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***PROCEEDINGS OF MINI-PLenary SESSION – NATIONAL COUNCIL OF
PROVINCES***

The Council met at 14:02.

The Deputy Chairperson took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayers or meditation.

The Deputy Chairperson announced that the hybrid sitting constituted a sitting of the National Council of Provinces.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon members, before we proceed today I would like to just inform hon members that we have some apologies. The first apology is from the Chairperson of the Council, she's attending the National Orders Awards ceremony in Pretoria.

The other apology is from hon Radebe, who is not joining us today because of a doctor's appointment.

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I am told that we have hon Farmer's wife in the gallery, we welcome her and we hope that she enjoys the session with us. And do join us whenever possible. Thank you very much for being with us.

Hon delegates, I would now like to welcome the hon Minister of Home Affairs, the Deputy Minister, permanent delegates, Members of executive Councils, MECs, and all special delegates and SA Local Government Association, Salga representatives to the House.

I've been informed that there will be no notices of motion or motions without notice. And, therefore, we shall proceed with the first order of the day.

APPROPRIATION BILL

(Policy debate)

Debate Budget Vote No 5 - Home Affairs:

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Hon House Chairperson, let me recognise the Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, the hon Njabulo Nzuza, the Chairperson of the Select Committee on Security and

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Justice, the hon Jane Mananiso, hon members of the Select Committee on Security and Justice, the Acting Director-General, DG, of Home Affairs, Mr Thulani Mavuso as well as DG Makhode in his absence, the Chief executive Officer, CEO, of Government Printing Works, Ms Alinah Fosi, Commissioner of the Border Management Authority, BMA, Dr Mike Masiapato, also in his absence, Leadership of the Independent Electoral Commission, IEC, as well as distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Over the past two years the Home Affairs ecosystem, comprising of the Department of Home Affairs, the Border Management Authority and Government Printing Works, has been on a transformational journey.

Under our digital transformation programme called Home Affairs @ home, we are rapidly inverting the entire service delivery model that has not worked for South Africans for too long.

Instead of forcing 63 million citizens to queue at only 349 physical offices, we are bringing services closer to where people stay.

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Instead of making people take a whole day off of work to get a new ID, we have cut application times to as little as five minutes through our new digital partnership model with the banking sector.

Instead of relying on vulnerable manual and paper-based processes, we are using biometric technology to digitalise and secure the application processes.

At the same time, we are bolstering South Africa's national security through immigration system reforms at a scale not seen before. And we continue to reposition this ecosystem as a key economic enabler, unlocking the power of Home Affairs to drive growth and job creation.

Improved service delivery, stronger national security and enabling economic growth, these are the three pillars of our reform drive.

Let us look at each of them in turn. First, we are delivering a service delivery revolution through digital transformation. The previous civics services delivery model was premised – as I said – on forcing every South African to visit a physical

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location, which was often located far away and was expensive to reach in terms of both time and money.

We are now turning this model on its head. Instead of you going far away to a limited number of Home Affairs, we are expanding the number of locations where you can access our services.

In addition to the existing office footprint, we are, therefore, decentralising and expanding access to civic services at scale.

By digitalising our long-standing partnership with the banking sector, we have already expanded access to Smart ID replacement services by an incredible 47% within just two months of launching the new system.

Eight weeks after this project went live, 167 bank branches across South Africa now already offer Smart ID replacement services.

To put this into perspective, under the previous manual model, only 30 bank branches were included in this partnership after a full decade.

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During the short eight-week period that the new system has been live, an incredible 127 364 South Africans have already gained access to Smart IDs.

In fact, on 15 May when I delivered my budget vote speech in the National Assembly, this figure stood at 118 434. That means that today, less than four full days later since that speech on Friday, another 8 930 citizens have used this new service.

This is not incremental change or tinkering at the margins, it is wholesale reform in action.

Given the stunning success of this project, we are raising our ambitions accordingly. I can, therefore, share with this House that we have now increased our target for the rest of the year to activate Smart ID replacement services at 750 bank branches by the end of 2026, with a specific focus on rural and underserved communities.

For millions of South Africans this means easier access to secure enabling documents in places they already know and trust. Just as importantly, the entire application process has now been fully digitalised.

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At participating branches, an application to replace a Green ID book or a lost Smart ID now takes as little as five minutes. This constitutes at least a 93% faster turnaround time than the previous service model. No queues, no prior bookings, no paperwork required whatsoever.

Instead, this new system relies purely on biometric verification to protect the integrity of every application.

Over the coming months we will add first-time ID applications, passport applications and doorstep delivery to this new system. This means that, for the first time ever, South Africans will be able to securely courier their enabling documents to their own homes without the need to visit a physical location just to do a collection.

We are also leveraging the data produced through this digitalised system to implement a fully-fledged business intelligence system at Home Affairs for the first time.

We have started live monitoring of Smart ID service provision as a cohort to compare performance across different channels and enable continuous improvement. We will expand this

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capacity to all services as we incorporate them into the digital partnership.

Additionally, Chair, I can announce today that we have just, on Monday, rolled out an upgraded online booking system.

Long-standing neglect and underinvestment meant that the old booking site was increasingly abused by unscrupulous individuals who blocked booking slots and then sold them on to desperate citizens. The result was that citizens struggled to obtain booking slots, which are free of charge.

Our modern new booking site has now secured the system against such abuses. We anticipate that it will take a week or two to fully stabilise the new system, which is available at myhomeaffairsonline.dha.gov.za.

This reform is yet another affirmation that we will not tolerate abuse of Home Affairs systems and we will use modern technology to fix our problems.

Hon members, the capstone project for our civic services reform programme is the world-class Digital Identity system we

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are currently designing. This reform will fundamentally reshape how citizens interact with the state.

In the 21st century, secure digital identity is no longer simply an administrative function, it is foundational national infrastructure.

Just as roads and railways enabled the industrial economy, Digital ID will enable citizens to participate fully and securely in the modern digital economy.

We recently published draft regulations under the Identification Act to establish an appropriate framework for this system.

I invite stakeholders to participate in the public comment period that concludes on 6 June.

Digital ID will allow South Africans to securely access their critical documents and Home Affairs services digitally in their own pocket, through their smartphones. It will also enable secure remote authentication.

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Through this reform we are engaged in state-building, laying the foundation for a more secure and efficient government and economy for decades to come. This is the culmination, hon members, of Home Affairs @ home, when you have your ID an enabling document in your pocket right in your own home.

Hon Chair, through Home Affairs @ home, we are also dramatically enhancing national security. Our digital partnership model with the banking sector is rapidly expanding the ability of the 16 million South Africans who still hold Green ID books to switch to the more-secure Smart ID.

The Green ID book is often cited as the most defrauded document on the African continent. It sits at the heart of identity theft and illegal immigration.

Last year we already delivered a record of 4 million Smart IDs. Now, through our digital partnership, we are going to ramp that up even further to ensure that every citizen has access to a Smart ID.

By rapidly scaling-up access to the more secured document, Home Affairs finally has a clear roadmap towards ensuring that every South African can switch away from the Green ID book,

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enabling us to eventually stop recognising the Green ID as a valid form of identification.

This will eliminate fraud and identity theft linked to the Green ID, striking a major blow in favour of the rule of law.

Our new Electronic Travel Authorisation, ETA, also went live in October last year for tourists from China, India, Indonesia and Mexico. For the first time ever, this system will enable us to record biometrics for every foreigner entering our country.

The ETA uses advanced machine learning technology to verify the authenticity of a passport and other documentation and uses facial recognition to confirm that the person who arrives in our country is the holder of a valid passport.

Over the coming weeks, we will be scaling up the ETA to cover tourists from many more countries. This will be followed by the continuous addition of more visa categories to the ETA, turning it into the single, digitalised and biometrically-secured entry point for all visa applications to South Africa.

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This security work is being complemented through the single biggest investment that has ever been made into our country's border infrastructure.

The BMA recently announced the selected bidders for a R12,5 billion public-private partnership that will demolish and rebuild our six busiest land ports of entry. These six ports account for 80% of all traffic through our border posts.

Through this project, dilapidated infrastructure will be replaced with modern new facilities that are designed around the ETA and other digital systems. These new border posts will also implement the One-Stop Border Post concept that was recently passed through this House as a Bill.

I extend my appreciation to every member of the NCOP who supported that important piece of legislation.

As these six major border posts are rebuilt, you, hon members, will be able to see the fruits of that Bill become a reality as we secure border processing through modern infrastructure.

Finally, we continue to reposition the Home Affairs ecosystem as a critical economic enabler. At the same time that it

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enhances national security, the ETA is also laying the foundation for a tourism boom in South Africa.

As we have demonstrated during this initial phase, the ETA enables qualifying tourists to consistently obtain visas within just 24 hours in digital format. They then store the ETA in the wallet on their smartphone and undergo facial recognition verification by the BMA when they arrive at the port of entry.

I can also announce that we recently deployed an extension module into live production, which now enables legitimate tourists with an ETA to seamlessly apply for a visa extension.

Our tourism sector, hon members, previously lost billions due to inefficient visa processes that forced prospective travellers to stand in long queues and complete paper-based applications that took weeks to process.

Through the convenience and efficiency introduced by the scale-up of the ETA, we are going to unlock entire new growth markets to create thousands of new jobs in South Africa's tourism industry. Again, there are no queues or paperwork, the ETA is Home Affairs @ home in action.

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One of the clearest signs that we are becoming an economic enabler is the growing demand from global industries to partner with South Africa through our visa facilitation schemes.

Through the Screen Talent and Global Entertainment Scheme, STAGES, and the Meetings, Events, Exhibitions and Tourism Scheme, MEETS, we are building a modern immigration system that supports investment, tourism, film production and international events and job creation, while maintaining the integrity and security of our immigration system.

I am pleased to announce today that the department has concluded the first round of assessments for participation in these new schemes.

Under STAGES, the successful participants are the Commercial Producers Association of South Africa, Film Industry Visa Assistance, FIVA, and Film Afrika. These partnerships will help position South Africa as a premier destination for international film and television production, supporting local jobs, skills development and economic activity across multiple provinces.

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Through MEETS, we are similarly creating a more efficient system to facilitate major conferences, exhibitions, tourism and international business events.

This is Home Affairs playing our part as a department that does not stand in the way of economic growth but actively enables it.

Hon Chairperson, our reforms in these three key domains are supported by a relentless drive to restore the rule of law.

Since the start of this administration the department has secured 10 criminal convictions, 14 arrests and 65 dismissals linked to corruption and misconduct.

The BMA has secured a further 26 arrests and 34 dismissals.

Crooked officials know that it is no longer a question of if they will be caught, dismissed and prosecuted. It is now only a matter of when.

With dismissals, arrests and prosecutions now being secured on a near-weekly basis, the days of impunity are conclusively at an end.

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Equally, we are restoring the rule of law through our law enforcement operations. Since July 2024, Home Affairs has already carried out more than 109 000 lawful inland deportations, an increase of 46%, while the BMA has prevented more than 945 000 individuals from entering South Africa illegally or without proper documentation since its establishment.

Enforcement will be dramatically enhanced by the technological power of the ETA and through two critical policy and legal breakthroughs we recently achieved.

Earlier this year Cabinet approved the Revised White Paper on Citizenship, Immigration and Refugee Protection, which will now be converted into a draft Bill designed to transform the very foundation of the South African state.

By implementing the Revised White Paper, we will introduce the first-safe-country-principle to end the practice of asylum seekers picking and choosing South Africa as their only destination in the region.

While upholding our fundamental constitutional commitments, this legal reform will empower us to reject asylum seekers who

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deliberately travel through other safe countries with the only aim of coming to South Africa.

This reform was further bolstered last week when Home Affairs won a landmark case in the Constitutional Court. The Court confirmed our position that asylum seekers must not be allowed to submit endless repeat applications while remaining in the country indefinitely once their original application had been rejected.

We will use this judgement from the highest court in the land, in combination with the legislative changes flowing from the Revised White Paper, to ensure that we ramp up lawful deportations and restore the rule of law even more effectively than we have already done.

Hon Chair, Home Affairs @ home is built around a coherent and ambitious set of reforms that are simultaneously revolutionising service delivery, national security and the harnessing of economic opportunities. It is supported by our unrelenting commitment to restoring the rule of law and the fruits of our reform programme are increasingly visible across this ecosystem.

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I am, therefore, honoured to present budget vote 5 to this House.

I extend my sincere appreciation to Deputy Minister Nzuza for his continued leadership and commitment to delivering for our country.

I also extend my gratitude to DG Makhode, Commissioner Masiapato, CEO Fosi and their respective teams for their continued hard work to deliver this agenda, and to the IEC under Chairperson Mosotho Moepya for their ongoing preparations for the upcoming local government elections.

Hon members, this is the budget vote that will capacitate the Independent Electoral Commission to deliver a successful local government election.

This is the budget vote that will enable us to bring digitalised Home Affairs services to hundreds more locations across the length and breadth of South Africa and deliver services right on your smartphone through Digital ID.

This is the budget vote that will secure entry into our country through the power of the ETA.

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This is the budget vote that will unlock economic opportunities for the people of South Africa by driving tourism and enabling growth sectors.

Hon members, this is a reform agenda that calls on us to put aside politics and instead put the people first. Home Affairs @ home is the agenda that is rapidly transforming this ecosystem from the most maligned in government into a world-leader.

I, therefore, call on all members to put our country first today by supporting this budget vote so that we can continue to repair and reform the very foundation of the South African state to better serve South Africans, not just today, but for generations to come. Thank you.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Hon Minister Schreiber, I think that was a very encouraging report. And I can also testify that in KwaZulu-Natal I used the mobile unit and on one day they were able to process 70 applications. Convey my sincere thanks to the team there. Thank you very much.

Hon members, I also forgot the apology from the hon Chief Whip, hon Mmoiemang, he's attending the Southern African

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Development Community, SADC, Parliamentary Forum from 12 to 22 May in Gauteng. The hon Sithole is acting in his position and we want to welcome her into that seat and wish her well.

Ms J S MANANISO: Hon Deputy Chairperson, let me stand on the protocol established by the Minister. Hon Deputy Chairperson, the committee met with the Department of Home Affairs and the Boarder Management Authority, BMA, on 6 May 2026 to consider the Budget Vote and annual performance plans, APPs. The committee welcomed key developments including improved border controls interventions at Beit Bridge Border Post and the announcement of the redevelopment of six strategic border posts as said by the Minister, including Lebombo Border Post, Oshoek Border Post, Kopfontein Border Post, Maseru Bridge and Ficksburg Border Post.

We note recent media reports of the use of ambivious vehicles at the Beit Bridge Border Post which we welcome in addressing illegal crossings at the borders.

Hon Deputy Chairperson as you can hear I am not well. Sorry. These advancement and projects represent significant investment in border infrastructure and will remain under the committee's oversight.

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Hon Deputy Chairperson, Budget Vote No 5 Is for human Rights and dignity. I think that as this collective and the provinces will be supporting this budget.

Hon Deputy Chairperson and hon members, the Department of Home Affairs carry a dual mandate of civic services and immigration management implemented through four programmes. Those programmes are administration, citizens affairs, immigration affairs and institutional support.

These structures support the department's core responsibility of identifying management, migration regulation and institutional governance.

Hon Deputy Chairperson, the department is undergoing a major digital transformation aimed at modernising services as the hon said that we are going fully digital and decentralising service model. Expansion of electronics, civic and immigration services strengthening government systems, positioning the Department of Home Affairs as an economic enabler through digital identity and immigration reform. Hence the home affairs at home.

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This transformation aims to build a modern, capable and technology-driven state. Out of nothing, nothing comes. We fully support the demodernisation programme of the department.

The department contributes directly to the National Development Plan, NDP, 2030, through provision of legal identity and access to services, support for skills-based economic growth through migration system. Strengthening border management through the BMA, enhancing regional co-operation within Southern African Development Communities, SADC. Advancing for industrial revolution, IR, reforms to improve efficiency and reduce fraud.

Key departmental priorities include digital transformation, Smart ID, e-passport and digital visas. Automation of internal processes as well as the expansion of banking sector partnerships for digital ID services as alluded by the Minister.

Immigration reforms and risk-based border systems have improved. Antifraud and anticorruption initiatives, legislative and policy reforms, public outreach and transformation programmes. On this one we were taken through by the department that they are working together with

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Community Development Workers, CDWs, which are community-based care workers who are assisting them to actually have this outreach programmes with the councillors in different municipalities.

We want to emphasize that during this year of the local government elections on the important of digitalisation of identity documents and for the department to ensure that it meets its targets in ensuring that every citizen has an identity document and can register for the local government elections.

Hon Deputy Chairperson, given the current environment regarding immigration and foreigners, the committee looks forward to the department's White Paper on Citizen Immigration and Refugee Protection which is at an advance stage as we speak. This legislative framework will indeed provide the necessary space for a dialogue and debate on these matters which will result in a more regulated space.

Effective human and orderly border management is a core responsibility of the democratic state and a critical pillar of national security, social cohesion and economic stability.

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South Africa's Constitution values geographic position and economic profile require a migration system that is principles, well-regulated and firmly rooted in the rule of law. Capable of managing migration flows while protecting the integrity of the state and the dignity of all the people.

For these reasons, we want to encourage the department to move with speed in the introduction of the Immigration Citizens and Refugee Protection Bill which provides a comprehensive framework to modernise South Africa's immigration system and address long-standing weaknesses that have undermined the public confidence.

We encourage the department to finalise the legislation urgently as it provides clear legal authority for the implementation enforcements and accountability across the state.

Hon Deputy Chairperson, the department has been allocated R13,8 billion, for the 2026-2027 financial year. This budget reflects an increased allocation to the Border Management Authority, transfers linked to structural shift, including the air liaison division, expanded function for digital transformation, support to the Independent Electoral

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Commission, IEC, electoral activities ahead of the 2026 local government elections.

I wish to emphasize that this budget allocation is not for the ghost employees, hon Minister, not for irregular or wasteful expenditure or for anything that is unethical. However, it should be used for the benefit of our people in the communities which they live in.

The department must continue its support of the IEC in ensuring that they protect the independence and credibility of the election outcome in the upcoming local elections.

Hon Deputy Chairperson, rural connectivity gaps, limiting access to digital services is one of our grave concerns as the select committee. Infrastructure weaknesses in remote areas, cyber security risk in digital IDs and banking systems, staff shortages in critical technical areas, continue to permeate backlogs and as well mainly appeals and wavers reliance on temporary service points such as malls and municipal offices.

We want to encourage the department to ensure that the long queues at home affairs offices are done away completely that digitisation programme of the department take those in rural

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areas, the elderly and those who are marginalised along so that these services are accessible to all people in our communities including those in rural towns and villages. We must never leave anyone behind, hon Minister in this service.

Hon Deputy Chairperson and hon members, the BMA is responsible for securing and managing ports of entries, facilitating legitimate movement and supporting regional trade. However, the BMA faces sever constraints. Only 2 600 of 11 200 posts have been filled. The BMA has a funding gap of R2 billion against a requirement of R4,3 billion. The BMA also has limited resources for enforcement and technology. These constraints significantly weaken operational effectiveness at the borders. To address the porous nature of our borders, we must ensure that the BMA is sufficiently funded to carry out its operational duties in securing our borders and ensuring that illegal movement of persons and goods is kept. Hon members have heard from the Minister that there is something happening of which those found wanting in terms of being offenders are arrested.

Strengthening border management capacity is non-negotiable. This includes the full capacitation and operationalisation of the Border Management Authority and hence co-ordination among

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security and law-enforcement agencies. Modernisation of ports of entry and the deployment of appropriate technology to secure the land, the sea and air borders. These measures are essential to combat transactional crime, human trafficking, smuggling and the abuse of the immigration system.

Hon Deputy Chairperson, to address fraud and corruption the BMA has implemented disciplinary actions against officials involved in corruption. Rotation systems at ports of entry, collaborations with the SA Police Service and Customer Interface Unit, CIU, under a zero-tolerance approach. On this one of the zero-tolerance approach we have sold this concept to every department that comes before us to say at least we must try to drive the zero backlog of anything that is happening. So that we claim the clean government that we are aspiring to have.

These measures are encouraged and we hope to see the outcomes of these disciplinary actions to ensure that those working at our borders are ethical and professional in the execution of their duties.

Hon Deputy Chairperson, hon members had some recommendations they deliberated on. They said that we need to ensure that we

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strengthen rural connectivity through telecom partnership. Expand mobile and decentralised services to be delivered in those areas, enhance cyber security and conduct annual audits, strengthen co-operation within municipalities, SAPS, and traditional leaders and other civic organisations.

We wish to emphasize that it is only through collaboration with communities that we will truly provide the required services to our communities as they are the ones who should inform our strategies.

The department is important to our average citizens from birth to death. It is therefore vital that consultation and co-operation translate into effective service delivery. For this reason, the committee further recommended that it will be important for the department and the BMA to enhance community engagement of migration and social cohesion.

We want to say the Minister, on issues of the Government Printing Works, GPW. we hope that the department will work together with other departments to ensure that they stretch their services to other departments because we are clear and we note that the public works are working to ensure that they do their work excellently so. For 2026-27 APP, notes that GPW

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must be capacitated to handle an influx of 60 million Smart ID applications over Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, MTEF, due to the facing out of the green barcoded ID. We urge GPW to meet this target and for the department to support the GPW.

Hon Deputy Chairperson, as the committee one would want to emphasize that we are not apologetic because we understand the role that this department plays. We want to make sure that we are going to fast-track increased funding support, hon Minister. Stronger intergovernmental co-ordinations, accelerated implementation of reforms and improved access for rural and underserved communities.

I hope hon Minister one of your special projects you will ensure that you have a rural strategy so that you are able to ensure that we do not leave anyone behind because most of the members and people coming from rural areas they fill that we are just failing them by not ensuring that they do not get access of services.

We encourage to prioritise digitisation and the production of the Smart IDs and for the IEC to work smartly within budget to ensure free and fair local government elections.

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We also encourage the IEC to host civic and democracy education programmes.

Hon Minister you can affirm or confirm that there is a counter WhatsApp or Tik Tok that is going around that discourage people to have digital IDs. So, we would need to have a robust awareness campaign on how it works and how it is circulated so that our people who fill that they would need to be automated and digitalised are able to access that particular service.

However, went to wish the IEC well in its preparation for local government elections and for the upcoming voter registration weekend on the 20th and the 21st of June 2026. We encourage all young people to go out and register.

We encourage the BMA despite the budget constrain to remain vigilant at our borders to ensure the protection of the movement of all goods and persons into and out of South Africa. For the work that they have been doing, they must keep doing that and not lower the bar. We want to thank you for the continued support as you come before the committee and your collective because sometimes when it is not the hon Minister, it is the hon Deputy Minister Nzuza. So, I hope that hon members will be supporting this budget because us the

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collective of the select committee we really support this particular budget. I thank you.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Thank you very much, hon Mananiso. Regardless of your sour throat, you have done very well. I am sure we will not here you say hoyi! Hoyi! today because of your sour throat. However, thank you very much for your participation in this debate.

We now move to the next speaker to contribute and that would be the hon Billy who has seven minutes.

Mr M BILLY: Deputy Chairperson, hon Minister, hon members and fellow South Africans, I think one thing is becoming very clear. South Africans are finally beginning to see a Department of Home Affairs that works for them and not against them. For years, Home Affairs became synonymous with frustration, with corruption, with endless queues, broken systems, and weak border control. The reality is that citizens lost confidence, business lost time, the country lost billions through fraud, inefficiency, and not managed migration.

The true foundations that were laid for the DA to do things differently. But today under Minister Leon Schreiber, we are

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witnessing something fundamentally different, hon members. We are witnessing urgency, we are witnessing reform, we are witnessing delivery.

So, this budget vote is not merely about numbers on paper. It's about rebuilding the credibility of the South African state. It is about restoring dignity to citizens. It is about using technology to secure our borders, modernise government, and unlock economic growth. The facts speak for themselves, hon members. Within just weeks of launching the digital partnerships with banks, 167 bank branches are already offering smart ID replacement services, with application times reduced to as little as five minutes.

It is progress that South Africans should not forget that the EFF protested against us; would rather have South Africans spend hours in queues at Home Affairs offices. More than 118 smart ID applications were processed through this new system in only eight weeks and that is not theory, that is delivery.

The electronic travel authorisation system, which the Minister spoke about, has already processed over 75 000 visa applications and rejected nearly 4 500 illegitimate applications before those individuals could even enter our

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country, South Africa. Over the past two financial years, nearly 110 000 deportations were carried out while Border Management Authority prevented more than 945 000 undocumented or improperly documented persons from entering South Africa, as the Minister has indicated. So, hon members, these are not just slogans, these are measurable outcomes.

Now, Chairperson, let us anticipate, obviously, the argument we know is going to come from our good friends, the ANC benches. They will stand up and say, these initiatives started before Minister Schreiber. They will say that, and they're correct. They're right. But what they won't tell you is that some ideas may indeed have existed on paper before this GNU administration. But South Africans are tired of governments that confuse announcements with implementation, which is what the ANC government has been doing.

So, an idea on policy sitting in a dusty file is not delivery. A press conference is not reform. A promise is not progress. The difference is that under Minister Schreiber, things are actually happening. The difference is execution and delivery, and that's where the difference is.

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So, for years, South Africans heard about digital transformation while standing in long queues for entire days. For years, border security was discussed while corruption flourished at ports of entry. For years, citizens were told systems would improve soon, but they kept getting offline, offline, offline.

An HON MEMBER: ANC is offline.

Mr M BILLY: But now we see a real movement, hon members. There are digital visas. There's digital IDs coming our way. There's biometric verification. There's automation. There's expanded smart ID access. Enforcement operations taking place, corruption crackdowns, and the rebuilding of border infrastructure. And it's all really happening. It's not in theory. It's not on paper. It's happening. Now, that is the difference between talking about reform and actually implementing reform.

An HON MEMBER: Yeah, yeah.

Mr M BILLY: The Minister has also correctly recognised that Home Affairs is not merely an administrative department. It's a national security department. It is an economic department.

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It is an anticorruption department. So, a secure identity system protects citizens from fraud. An efficient visa system grows tourism and investment. Secure borders protect our sovereignty. A functional population register strengthens the integrity of our democracy. And importantly, this reform agenda is rooted in digital transformation.

The BMA is also driving forward with biometric movement control systems, digital-traveller processing, and technology-driven enforcement such as body-worn cameras. A Minister who embraces technology unlike our Police Ministers who have all refused to embrace the digital age and incorporate police body-worn cameras. Chairperson, what we are seeing now is what becomes possible when capable leadership meets political will.

An HON MEMBER: Yeah, yeah.

Mr M BILLY: Of course, challenges remain. The BMA itself acknowledges infrastructure backlogs, absolute legacy systems, funding constraints, corruption risk, and capacity limitations. But for the first time in many years, there is a clear direction, a coherent strategy, and measurable progress, hon members.

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So, the DA supports this budget vote because it represents reform over decay, innovation over stagnation, and accountability over excuses. South Africans do not want endless explanations anymore. They want results, and slowly but surely, Home Affairs is beginning to produce those results.

Mr P A PHALA: Hon Chair, hon members, hon Minister, and hon Deputy Minister, officials of the department, and the people of our beloved motherland ...

Sepedi:

... thobela.

English:

The Select Committee on Security and Justice, as it participates in this Budget Vote 5, a debate of the Department of Home Affairs, under which its agencies find expression of their constitutional mandate in the Constitution of the country. The agencies are the Border Management Authority, the Independent Electoral Commission, and the Government Printing Works. The entities which the committee is to confirm our support for the Budget Vote.

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This is a critical role that Parliament plays in considering, adopting, and passing budgets for various government departments and state entities to ensure that there are funds allocated to them to provide services to the people of South Africa.

However, Chair, the debate on the Budget Vote 5 takes place at a time when all of us in the country have witnessed marches by South Africans protesting against the thorny, sensitive, and painful issue of illegal immigration.

Chair, the issues raised by the people dictate to us, as Members of Parliament, to pause and apply our conscious decision and urge South Africans that as they genuinely raise concerns regarding illegal immigration in our country, they should do so within the parameters of the law and not take law into their own hands.

Chair and hon members, thus my focus on this debate would be on the critical matters faced by the Border Management Authority, in particular, the migration and illegal immigration. These issues of migration and illegal immigrants are a complex phenomenon and that is as a result of both the

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push and the pull factors. I'm saying they are a complex matter because there's isn't one solution to the challenges.

Minister and hon members, at our country's level, we need to strengthen our border management and control to ensure legal movement of persons and goods across our ports of entry are relevant and economically grounded in line with the country's National Development Plan 2030.

At the regional and global levels, an uncomfortable debate should happen at the multilateral and bilateral levels on what pushes citizens to move from their own country to another in search of opportunities to sustain livelihood.

Linked to these matters across border crime in all the provinces, illegal immigration has dire consequences to the locals in many ways. For instance, in the Free State, we have a challenge of stock theft and vandalism that happens across the borders with the Kingdom of Lesotho.

Cross-border livestock rustling results in millions of revenue losses, with stolen cattle and sheep frequently driven across the border into Lesotho. Farmers along the borders also report

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stolen equipment, tractors, copper cables, and damaged irrigation and extraction, etc.

In Limpopo, Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal, the illegal settlement along the borders have become massive scenes of crime, where illicit goods, illegal firearms, drugs, and illicit cigarettes are crossed into the country. As a committee, we haven't yet interacted with border areas on the North West with Botswana and Northern Cape with Namibia, but things look different there, relatively stable and secure but remain vulnerable.

Hon members, the challenge of illegal immigration is worrying, and we believe that the Border Management Authority and all other law enforcement entities responsible for border management and control should work in a coordinative manner to address the related national security risks.

Hon members, South Africa alone cannot address the dilemma of illegal immigration without the cooperation and collaboration with other countries, including countries on our continent.

The Pan-African agenda on security, political, economic, and social integration of Africa can only happen in an environment of legality and peace.

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The African Union Treaty relating to free movement of persons provides that:

"Free movement of persons means the right of national of member states to enter, move freely, and reside in another member state in accordance with the laws of the host member state and to exit the host member state in accordance with the laws and the procedure for exiting that member state."

In this regard, there's an obligation for all countries in Africa and the world to ensure that all our citizens are documented and that anyone who leaves or enters our country should do so with their necessary travel documents in accordance with the laws and procedures of both exiting and host member states.

The other sensitive issue that requires an engagement among us as South African is the role of businesses which deliberately contravenes labour and immigration laws in employment of foreign workforce.

It is common cause that some of the businesses employ and exploit undocumented foreign nationals in order to increase their profit margins as well as differing their obligations to

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ensure that their employees enjoy their rights as provided in their labour laws, such as the Basic Condition of Employment Act.

Businesses in South Africa should look into this matter. You don't need the presence of inspectors in order to comply with their labour laws. Everyone and every business have a legal obligation to ensure that all its workforce is employed in compliance of the labour laws. The laws of our country are meant to be implemented by all of us.

Hon members, it is important to conclude on this matter of illegal immigration by indicating that it should be obvious to the Minister of Home Affairs that the finalisation of the White Paper on Citizenship, Immigration, and Refugee Protection is needed as urgently as yesterday. The White Paper will strengthen the legal regime to deal with issues of citizenship, immigration, and refugee protection.

Hon members, you may be familiar with the saying, and I think I'm going to emphasise what the Chairperson was saying here, that out of nothing, nothing comes. I'm saying out of nothing, nothing comes because there seems to be a narrative that is

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being driven around to suggest that today has no reference to yesterday and that tomorrow is not linked to today.

The Department of Home Affairs and its entities have been in existence for decades since the dawn of our constitutional democratic order. Over the years, the ANC-led government has initiated policies and passed various legislations that shaped Department of Home Affairs to what it is today.

I'm saying out of nothing, nothing comes because as we who are privileged to lead our government and the people today celebrate the current successes attained by the Department of Home Affairs and its entities, we should do so not forgetting that there are those who travelled this road before us.

We are enjoying the fruits of the labour of former Minister Aaron Motsoaledi and those he succeeded in Home Affairs.

Hence, we insist that - I need your protection, hon Chair.

Hence, we insist that out of nothing, nothing comes.

Hon members, the Department of Home Affairs initiated the modernisation programme of Home Affairs many years ago. We are glad that the modernisation programme has been implemented in phases and has contributed in a great measure to address the

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challenges regarding provision of Home Affairs services to our people.

These challenges include the long queues that have been a feature of Home Affairs for some time. The challenges of queues are still visible at Home Affairs offices, but the system is improving.

Today, the branch booking appointment system launched in 2020 to provide online booking for smart identity document, ID, and passport application has been a gamechanger in ensuring efficient provision of Home Affairs services to the people.

We are aware that the previous system at times encountered challenges of a system downturn and we noted in the annual performance of Home Affairs that the matter will receive the most priority as part of digitisation strategy of Home Affairs.

We urge the Minister of Home Affairs to address these challenges and should develop a plan to address these matters as a matter of urgency. The ANC supports the Vote of the Department of Home Affairs.

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Thank you.

Ms F F RADZILANI (Limpopo): Hon House Chair, let me stand on the protocol already established. It is a great honour to join this august House of hon members, an important House in the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, especially for us coming from provinces in which our interests are considered and elevated to this sphere.

In our quest to build a better country, continent and the world, not only financial resources are vital but also capable and skilled human resources too play an important role in the form of our frontline workers across our offices, ensuring that the national security, socioeconomic development, management of ports of entry and citizenship are enabled amongst others. I am mentioning the significance of our frontline workers, as we are commemorating the importance of workers this month in the journey to transform lives of our people. We have also gathered in this House in the month we also commemorate Africa Month and the birth of the African Union.

The official theme for this year is celebrated under:

Deepening the African Union, AU, vision for unity for Africa

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through prosperity, peace and modernity for a better Africa and the world. This thematic message highlights the important role for Africa Union's goal for cultural revival, regional solidarity and sustainable development. This message also echoes the historic and revolutionary words of the great African pioneer, Kwame Nkrumah, when he said:

Unite we must. Without necessarily sacrificing our sovereignties, big or small, we can here and now forge a political union based on defence, foreign affairs and diplomacy, and a common citizenship, an African currency, an African monetary zone and an African central bank.

These words serve as an important emphasis in the centrality of African Unity, development of its economies and its populations. However, some of the pertinent hindrances for such goals includes diminishing of national identity, flow of illegal immigration in our ports, undocumented citizenship, elements of Afrophobia and xenophobia, which Home Affairs has a major role to play in fostering tolerance and peace, managing migration while promoting economic development for sustainable livelihood.

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Limpopo province is not immune from the challenges relating to migration, especially illegal ones which play a major role in destabilising provision of services to our communities due to undocumented and illegal migrants. However, we are also pleased with the work done by the department and Border Management Authority in managing flooding of our borders and streamlining the law enforcement, including interception of illicit activities. The introduction of the digitisation of the departmental records for ease access, footprint expansion and address registration in health facilities are some of the remarkable strides the department has attained.

However, despite such achievements, the Limpopo Home Affairs experience some major challenges which we believe the budget presented ...

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Stop speaking! Hon member of the executive council, MEC, can you please stop speaking? Earlier, your video went off together with your sound, so, we couldn't hear you. What we have done is, we've stopped your time at seven minutes and 47 seconds. We will introduce you to come back once the present hon member who is on the podium completes his debate. So, can you please

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be patient with us for a few minutes? Thank you. Hon Zulu, please, continue.

Mr S A ZULU: Deputy Chair, I'm compromised here in terms of time.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): I've noticed that, yeah, that is so. You'll be reimbursed, don't worry. Yes.

Mr S A ZULU: The Auditor-General has repeatedly flagged weak internal controls at Home Affairs and the Border Management Authority, BMA, irregular expenditure in the hundreds of millions. However, where are the consequences? Where are the heads that have rolled as the NCOP delegates who represent the provinces that live in this reality? In Musina, Beitbridge is chocked. In KwaZulu-Natal, the Lebombo Border ... [Inaudible.] ... because one scanner broke down and stays broken for months.

In the Eastern Cape, communities watch trucks cross illegal while the SA Police Service and Home Affairs point fingers at each other. Home Affairs received R13,8 billion for 2026-27 financial year, yet almost R6,5 billion of that amount goes to

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transfers and subsidies, including R3,1 billion to the electoral commission. Those ones, Deputy Chairperson, they want us to give them the money so that they can steal our votes again. Eight hundred and forty-nine million rands to the Political Parties Fund and R2,5 billion to the Border Management Authority.

This means the department's actual operational capacity is far smaller than the headline figures suggest. Most alarming is the immigration affairs, the programme responsible for illegal immigration, deportations, asylum management, visa processing and immigration enforcement receives only R625,2 million, less than 5% of the total vote. South Africa is battling the following: Porous borders, trafficking syndicates, fake documents, asylum abuse, organised criminal networks and growing public anger over illegal immigration. Yet, the government allocates only R625 million to the programme expected to confront all of these.

This is not border security, this is budgetary surrender. The department itself admits that it is operating at nearly 40% staffing capacity. Provincial presentations show only 5 023 staff members filled against an approved establishment of 12 727 posts. At the same time, offices remain closed for

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months. Provinces face severe staff shortages and immigration operations remain underresourced. The department's own report confirmed that office closures in some provinces lasted up to 12 months due to infrastructure and operational failures. Yet, government wants South Africans to believe the system is improving.

The Auditor-General's findings expose the real condition of Home Affairs. The department received a qualified audit opinion due to material financial misstatements, failures in internal controls, failures to investigate misconduct and failures to recover money owed to the state. The department distorts over R526 million in irregular expenditure, not here condoned. It further distorts R180,5 million linked to irregularities in digitisation projects. This is not administrative weakness, this is institutional failure.

At the same time, Home Affairs admitted that 63 officials were dismissed since July 2024. Ninety-five misconduct cases were opened and dozens of corruption investigations remain active. This means corruption inside the department is not historical, it is current and ongoing. Yet, despite this, the annual performance plan, APP, only targets the finalisation of 80% of fraud and corruption cases within 90 working days.

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In other words, government is budgeting for corruption backlogs inside the very department responsible for citizenship and national identity. Government boast about deportation targets, but the same APP reveals that the department aims for only 45 000 deportations in 2026-27 financial year, despite the millions of undocumented migrants estimated to be within the Republic of South Africa. That target alone exposes the disconnect between the scale of the problem and the scale of the budget.

The BMA itself admits to poor infrastructure, corruption and bribery, cyber insecurity, underfunded operations and capacity limitations. Yet, the state still expects citizens to trust that the borders are secure. The Treasury itself admits that Home Affairs paper-based systems create opportunities for fraud, corruption, inefficiency and threats to national security.

Government speaks about digital transformation, yet rural communities still lack access to functioning offices, internet infrastructure, mobile services and adequate staffing. The department plans to introduce only 220 mobile offices nationally. For a country with massive rural populations and deep service delivery inequality, that is nowhere near

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sufficient. The national development plan calls for a capable state, ethical governance, secure borders, professional institutions, and accountability. This budget fails every one of those tests.

Instead, it entrenches weak immigration enforcement, weak governance, weak accountability and weak state capacity. The MK Party believes that South Africans deserve their secure borders, corruption-free Home Affairs, efficient services and a department capable of protecting national sovereignty. This budget does not achieve that. For these reasons, the MK Party rejects Vote 5 Home Affairs as it stands. Hon Nxumalo, my provincial Chief Whip, is good to see you back in the House. Thank you very much, Deputy Chairperson.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Thank you very much, hon Zulu, Mageba [clan name.] I am just checking with the information technology, IT, people if the hon MEC from Limpopo is back with us.

Ms F F RADZILANI (Limpopo): I am back, hon Deputy Chair.

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The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Okay, you may continue for seven minutes. Sorry, eight minutes. Eight minutes.

Ms F F RADZILANI (Limpopo): The introduction of the digitization of the departmental records for ease access, footprint expansion to address birth registration in health facilities are some of the remarkable strides the department has attained. However, despite such achievements, the Limpopo Home Affairs still experience some major challenges which we believe the budget presented will assist in resolving them.

Allocated budget to Department of Home Affairs in Limpopo is not adequate to fund and fill all the approved posts on the organisational establishment, resulting in several critical vacancies remaining unfilled. This led to some managers and officials to frequently required to assume additional responsibilities and perform duties beyond their formal job descriptions without commensurate remuneration or acting allowances.

There is therefore a clear need for the National Treasury to increase the Compensation of Employees, COE, allocation to enable the filling of vacant posts, restore reasonable

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workloads, improve staff morale, and stabilise operations within the province.

The Department of Home Affairs continues to experience security challenges at its offices as a result of budget constraints, which previously necessitated a reduction of physical security services to 50% capacity. This reduction exposed offices, staff, clients, and critical assets to heightened security risks.

The department has recently increased security capacity was to 80% in response to these risks. To mitigate costs while strengthening security, the department is planning to install alarm systems and implement remote monitoring solutions, which are expected to enhance early detection and response capabilities while reducing reliance on costly full-time physical security deployments.

The introduction of mobile services by the department will play a huge role in role in reaching out to schools in the most rural areas of our province, remaining true to our commitment of taking services to our people.

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The department is also intending to reduce the number of uncollected identity documents especially at the areas with high volume, in our effort to achieve, we are working closely with the traditional authorities, community development workers, local municipalities and other involved stakeholders.

The province, is also in preparation for the upcoming local government elections, working closer with Independent Electoral Commission, IEC, Government Communications and Information System, Department of Basic Education and government departments to ensure that our people secure their identification prior the election period.

We are grateful for the initiative that was led by the Minister, the team and the Operation New Broom, which utilises biometric technology to speed up verifications and focuses on hotspot areas around the country, demonstrates the commitment of Home Affairs to enforce the rule of law, with Limpopo as a major focal point.

The department will continue to intensify multisector stakeholders' engagement together with South African Police Service, Department of Labour and Employment and Department of Social Development to detect undocumented foreign nationals.

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We will continue to strive for building safer communities, aligning priorities of the Government of National Unity, which include inclusive economic growth and job creation, reducing poverty and cost of living and building a capable, ethical and developmental state.

Hon members, history has taught us that working alone or in silo yield no positive results, either as this Parliament, the three spheres of government or private sector. It will be through our unity and collaboration with members of society, private sector and other important stakeholders, that together we can indeed take South Africa forward.

We will continue to do our best to ensure that our people's interest come first and advance the gains we made since the democratic breakthrough.

Let me take this opportunity to thank members of the portfolio and select committees, officials of the department for their tireless day to day activities in the department and believe that our duty will yield positive result as we move forward. And as Limpopo Province we support the budget that is going to benefit the people of the Republic of South Africa. Thank you, hon Deputy Chair.

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Mr B J FARMER: Hon Deputy Chairperson, hon members, I greet you in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Allow me, to thank my wife Kathleen for her continued support, support without which I would settle nor have been alive today. I rise today on behalf of the PA to participate in this important policy debate.

Home Affairs is not an ordinary department. It is the front door of the state where identities are protected, citizenship confirmed, and borders are regulated. It is where the dignity of our people either begins or is denied.

For the PA, this budget vote must be judged by one simple question: Will it make home affairs work for South Africans first? We know that this vote provides R13,8 billion for the 26-27 financial year. This much money must deliver visible results. It must deliver shorter queues and faster documents, safer borders and cleaner immigration systems. It must deliver Home Affairs that treats citizens with dignity and protects the sovereignty of our country.

We welcome the focus on digital transformation. The idea of Home Affairs at home is important. Because no South African should lose a full day of work, travel long distances, or

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stand in endless queues just to access basic identity documents. If digital systems are properly implemented, they can fight corruption, reduce human interference, improve access, and make the department more efficient.

But let us be clear, digital transformation must not become digital exclusion. Many of our people in rural areas, townships, informal settlements and poor communities do not always have reliable internet, data, devices or transport. So, while we modernize Home Affairs, we must also ensure that the grandmother in the rural village, the unemployed young person in the township and the mother needing a birth certificate for a child are not left behind. Modernisation must serve the poor, not only the connected.

We also welcome any reform that improves immigration management and border control. We have said it many times. South Africa cannot build a capable state if we do not know who is in the country, who is entering the country, and who is abusing the system. A country that cannot manage its borders cannot protect jobs and communities. We must protect national security to plan properly for housing, schools, clinics, policing and basic services.

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We are not against foreigners, but against lawlessness and corruption at ports of entry. We are absolutely 100% against the syndicate that sells documents and the thousands of employers who exploit undocumented people while South African sits without work.

Home Affairs must become a department where corruption has consequences. If an official sells an ID document, that is not administration. That is a national security threat, just like if someone fraudulently enters the population register that is not a paperwork error. That is an attack on the identity of the republic.

If visas are manipulated, if ... [Inaudible.] ... abused, if asylum systems are exploited, then the state must act without fear or favour.

We need to see stronger vetting, stronger internal investigations, faster disciplinary action, and proper cooperation between Home Affairs, the Border Management Authority, SA Revenue Service, Sars, and the justice system.

Hon members, this budget vote must also unlock economic opportunity. A modern Home Affairs can help tourism it can

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support investment and bring in critical skills where they are truly needed. Let this be the year where Home Affairs stops being a symbol of frustration and becomes a symbol of a capable state. Let this be the year where South Africans feel that their identity their citizenship and their country are protected.

In closing, the PA supports this budget vote, but we support it with a clear message: put South Africans first. Salute!

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Hon House Chairperson, the Minister of Home Affairs, Dr Leon Schreiber, the Chairperson of the Select Committee on Security and Justice, hon members of the National Council of Provinces, the management team of Home Affairs led by Deputy Directors-General, DDG, Thulani Mavuso, today on acting capacity, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, it gives me a great pleasure and honour to join this policy debate for Budget Vote 5, Home Affairs.

House Chairperson, these debates are very crucial for us as a department to share what the resources allocated to the Department of Home Affairs can do in improving the lives of the people. It is through such debates where we get a platform

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to share what we can do with the resources allocated to us. The budget we are tabling here today should not be seen just as a collection of a series of numbers. We are presenting a budget that is indicative of the government's priorities in the Seventh Administration. This budget reflects our commitment to deliver quality services to our citizens. This budget enables us to effectively manage our immigration, supporting economic development and growth whilst building a safe and secure country. This budget is shaped by clearly visible gains that our citizens continue to reap from the Department of Home Affairs.

The progress we are making demonstrates that meaningful transformation is only possible through a deliberate shift in organisational culture. Through this conscious renewal, we are continuing our journey of building a Home Affairs that is modern, that is secure, that is efficient and truly citizen centred. Early birth registration is one of the most important issues. It remains one of the foundational pillars of our national identity system. By recording details of a child from the earliest possible stage, we protect the integrity and the credibility of the National Population Register while simultaneously opening doors of opportunity for every South African child.

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A legal identity secured at birth is not merely an administrative process. It is the first recognition of citizenship, dignity and belonging. With an identity number assigned from birth, parents and guardians can access essential services without unnecessary delays, including health care support, social assistance and other critical state interventions. In this way, early birth registration strengthens both the developmental capacity of the state and the social protection framework upon which millions of families depend, and it opens doors to a better life for children as they are born.

Beyond service delivery, early birth registration is also our most powerful defence against identity theft. I am proud to report that the civil services branch of Home Affairs exceeded its target of 677 000 birth registration within 30 days by successfully registering 680 555 babies within 30 days. In the 2026-27 financial year, we intend to continue the automation of birth registration process at health facilities, building towards a full e-birth registration system. This will improve security of the process by minimising fraud and corruption and turnaround time for issuing this birth certificate. This will also end the unsustainable generation of paper records.

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The birth target for the 2026-27 financial year has been set at 644 000 births to be registered within 30 calendar days. This we must do whilst maintaining a balance that the system is never abused and that only the people who are qualifying for citizenship enter our population register. The budget we are tabling is enabling us to build on our achievements and translate our vision into action. At the core of our success is culture change, which drives development of a professional, ethical, service-orientated and accountable institution. We recognise that sustainable reform is not driven by systems alone, but also by people, values as well as leadership.

At the heart of our democracy lies a clear constitutional imperative of protection of human dignity and identity. Every transaction, from opening a bank account to voting, begins on who you are or who we are. Without identity, we become invisible, we become nonexistent, unable to transact, enter any contract or any meaningful economic activity. We therefore have a sacred duty to build a department that takes its place as the nerve centre of government, a professional custodian of the nation's record and its identity.

Home Affairs is currently driving what is arguably the largest identification and digitisation of paper records in Africa.

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The digitisation of civic records is a remarkable achievement that stands amongst the most significant administrative reforms undertaken in the democratic area. Since inception of the project, more than 60 million civic records have been digitised, with a further 25 million records targeted for digitisation during the 2026-27 financial year. This is not merely the transfer of paper to digital platforms. It is the construction of a modern, efficient and accessible state capable of responding to the needs of its people with speed, dignity and integrity.

House Chairperson, in the 2025-26 financial year, we issued a record-breaking number of smart ID cards of just above four million, far exceeding the target of 2 750 000. This is the highest single year output the department has ever seen in its history of existence. The first-time issues over the past financial years have grown from 622 000 in the 2021 financial year to 1 032 327 in the 2025-26 financial year, far surpassing our target, making it clear that it is now becoming easier for citizens and first-time issues to access smart ID cards and access identity. It is through collaborative partnership, community outreach and the expansion of mobile offices that we continue to take services directly to the

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people, particularly those in rural, remote and historically underserved communities.

We prioritise visiting schools to ensure that learners obtain enabling documents without disrupting their education. Crucially, this deployment includes special schools so that every citizen is served with dignity. This initiative is bolstered by the memorandum of understanding that we have with our sister department, Department of Basic Education, ensuring that local authorities help us reach those who need us the most in various schools. Our mobile offices exceeded the annual target, visiting 6 304 sites. This included 5 010 visits to public schools, 516 to special schools, providing vital services to young citizens. The real impact is found in people we serve.

House Chairperson, let me again remind the House of the words of Jack Lew, that budgets are an expression of our values and aspirations. We had to display our values by making resources available for those who were ravaged by disasters which threw their lives in turmoil. Mobile units have served as a vital lifeline during times of crisis, assisting survivors of floods, fires and other disasters to reclaim their legal

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identities and restore access to essential services when needed.

When fire engulfed Dunoon in Cape Town earlier this year, destroying hundreds of structures, the department responded with agency and compassion through a targeted cost waiver intervention. Affected residents were able to replace their identity document. This approach reflects our broader commitment to ensuring that no South Africa is abandoned in moments of vulnerability and distress. In the same spirit, we stand ready to deploy our mobile units to disaster-affected communities in Gqeberha and the Northern Cape as soon as it is humanly possible for us to do so. As we look forward to the 2026 local government elections, I encourage all citizens to collect their identity documents. Your identity is your voice, it is your heritage and it is your freedom.

The Department of Home Affairs will continue to play its enabling role in supporting electoral readiness, working closely with all relevant institutions and stakeholders to ensure that the necessary civic infrastructure is in place for the successful administration of the 2026 local government elections. Through strengthened collaboration, efficient service delivery and expanded access to identity services, we

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remain committed to supporting free, fair and credible elections that reflect the will of the people. To enable South Africans to travel wide for business, study, work and leisure, we strive to issue 90% of passports in the country within 13 working days for adults and 18 days for minors. In this way, citizens receive transparent, predictable services with clear timelines for passport application.

In the year under review, Home Affairs surpassed its target by issuing 98,72% of passports for minors within the 18 days and 96,32% of adult passports within 13 days. In addition, in this period, the department extended passport services to South Africans in certain countries abroad. The road to transformation is ultimately about people, both citizens we serve and the public servants who deliver our mandate. To this end, we are implementing a culture change strategy anchored in ethical conduct, innovation and citizen-centred services. Key milestones from the past financial year include digital upskilling of more than 2 000 officials as well as completing mandatory digital literacy training, thus exceeding our target of 2 500. Women represented over 65% of the training beneficiaries. This year, we will deepen our culture change initiative and accelerate transformation.

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House Chairperson, allow me to pass my greatest gratitude to my colleagues, the hon Minister for his continued leadership and support and teamwork in advancing the work of the department. Through our collective commitment and resilience, I believe that the vision of a modern, secure Department of Home Affairs, Home Affairs from home, that is strategically delivers its full constitutional mandate is within reach.

I wish to extend my sincere gratitude also to the director-general, DG, and the entire management team of Home Affairs for continuing to work tirelessly. The dedication and commitment of your management team is what drives our success and allows us to endure and overcome the challenges we often face.

I would like to further thank the Chairperson and members of the select committee for the work they continue to do with us for the guidance on key strategic issues. Through your valuable guidance, together we can build a future-fit Home Affairs Department. Working together, we can indeed do more. Thank you very much, House Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Thank you, Deputy Minister. I know that it's sometimes lost on the virtual

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platform, but the applause in the Chamber was substantial. Hon delegates, the next speaker at the podium is the hon Mokae representing the Democratic Alliance for seven minutes.

Mr O J MOKAE: Hon House Chairperson, hon Minister, hon members and fellow South Africans, good day. I begin with the following quote by Rigoberta Menchú Tum, a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, when she said,

Without strong watchdog institutions, impunity becomes the very foundation upon which systems of corruption are built. And if impunity is not demolished, all efforts to bring an end to corruption are in vain.

In this, she emphasised the need to build strong institutions to deal head-on with corruption, as it robs South Africans of much-needed services. Fraud and corruption stand in contrast from us thriving and fully benefiting from government services and opportunities.

You see, hon House Chairperson and members, this department has, over the years, been infiltrated by corrupt officials who have run massive corruption schemes, effectively treating South Africa's immigration and civic systems as a marketplace.

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They have abused their positions to orchestrate syndicates with external actors to issue fraudulent visas, passports and permits that are processed without supporting documents, often approved swiftly via WhatsApp, compromising our country's national security. Their activities have seen them accepting bribes and financial gains were routinely laundered through their spouse's accounts. In some instances, officials earning less than R20 000 per month were receiving deposits in their accounts worth millions of rand.

We witnessed how some, through these dubious proceeds, even built mansions that are way above their pay grades in the department. Some use fabricated photographs on passports and swapped DNA samples, which poses severe national security risks. We have seen how officials are also stalling services to South Africans to extort money from them. The matter of the department's Chief Director of Legal Affairs is a clear case in point of how the department was destroyed from inside.

These, hon Chairperson, are not patriotic South Africans. They do not serve their country with pride. They are criminals who are consumed by greed, with intentions to milk the state to fill their pockets. They hamper the state from fully making a difference in the lives of ordinary South Africans who depend

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on the state for their livelihoods. They stand against the principles of Batho Pele. They are behind the bad headlines of this department.

We know how disgraced foreign religious figures such as Shepherd Bushiri and Timothy Omotoso allegedly colluded with them to unlawfully secure residence and work permits. Put simply, they do not deserve to be in the public service of our country. They must face the full might of the law. However, hon House Chairperson and members, we are pleased to see efforts led by Minister Schreiber, teaming with other law enforcement agencies, to clamp down on years of corruption in this department. A serious crackdown is taking place here.

We have witnessed strides in this regard through the reform agenda introduced in the seventh administration, focussing on digital transformation, economic inclusion, national security, restoring dignity in service delivery and, most importantly, the anti-corruption strategy which is dealing with years of neglect and poor management. This anti-corruption strategy has led to, and I think the hon Minister alluded to all these figures earlier on, 10 criminal convictions, 14 arrests and 65 dismissals from the department. Additionally, we have seen

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more than 100 000 lawful deportations by this department since the formation of the Government of National Unity, GNU.

The Border Management Authority, BMA, has prevented more than 945 illegal and undocumented entries into the country. These efforts, hon members, are not just figures. They represent a committed effort to address systematic failures and years of poor management in this department. Yes, we see a concerted approach to address corruption and turn the tide in what was named "horror affairs" before, and hon Phala is not here to listen to that.

Under Minister Schreiber, we truly have a Home Affairs that is moving from queues, paper systems and dysfunction towards a modern digital state department enabling economic participation, tourism, investments and secure service delivery. The fact is that what was once a horror department is now a machine that is getting oiled to be efficient and effective in service delivery. This is not an ideology or political lecture, but signs of a department that is transforming into a modern one.

South Africans can now access smart identity documents, IDs, within weeks, and even the Deputy Minister alluded to this.

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Home Affairs has expanded its services from 30 bank branches to 167 branches in less than two months. Applications now take as little as five minutes, no paperwork, no prior bookings, with biometric verification dramatically reducing fraud. All this speaks to the narrative of efficiency and effectiveness. This speaks to a department headed by visionary leadership, committed to improving the lives of all South Africans.

The work carried out in this government should spill over to other departments in this GNU. Just as Rigoberta Menchú Tum said, with strong institutions and a dedicated approach, we will deal head-on with fraud and corruption, and send a clear message that every rotten apple will be removed. I thank you.

Setswana:

Ke a leboga.

Afrikaans:

Baie dankie.

English:

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Hon delegates, I'm always pleased when a member of the other House visits us and sits in the gallery. So, in that regard, please join me in

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welcoming the hon Bollman to the gallery. Nice to see you here.

Hon delegates, the next speaker at the podium is the hon Van den Berg from the Freedom Front Plus.

Afrikaans:

Mnr H J VAN DEN BERG: Agb Voorsitter, ek gaan vandag in Afrikaans praat, so as u dalk net wil seker maak dat hulle die tolkapparate gereed het. Goed, hier gaan ons.

Minister, agb lede van die Nasionale Raad van Provinsies en al die ander burgers van ons land, alhoewel daar goeie vordering by hierdie Departement van Binnelandse Sake plaasvind, is daar tog nog baie werk. Van hul kantore, veral in landelike gebiede, sukkel steeds met lang toue, onderbemaning en onbetroubare digitale stelsels. Die publiek verloor werksdae net om basiese dokumente te kry.

Die Grensbestuursowerheid, GBO, is kritiek onderbeman en swak toegerus. Dit funksioneer tans met slegs ongeveer 25% van die nodige personeel, naamlik 2 500 beamptes, teenoor meer as 11 000 wat nodig is.

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Daarmee saam met byna die volle deel van die begroting wat aan salarisse gaan, is daar heeltemal te min geld vir voertuie, gevorderde kameratoerusting, hommeltuie en volhoubare patrollies. Ons sal dus geld van ander plekke af moet kry vir hierdie departement.

Maar wag, daar is baie geld by die kleinsakeontwikkeling vir jong entrepreneurs en landelike ontwikkeling met Nasira opleidingsfondse. Dalk moet daar beter saamgewerk word. Daar is hope besigheidsgeleenthede en opleiding wat aan grensbeveiliging en beheer gekoppel is.

Dink maar aan behuising, voedselvoorsiening ... [Onhoorbaar.] ... werk van hierdie inligtingstelsels, heiningkonstruksie en vele meer. As ons buite die spreekwoordelike silos dink, kan ons dalk net twee vlieë met een klap doodslaan.

Ons 4 200 km lange landsgrense en kuslyn bly baie poreus. Onwettige immigrante plaas enorme druk op provinsiale gesondheidsorg, behuising, skole, veiligheid. Dit is eenvoudig onaanvaarbaar.

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Die VF Plus het lank reeds gewaarsku dat alles van werksgeleenthede tot bek-en-klouseer negatief deur onvoldoende grensbeheer beïnvloed word.

Terwyl die Witskrif oor Burgerskap, Immigrasie en Vlughtelingbeskerming in die regte rigting beweeg, eis die VF Plus veel sterker optrede. Om Suid-Afrikaners eerste te stel moet die GBO dringend met toerusting verskaf word. Radikale digitalisering wat ook landelike gebiede bereik moet ingestel word.

Zero verdraagsaamheid, wetstoepassing teen korrupsie moet volgehou en verskerp word, met vinnige vonnisse en voortgesette leefstyloudits. Stroomlyn en ... [Onhoorbaar.] ... wettige immigrasie, terwyl die wat onwettig is beslissend en menswaardig gedeporteer word. Moet hulle ook nie teen duurste in ons vol tronke aanhou nie.

Daar is ook baie onwettige immigrante in hierdie land wie eenvoudig met onbehulpsume stelsels en korrupte prosesse moed verloor het, en nie meer 'n poging aanwend om wettig te wees nie – meestal goeie, hardwerkende mense. Ons wil ook versoek dat ons hulle help om dit reg te doen.

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Die VF Plus sal veg om waardigheid aan Suid-Afrikaanse burgers terug te gee en sekuriteit op ons grense te verseker. Ons sal ook nie huiwer om halwe maatreëls en kompromieë wat koalisiëpolitiek bo soewereiniteit plaas, te kritiseer nie.

Ons mense het te lank vir 'n Departement van Binnelandse Sake en 'n GBO wat werklik werk gewag, nie net vir sommige nie maar vir almal wat hier hoort. Laat hierdie begroting 'n beslissende waarskuwing na 'n bekwame, burgergesentreerde departement met veilige grense bring. Die VF Plus staan gereed om daarin te help. Baie dankie.

Setswana:

Ke a leboga.

Ms A MATSHOBENI: Hon House Chair, to the Minister, I am always concerned about vulnerable and rural communities on this digital transformation. If they have access. Even today ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Hon Matshobeni, I am sorry to interrupt you, but I think you do know by now that we require you to turn your camera on when you are addressing the House. If you can turn your camera on and continue, please.

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Ms A MATSHOBENI: I did, House Chair. Maybe it is technology things, but I did turn it off. I don't know why I am not appearing. Maybe there is something that ... Ey, I am struggling, House Chair. I don't know what is going on, but I did turn on my camera.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Please continue, hon Matshobeni, but try and sort your camera out while you are busy.

Ms A MATSHOBENI: Alright, House Chair, thank you very much.

I was saying to the Minister, I am always concerned about vulnerable communities and rural communities regarding this digital transformation if they have the access because even today, they don't have an office in Idutywa where I stay. They are always struggling.

We also cannot ignore the fact that many of our people do not have smartphones, especially those living in rural areas. How are we going to assist and support those who do not have smartphones according to this thing of digitalisation? Is there another way we can help and accommodate them? Minister, according to these numbers you've mentioned here, I so wish we

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can have a breakdown of rural communities who have access to this digital transformation.

Nonetheless, the EFF rejects the Budget Vote for the Department of Home Affairs. This department is responsible for managing the National Population Register, issuing civic documents and controlling international migration. Yet it is plagued with systematic dysfunction, and it's known only for its outdated infrastructure, corruption and massive backlog of applications, challenges which undermine service delivery across all provinces.

We reject this budget as rural and remote areas remain physically unreachable by permanent Home Affairs offices, forcing citizens to travel long distances leading to massive unmanaged daily queues at operational branches. In rural municipalities such as Mbashe municipality in the Eastern Cape, our people are forced to travel long distances to offices, only to be turned away because the system is offline, the month is fully booked, or they are told to come back another day.

The mobile truck, which was meant to assist rural communities, is often unavailable, and residents are repeatedly informed

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that the vehicle is broken or under repair. The people of Mbashe have raised this concern for a very long time, but little has changed.

In KuGompo in the Eastern Cape, residents also experience similar challenges as the Department of Home Affairs has moved their offices from Fleet Street which is in the CBD into Hemingways shopping mall. The move of Home Affairs offices into shopping malls might seem like a great idea on paper as it sounds modern, convenient and clean, but the reality on the ground is very different and it is causing serious frustration for ordinary residents.

Moving the Home Affairs offices to fencing malls make the offices incredibly hard to reach for the poorest members of our community. What about those buildings of Public Works that are not occupied like where I am in Mbashe? There are those Public Works houses that are not occupied, others are abolished because of vandalism by pharas [homeless people].

Instead of taking one quick trip to town, the residents of KuGompo, for example, are now forced to pay multiples of rands, expensive taxi rides just to get to a mall. So, Ta Mthura from Duncan Village now has to take a taxi from

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Ziphunzana to town and then another taxi from town to Hemingways Mall just to apply for an ID and then make the same trip back. Even your Amanda who drives her own car to the mall is inconvenienced by this move as she now has to pay the Hemingways Mall parking fee just to access your offices and be turned away due to system being offline.

The move to malls therefore effectively prices out the very people who need government services the most. There is also an absolutely chaos of the moving process itself, as we have seen situations where people travel all the way to usual local offices in town only to find it shut down with zero warning. They get redirected to a mall, arrive there and find out the new by units aren't even connected or working yet. It is a massive waste of time and money.

A change of off scenario does not fix a broken system. Moving into a mall does not do anything to solve the chronic system downtime we all know too well. It does not stop your system from going offline. It does not stop understaffing and it sadly hasn't stopped the corrupt operators who hassle people for spots in the queues outside.

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I stand here in the Council today to reject the budget of a department that is known only for its corrupt officials that are responsible for illegal migration, issuing fraudulent visas and illegally selling birth certificates and identity documents. This has collapsed the country's migration system and has fuelled xenophobic sentiments.

The Department of Home Affairs in South Africa is burdened by a legacy of underfunding, systematic corruption, and technological inadequate. This budget completely misses the mark of fixing the staffing crisis. In fact, things are actually shrinking. The total Home Affairs budget is dropping from R15 billion to R13 billion from 2026 to 2027, and it looks like funding will be going backward over the next few years because of this.

Home Affairs offices all over the country are left totally short staffed and the workers who are there are completely burned out. These challenges are not mere administrative inconveniences. They directly abstract citizens' constitutional rights and pose risks to national security. Addressing these multifaceted issues requires systematic structural reform through targeted digital transformation, the eradication of criminal syndicates, and strategic leadership.

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The department must reposition its self as a professional and secure entity capable of delivering dignity and efficient services to the public. If we want to fix Home Affairs, we need to focus on stable systems, fair access and stopping corruption, not just putting a shiny new coat of a paint on a deeply flawed system.

Rural communities deserve dignity, equal access to services and responsive government support. First-time voters deserve a seamless process to register. That is exactly why the EFF in the National Assembly has introduced a Private Member's Bill for automatic voter registration. We want everyone to get registered automatically the moment they turn 16 years. This will break down registration barriers and save the IEC millions of rands currently wasted on voter registration weekends that barely brings anyone in.

Today we reject this Budget Vote and call upon the Department of Home Affairs to urgently improve services across all provinces by increasing the number of officials and service points, repair and maintain your mobile service vehicle, bring services closer to rural communities, and ensure that people are treated with dignity and efficiency. Thank you very much, House Chairperson. We reject this budget.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Thank you, hon Matshobeni. Hon Matshobeni, there was considerable investment of both time and money in training for permanent delegates on the Zoom platform. I do urge you to make a visit to the IT offices to allow them to assist you to resolve your problem, because it is a requirement in terms of our Rules that you do turn your video on in future. So, if you don't come right with the colleagues at IT, my office is always open to you as well and perhaps I can assist.

Hon members, we return to the Chamber and the next speaker at the podium is the hon Peter from the UDM with five minutes to speak.

IsiXhosa:

Mnu. M M PETER: Sihlalo weNdlu ohloniphekileyo, mandibulise kumalungu ale Ndlu, kuMphathiswa ohloniphekileyo weSebe lezeMicimbi yaseKhaya nabemi bonke boMzantsi Afrika. Mphathiswa omhle, masingafihli amakhuba kulinywa. Phambili phaya, eli sebe lakho belifudula linemicelimngeni emininzi. Umzekelo, imiqodi yemingcelele yabantu beme emvuleni ngaphandle kwezakhiwo zeli sebe. Emva kokulinda baye baphinde bajikiswe sebecithe imini yonke kuloo mingcelele ngenxa yokungasebenzi kweekhompuyutha okanye ukunqongophala

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kwabasebenzi kwezo ofisi. Ukunqongophala kwamanzi kwizakhiwo zakho ezigcwele abantu abazokwenza izicelo ngezicelo, yenye yeengxaki eli sebe elinazo. Mphathiswa, yonke le micelimngeni ufika ikhona.

UMzantsi Afrika ucela ukuqonda ngamanyathelo athathwa yile Nkqubo yokulawulwa iMida (Border Management System) ukunqanda ukuquqa bebuyelela kwabantu abasuka kumazwe angaphandle bengenamaphepha. Kwintetha yakho, ukhankanye ukuba uneendlela ezithile (models) ozisebenzisayo. Ziphi ezi ndlela zakho zithile kuba xa ujongaphaya ezantsi ebantwini, ezilalini nakuzo zonke iindawo, azibonakali ezi ndlela. Nceda wenze kubonakale ngokuthi unciphise ukuthetha ugqame kuphuhliso.

SiyiUDM siya kuzixhasa ezo zicwangciso xa ziphucula uluntu kodwa intetha yakho yona asinakuze siyixhase. Nceda uchubele le Ndlu ngemicelimngeni ofike ikhona kweli sebe nezinto othe wazenza eziluphuhliso. Ingaba le micelimngeni isekhona nanamhlanje kusini na? Usayibona kusini na imingcelele yabantu bethu? Usababona kusini na abantu beme kwimigca emide phandle benethwa zimvula? Ingaba abantu bakuthi basajikiswa kwiiofisi ngelithi iikhompuyutha azisebenzi? Ingaba sisazibona zonke ezi ntshutshiso kwiintloko zabantu bakuthi?

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Mphathiswa, eli lizwe liya kuthi ukuze lilunge urhulumente andwendwele amasebe akhe onke engabhungisanga. Olu cwangciso lokuxela xa kufuneka sindwendwele la masebe aluncedisani norhulumente. Nathi, xa sifuna ivoti asilwenzi olu cwangciso lokuzixela lungaka. Ezi ndlela zithile zakho mazicace eluntwini. Yiba ngumahluko, ungasibaliseli iintsomi hleze nathi silahlekwe apho sikhoyo. Masiyibone isenzeka imisebenzi yakho, siyincome. Ngoko ke, iUDM iyaluxhasa olu hlahlomali. Enkosi Mphathiswa.

Mr N GOTSELL: Hon House Chair, hon Minister, hon members and fellow South Africans, good afternoon. The DA proudly supports this budget vote and the annual performance plans, APPs, because probably for the first time in our democratic history, the Department of Home Affairs looks like a department that actually knows where it is going. Frankly, after years of queues, manual manoeuvring and Gupta-Gigaba sponsored corruption scandals, South Africans deserve to see a department that works.

What became very clear during the APPs and budget engagement is that there is now a coherent vision driving home affairs, digitalisation, stronger immigration enforcement, modern border management and better service delivery. This was not

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just PowerPoint politics. These are results that are already tangible. The expansion of smart IDs and live capture service through bank partnerships is cutting queues, reducing paperwork and limiting opportunities for corruption.

In terms of immigration enforcement, the Department of Home Affairs conducted more operations in the last year than in the previous five-year term combined. The Constitutional Court victory limiting repeat asylum applications also sends a clear message. South Africa's immigration system cannot and will not continue to operate through loopholes and abuse. Chairperson, we also commend the Border Management Authority, BMA. Despite serious funding constraints, the BMA is beginning to stabilise and professionalise border management while taking visible action against corruption at our ports of entry.

The redevelopment of six border posts into one-stop facilities is a major step forward for both trade and border security. Hon members, biometrics is without a doubt the solution to many government department's problems. Government has over the past 10 to 15 years spent billions of rands on integrating the criminal justice system. The Departments of Justice and Constitutional Development, Correctional Services, the SA Police Service and Home Affairs can all benefit from this

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easy, secure technology but only the latter does. And guess which one of these departments is led by a DA Minister?

The Home Affairs Department has introduced an electronic travel authorisation system. It brings visa processing into the modern era through biometric-based automation that improves both efficiency but also security. Now, Chairperson hon Farmer raised the concern about rural access, about connectivity and cybersecurity, fair concerns. But as always, hon Farmer, where there is a DA policy, there is an answer.

Digitalisation does not mean abandoning rural communities, hon Matshobeni. Mobile units remain operational and now provide even more efficient service. Partnerships with municipalities are continued and home affairs is actively working with telecommunication providers and their government department to improve connectivity in remote areas. Another DA Ministry.

It is quite rich to hear lectures about ethics and corruption from a party whose criminally convicted CIC which stands for commander in cartier continues to benefit from the loot of VBS, another bank which robbed poor communities of their hard-earned money. The EFF seems ...

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): If you can take your seat, please, hon Gotsell. Yes, what is your point of order, hon Nonkonyana?

Adv Inkosi M NONKONYANA: Hon House Chairperson, on a point of order: I have been raising my hand in terms of Rule 69, read with Rule 66(3). Chair, the hon member, continues to refer to the Ministers of state as DA Ministers. This is not true and he knows it is not true. The Ministers are Ministers of state and not Ministers of DA and I therefore ask you to rule accordingly that he is out of order.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Thank you, hon Nonkonyana. I do think that that is a point of debate. I think Ministers all belong to political parties, so I am afraid I cannot sustain your point of order. But hon Gotsell, if you can continue with your presentation. Thank you.

Mr N GOTSELL: Hon Nonkonyana, hold on to your chair, there is more to come. The EFF seems incapable of comprehending that a Public-Private Partnerships can actually exist to improve services and not to enrich the connected few. One has to only then ask why Premier Lesufi appointed an EFF Finance MEC in Gauteng. But this is perhaps because their political worldview

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has been shaped by years of scandal and opportunism rather than good governance and serving the people, something hon Zulu would not understand if it hit him in the face.

Chairperson, let us also be honest about something else, we often hear ANC members say how successful DA Ministries are by simply building on the foundation that they laid in the previous administrations. Hon Nonkonyana, if this is the foundation, then it explains why the house needed urgent repairs. South Africa would have been far further ahead had the Department of Home Affairs not spent years under ANC Ministers associated with corruption, state capture and administrative collapse.

But it does not seem that the ANC has learned its lesson because while the President has fired two corrupt cronies, Malusi Gigaba still chairs one of this Parliament's most critical oversight committees. Hon Nonkonyana will after this, ascend to this podium and try to tell the public something else. But my fellow South Africans, only has to mention the era of Malusi Gigaba to understand why the Department of Home Affairs became synonymous with dysfunction and mistrust.

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Hon Chair, the reality is that this department is failing because of that legacy. It is succeeding because finally it is moving away from that legacy under the leadership of Minister Leon Schreiber. And that is why the DA supports this APP and the budget vote. There is still a long road ahead. Staffing shortages remain severe, digital infrastructure must continue expanding and oversight remains crucial. But under the leadership of the DA-led Minister Leon Schreiber, South Africans can rely on direction, honest government and people-focused service delivery. I thank you.

Adv Inkosi M NONKONYANA: House Chair, hon members, special and permanent delegates of this august House, hon Minister of Home Affairs and Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, distinguished guests, Acting Director-General and your team, as well as the staff of Parliament, fellow South Africans ...

Setswana:

... dumelang.

English:

For the first and foremost, I rise on behalf of the ANC that was formed by our forebears on 8 January, 1912, and mandated by our forebears to take over the National Democratic

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Revolution that was started by them as far back as the 16th century, when violent regime imposed its foreign system of governance and robbed South Africans their birthrights to govern themselves.

We salute those two gallant fighters and vow never to disappoint them until all the entailing masses enjoy the fruits of liberty that has been waged by the mighty ANC. The ANC has thus been given responsibility to govern this country since 1994. And ever since then, it did everything humanly possible under difficult circumstances to govern our beloved country by embarking on several programmes to dismantle structures of government and pursued the Reconstruction and Development Programme and other progressive policies to deliver a better life to all South Africans.

Since the advent of democracy, this Department of Home Affairs has been able led by many Ministers, working hand in glove with their Deputy Ministers in order to deliver services to all South Africans from birth to death in healing scars inflicted upon peace-loving South Africans for many centuries. The Government of National Unity, the GNU, is able led by the cadres of our movement and all Ministers of state, including those from DA, hon Billy, are implementing progressive

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policies and laws and acted by the ANC government. You like it or not? The insinuation by some DA members, that some Ministers of state are applying its policies is fundamentally wrong and must be rejected as blended propaganda to reverse the gains we have achieved since the advent of democracy. On the issue of delegated responsibility ...

Mr F J BADENHORST: Hon Chair?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Please take your seat, Inkosi Nonkonyana. Yes, hon Badenhorst, on what are you rising?

Mr F J BADENHORST: I rise on Rule 61B. And I know you are going to rule that it is the point of debate, but I would contend, hon Chair, that he is misleading the House because nothing good happened in Home Affairs under the ANC government. The first good thing that happened there was the DA Minister taking over. Thank you, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Indeed, that is the point of debate, hon Badenhorst. Please continue, hon Nonkonyana.

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Adv Inkosi M NONKONYANA: Hon Minister, we all know that this department has been assigned to you by His Excellency, the President of the Republic, who no doubt was aware that you are a member of another political party. He no doubt trusted you that you will provide the needed collective leadership of the department, which, by the way, is fundamental principle of the mighty ANC. By working hand-in-glove with your Deputy, Comrade Nzuza, it is pleasing to note in this debate that both you and hon Deputy Minister Nzuza are working together to do more for South Africans.

Hon Deputy Minister, we note has been serving this in this portfolio in the previous administration and no doubt have institutional memory of the department. Hence, we have received successes. We have noticed some tension caused by some members of the DA in their bid to mislead the public about the outcome of the hard work of your predecessors in office to claim easy victories that include the need to modernise the department to deliver world-class services to all the people of South Africa particularly the downtrodden masses living in rural and far-flung areas of our country.

We appreciate the vision of the department to deliver Home Affairs at home and trust that this is not a pie in the sky.

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Modernisation of Home Affairs is a policy priority of the ANC. We note that the vision is in line with the apex priorities of the ANC-led GNU which is anchored in the need to grow the economy thereby to create the needed job opportunities for jobless, reduce poverty address inequality and to build a caring and capable state for all South Africans.

Peace-loving South Africans are law-abiding citizens deserving better services especially in rural areas and traditional communities living in far-flung areas from urban and peri-urban centers. South Africa, they know they deserve better.

In my capacity as the whip of the select committee, we will put all the Annual Performance Plans for 2026-27 a financial year of the department in our radar screens to monitor the implementation of the plans you presented before us in line with the budget of this department for the benefit of all.

On the issue of the rollout of electronic transfer authorisation you referred to hon Minister across all ports of entry, the state of the nation address by His Excellency the President of the Republic earlier this year which is in line with of course January 8 Statement of the ANC directs that the department to extend Electronic Travel Authorisation, ETA,

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system to all countries that require visa enabling applications for tourists to be processed digitally within 24 hours. This system, hon members, replace traditional paper-based visas with a view for a faster digital and secure tourist entry. This system facilitates online applications with rapid approvals featuring dedicated AI driven biometric based automatic immigration lanes at major ports to enhance legitimate transfer traveling thereby promoting tourism in South Africa to push back frontiers of property bequeathed to us by the apartheid and other illegitimate regimes.

We believe therefore that ETA is in line with the President's state of nation address this year that in earlier direct the department to collaborate with other sister department to promote this country as one of the best tourist destinations. We also believe that ETA will enhance national security through improving screening and integration with an electronic movement control system. And happy that this system has been reported to us to have achieved 94% rate approver.

On the issue of accommodation challenges in the offices, there need to have decent office accommodation cannot be of our size, Chair. In our determination to modernise the Department

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of Home Affairs we must have decent offices equipped and such offices of course must have modern infrastructure.

We appreciate the target set up by the department to us in support of this Budget Vote which include 680 000 555 births to be registered within 30 calendar days and to maintain 85 to 90% targets of all branches in delivering services in South Africa. Last month as part of my constituency work I visited areas in Luthulini administrative area in Flagstaff with officials of the OR Tambo District Municipality and was taken aback by the absence of the officials from the Department of Home Affairs as they were invited to be part of that programme to enable eligible South Africans to obtain identity documents to register to vote and to vote ANC at the local government elections scheduled to take place on 4 November this year.

On 18 May as part of the consequence of my constituency responsibility again in addition of this Budget Vote I visited offices of the department in my own town Flagstaff which is a list from private sector and saw for myself the state of such offices which is one of many offices in rural towns all over South Africa that need improvements.

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I also visited of course Lusikisiki and saw for myself again a state-of-the-art office belonging to the department that was built by the ANC government few years ago. We sincerely hope that the money budgeted for infrastructure will be utilised to improve the accommodation conducive for the departmental officials and to render services to the people better faster and efficiently all over South Africa. In this regard we hope to note that with the presentation by the department it is determined to contribute public and social employment through appointment of unemployed youth young people for the digitisation of more than 340 million paper-based South African civic records and modernisation of civil services.

The department must collaborate with traditional authorities by having satellite offices closer to their traditional communities thereby put into practice the needed cooperation governance between spheres of government and the institutions of traditional leadership in South Africa.

We have also noticed high vacancies and want the department to fill all these vacancies soon so as to reduce high rate of unemployment in South Africa. Jobs must be given to deserving South Africans as the ANC is against jobs for pals in

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committed people and offering jobs in exchange for sexual favours.

We will monitor the expenditure of the department in this regard in our oversight role and hold this department to account on regular basis.

On the issue of asylum, I think the Minister has covered this aspect and I must therefore rush because my time is getting out to indicate then that the ANC is the leader of the societies including marginalised communities living in far-flung rural areas. I appreciate the decision of the department in continuing with the programme of rolling out mobile units to remote areas thereby bringing...

Mr F J BADENHORST: Point of order.

Adv Inkosi M NONKONYANA: ...closer to the people. However...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Please take your seat, hon Nonkonyana.

Adv Inkosi M NONKONYANA: ... rolling out. Thank you. I hope my two minutes will be ...

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Mr F J BADENHORST: We will protect your time.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Yes, hon Badenhorst.

Mr F J BADENHORST: Will the hon member take a question, please!

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Hon Nonkonyana, will you take a question?

Adv Inkosi M NONKONYANA: He knows. No, unless he gives me five minutes. You can give me your time, I will. If he gives me his time from DA... Okay, sit down then.

Mr F J BADENHORST Chair, are you giving your orders

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Hon Badenhorst, please take your seat. Hon Nonkonyana, I think that is inappropriate to ask him to sit down like that, but a simple no would have sufficed, but please, we will give you an extra six seconds. You have 20 seconds to go. Thank you.

Adv Inkosi M NONKONYANA: Okay. Chair, the ANC, in conclusion, for the reasons advanced by the cadres of this movement in

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this debate, as well as for the reasons set out above in the speech, has no hesitation in supporting this Budget Vote of this department. The EFF and MKP continue to oppose anything for no apparent reasons. This is not surprising, as it is only natural for toddlers not to understand governance, as they themselves must be looked after and guarded about.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Chairperson, thank you very much and indeed to all the speakers in the debate. I think it was a lively and an enriching discussion and as always, it is great to be with you all in the NCOP.

I would like to respond to several points raised during the debate. First, we can leave campaigning for the campaign trail. What is striking and important is that this debate centres on who deserves credit for reform. That is significant, because for a long time South Africans have been used to political debates about who should take the blame. What we are now beginning to see through this reform programme is a growing recognition that real progress is being made different speakers and parties are engaging on that basis, which I believe is healthy for our democracy.

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I also want to confirm that we are one home affairs team – the department, the Border Management Authority, BMA, Government Printing Works, the Deputy Minister and I – working together to implement what is, in my view, the most ambitious vision this department has seen.

Having said that, several specific matters deserve mention. Let me begin by thanking the MEC from Limpopo for her contribution. Limpopo is a critically important province for Home Affairs because it is one of our border provinces. I recently engaged with work taking place at Beitbridge and also at Lebowakgomo, where the new operation mentioned by the MEC enabled a strong law-enforcement intervention. I therefore appreciate the MEC's input today and confirm our commitment to working with Limpopo, and with all provinces represented in the NCOP, to advance the agenda we have outlined.

I also want to make it clear that the White Paper has been finalised. One speaker suggested that it still needs to be concluded, but it has already been approved by Cabinet. The next step is to translate it into legislation through a specific Bill that will give effect to the White Paper.

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This is an important achievement for the Government of National Unity, GNU, as we have reached agreement on the reforms needed for our citizenship, immigration and refugee protection systems.

On digital identity document, ID, I believe it was hon Mananiso who referred to a WhatsApp video circulating on the matter. I want to emphasise that no one will be forced to use digital ID. Anyone who wishes to continue using the physical card may do so, and those who can only use the physical card will not be disadvantaged. That remains the position set out in the draft regulations. No one will be compelled to use the digital system, and no one will be denied the physical document.

In practice, this creates a dual system similar to modern banking: many people use a digital version on their smartphones, including for payments, while still keeping a physical card as a backup. I believe that this dual approach offers the best outcome by maximising inclusion while introducing the convenience and efficiency of digital ID in a responsible way.

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Hon Zulu raised concerns about protecting national sovereignty, but there is deep irony in that argument. It was under the leadership of his party leader that members of the Gupta family were irregularly granted citizenship in some instances, and it was this Minister who revoked that citizenship. We must therefore be honest about who placed national sovereignty at risk. It was certainly not this government. It is the government led by the formerly MK Party leader.

I also want to address the issue of inclusion and rural communities. I must say that if members would just check the list of bank branches, the 167 that I mentioned, which are now live. You will find an extraordinary number of those are precisely in underserved communities. We have done that on purpose. There are 349 home affairs offices. Only 248 of them are modernised, where you can get a smart ID and a passport rather than the green ID book.

So, we know that there are 248 locations where you can get these documents. The focus of the 167 bank branches is on the other locations, the areas that traditionally have been the ones who have to travel great distances just to get a smart ID, for example. We have to understand that it is the current

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system that is exclusionary. It is the system we inherited, which is actually making it difficult for people in rural and underserved communities to reach home affairs offices. By expanding access into hundreds of new locations and bringing it on to smart devices, by definition we are broadening inclusion at a massive scale.

And I want to particularly zoom in on the member from the EFF, hon Matshobeni who I gathered from the inputs is a resident of Idutywa. One of the bank branches where you can get a smart ID now is in Idutywa. So, the member needs to actually just study up on the work we are doing and make use of the new service, which is right there on her doorstep. Chair, let me let me conclude by actually ... [Interjections.] ...

Ms A MATSHOBENI: No, no, I am not talking about the branches, I am talking about the access in our rural communities.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Order, hon Matshobeni order, you know that is inappropriate. Please continue, Minister.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: ... Allow me to list a small number of locations that for the very first time now have

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access to smart ID services. Idutywa, Mthata, Mamelodi, Soshanguve, Soweto, Tembisa, Manguzi, Giyane, Mafikeng, Burgersford and Lusikisiki. That is inclusion and access in action delivered by digital transformation. Thank you very much, Chair.

Ms A MATSHOBENI: We do not have the office in Idutywa.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr D R Ryder): Hon members, delegates, I would like to thank the Minister, the Deputy Minister, all permanent delegates, MECs as well as the Salga representatives as we as all special delegates who joined us today, for availing themselves for the sitting. Thank you.

Debate concluded.

The Council adjourned at 16:33.