

UNREVISED HANSARD

MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FRIDAY, 15 MAY 2026

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PROCEEDINGS OF MINI-PLENARY SESSION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Members of the mini-plenary session met at Good Hope Chamber at 10:00.

House Chairperson Mr C T Frolick took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayer or meditation.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Debate on Budget Vote No 5 - Home Affairs:

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Hon House Chairperson, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, hon Njabulo Nzuza, Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs, hon Mosa Chabane, hon members of the Portfolio Committee, Director-General of the Department of Home Affairs, Mr Tommy Makhode, Chief Executive Officer, CEO, of Government Printing Works, Ms Alinah Fosi,

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Commissioner of the Border Management Authority, BMA, Dr Michael Masiapato, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, a little less than two years ago, I introduced the Home Affairs @ Home Programme to reimagine, rebuild, and reform the Home Affairs ecosystem from top to bottom.

Across the Department of Home Affairs, the Border Management Authority, BMA, and Government Printing Works, I committed to the people of South Africa that we would pursue digital transformation to urgently resolve the systemic failures that long dogged this ecosystem.

Crucially, the reform agenda of this administration recognised from day one that the old service delivery model was not only broken but misguided in the digital age.

Under the old way of doing things, access to home affairs services was premised on forcing 63 million citizens to use just 349 physical locations to obtain critical services. From the start, we had the courage to do things differently, by recognising that this ecosystem did not only need piecemeal changes.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon McGluwa, you are disrupting proceedings. Please switch off your microphone.

Please proceed hon Minister. My apologies for that.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Instead, it required radical reform that would turn the traditional service delivery model on its head. Instead of forcing every single South African, as well as every legitimate visitor, to go and stand in one queue to access just a handful of physical offices or locations, our vision is to use the power of technology to bring our services closer and closer to the people - until we deliver those services right in their own homes. Home Affairs @ home.

The backbone of this reform journey is defined by three flagship projects.

Firstly, to massively expand inclusion and access to existing physical documents, such as Smart IDs and Passports, through a ground-breaking new digital partnership model with the banking sector.

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Secondly, to build the world's most sophisticated digital visa processing system to eliminate fraud and inefficiency through the Electronic Travel Authorisation, ETA.

And finally, to build a new digital identity system that enables remote verification and introduces digital versions of home affairs products that South Africans can securely access through their smartphones.

Hon members, just two years later, our vision and courage in embracing wholesale reform is paying off in the biggest way imaginable. Millions of South Africans are starting to feel the difference. Let us start with our digital partnership to expand access to existing physical documents.

By digitalising the long-standing partnership between home affairs and the banking sector, we have already expanded access to Smart ID replacement services by a staggering 47% just two months after the system went live. After just eight weeks, a total of 167 bank branches across the length and breadth of South Africa now offer Smart ID replacement services, with more branches going live every single week.

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Through this new model, the Smart ID application process has been completely digitalised. Gone are the days of spending a whole day in a queue. At these 167 bank branches, it now takes as little as five minutes to apply for an ID.

No prior bookings are required. No paperwork is needed. And there is no discretion, completely sealing the system off from manipulation and fraud by relying on the power of biometric technology. It is therefore little wonder that, within just eight weeks, a total of 118 434 Smart ID applications have already been processed through this new system for people who are switching from the old Green ID book to the Smart ID or replacing a lost ID card.

Hon members, this project holds the key to ensuring that each of the 16 million people who still use the vulnerable Green ID book are able to switch to the more secure Smart ID. The Green ID is the most defrauded document on the African continent and sits at the heart of financial fraud and identity theft in this country.

For the first time, home affairs now have a clear roadmap to ensure that every South African is able to switch to a Smart

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ID, which will enable us to finally end the recognition of the Green ID book as a valid form of identification.

Given the astonishing success of this project, we have raised our ambitions accordingly. I can announce today that, by the end of 2026, we aim to roll-out this service out to at least 750 bank branches, extending them into every single corner of South Africa. Over the next few weeks, we will also roll-out first time Smart ID and Passport applications through this new secure system. And we will introduce doorstep delivery of IDs and Passports for the first time in our country's history.

Thanks to our laser focus on digital transformation, South Africans will shortly have the option of having their enabling document securely couriered right to their own doorstep, without the need to travel anywhere just to do a collection. Home Affairs @ home.

Let us now turn to our second flagship, the ETA. Ahead of the G20 Leaders' Summit, we rolled out the ETA for tourists from China, India, Mexico and Indonesia.

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This new system uses biometric and machine learning technology to enable prospective travellers to apply for a tourist visa on their laptop or smartphone and receive the outcome within just 24 hours.

Hon members, the ETA transforms national security, by checking 40 different parameters to verify the authenticity of a passport and by using liveness detection to verify a selfie of the applicant against their passport photo.

The Border Management Authority, BMA, then uses facial recognition technology once the traveller arrives at the border post, to verify their identity and the status of their visa. Once again, this is all done without any scope for discretion or manipulation.

Even with the initial roll-out limited to just four countries, I can report to this House today that the ETA has already processed over 75 000 applications, resulting in more than 71 000 approvals and nearly 4 500 rejections. I would like us to think about that for a moment. That is almost 4 500 people who were prevented by the ETA from obtaining a visa, who may

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otherwise have entered our country illegitimately under the old manual and paper-based system.

With final technical work currently underway, we will shortly expand the ETA to tourists from many more countries. This will unlock entire new growth markets for our tourism sector, hon members, in ways that were unimaginable under a manual and paper-based system.

Over the remainder of this administration, we will roll-out the ETA to cover all visa categories, in order to entirely eliminate the space for inefficiency, fraud and corruption that will indeed make South Africa a world leader. I am not aware of any other country that has done what we aim to do. Once our roll-out of the ETA is complete, it will go down in history as the single most powerful reform ever implemented to secure our immigration system, while enabling legitimate travellers to conveniently obtain visas through their smart device. Home Affairs @ home.

For our third flagship reform, digital ID, we have recently published draft regulations in terms of the Identification Act.

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I invite all stakeholders to comment on these draft regulations before the closing date of 6 June, so that we can implement an appropriate and fit-for-purpose regulatory framework for this new system that will enable South Africans to securely access home affairs services in the palm of their hand. Home Affairs @ home.

Hon House Chairperson, these three flagship reforms are supported by a comprehensive culture change process.

This includes a digital training component that is equipping thousands of our officials for the future world of work. At the same time, our crackdown on corruption is gathering pace at an unprecedented rate.

Since the start of this administration, the Department of Home Affairs has secured 10 criminal convictions, 14 arrests, and 65 dismissals.

The BMA has secured an additional 26 arrests and 34 dismissals. We are now carrying out dismissals, arrests and convictions on a near-weekly basis.

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Crooked officials are no longer asking whether they will be caught. They are spending all their time wondering when it will be their turn. My answer to them is simple: Sooner than you think.

We will not rest until every single corrupt official is swept away by the tide of accountability that is washing over home affairs. Our reform drive is also supported by a series of legal and policy breakthroughs.

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. Hon House Chairperson we are indeed looking forward to bringing that legislation to the committee. 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 destination in the region.

While upholding our fundamental constitutional commitments and the rights of legitimate refugees, this legal reform will empower us to reject asylum seekers who deliberately travel

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

Let me make it clear today that South Africa is not the only safe country in our region, and through the implementation of this new policy, we will no longer tolerate the abuse of our country's migration system.

This reform was further bolstered just this past week, when we won a truly 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 has 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 enforcement operations and deportations even more effectively than we have already done.

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Over the past two financial years, hon House Chairperson, home affairs have carried out nearly 110 000 inland deportations - an increase of 46%.

This is in addition to the over 945 000 people that the BMA has prevented from entering into South Africa, either illegally or because they did not have the required documentation, since its establishment.

In fact, under Operation New Broom that I launched last year, home affairs conducted an incredible 10 700 enforcement inspections across the country during the past financial year - overperforming our annual target by 4 000 by more than double. I would invite this House to applaud the team in the back for the incredible work that they are doing.

In the last year alone - yes, the incredible statistics. In the last year alone, home affairs have done more immigration enforcement operations than during the entire five-year term of the previous administration.

Through our unwavering commitment to upholding South Africa's Constitution and our immigration laws, we are rapidly

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restoring the rule of law in a domain where it was eroded over decades.

Finally, our reform programme is supported by the single biggest investment ever in border infrastructure. Last month, the BMA announced the bidders that have been selected for a R12,5 billion public-private partnership to demolish and rebuild our country's six busiest land ports of entry. Taken together, our reform agenda is directly enhancing national security, improving the efficiency of service delivery, and repositioning home affairs as a powerful economic enabler to create jobs in our country.

Through this agenda, we are reforming what was once the most maligned department in all of government, into a world-leader in modern governance.

If ever there was an agenda that called on all of us to put our country over politics, it is this one. We are laying the foundation for a modern and future-fit new South African state that will stand our country in good stead for decades to come in the digital world we now inhabit.

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I therefore proudly table Budget Vote No 5 for Home Affairs before this House. The budget totals R13,8 billion for the 2026-27 financial year, R12,8 billion for the next year, and R13,3 billion for 2028-29.

It includes funding not only for our reform programme across the entire ecosystem, but it is also this Budget Vote that will enable the Independent Electoral Commission to deliver the upcoming local government elections through an additional allocation of R1,1 billion.

The National Voter Registration Campaign will officially launch on 27 May under the message: "Get Up, Show Up, Vote." This is preceded by a targeted Voter Communication and Registration Campaign that is currently being rolled out across 212 municipalities until the end of this month by the commission.

These are municipalities that have been impacted by ward delimitation and voting district changes.

To enhance operational readiness, more than 6 100 field workers have been deployed across the five affected provinces

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to support registration activities and community engagement. We urge all the affected communities to be on the lookout for these field workers and to ensure that their registration is correctly captured.

Hon House Chairperson, my sincere appreciation goes to Deputy Minister Nzuza, Director-General, DG, Makhode, Commissioner Masiapato, and chief executive officer, CEO, Fosi, as well as their respective teams, for their continued dedication to delivering concrete reforms that make South Africa a better country for all its people.

I call on every hon member who wants to see a successful local government election, who wants to eradicate corruption and abuse, who wants to position this ecosystem as an economic enabler that creates jobs, and who wants home affairs to complete our digital revolution to deliver dignity for all, to support this Budget Vote. I thank you. [Applause.]



Mr M S CHABANE: House Chair, Minister, Deputy Minister, the ANC rise to support the 2026 and 2027 Budget Vote Report for the Department of Home Affairs and all its entities.

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The 53rd ANC National Conference resolved on the key reforms to enhance on the performance of the department and its entities but also initiated legislation. Our assessment does indicate progress since the 5th and the 6th Administrations. We see a portfolio that has fundamentally transitioned from a merely laying foundation to aggressively accelerating reforms.

The ANC has initiated the establishment of the Border Management Authority, BMA, conceptualisation of modernisation of civic records as announced by the President in 2023, review of the immigration landscape, redevelopment of the ports of entry, rollout of Home Affairs offices and malls, collaboration with banks for more services, including the introduction of service kiosks and non-modernised offices, which this year will be distributed across the country.

The capacitation of the counter-corruption unit, appointment of multidisciplinary team to fight against corruption within the department, which the portfolio of work has been demonstrated by the Special Investigating Unit, SIU, interim report, signals a significant foundation laid by the ANC. This area will need more resources for the implementation of its recommendation.

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The theme, Home Affairs @ Home on Digitisation, does not place a narrative that suggests Home Affairs and its entities, particularly the Government Printing Works and BMA, has been established or started to work in the Seventh Administration. It simply reaffirmed the 2023 National Development Plan aimed to achieve inclusive knowledge-based economy by fostering high-speed connectivity and driving public sector modernisation.

The ANC supports this budget, taking account of the progress made and work that still needs to be done, with limited allocated resources.

And this budget will respond to key priorities, which include upgrade of ICT infrastructure, train and recruit more staff, renovation of our age offices. It will further ascertain the job security and improve the working conditions of all the cohorts, workforce, and the modernisation hub located in Silverton.

Since the Sixth Administration, the department has shifted away from relying exclusively on fiscal and paper bound, moving towards secure and decentralised electronic channels.

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The ANC applauds the civic service affairs, which is Programme 1, with a historic milestone of issuing 4,3 million Smart IDs, significantly exceeding the target of 2,7 million. This presents a good work and high number of IDs issued in a single year. Notably, over 1 million of these were the first applicants expanding on access to ID documentation.

The department registered 680 000 births, surpassing the target of 677 000 within 30 days. The Annual Performance Plan, APP, further indicates good performance work of 96,3% of adults, and 98,7% for minors on issuing of passport within the time frame.

The committee has noted continuous concern in relation to undocumented or illegal nationals by South Africans. Migration across the continent is occasioned by the movement of people as a result of push factors, such as conflict, poor economy in their country of origin, and as a result, our country is experiencing influx of illegal nationals. And I hope the Minister will comment on his response.

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The ANC's position is that South Africa is not xenophobic. For decades, we have coexisted with people across the continent. However, those who enter our country must do so within the prescript of the law. We commend the number of deportations as recorded in the APP, though it comes at high cost.

The interception of three buses in free state carrying undocumented foreign nationals thus indicates that we need more funds to recruit immigration officers in collaboration with the cross-border transport agency.

The chair of Correctional Services also highlighted the influx in the correctional facilities. Having announced the final bidders for the redevelopment of the port of entry, reaffirmed the ANC's 53rd Resolution of relocating the refugee center to the site of One-Stop Border Post.

The Revised White Paper on Citizenship, immigration, and Refugee Protection, which will represent a complete overhaul of the migration system in South Africa, aiming to secure our borders while streamlining legitimate travel and trade. On this score, we called the Cabinet to fast-track the Bill so that Parliament creates a platform for all South Africans and

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stakeholders to have conversations on the path of migration landscape this country must take.

The BMA transits from its initial administration setup into full-scale operation deployment. The 2026-27 financial year marks a milestone in its operational performance. The BMA baseline transfer from the Department of Home Affairs is R2,5 billion in 2026-27 and further additional allocation previously acquired from the National Treasury, which will allow the BMA to recruit more personnel and fundamental shift in their budget structure.

During the 2025-26 financial year, the BMA demonstrated measurable operation progress despite fiscal and infrastructure constraints. This achievement provided a compelling basis for Parliament to support the increased budget allocation for 2026-27 financial year to strengthen border security and prevention of illegal crossing, successful facilitation of legitimate movement of people and goods, improve immigration management, and build capable and professional border management institutions aligned with South Africa's primary development objectives.

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The Independent Electoral Commission, IEC, primary forecast for the 2026-27 financial year is a preparation for 2026 local government elections. The IEC has set a target to reach 28 million registered voters and to achieve this is currently running an online registration and will host two major voting registration weekend in June and in August. On this score, the committee recommended that the IEC must address the technical malfunctioning and limitation on online voter quota, further provide clear risk mitigation strategy to ensure planned major ICT upgrades and testing of scanning gadgets so that it does not compromise the 2026 local government elections. The commission has scaled up its outreach programme, which they have already began in civic education events involving all stakeholders throughout the country. This work will require all political parties serving in this arm of the state and those parties who are not in the legislative arm to complement the work of the IEC in mobilising all South Africans to register online and in June and August open registration. The IEC remains one of the best institutions which has maintained good governance and audit outcomes for the period over the years.

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The Government Printing Works is an institution established in June 2009 as a result of the ANC resolution in pursuit of legislation specialising in security printing for national documents and this House has a responsibility to uphold its constitutional mandate by oversight work over this institution. The Government Printing Works operates fully as a self-funded government entity receiving a zero-baseline transfer from the fiscus.

The positive outcome on both the governance and financial progress is as a result of focus oversight by the portfolio committee over the entity as reported in our last Budget Vote debate.

This House will recall the loss of data, poor financial and governance system highlighted by the Auditor-General which contributed to its consistent negative outcome over a period of time. Today, we can report the Government Printing Works is gradually evolving notwithstanding governance and culture challenges identified by the portfolio committee and the executive.

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In this financial year, it projected total sales of R1,8 billion and target of 10% net profit over the Medium-term Expenditure Framework, MTEF. The interventions of the National Treasury to grant the Government Printing Works to retain its historical surplus fund will yield the result for the entity to invest in its digital infrastructure.

The APP highlights include maintaining a strict 99,9% conformity rate for producing highly secure Smart ID cards, passports and processing up to 16 million applications over the MTEF. However, with the gains we have recorded on our oversight work a concern remains on ICT challenges that necessitated the Minister to appoint Dr. Lubisi to assess this environment to ensure a total business continuity, culture and safeguard the national identity.

The 2026-27 Budget Vote reflects a portfolio that is embracing technology innovation, enforcing national security, safeguards our democratic process while severe budget constraints persist. Reprioritise spending strategy of the Department of Home Affairs, Border Management Authority, IEC and the Government Printing Works ensure that we continue to build a capable, ethical and developmental state.

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Xitsonga:

Ndza khensa.

Mr J S NGUBANE: Hon House Chairperson, hon members, today I stand before you to discuss the Budget Vote for 2026-27. While the report presents ambitious targets and strategic shifts, it is riddled with structural flaws, fiscal constraints, and unresolved systemic challenges that threatens the effectiveness of Home Affairs.

The Department of Home Affairs budget has been reduced from R15,156 billion in 2025-26 to R13,766 in 2026-27, with an average annual decline of -4,3% over Medium-Term Framework, MTF. This contraction undermines the department's digital transformation agenda, including the rollout of Electronic Travel Authorisation, ETA, e-passport, and automated birth registration.

Transversal information technology, IT, management, critical for digitization, plummets from R1,966 billion to R1,089 billion, a decline of -15,3% average annual growth rate.

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The report itself warned that these cuts pose a significant risk to the digitalising drive that the Minister spoke about here. The birth registration backlog persists with the report urging the department to apply the same rigorous effort as with smart Identity Documents, ID, cards, late registrations continue to undermine the integrity of civic records.

The report exposes idling self-service skills gathering dust in Silverton with no clear accountability and no clear rollout plan. This is a waste of resources and a failure in the project management. And we went there, visited the Silverton. We saw the kiosks that are sitting there with a mentality of that when a new Minister comes in, they don't take another project forward. It's a waste of about R28 billion.

Deputy Minister Njabulo was one who was praising that - Artificial Intelligence, AI, we're going to put kiosk everywhere in the country where people are, where it's going to reduce queues and it's going to reduce the time where people apply for their smart ID. But today we have kiosk idling there. No one is accountable for it, wasted resources.

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Which brings me as well to this big billion Rand project in the ports. Watch the space again, House Chairperson and members. It's another waste that is going to come again, because we have tendency in this department of going ambitious, with the project, going overboard and things no one gets account for it of who has failed on the project, like this one.

We are told that the integration is not working, the integration... but you ask yourself on the specification of this project in the beginning, how was it started if there was no one who will take accountability of its failures?

And then on the Border Management Authority, BMA, the BMA's reliance on an ad hoc grants such as R50 million from Criminal Assets Recovery Account, Cara, against R34 billion needs for an advanced tool is unsustainable. And there's a skewed BMA's key performance indicator, KPI, where they go on overboard and say they've met 100% target on deportation, whereas they are not meeting any other target on people. People are getting in in our borders as they please.

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Minister, you need to zoom in into BMA's key performance area, KPA. They are misleading the country. They are not correct. You cannot measure yourself on the gate that in my door, there were two people that come in. But in the whole of the country where there's borderless, there's 100 people come in, but you are saying I'm succeeding in protecting the country. There's that challenge.

And then, Minister, your biasness, on BMA's capacitation is glaring. You went all over in Cape Town and signed a memorandum of understanding, MOU, with the Premier of the Western Cape and the Cape Town and doubled the capacitation of BMA. And we saw you guys going all over the street and cleaning up people on deportation. In South Africa, there is no country called Western Cape. There is a country called Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, KZN, all other provinces. You must go sign the same MOUs with Gauteng as well. Go sign the same MOUs with KZN as well. Because you see the march by Phakelumthakathi, nabo Ngizwe Jacinta. It's because these people are not mad, Minister. They are trying to be your BMA.

Where, Minister, there is lawlessness, where there is a lack of law, lawlessness takes over. What you see now on Ngizwe'

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house that has been burned there, it's because there is no law for deportation there is no law for blocking people coming in. Now, these people on March and March, Jacinta and Phakelumthakathi are trying to be your BMA, they're going all over the street, trying to take people out because BMA has failed these people. That's the problem that we are having.

And your biasness ... if I can tell you, the capacitation you did was excellent in the airport of the Cape Town International Airport. You've doubled the BMA staff there. In Cape Town, you've doubled the staff. But in other provinces, the staff is less. you even haven't signed MOU; you haven't even have that biasness. Minister, there is no country called Western Cape, there is a country called South Africa. Apply your BMA rules across the country.

And then on the Independent Electoral Commission, IEC, our concern, Minister, is that the IEC faces R1,6 billion shortfalls for the 2026 Local Government Elections, risking procurement timelines and election readiness. The commission is forced to request National Treasury approval of rollover surplus funds, a desperate measure for survival. The technical malfunctions in the online voter registration portal persist,

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limiting accessibility and security. The report edges urgent fixes, but these issues remain unresolved.

The IEC requested R1,1 billion due to budget constraints, with the risk that funds for crucial upgrades may only become available too late affecting critical procurement timeline for the 2026 Local Government Elections.

The risk about the planned major technology upgrade, including migration to Windows Server 2022 and Software-Defined Wide Area Network, SD-WAN, implementation is highly highlighted in the IEC, Minister. There is a high risk that you need to visit the IEC and tell them to stop being so clever in Information and Communications Technology, ICT systems at a very late stage where we are only remaining with around about four or six months to the local government election. The risk there is that again, if you do your upgrade and your testing, you're going to have the same thing that we had in Gallagher Estate, of system glitches and failures. These people are upgrading at this late time of the elections, and they are doing testing as well of their scanners at the latest stage.

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So, on the Government Printing Works - it's worst Minister. There you don't have capacity in leadership. That's a first challenge, Government Printing Works faces repeated tender cancellations of procurement left, right and center, poor working conditions of staff and you are losing staff, left, you are losing contracts, left, right and centre. As MKP, we do not support this budget vote, and I wish we would even call division ... [Inaudible.] ... the majority in MKP. Thank you very much, House Chairperson. [Time expired.]

Ms N J BOLLMAN: House Chairperson, Minister, Deputy Minister, the 2026-27 Budget Vote for the Department of Home Affairs comes before this House at a crucial moment for South Africa. This is not simply a budget about administration. It is a budget about whether a South African state can modernise itself fast enough to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world.

For far too long, South Africans associated Home Affairs with frustration rather than service - long queues, delayed documents, broken systems, missing files, and corruption syndicates thriving within weak administrative processes. For

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many South Africans, Home Affairs became symbolic of a state that had stopped working effectively for its people.

But today, under the leadership of DA Minister, Leon Schreiber, we are beginning to see a department repositioning itself as a modern, technology-driven institution capable of improving service delivery, supporting economic growth, and restoring confidence in the state.

What makes this budget particularly significant is that these reforms are taking place under fiscal pressure. The department's budget decreases from approximately R15,1 billion in the previous financial year to approximately R13,7 billion in 2026-27. Yet the true story of this budget is what Minister Schreiber has achieved, despite having less.

Leaner budgets force sharper choices. They expose waste and compel innovation. And we are already beginning to see measurable outcomes. During 2025, the department issued more than 4 million smart ID cards, the highest annual total ever recorded in South Africa. Importantly, this budget also supports the expansion of Smart ID eligibility to naturalised citizens and permanent residents for the first time, while

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continuing the long overdue phase out of the green bar-coded ID book.

The portfolio committee reports outlines a strategic vision for what is described as the new Home Affairs, a department transitioning away from outdated paper-based administration towards a digitally enabled institution. This includes electronic travel authorisation systems, e-passports, digitised civic records, online smart ID applications, and automated birth registration systems. But this is not simply about digitising forms. It is about redesigning the relationship between citizens and the state.

South Africans should not have to spend entire days standing in queues for services that can be delivered securely and efficiently through digital systems. A capable state respects the dignity and the time of its citizens. This is why the Home Affairs at Home Programme matters. It lays the foundations for South Africa's first digital ID system and future remote verification systems that can ultimately reduce dependence on physical office visits.

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Despite reductions in aspects of the department's IT baseline, approximately R492 million remains ring fenced for the mass digitisation project. This allocation is critically important because digitisation is no longer a secondary administrative exercise. It is now central to economic competitiveness, anti-corruption efforts, and effective governance.

The committee report identifies multiple business processes vulnerable to fraud and corruption, including visa applications, overstay appeals, and aspects of passport and identity document administration. Digitisation strengthens traceability, improves audit capability, and reduces opportunities for manipulation. While technology alone cannot eliminate corruption, transparent digital systems make corruption significantly harder to conceal.

The most economically significant reforms funded through this budget is the rollout of the electronic travel authorisation system. South Africa cannot speak seriously about economic growth while maintaining immigration systems that frustrate investors, delay scarce skills and discourage tourism.

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Immigration systems are economic infrastructure. This is why the increase of over 45% immigration service funding is so significant. It reflects a deliberate effort to modernise visa processing, reduce historical backlogs, and improve South Africa's competitiveness as a tourism and investment destination.

The expansion of Home Affairs services through the banking sector is another practical example of reform translating into accessibility. The planned expansion towards hundreds of participating branches nationally reflects the department bringing services closest to citizens instead of forcing citizens to chase services.

I also wish to highlight the increasingly strategic role of the Government Printing Works. Historically viewed primarily as printing institution, Government Printing Works is now evolving into what the report describes as a digital trust centre. The allocation of R250 million towards ICT infrastructure and software modernisation reflects the growing importance of secure digital identity systems within modern governance.

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This budget demonstrates that what becomes possible when government begins prioritising reform, efficiency, and modernisation over inertia and dysfunction. It just demonstrates the department moving away from paper-based failure towards digital capability, and it demonstrates a Minister prepared to confront inefficiency instead of simply managing decline.

The DA supports this budget because it reflects the principles, we have consistently championed capable governance, accountability, innovation, economic growth, and a state that treats citizens with dignity. Under Minister Leon Schreiber, Home Affairs is beginning to lay the foundation for a modern department. Thank you. [Time expired.]

Mr T P MOGALE: House Chairperson, the EFF rises today to reject the illusion that digital transformation alone can solve the crisis inside the Department of Home Affairs. While workers remain overburdened, offices remain understaffed, and ordinary South Africans continue to queue for hours in unsafe and undignified conditions. The budget vote speaks grandly about a new-home affairs and an AI-enabled organisation. Yet, the lived reality of our people is collapsing systems,

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exhausted workers, broken infrastructure, and a department increasingly dependent on outsourcing rather than building internal state capacity.

You cannot digitise dysfunction. You cannot automate away understaffing. You cannot always speak of modernisation while workers operate in offices that fail basic occupational health and safety standards.

More than 70% of home affairs offices are overcrowded, poorly ventilated, understaffed, and unable to adequately serve the public. Workers in Lebowakgomo sit in offices with failing air conditioning systems and leaking roofs. In Groblersdal, members of the public wait in long queues under the scorching sun without seats. In Pietermaritzburg, the home affairs office did not have running water for more than two years.

We invite the Minister next week to visit two home affairs offices with us, one in Sibasa in Limpopo and the other in Aliwal North in the Eastern Cape and then come back to this House and tell South Africans whether there is truly any new Home Affairs for ordinary people. Because from where we stand, this so-called new Home Affairs appears to be targeting only

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affluent areas and areas with DA voters. While rural communities and poor, black, working-class communities continue to suffer collapsing infrastructure, long queues, broken systems, and chronic understaffing.

A few weeks ago, the portfolio committee conducted oversight visits to various digitisation hubs in Tshwane. Committee members were shocked to hear the harrowing stories about the treatment of young workers by the department. Workers raised concerns about job security, poor stipends, and ill treatment by departmental staff and service providers.

We call for the establishment of a permanent digitisation business unit within the department because the department has already procured machines, established hubs, and trained workers to do this job. This business unit can generate income for the department by digitising government records for other departments that still rely on paper-based systems.

The IEC has made the voter registration process unnecessarily difficult for first-time voters. Voter registration application is constantly malfunctioning and can only register a new voter who provides a cellphone number. Yet, in many

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parts of the country, there are countless people who do not have cellphone numbers. This means the IEC cannot register them as new voters.

House Chairperson, this is why the EFF has submitted a Private Member's Bill on automatic voter registration to ensure that all young people who turn 16 years are automatically registered to vote. This will remove unnecessary barriers to entry and save the IEC millions spent on fruitless voter registration weekends that only attract few new voters. Given the serious role of the IEC in our democracy, we have called for all commissioners and IE staff to undergo lifestyle audits and vetting to ensure that the people who facilitate our elections are free from capture and manipulation.

As we approach the 2026 Local Government Election, we want to caution the IEC about the disturbing trend we have observed in our elections, where votes counted and recorded at voting stations mysteriously change afterwards. As we witnessed in Polokwane Ward 13 during the 2024 National and Provincial Elections, such actions make us lose confidence in the ability of the IEC to deliver free and fair elections.

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We also call upon the IEC to stop the decision of moving the voting station away from the University of Limpopo, whose interest is the IEC serving, when they deny over 1 000 registered voters at the University of Limpopo a voting station within the campus. We call for the IEC to withdraw that decision. I thank you.

Ms B E MACHI: Hon Chairperson, a well-run Home Affairs Department is a key pillar of our national security. Without it, South Africa cannot maintain the integrity of its borders. The IFP acknowledges the Department's commitment to protecting our country through its focus on increased border security. The IFP maintains that effective administration is a vital part of a working immigration system. We have consistently called for more resources to be channelled into immigration offices.

In light of this, we welcome the budget increase for the Department's Immigration Services sub-programme, which has risen by R88,4 million. This represents a significant 45% increase from the last fiscal year. This indicates the department's commitment to enhancing administrative processes,

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which is in line with the IFP's goal of taking practical steps to streamline immigration processes.

Similarly, we welcome the R10,9 million increase of the asylum seekers subprogramme budget. These additional resources will help enforce stricter control of asylum applications, which is necessary to ensure that people enter the country in a legal manner. These boundaries are essential to preserve the dignity of potential asylum seekers, as well as the safety of South African citizens.

The IFP maintains that this must be a top national priority, and that working administrative systems play a key part in this. We also welcome the significant portion of resources allocated to the Border Management Authority, which plays a vital role in maintaining national security. Its increased budget will contribute to practical measures that regulate the movement of illegal immigrants in and out of our country.

The IFP has consistently called for our government to be more hands-on in patrolling South African borders. We have long advocated for the implementation of drones' technology, the deployment of the Defence Force, and the construction of

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proper fences. For this reason, we appreciate that the bulk of the Border Management Authority's budget has been localised to frontline border operations.

The Department's decision is aligned with the IFP's commitment to protecting South Africa's border through practical and effective physical interventions. However, we note with concern the lack of attention to the state of South Africa's detention centre, which makes use of taxpayers' funds to house and feed unlawful immigrants. The IFP stands firm that all immigrants must be treated with respect and dignity, but that must not come at the expense of citizens.

We urge the department to consider the effect that large holding facilities like Lindela Repatriation Centre has its own operating budget. We also note the projected specificity of the Electoral Commission, which is expected to reach R1,65 billion. We understand that this structural deficit is the result of the 2026 being an electoral year but urge the department to consider the economic consequences of this shortfall.

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The IFP maintains that taxpayers are entitled to efficient and accountable governance, regardless of election scheduling. The IFP supports the budget and stands firm in our belief that effective border interventions are key to national security. I thank you, Chairperson.

Mr A !Q SAULS: Greetings in the wonderful name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. [An unofficial language spoken.]

Deuteronomy 28:43 says, the foreigner who resides among you will rise above you, higher and higher, but you will sink lower and lower.

We welcome the "Home Affairs @ home" vision, transitioning this department into a digital first AI-enabled organisation as a brilliant pioneering move. We congratulate the hon Minister and hon Deputy Minister. Therefore, we support this budget. Hon Minister, please ensure that this prophecy in Deuteronomy does not come true for South Africans, where it says that South Africans, in our context, will go lower and lower, whilst foreigners go higher and higher.

I get worried when I see the Transversal Information Technology, IT, Management subprogramme budget is plummeting

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by 15,3%. We cannot lead a digital revolution while cutting our IT management budget from R1,9 billion to just R1 billion. I do note that the Minister of Finance also has a role to play here.

Hon Minister, you must ensure that the world does not see our decisive actions against illegal immigration as xenophobic, but as patriotic, When we look at the loophole created by the point system that automatically gives 100 points to a foreigner with a critical skill and waives the requirement by the Employment Services Act to first go see whether they are qualified South Africans to do the jobs, it makes me ask if this prophecy is true. Are foreigners going higher and higher while South Africans go lower and lower? This loophole causes South Africans who have worked years to get their Doctor of Philosophy, PhDs, to be deans of faculties, but because of this system, it is given to foreigners.

We must address the economic enablement strategy in Programme 3: Immigration Affairs. The department has unbundled visa targets, but this has created a policy paradox. In sectors like hospitality and plumbing, illegal immigration provides cheap, unregulated labour. On the other hand, we see digital

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nomads and visitors entering through our airports on visitor visas and stay here illegally. They earn in foreign currency, causing property rates and rentals to go sky high. The South African plumber loses his job to cheap labour at the border, whilst the South African professional nurse, teacher or professor is priced out of a home by the wealthy immigrant at the airport. We are being displaced from both our jobs and our land.

When we enforce the law against black Africans who enter our country illegally, and equally against white Europeans who stay in our country illegally, then the world will know that this is not xenophobic, it is patriotic. We have allocated R2,3 billion to the Border Management Authority, BMA, to watch the fences of Limpopo. But where is the fire for the gates at Cape Town International Airport? Patriotism is not selective. If we only chase the man crossing the river but welcome the man overstaying at the resort, we are not being patriots.

We support this budget, but we want to remind the Minister, it must be ...

IsiZulu:

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Abahambe!

English:

... for both the black and the white illegal immigrants. We demand that the R2 billion in self-financing be used to protect the South African worker and homeowner. Let us build a Home Affairs that serves the South African first, protects the South African workers second, and welcomes the white and black foreigner only when they come here legally, and their presence does not result in the displacement of the peace-loving South Africans who host them. Otherwise, we repeat what Jan van Riebeck did when the Khwe and San forefathers welcomed them. I thank you.

Afrikaans:

Ons baiza nie!

Afrikaans:

Mnr P A VAN STADEN: Agb Huisvoorsitter, daar is diegene wat altyd kla maar dan moet hulle vir hulself afvra dat as ons 'n bietjie 32 jaar in die tydlyn teruggaan, waar kom die probleme eintlik vandaan? Die VF Plus verwelkom die Minister van Binnelandse Sake se aankondiging op 28 April vanjaar rakende

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die Grensbestuursowerheid se strategiese grens-herontwikkelingsprojek. Ek hoop my Afrikaanse benaming is korrek.

Hierdie projek geskied met die samewerking van sy eie departement, die Grensbestuursowerheid, Openbare Werke en Infrastruktuur, asook die SA Inkomstediens. Die VF Plus verwelkom die feit dat hierdie projek met 'n waarde van R12,5 miljard die grootste belegging ooit is wat deur die regering gemaak is om uiteindelik ons land se grensbestuurstelsel op te gradeer. Baie dankie daarvoor.

Dienslewering en behoorlike kommunikasie is sekerlik een van die mees belangrikste kenmerke van 'n werkende en werkbare departement of besigheid. Sonder behoorlike dienslewering en kommunikasie kan geen departement of besigheid behoorlik funksioneer nie, al gooi ons hoe baie geld op daardie betrokke entiteit.

Minister, ek noem nie die aan u met 'n vyandige hart nie. Dit is glad nie my bedoeling nie. Maar ek bring dit onder u aandag omrede daar nog te veel mense is wat met dienslewering en amptenare by verskeie van die kantore van Binnelandse Sake

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regdeur die land sukkel. Daar is ook regtig baie mense – en dit sluit my eie kantoor in – want verskriklik baie kiesers kom na my kantoor toe in Pretoria wat om hulp vra oor sekere sake by verskeie amptenare in u departement wat na vele e-posse doodeenvoudig net nie beantwoord word nie. Dit is 'n groot probleem en ek sal in die komende week aan u 'n volledige lys van hierdie sake oorhandig ... [Onhoorbaar.] ... na u toe en eskaleer asseblief.

Dit is op rekord by my waar mense die afgelope maand na een van die kantore gegaan het om oor hul paspoort rekords navraag te doen, en die betrokke amptenaar in daardie kantoor het summier die mense huistoe gestuur en op hulle gewys of eerder 'n hofbevel te bring voordat hulle gehelp sal word. Dit is regtig ... Ons kan die publiek nie so behandel nie. Dit maak regtig nie saak wie hulle is nie.

Ek verstaan die uitdagings waarmee u in hierdie departement te doen het maar ek wil ook van hierdie geleentheid gebruik maak om dit wat in hierdie afgelope twee jaar in hierdie departement verander en omgekeer het van 'n uiterse negatiewe na 'n uiterse positiewe u daarmee geluk te wens. Ek dink u verdien die gelukwensing. Ek gee altyd krediet waar dit

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verdien word maar ek gee ook kritiek waar dit nodig is. Van die lede wat my al baie jare ken weet dit is hoe ek handel.

Korrupsie, wanbestuur en wanadministrasie is 'n simptoom wat regdeur ons hele regeringstelsel vernietig moet word. Die 212 amptenare wat tans in hierdie departement aangekla word van ernstige wangedrag en die sake wat deur u na toepaslike owerhede vir verdere kriminele ondersoeke en moontlike vervolge verwys is word regtig verwelkom. Hierdie hoë getal amptenare wat onder verdenking is, is maar net weereens 'n bewys van hoe erg die probleem is waarmee ons departemente en ons as regering te doen het.

Dit is tyd om skoon te maak en op te ruim. Vir te lank moet die belastingbetaler die verloorder in die stryd teen misdaad wees en die tyd is nou om behoorlik op te tree. Agb Minister, ek wens u alle sterkte toe. Dankie, Huisvoorsitter.

English:

Ms L M NGOBENI: Good morning, hon House Chairperson and members.

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House Chair, Home Affairs is one of the most important institutions through which a sovereign state protects its citizens, secures its borders, safeguards its democracy and enables economic growth. Yet, for more than three decades, as has been illuminated by the Special Investigating Unit, SIU, report, South Africans have endured a Home Affairs department characterised by inefficiency, corruption, administrative backlogs, weak border management and poor co-ordination between state agencies.

These failures have eroded public confidence and weakened the state's ability to place the interests of South Africans first. We want to be clear about this. I think the hon member before me, a couple of speakers ago, spoke about the marches that have been happening. We want to reiterate that South Africans are neither Afrophobic, xenophobic, nor are we anti-immigrant. We are, however, justifiably frustrated by a broken system that has allowed porous borders, undocumented movements of people and illicit goods, fraudulent documentation and organised crime syndicates to place an enormous strain on health care, policing, housing, education and employment opportunities.

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This is why ActionSA strongly supports measures aimed at strengthening border security, preventing illegal entry, improving deportation processes and reducing deportation costs, so that we can restore the dignity of our identity and visa systems. We welcome the continued strengthening of the BMA, particularly the focus on technological modernisation, integrated law enforcement operations, biometric systems and improved detection of illegal movements across our borders.

We also further encourage the department to increase its target of 45 000 deportations of undocumented foreign nationals during this financial year, while continuing efforts to eliminate visa and permit backlogs that undermine investor confidence and economic growth. We must seriously consider blacklisting nations whose citizens are repeat offenders while placing high-risk movements under enhanced watch and brief.

We remain deeply concerned by persistent corruption vulnerabilities within Home Affairs' processes, including passport applications, overstay appeals, deportations and customary marriage registrations. Corruption within Home Affairs is not merely an administrative failure, it is a direct threat to national security and public trust. ActionSA,

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therefore, supports stronger vetting processes, lifestyle audits, consequence management and intensified anti-corruption interventions across the department and all its associated entities.

We also maintain that immigration policy must always prioritise the needs and interests of South African citizens first. This means protecting our jobs, ensuring lawful migration, preventing the abuse of public services and restoring the rule of law at our borders. A country that cannot manage its borders cannot effectively manage its economy, protect its citizens or uphold the integrity of its democratic institutions.

House Chair, ActionSA therefore supports this report because many of its recommendations move South Africa towards a more secure, modern, efficient and accountable Home Affairs system. However, our support will always be accompanied by a firm oversight to ensure that these commitments produce real outcomes for ordinary South Africans and that government never loses sight of its first responsibility - to serve, protect and prioritise the people and citizens of South Africa. I thank you, members and hon House Chair.

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Xitsonga:

Ttn S M GANA: Mutshamaxitulu wa Yindlu ...

English:

... let us start by wishing Orlando Pirates well for the game tomorrow, where we will be lifting the League of South Africa.

Hon members, fellow South Africans, why do we never ask white people whether they are South African? Today, I want to join my fellow members in highlighting the deep-rooted issues within this department and to propose solutions.

I want to speak about budget allocations to the Border Management Authority and the Independent Electoral Commission, IEC. I want to speak about blocked and fraudulent identity document, ID documents and the impact it will have on the integrity of the upcoming elections. But I cannot, because as much as I want to speak about policy, we must speak about humanity today.

This week, Velani Ludidi, a well-known and celebrated journalist who has dedicated his life to uncovering and reporting on issues that affect every day South African lives,

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was asked if he is a South African. I remember the same question being asked to others who are black and dark like me back in 2008.

Hon members, fellow South Africans, I ask again, why do we never ask white people whether they are South African? How have we reached the point where we celebrate the presence of travellers from Europe to South Africa, but villainise our fellow Africans, even fellow South Africans.

In his response, Velani correctly pointed out that our fellow dark-skinned people are not the enemy. Over 75% of tourists visiting our country with valid documents and spending money in South Africa are from Africa. Our tourism industry, a significant part of our economy, is built on fellow Africans.

We must always ask who benefits from us turning against one another while we could be partners in growth. This does not mean that we should ignore the frustrations of ordinary citizens. Our education, health and basic services infrastructure is barely keeping up, and South Africans rightfully feel abandoned by the state.

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Minister, today I addressed my fellow South Africans, but I want to end by addressing you directly. The current status quo, where South Africans are turning on one another, is a direct consequence of our dysfunctional immigration and border control system.

I have said this before and I say it again, our system must work, our laws must be implemented, and anyone who wants to come to South Africa must enter South Africa through legitimate gates with valid documents.

Xitsonga:

Ndza khensa swinene, Mutshamaxitulu wa Yindlu.

English:

Up the Bucs.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Hon House Chair, Minister of Home Affairs, Dr Leon Schreiber, members of the executive, chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs, hon e Mosa Chabane and members of the portfolio committee, Director General of Home Affairs, Mr Tommy Makhode and your management team, the chairperson of the IEC, the chief executive officer,

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CEO of Government Printing Works, commissioner of the Border Management Authority, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, receive my warm greetings this morning.

Hon Chairperson, the budget we are tabling today 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, secure, efficient and truly citizenship based.

This budget enables 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-oriented and accountable institution.

We recognise that sustainable reform is not just 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 as well as identity.

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Every transaction from opening a bank account to voting begins with who we are. Without identity, we become invisible, non-existent, unable to transact and enter into any contracts or any 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.

As part of our digital transformation journey, the digitisation of civic records is a remarkable achievement that stands amongst the most significant administrative reform undertaken in the democratic era.

Since the 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 platform. 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.

Whilst we celebrate the progress, we must equally acknowledge that persistent human resource and budgetary pressures

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confronting the project, as well as the department, more importantly. The demands placed on frontline workers continue to grow and they continue to exert pressure.

Hon Chairperson, in the 2025-26 financial year, we issued a record-breaking number of smart ID cards of just above 4 million, exceeding the target of 2 750 000. This is the highest single year output in our department's history.

The first time issues over the past financial years have grown from 622 000 in the 2020-2021 financial year to more than one million and thirty two thousand in the 2025-26 financial year, far surpassing our target, clearly displaying that we do not have an identity crisis as a country.

It is through collaborative partnership, community outreach and the expansion of mobile offices that we continue to take services to the people, particularly those in rural, remote and historically underserved communities.

Early birth registration remains one of the foundational pillars of our national identity system. By recording the details of a child from the earliest possible stage, we

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protect the integrity and credibility of the National Population Register, while simultaneously opening doors of opportunity for every South African child.

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 are able to access essential services without any unnecessary delays.

Beyond service delivery, early birth registration is our most powerful defense against identity theft. I'm proud to report that the Civic Services Branch exceeded its target of 677 000 by successfully registering six hundred and 680 555 five babies within 30 days of birth, closing the gap of late birth registration. In the 2026-27 financial year, we intend to automate birth processes at health facilities.

This will improve security of the processes by minimising fraud and corruption and turnaround time for issuing birth certificates. This will also end the unsustainable generation of paper records. The birth target for the 2026-27 financial year has been set at 644 000 births to be registered within 30

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calendar days. This will must do once maintaining the balance that the system is not abused.

We are aware of the consistent attempt to try and enter unqualifying foreign nationals to our population register using the early bird system. We continue to arrest and will make sure that we exert more arrest on those who attempt to do so.

We prioritise visits to schools to ensure learners obtain enabling documents without disrupting their education. Crucially, this deployment includes special schools so that every citizen is served with dignity.

Our mobile offices exceeded the annual target of 6,304 sites. This included 5,010 visits to public schools and 516 to special schools, providing vital services to young citizens, the inheritors of our future. The real impact is found in the people we serve.

For instance, take the 94-year-old Mr Mandla Mziwabantu, he received his first smart ID card when we visited Matatiela in August 2025. Oh, Ms. Nonduduzo Zagaza, a visually impaired

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citizen from Guamashi who experienced the dignity and convenience of a doorstep service this past October. Their stories remind us that the work that we do matters.

Beyond routine service delivery, our mobile units continue to serve as vital lifelines during times of crisis, assisting survivors of floods, fires, and other disasters to reclaim their legal identity.

This approach reflects our broader commitment to ensuring that no South African is abundant in moments of vulnerability and distress. In the same spirit, we stand ready to deploy our mobile units to other disaster-affected communities.

As we look towards the 2026 local government elections, I encourage all citizens to collect their identity documents. Your identity is your voice. It is your heritage. It is your freedom.

The Department of Home Affairs will continue to play its enabling role in supporting electoral readiness. In the year under review, Home Affairs also surpassed its target by

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issuing 98,72% of passports for minors within the 18 days and 96% of all altered passports within 30 days.

In addition, in this period, the department extended passport services to South Africans in certain countries abroad, showing progress that we're moving forward. Key milestones from the past financial year include digital upscaling of the 2,861 officials of which 65% of them were women who trained and benefited in this project.

This year we will deepen our culture change initiatives and accelerate transformation. We are resolute in our mission to transform home affairs into a professional, ethical, high performing institution serving all people with dignity.

House Chairperson, allow me to pass my gratitude to my colleague, the hon Minister, for his continued leadership and teamwork in advancing the work of the department. I would also like to thank the chairperson and members of the Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs for their continued oversight and constructive engagement.

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I know that there is work being done with the portfolio committee on the Mkwavela, which they will go to be visiting so that we do not say they are not doing their work and we are not doing their work, we do our work collaboratively.

Lastly, our greatest gratitude goes to the men and women in the frontline offices of our department who are our ambassadors and front barriers. In frontline offices and border lines, we salute you. We appreciate you.

Let me also extend my appreciation to the department's management under the leadership of the Director General, Tobi Makiote. The dedication and commitment of our management team is what fuels our progress in improving service delivery and performance. Together, we must work this journey to build a better home affairs that services all.

I thank you.

Mr N L S KWANKWA: House Chair, the UDM supports the Budget Vote. The Department of Home Affairs remains one of the most important institutions in our democracy. It is responsible for

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safeguarding our national identity system and managing our immigration, securing our borders and protecting the integrity of our electoral processes.

In considering this Budget Vote, we must acknowledge the positive progress made by the department over the past year. The introduction of the Electronic Travel Authorisation, ETA, system is an important step towards modernising immigration administration, as the Minister already indicated. If implemented effectively, it can and will reduce fraud, improve efficiency and strengthen border management, while making South Africa more accessible to tourists, investors and skilled professionals.

We also commend the department for investments in digital systems and technological innovation that are improving service delivery for ordinary South Africans. Initiatives that increasingly allow South Africans or citizens to experience Home Affairs @ Home through online services and digital platforms are helping to reduce long queues at Home Affairs' offices around the country, improve convenience and restore public confidence in the department.

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However, serious challenges remain. Illegal immigration continues to place pressure on communities and public services, while weaknesses in enforcement and border control undermine confidence in the system. There is absolutely nothing xenophobic about South Africans expecting immigration laws to be applied consistently, fairly and effectively.

This is why the work of the Border Management Authority, BMA, is so important. While progress has been made in establishing a more co-ordinated approach to border security for greater operational capacity, I beg your pardon, far greater operational capacity is still required. Without sufficient funding, technology, personnel and infrastructure, the BMA will continue to struggle to meet the scale of the challenge.

Minister, even though there have been interventions in this regard, we are also deeply concerned by the ongoing allegations of corruption at key border posts. We often hear of the stories at Beitbridge, particularly of reports that there are buses and taxis transporting people to and from Zimbabwe that are able to move individuals across the border without the proper documentation through the payment of bribes to officials, which seriously undermines the integrity of our

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immigration system and the rule of law. These allegations require urgent investigation and decisive action across the country.

At the same time, South Africa must uphold the rule of law without promoting fear, division or xenophobia. Border security and human dignity must go hand in hand.

As we approach the local government elections, it is important to note that there are several reports with concerns that the Independent Electoral Commission, IEC, has a shortage of funding, more than a billion ... shortfall, to be able to finance the local government elections, and Treasury has not approved the roll-over request for surplus funds.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon member, your time has now expired.

Mr V ZUNGULA: Minister, the reason why there are millions of undocumented foreigners in the country is ... this department. It is this department that has failed to manage immigration, both the borders as well as the systems to detect and deport foreigners who have overstayed ... the country.

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It is deliberate. You can't have only 832 immigration officers without scanners and tools of trade in a country with more than 62 million citizens and an estimated million undocumented foreigners.

This intentional incapacitation of Home Affairs allows companies to hire illegal immigrants as they please. Hence, in South Africa, there are industries and sectors that are dominated by foreign workers, and you aren't dealing with this. In fact, Minister, you are contributing to the high unemployment levels, because instead of enforcing the law and having South Africans being employed by those companies, you turn a blind eye to the exclusion of South Africans in the economy. Perhaps it is black South Africans that are the biggest losers in this uncontrolled migration. Hence, you are not bothered.

The fact that most Home Affairs officials, found to have been fraudulently issuing official documents are just fired and no criminal charges are filed, shows that the department is not serious about dealing with such treasonous actions. South African passports are not trusted internationally due to the widespread corruption at Home Affairs.

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Recently, a Nigerian family was deported from Ireland to South Africa because of such corruption. With the case of foreigners in Cape Town that overstayed their visas, they even caused gentrification. To get good service in Cape Town restaurants, natives have to speak with a European or an American accent. That is how bad the situation is in South Africa, especially in Cape Town. You even have a nice term for them. You call them digital nomads, and you do not call them what they truly are, which are illegal foreigners. Perhaps it is because they are white and they are not black.

The department has never had a single operation focusing on illegal American and European foreigners that are in Cape Town. Recently, we found that there are Mexicans that established a drug laboratory in the North West. There were Libyans that established military camps in Mpumalanga. All these incidents point to the reality of foreign criminals using South Africa as a base for their criminal activities, because they know how ineffective Home Affairs is.

Minister, before you call people xenophobic, how about you start getting your department to work and fix the illegal immigration mess? Focus on clearing the house before

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attempting to silence people who are raising genuine concerns about the lack of immigration controls.

Lastly, deport that Phil Craig. The Western Cape will never secede from Azania. Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Hon Chair, Al Jama-ah supports the budget of Home Affairs. Al Jama-ah would like to thank the Minister, the director-general and the legal team, after meeting with them, for their willingness to develop a concept document on the contentious First Safe Country Principle, which Al Jama-ah opposes. It will be a blot on South Africa if America invades Cuba and Cubans are not allowed to apply for refugee status in South Africa in terms of the First Safe Country Principle ... a betrayal of Mandela.

The same ... to Nigeria. We had a budget item and a Budget Vote, like you have today, Chair. This budget item financially supported the resistance movement in South Africa, like the ANC.

The White Paper on Citizenship, Immigration and Refugee Protection that was approved on the 26th of March – and noting

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Al Jama-ah's objections – contains provisions that will hurt our country's standing, fuel xenophobic attacks, contravene our Constitution and waste millions in legal fees.

The White Paper seems to be a Bill that contradicts the International Court of Justice's case against the Zionist Israeli entity. It ignores almost every expert's advice given during the public participation process, such as the SA Human Rights ... Lawyers For Human Rights and the Scalabrini Centre.

Not one of these warnings appeared in the report to the Cabinet. How is this explained to a court? Then the executive was presented with artificial intelligence briefings that ... [Inaudible.] ... and led to the suspension of officials. Bots are not on our voters' roll.

During April, five Ethiopians were shot dead in Johannesburg. Since 2015, 180 Nigerians have been killed. Tanzanians are contemplating giving South Africans 48 hours to leave the country, accusing South Africans of forgetting the support that their country and other African countries gave South Africa's liberation struggle.

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The White Paper frames asylumseekers as abusers ... those who choose to live in South Africa. This is not policy. This is a xenophobic slogan also repeated today in this House. Al Jama-ah applauds the ANC Ministers who are stating that South Africa is not xenophobic and also the call by President Cyril Ramaphosa that applicants for asylum must be treated with compassion.

We need the budget on Home Affairs to remove this First Safe Country Principle, to scrap the points system for refugees and to stop appeasing xenophobic populism. South Africa cannot be a champion for international law and African law while it is violating it at home, and move from Pan-Africanism to ... a Eurocentric supporter. Al Jama-ah supports Vote No 5, but it does not hesitate to remind parties rooted in the liberation struggle ... [Inaudible.] ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon member, your time has now expired. Thank you.

Mr A C ROOS: House Chair, while the fancy dress parties in Parliament focus on getting on TV and the social media grifters in green focus all their energy of attacking the

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party that is trying to get South Africa working, South Africans face two major crises – the humiliation of widespread unemployment, and brazen crime and corruption. If we do not address these twin threats, we rob our people of the dignity that so many people fought for.

For years we have been stuck with paper-based systems designed for manipulation. An official could remove a document from a file, contact the applicant demanding payment to find the missing document before the visa is rejected.

This was not a likely contingency in Belgium for example, which has aggressively digitised immigration processing, and now finally South Africa is moving in that direction. The new Electronic Travel Authorisation, ETA, system is one of the most significant immigration reforms South Africa has ever seen because it not only stops corruption in its tracks, but it opens the doors for tourism and economic growth. It replaces outdated paper-based systems with digitised and automised processes. It's important because it reduces opportunities for fraud and interference of paperwork by corrupt officials.

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However, what about the workers? One sector bucking the trend of job losses is tourism and Home Affairs reforms under Operation Vulindlela have been a major contributor to the success.

The initial roll-out of the ETA targeted countries including China and India, and these are major contributors or they have enormous potential for travel and investment potential.

Linked to this is the expansion of the Trusted Tour Operator Scheme. This initiative has brought over 70 000 additional tourists to South Africa.

Now, behind every additional tourist is employment. Jobs in restaurants, jobs in hotels, jobs for tour guides, jobs in aviation, jobs in local tourism economies that desperately need growth.

The Meetings, Exhibitions, Events and Tourism Scheme, Meets, and Screen Talent and Global Entertainment Scheme, Stages, programme add jobs in the conference, film and creative industries. The visa modernisation is supporting South African livelihoods.

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There has also been a significant intensification of immigration enforcement and border management that must be acknowledged. Internal immigration enforcement operations have increased by an average of 10 times what they were before the Government of National Unity, GNU, with over half a million deportations. Hon Ngubane, internal immigration enforcement means inside the country, not on the border.

The Border Management Authority, BMA, is finally beginning to function as a modern border authority. Attempted illegal crossings have gone down by a quarter while we see legal tourism movements almost increasing by the same rate. What this shows is that under a capable state we can secure our borders while enabling trade, tourism and investment.

Minister Schreiber's Constitutional Court victory against the abuse of the asylum system has further strengthened the integrity of South Africa's immigration framework. Corruption itself is increasingly being targeted directly. The Border Management and Immigration Anticorruption Forum has been established, co-operation with the Special Investigating Unit, SIU, is expanding, more officials are being investigated and

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sanctioned, and digitisation is steadily reducing opportunities for bribery and corruption.

We must also highlight the potential dangers ahead. At the very moment, Home Affairs is working harder than ever to get rid of corruption, introduce stop-gating visas, and tackle illegal immigration like never before. The disgraceful three-year delay in the transferring of border security resources and staff from the SA Police Service to the BMA continues.

The DA sponsors the recommendation to resolve the SAPS' issue as a matter of urgency. Action SA and the PA should be honest about the Minister's incredible progress to tackle illegal immigration and join the calls for more funding, and rather march to the SAPS' headquarters if they really want to help deal with illegal immigration and capacitate a Minister who is doing an excellent job.

Another danger is fake news. The Minister does have an memorandum of understanding, MOU, with OR Tambo and Home Affairs received more than a million more applications over target, but hon Mogale says that services are declining. I

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think the EFF wants to automate registration because their voters are too uninspired to register.

Hon Ngubane is shocked that the department would rather focus on the roll-out of kiosks at banks, that maintain the system at their own cost, rather than re-engaging a service provider that was fired for failing to deliver the kiosks. Now, if the tills weren't emptied out under the government of Jacob Zuma, the Minister might have some more money for information and communications technology, ICT, projects.

Where departments are working, they must be properly funded and supported by this House. If South Africans want a state that works, a state that modernises, a state that secures borders, fights corruption, creates jobs and restores dignity, then we must support capable governance at the ballot box. So let us start on the 4th of November by voting DA.

Ms S P JAMA: Hon House Chair, hon members and peace-loving citizens of the Republic. Nations really collapse in a single dramatic moment, decline settled slowly, institutions weakened, public trust erodes, dissatisfaction becomes normal

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and eventually, society begins losing confidence in the ability of the democratic state to govern effectively.

This is a dangerous place for any democracy to arrive at. Because once cynicism replaces belief, politics itself begins changing, serious governance gives way to spectacle, public relations begin masquerading as leadership, performance begins replacing implementation.

That is why this budget matters, because Home Affairs is not simply another department in government, it sits at the centre of sovereignty, citizenship, migration, elections and the legal relationship between the state and its people. In many ways, the condition of this department reflects the conditions of the democratic state itself.

Hon House Chair, earlier this year the ANC NEC Lekgotla reaffirmed the effective humane and orderly border management remains a core responsibility of the democratic state.

President Cyril Ramaphosa reinforced this commitment during the state of the nation address when government committed itself to strengthening border security through

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infrastructure, technology and personnel. And this budget begins giving material expression to that commitment.

Budgets are moral documents, they reveal what a state chooses to prioritise, and in this budget the additional allocation towards capacitating the Border Management Authority, BMA, including the filling of 738 critical positions reflects an understanding that sovereignty cannot be defended through rhetoric alone.

Institutions require people, they require infrastructure, they require operational capacity. These interventions matter because migration has become one of the most politically and emotionally charged issue in South Africa today. Communities are frustrated, young people are unemployed, public services are under strain, crime and insecurity shape everyday life in many parts of the country. In that climate, undocumented migration easily becomes a vessel into which every social frustration is poured.

But leadership requires honesty. South Africa cannot respond to migration through vigilantism, online hysteria or shallow political sloganeering. Equally, leadership cannot pretend

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that border management and unlawful migration are unimportant. The ANC rejects both extremes.

African unity does not require abandoning lawful governance, and border control must never become hostility towards African people themselves.

What is politically convenient is blaming poor undocumented migrants while saying very little about businesses that deliberately exploit vulnerable labour to suppress wages, avoid labour obligations and maximise profits. That conversation also requires honesty.

Hon House Chair, the democratic state carries the responsibility to know who enters the country, who exists in the country and under what conditions. That responsibility is fundamental to sovereignty and governance.

For many years border management suffered from fragmentation, weak coordination and inadequate technological capability.

The establishment of the BMA marked an important institutional shift towards a more integrated approach, and the impact is

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beginning to show, undocumented crossing has been intercepted, counterfeit goods seized, smuggling operations disrupted, trafficking networks interrupted. These interventions matter because criminal economies thrive where state capacity is weak.

Investment into movement controls systems, passenger processing technology and improved connectivity across ports of entry will become increasingly important in strengthening border management capacity.

Long-term migration management will also require deeper co-operation with neighbouring states and continental institutions. No country can sustainably manage migration challenges in isolation from the region around it.

Hon House Chair, too often Home Affairs is discussed as though it exists separately from economic development. But documentation systems, visa systems, ports of entry and institutional efficiency directly shape tourism, trade, labour mobility and investment confidence.

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Efficient and secured ports of entry are not only immigration concerns, they are economic infrastructure. Delays, congestion and weak systems at ports of entry carry consequences far beyond Home Affairs itself. They effect freight movement, regional trade, tourism and broader economic activity. And this is where border question of state capacity becomes unavoidable.

For years South Africa debated policy while state capacity weakened underneath us. Rebuilding that capacity is far more difficult than destroying it.

One of the clearest frustrations South Africans hold towards the democratic state is the feeling that institutions often fail them at the point where they encounter government directly. Home Affairs becomes symbolic of that frustration: queues before sunrise, offline systems, delayed documents, collapsed infrastructure and inaccessible services.

South Africans experience the state most directly through frontline institutions, through where the systems work, where the documents arrive, where the queues move, where the offices function with dignity and efficiency. That damage to public

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trust cannot simply be erased through slogans or media campaigns, it requires functioning systems.

While progress remains uneven, the digitisation and modernisation process underway inside Home Affairs is beginning to change the relationship between citizens and the state. Online booking systems, Smart IDs, electronic verification systems and digital travel authorisations, are all part of a broader effort to restore administrative efficiency and institutional credibility.

This is also why political discourse around Home Affairs sometimes becomes almost absurd. People arrive midway through a long process of institutional reform and suddenly behave as though history started with their appointment.

The digitisation of Home Affairs, the modernisation programme and the strengthening of border management's capacity long predates the current political moment. This work stretches across excessive ANC administrations and Ministers, from Comrade Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma to President Dr Gigaba, to Comrade Dr Aaron Motswaledi and others, spent years

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stabilising and modernising this department, long before the current political arrangement emerged.

While others discover these issues when cameras arrive, the ANC spent years engaged in the difficult and ominous, often unglamorous work of rebuilding these institutions.

Yes, House Chair, for as long as the work continues and institutions continue improving, the ANC will continue holding the Minister's hand through this process, despite the political setback our movement suffered. He's welcome to continue claiming victories. Our primary concern is the work that will get done and the democratic state continues moving forward. Because governance is not a content creation exercise, it is careful, difficult and administrative work.

Ultimately, people judge government through outcomes. Can they access documents with dignity? Can systems remain functional? Can elections be trusted? Can the state protect the integrity of citizenship? Those are the questions that matter.

As Parliament our responsibility is not oppose but oversight. These institutions must continue improving and the portfolio

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committee will continue monitoring implementation closely. That is why the finalisation of the White Paper on Citizenship, Immigration and Refugee Protection cannot continue being delayed indefinitely.

South Africa requires a coherent legislative framework capable of responding to modern migration realities, while balancing constitutional rights, state sovereignty and social stability.

Concerns around governance and working conditions at Government Printing Works must also continue receiving urgent attention.

Hon House Chair, as we move towards the 2026 Local Government Elections, the work of Home Affairs and the Electoral Commission of SA become increasingly important. The operational readiness and integrity of the Independent Electoral Commission, IEC, will be critical in sustaining public confidence in our democratic processes.

Every eligible South African must be able to access documentation, voting stations must function effectively,

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young people must feel encouraged to participate in democratic life.

We also have emphasised the importance of ensuring that the election infrastructure and systems function effectively so that the operational challenges experienced in parts of 2024 elections are not repeated in 2026.

One of the greatest long-term threats to democracy is not disagreement itself, but growing disengagement and hopelessness among the youth. Democracy weakens when citizens emotionally withdraw from it.

As we approach the 4th of November, we call on South Africans, especially young people, to participate actively in shaping the future of this country.

The ANC does not ask South Africans to ignore their frustrations, we ask them to participate in the difficult work of rebuilding, renewing and improving their democratic state.

Democracy does not correct itself automatically, it is strengthened by citizens who continue to participate in it.

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And on the 4th of November we remain confident that South Africans will, once again, come out in their numbers to defend the values of transformation, constitutional democracy and capable development state by voting for the ANC.

Hon House Chair, Cabral once warned liberation movements: Tell no lies, Mask no difficulties, mistakes or failures. Claim no easy victories. That remains relevant in the task today before us.

South Africans know the frustrations they experience withing their democratic state, pretending otherwise will not rebuild trust, but neither should we pretend that we are building institutions weakened over many years can happen overnight or through political performance designed for headlines. Serious governance is slower than slogans, and restoring public trust requires more than branding exercises, it requires consistent work, sometimes difficult work, often unglamorous work, but necessary work nonetheless.

And despite its imperfections and contradictions, the ANC remains the only movement with the historical depth and political reach capable of holding together the competing

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realities of Africa. A movement able to defend sovereignty without descending into chauvinism, a movement able to embrace African unity while remaining committed to constitutional governance, a movement capable of transformation while protecting democratic institutions.

That responsibility remains before us, and for that reason the ANC supports Budget Vote 45. I thank you.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: House Chair, on a lighter note I do find it a bit funny that people stand here talking about institutions that were weakened and then they list the names from their own party who weakened the institutions. Let's just be serious, please, hon members.

But on a more important note, I think the issue of the rule of law and illegal migration was raised by a number of speakers and I do want to briefly respond to that.

To indicate, firstly, that I think government's position and Government of National Unity, GNU's position on this is absolutely clear, it's been articulated by the President, it's been articulated by numerous members of the coalition, and I

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align myself completely with the fact that we are guided by the rule of law.

The law says that we have to do deportations when people violate South Africa's immigration law. We don't do record numbers of deportations as we've reported on here today because of xenophobia, we do it because the law requires Home Affairs to uphold South Africa's immigration law.

Illegal immigration by definition is breaking the law. But it is also lawlessness to incite violence, it is also lawlessness to profile South Africans, as we heard, rather disturbingly here from some of the speakers, and I think that is exactly the line that we hold. Our commitment is to the Constitution and the rule of law, and to nothing else.

Hon Ngubane, the Memorandum of Understanding, MoU's issue you ... my friend you are simply just wrong about that. We have 80 officials working at O R Tambo International Airport under MoU with the Gauteng provincial government, and I think as a resident of KwaZulu-Natal you should know that we also have a MoU with eThekweni, between the Department of Home Affairs and that particular metro. And our approach to it more broadly,

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Chair, is what we call the coalition of the willing. So, whenever someone is willing to put resources in, whenever someone is willing to help us fix problems, those are the people we will work with. But people who are not willing to work with us can't turnaround and complain, when the door was open for them to do so.

Chair, the funding issue also came through very strongly. I obviously agree with it, that if there was more funding available we could be moving, perhaps even faster and with greater urgency.

But I think hon Bollman raises an important point when she speaks about these reforms taking place under fiscal pressure, and how that also focuses the mind. You don't have endless resources, so, you have to prioritise the issues that are actually capable of delivery and that make the biggest impact over time. That is the approach we've taken.

But I must also indicate to hon members, if you look at the budget you would have seen significant increase in self-funding. We are taking responsibility in as far as that is

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possible within our mandate to generate funding to help deliver the digital transformation programme.

One of the most important ones we are currently waiting for feedback from National Treasury is the Electronic Travel Authorisation, ETA, itself. If hon members think about the service we are actually delivering through that system, it is significantly better than what you would have previously experienced with a paper-based visa application. And we think we can get foreigners effectively to pay a reasonable fee to use the ETA, get a great service, and guess what? Then we use those resources to fund South Africa's border security. It's a win-win outcome. Foreigners funding South Africa's border security is where we would like to get through the ETA.

But there are also other initiatives that we are working on to generate resources to uphold our infrastructure. the verification services with the banking sector, for example, was close to collapse, 50% of verification attempts fail. And because we've now actually corrected the fees, we have more resources to maintain that are moving forward.

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Hon Van Staden, I hear you, thank you for the kind words but also for the encouragement on communications. I think we would like to get to the call centre as the project, perhaps in some of the subsequent work we are doing. Once the foundation is in place please share the list of issues.

Chair, finally, I read to you a list: Dutywa, Mthatha, Mamelodi, Soshanguve, Soweto, Tembisa, Manguzi, Giyani, Mafikeng, Burgersfort and Lusikisiki. These are just some of the places, underserved parts of our country, for the very first time that they've access to Smart ID services through our new banking digital partnership. That is how we are delivering dignity and inclusion for all. Thank you very much.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Zungula, why do you want to be recognised?

Mr V ZUNGULA: No ... the Minister has left the podium. It's fine.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Thank you.

Debate concluded.

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The mini-plenary session rose at 11:49.

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