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## **Debate on Vote 5: Home Affairs (Good Hope Chamber)**

House Chair,

What if I were to tell this house that the Home Affairs system has been working well for the past five years? And particularly well in the 9 wasted years of state capture? You could ask whether I have gone mad, or you could ask for who has Home Affairs been working so well for?

Gogo Dlamini, who had to take two taxis to get to Home Affairs only to find it offline? No.

The working Mother who had to take a day off work only to find she couldn't get to the front of the queue and then had to take another day off to make her application? No.

The investor who wanted to set up a business in South Africa but gave up because he had to wait too long for a visa? No.

The connected families, pastors, and those who were able to buy permanent residence? Now we're getting closer.

The permitting officials who made it all possible and the expediting agents on the outside who collected the money? Yes.

The Lubisi report showed widespread fraud, fake users created on the system, key logging, identity theft, and Home Affairs staff operating a visa fraud syndicate where poor IT controls enabled this corruption - it's been a lucrative business. Business was good with companies charging big money and profiteering while an underfunded National Population Register suffered a 50% failure rate and contributed to over 40 000 hours worth of downtime in the past 5 years, leaving South Africans stranded in queues.

Minister Schreiber could have spent the next 5 years fighting fires, but a great leader excels at identifying and addressing the root causes of problems, rather than just treating the symptoms - the root of this problem is systems that are designed to be easily manipulated by corrupt officials and deliberately slow to drive an expediting market.

And so, we need to savour this moment. Where, for the first time, we have a budget and systems reform that is starting to address the root of corruption and begin to work for ALL South Africans.

The Home Affairs at Home initiative will take the over 20 million South Africans using online banking out of queues, while the system modernisation and rollout of services to 1000 bank branches in both urban and rural areas will more than triple the Home Affairs office footprint overnight. Chances of standing in a queue will drop substantially, along with the chances of the system being offline. It doesn't make any sense to say anything other than these systems reforms are massively pro-poor. And it shows that a capable state can bring reforms that benefit ALL South Africans.



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House chair, our country has been an open goal for illegal immigration, smuggling, and human trafficking. The Border Management Authority wasn't an additional entity but rather took what was there and combined the different line functions into one entity. What putting these functions together has served to do is highlight the chronic underfunding of border security over the years. There is not a single party that has disagreed that this funding is wholly inadequate!

Under the leadership of Minister Leon Schreiber, the BMA has achieved an incredible 215% increase in the number of undocumented persons intercepted during the festive season and a 63% increase in the prevention of attempted illegal crossings over easter compared with the previous financial year. Operation New Broom and increased urgency, have seen day-to-day immigration enforcement operations surge by 270% year in year, including extensive interventions to uphold the rule of law, dealing with zama zamas and food-borne diseases in spaza shops amongst other key issues affecting South Africans.

But Minister Schreiber cannot be expected to tackle illegal immigration with such limited resources on an ongoing basis. And so, it is critical and urgent that SAPS border police units be moved into the BMA without delay. The last available figures released indicate that 4 354 police officers are assigned to border protection, while the BMA is stuck with 672 border law enforcement officers. This disparity urgently needs to be addressed. Home Affairs, Port Health, Agriculture, and Environmental Biosecurity have all transferred staff, assets, and budget into the BMA. The bilateral meeting that took place in June to iron out issues with the transfer of SAPS Border Police functions to the BMA has yielded no further communication of action by Minister Mchunu. Minister Schreiber has proven he has the political will to tackle the legacy of illegal immigration and porous borders and needs to be backed with the necessary resources.

House Chair, the investment in digital modernisation that is the cornerstone of this budget, will help stop long queues, system offline, corruption, and exploitation in its tracks. This is bad news for those who hoped to take over government and benefit from these lucrative revenue streams. And don't be surprised when those vote against these reforms by voting against this budget.

In 1952 Mandela & Tambo Attorneys opened its doors. It was, and I quote: *"...a place where persons regardless of skin colour could come and find a competent ally, a place where they would not be either turned away or cheated."* Where others have chosen to benefit from the struggles of our people it is the Party of Freedom, Fairness, Opportunity, and Diversity that will make Home Affairs such a place.

The DA supports this report.

**FREEDOM. FAIRNESS. OPPORTUNITY. DIVERSITY.**