

Parliamentary Budget Vote Debate 5
Home Affairs
By
Hon. SJ Nkomo, MP

6 May 2015

Honourable Chairperson,

At the outset let me state that the Inkatha Freedom Party supports this budget vote debate and supports this Minister, the Honourable Malusi Gigaba.

As you all may know, this portfolio holds a special place in our hearts as it was at one time the ministerial portfolio of our leader Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi.

Honourable Chairperson, this portfolio is not without its internal, regional, continental and international challenges, and it's these that we seek to identify and assist the department in overcoming for the benefit of our country, all who live within its borders and all who travel to its shores.

The Department is currently dealing with the fall-out from the recent spate of xenophobic attacks in the country as it attempts, amongst others, to deport illegal foreign migrants arrested last week as part of its Operation Fiela and who are currently being held at departmental detention facilities.

Illegal Immigrants and the existing porosity of our borders remain a source of grave concern and add literal fuel to the fire surrounding the proliferation of xenophobia in our country. With Home Affairs DG Mkuseli Apleni advising parliament recently that his 700-member immigration unit was unable to cope with the "thousands" of illegal immigrants who entered South Africa every day, we believe this to be the most urgent and pressing matter for the department to contend with at present and ask that all available resources be channelled towards its speedy resolution.

Visa's and their issue remain another source of great contention for many requiring them and our offices are often inundated with people who are at their wits end seeking assistance after having failed to obtain same from departmental officials. Whilst departmental assistance is usually quick in resolving these issues they still speak to systemic flaws inherent in the system which must be addressed.

South African passports and identity cards remain under international scrutiny with many countries requiring additional and often time-and-costs consuming measures before they will issue South Africans wishing to travel abroad the necessary visas. A case in point remains travel visas to the United Kingdom.

What is the Department doing to alleviate such measures by working more closely with their foreign counterparts and by ensuring that identity theft and fraud in respect of South African passports and identity cards is wholly prevented?

In 2014 we requested the Minister to appoint a task team and conduct a thorough investigation of all VEC 4 votes for the last elections, thereby identifying the weak spots in the process and making it impossible for fraud to occur via the VEC 4 voting format in future elections. We still await feedback on this issue.

The IFP supports the budget vote.

I thank you.