**African Christian Democratic Party**

 **10 July 2019

ACDP Parliament
Budget Vote 5: Home Affairs
Speech by: The Leader of the ACDP, Rev Kenneth Meshoe MP**

 **Department of Home Affairs has failed to safeguard the identity and status of many South Africans**

* **movement control systems leaves much to be desired as borders remain porous**

“Chairperson,

According to the 2014-2019 strategic plan of the Department of Home Affairs, it is mandated to efficiently determine and safeguard the identity and status of citizens, as well as to regulate immigration to ensure security, promote development and fulfil South Africa’s international obligations.

The department has, sadly, failed to effectively execute these two mandates.

Take for example, the complaints of women who have discovered that they were married illegally and unknowingly to strangers they had never met. Some victims have been fighting with Home Affairs for years to have their marital status corrected, but the department has not helped them. Some are unable to get employment or open bank accounts because their proper marital status cannot be verified.

Chairperson, if a South African women discovers that she was fraudulently married to a stranger, what is preventing the department from tracing which Home Affairs officials were involved in facilitating this deceit? Surely the Department should have a team that properly investigates these cases of fraud? Those found guilty should face the full might of the law. It is unacceptable that women should be trapped in a fraudulent marriage, sometimes for years without assistance from the department. The story that the honourable Minister told this afternoon about Thami Swartbooi is proof that if a Home Affairs official is willing, they can assist women who are trapped in such relationships. We heard that Thami was assisted within 48 hours after suffering horror, humiliation and harassment for 14 years. My question is why can this not be done for all women who find themselves in a similar situation? There are hundreds, if not thousands, of women who are experiencing a similar abuse and harassment.

Secondly, the movement control systems also leaves much to be desired as our borders remain porous. Many illegal immigrants who get involved in criminal activities remain untraceable by investigators because their fingerprints are not on record. This leaves the police with cases they are unable to complete as they cannot trace these criminals and punish them for their crimes.

The ACDP, therefore, calls on the Minister to ensure that there are tight controls at our borders so that all visitors to our beautiful country are properly documented, so that if they commit a crime while they are here, they can be quickly be tracked and arrested.”

**-END-

For more information contact Rev Kenneth Meshoe MP, 082-962-5884

Media enquiries: Keeno Petersen, Media Liaison Officer, ACDP - Parliament, Tel: 021-403-2971 or Cell: 073-580-2902 or Email:** **kpetersen@parliament.gov.za**

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