**HOME AFFAIRS BUDGET VOTE 5 – DEBATE SPEECH**

**Liezl van der Merwe MP
IFP Spokesperson on Home Affairs**

House Chairperson; Honourable Minister, and Deputy Minister, MPs –

Just a few weeks ago on the 8th of May, South Africans made their voices heard through the ballot box. The IFP thanks each and every voter who supported our democracy by casting their vote, the ultimate act of patriotism. We thank the voters for giving the IFP an increased mandate and we pledge to serve the electorate to the very best of our abilities.

However, it would be remiss of me not to mention our concern with the chaotic nature of the elections passed. The allegations of indelible ink disappearing, faulty zip-zip machines, people voting more than once and other shortcomings had placed at risk the very credibility of our electoral system. We are however grateful that the IEC has already started looking at new technology to replace our old voting systems and we hope that Treasury will give them support in this regard.

Chairperson –

Seventeen years ago, the then Minister of Home Affairs, Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, appointed a Commission of Inquiry into South Africa’s electoral system.

The Commission agreed that our electoral system lacked accountability, and a mixed system was proposed.

Why do we still talk about the van Zyl Slabbert Commission, 17 years later in 2019?

Because this year’s elections were marred by dodgy characters on Party lists to become MPs and MPLs, and a general outcry from the public that we need greater accountability within the electoral system.

Also, because at the time Cabinet committed to implement the Commission’s recommendations at a later stage. BUT that later stage has never arrived. It is the IFP’s hope, that you will reopen this important debate Hon Minister. Because electoral reform is indeed needed.

Minister, your Department faces many severe challenges.

Whether it is the traumatizingly long queues at Home Affairs office, OR computers that are offline for days on end, or the critical vacancies to go unfilled, or the applications to lie unattended for weeks and months and years. Your act of patriotism Minister must be that you fix what is broken within the Department of Home Affairs.

Because when Home Affairs fails, the consequences are dire.

When Home Affairs fails, it fails the most vulnerable in our society.

When Home Affairs fails, it fails people like Elize Marcha O’Brien. She is married to an Egyptian national, someone she has never met. When her fraudulent marriage was discovered, her real relationship ended, as Elize could not prove her innocence. After 3 years, Home Affairs has still not annulled that fraudulent marriage.

**Her life has been ruined.**

Chairperson –

The IFP believes we need severe jail sentences for those who sell South African paperwork for a few hundred rands. In the same way, we need to act now to secure our porous borders. And to deal with lawless elements, who are flouting our laws.

Just recently, South Africans were left reeling when our own SAPS members were attacked by undocumented migrants in Hillbrow.

In December 2017, when you served as Minister of Health, Minister Motsoaledi, you told us that 60% of the babies born at Steve Biko Academic Hospital were “not South African”. Just last week, Gauteng Premier David Makhura said his administration is in need of a better plan to address the problem of illegal migrants.

Clearly, Government realises the size of the challenge. What seems to be lacking as always with the ANC-government is to deal with it.

Throughout South Africa, even around this very Parliamentary precinct, are businesses operated by undocumented migrants from many different continents, who flout legislation, don’t pay tax or VAT, and pay their staff less than minimum wage.

Our trucking industry is in crisis. Lives have been lost, because South African jobseekers are saying they are being shunned in favour of undocumented migrants.

Let me be clear: what I am speaking about is not about xenophobia. It’s about patriotism. When the safety and security of our State and the wellbeing of our citizens are threatened, we need to act.

House Chairperson, last month, Nigeria’s President Muhammadu Buhari signed an Executive Order to withhold visas from foreign workers whose skills are readily available in Nigeria. His, was an act of patriotism. Putting the people of Nigeria first.

This budget needs to fix many problems. Some are easily fixed, but others will require real political will and real patriotism.

We look forward to hearing your solutions Hon Minister and to partner with you in fixing the Department of Home Affairs and in putting South Africans first.

I thank you.