

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

# QUESTION NO. 2268

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## INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER 21 OF 2015

**2268. Mr R A Lees (DA) to ask the Minister of Home Affairs:**

(1) With reference to his department’s offices in Ladysmith, KwaZulu-Natal, is there a limit to the number of persons who can be assisted with the collection of documents such as identification documents, passports and residence permits in respect of each day; if so, (a) what is the maximum number of persons that can be assisted and (b) why can only a limited number of persons be assisted;

(2) are there any plans to increase the resources of the office to be able to assist more persons; if not, why not; if so, (a) what are the relevant details of such plans, (b) when will the specified plans be implemented and (c) how many persons will the office be able to assist in respect of each day once the plans have been implemented;

(3) are persons who arrive at the office informed that (a) the office can only assist a certain number of persons on a day and (b) some persons may end up waiting the entire day without being assisted?

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**REPLY:**

(1)(a) Yes. When the office is busy and there are long queues, the office can assist at least 200 clients per day for both applications and collections of Smart Card IDs and Passports.

(1)(b) The office receives a large number of clients, due to the high demand for the acquisition of Smart ID Cards and the office can only serve the clients within the office operating hours. The increase in demand has been exacerbated by misinformation that has been given to the public, particularly the elderly.

For example, the elderly are being told that they would be charged a fee for the Smart ID Card if they do not apply immediately or they will not be paid their social grants by SASSA if not in possession of the Smart ID Card. This has resulted in a rush to acquire the Smart ID Cards which in turn causes overcrowding in the office as well as long queues.

The Department is working hard to counteract this misinformation and provide accurate information to clients through the channels of Operation Sukuma Sakhe, War Room meetings, Local Task Teams meetings, District Task Team meetings and other stakeholder engagements.

(2)(a) Yes. An additional collection counter will be installed as well as other resources that may be required within the limited space available.

(2)(b) An order is in the process of being issued for re-cabling and installation of additional data points so that the additional collection counter can be installed.

(2)(c) That will be determined once the additional counter has been added.

(3)(a-b) Yes, the clients are being informed by the floorwalkers and Office Manager about the numbers that can be assisted per day. Queuing numbers are issued to a certain number of clients that can be assisted per day while they are queuing outside. Moreover, the floorwalker is always available to check if all clients are being assisted and that they are seated in the correct queues. In addition, the floorwalker makes sure that the clients remaining outside are let in once there is availability of space in the office. Clients who are not able to be assisted on a particular day are informed.