

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 447**

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**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER 4 – 2022**

**447. Ms L L van Der Merwe (IFP) to ask the Minister of Home Affairs:**

(1) What is the current backlog in terms of the total number of refugee and/or asylum-seeker applications;

(2) What is the nature of the assistance offered by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees to his department in order to fix the asylum and refugee management system;

(3) What total number of section 22 asylum-seeker visas in terms of the Refugees Act, Act 130 of 1998, have been granted by his department in 2021? NW512E

**REPLY:**

1. The backlogs are with SCRA and RAASA. Hitherto, SCRA has already cleared past backlogs in other four RROs, with 24 000 files remaining at Desmond Tutu Refugee Centre. All these files are already on paperless platform and are awaiting final enhancements which should be finalized early March 2022 before they are loaded on the SCRA platform for finality.

RAASA backlog opening balance is 123 500 and the newly recruited members have already started to consider these files.

 (2) The Department of Home Affairs has entered into a multiyear agreement with the United Nations High Commission for Refugee (UNHCR) for the implementation of the Backlog Project aimed at providing support to the Refugee Appeal Authority to finalise and deliver appeal decisions. The project aims to introduce support mechanism that will not only address the existing backlog, but to put in place new systems and capacity to prevent new backlogs from forming. The agreement sets out the essential elements of the project and relevant obligations of the parties over a period of four years. For the full four years of the project, UNHCR will contribute to the recruitment of additional 36 members of the Refugee Appeal Authority.

On 25 January 2022 I met the UN Assistant Higher Commissioner for Protection to review this partnership and related work. In that meeting it was agreed that as part of the next five-year period, an assessment focusing at the first instance asylum process will be undertaken to enhance the already done work in ensuring that these kinds of backlog do not reoccur. The assessment report will determine further assistance, if any.

1. The numbers are as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Month** | **Cape Town** | **Durban** | **Musina** | **Gqeberha** | **Desmond Tutu** | **Total** |
| April | 216 | 318 | 33 | 76 | 582 | 1225 |
| May | 2654 | 4405 | 1252 | 131 | 4630 | 13072 |
| June | 3059 | 3629 | 3039 | 1087 | 8335 | 19149 |
| July | 3409 | 3765 | 1143 | 396 | 5864 | 14577 |
| August | 3123 | 3455 | 847 | 281 | 10123 | 17829 |
| September | 1742 | 2255 | 945 | 295 | 9764 | 15001 |
| October | 1030 | 1271 | 469 | 139 | 4124 | 7033 |
| November | 835 | 924 | 365 | 119 | 3294 | 5537 |
| December | 403 | 496 | 220 | 111 | 1713 | 2943 |
| **Total** | **16471** | **20518** | **8313** | **2635** | **48429** | **96366** |

**END**