

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

# QUESTION NO. 976

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## INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER 10 OF 2016

**976. Mr A M Figlan (DA) to ask the Minister of Home Affairs:**

(1) (a) Why are the (i) Cape Town and (ii) Port Elizabeth refugee offices showing new applications received when they are not officially mandated to do so, (b) what is the total backlog of rejected refugee status appeals in the country and (c) what are the plans to address this situation, given that only 12% of the appeals for the 2015-16 financial year have been processed so far;

(2) what are the main unfounded reasons given by Zimbabwean nationals when applying for asylum;

(3) (a) has the demand for refugee identification documents been consistent each year during the past five financial years, (b) has supply always been around half of those requested in each financial year and (c) what is the related backlog in this regard? NW1106E

**REPLY:**

(1)(a)(i-ii) The new asylum applicants relate to family joining. In the main there are two categories of those joining the files of existing asylum seekers, namely: new-born babies and also dependents who were declared by the principal applicant when applying before the closure of the office and they have now made the move to South Africa to join their principal applicants under section 3(c) of the Refugees Act.

(1)(b) The number of backlog cases as reported to the UNHCR in 2015 is 144 233. At the time 80 315 cases were active on the system. Since the July 2015 report shared with UNHCR, the Department is undergoing a process to properly audit and undertake a project to deal with this backlog. The outcome of the audit, on completion, will confirm the appeal backlog.

(1)(c) The Department, working with the UNHCR, has put together a planning team that is developing a project plan for the appeal backlog. Such planning is being conducted in parallel with the file auditing process mentioned above to inform the plan.

1. Most unfounded claims relate to the political climate in Zimbabwe. Most applicants with this type of decision cite persecution on the grounds of political affiliation and perceived failure by the government to deal with such persecution and harassment of political opponents.

(3)(a) The overall number of applications for refugee identification documents has been consistent throughout the indicated period. However, during the 2012/2013 and 2013/14 financial years, a backlog began to build up because of limited capacity and was eventually cleared in late 2014/15.

(3)(b) As indicated above, capacity challenges affected the percentage of applications being processed within the stipulated time frames. However, such challenges do not mean that the other 50% of applicants do not receive their identity documents. Instead, it means that they receive their documents but outside the stipulated turnaround time.

(3)(c) Currently there is no backlog in the processing of both refugee identity documents and travel documents.