

## **Motsoaledi threatens labour dept with court over closed Home Affairs offices**

The Citizen - 7 May 2020

Government 7.5.2020 09:56 pm Motsoaledi threatens labour dept with court over closed Home Affairs offices News24 Wire Minister of Home Affairs Aaron Motsoaledi after he briefed parliament in October. He said of immigrant children, "Send them to school ... We'll look at the documentation later." Photo: Tariro Washinyira The department shut down two offices because they did not have a protective glass partition between staff and clients, but Motsoaledi says no office has partitions. Home Affairs Minister Aaron Motsoaledi will take the department of labour to court if it does not allow two offices in Gauteng to operate. On Thursday, Motsoaledi told the Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs that offices in the Western Cape, Mpumalanga and Limpopo were shut down by the Public Servants Association of South Africa (PSA). The PSA, in a statement released on Wednesday, said some Home Affairs offices did not comply with safety measures and in some cases, the full staff complement was instructed to come to work. "The PSA cannot allow employees to return to workplaces that do not meet the requirements announced by various ministers to curb the spread of the virus," read the statement. The department of labour shut down two offices because they did not have a protective glass partition between staff and clients. "I don't accept their reason," Motsoaledi said, adding no Home Affairs office had such a partition and it would take months to install. He added 5,000 face screens had arrived on Wednesday for staff, saying if they wore masks and gloves, as they were, the partitions were not necessary. Motsoaledi said Home Affairs had appealed the department of labour's decision. "If we don't get it right, we'll certainly go to court." As committee chairperson Bongani Bongo closed the meeting, Motsoaledi asked if he could clarify further. "Chairperson, we are not taking any union to court. We are talking about the department of labour, because the demand they have made on us is outrageous. But, already, twice we have contacted them, they say we must appeal. "Now, I'm talking of a court of law because this has already happened to me." He said when he was minister of health the department of labour had closed the health department's head offices and said they must appeal, but opened the offices when he threatened them with court action. "I'm just doing a déjà vu here that our offices are not working, on a demand that we believe is outrageous and when we spoke to them collegially, as we are advising, they said: 'No, appeal'."