

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA calls for balanced, united approach to migration, employment, and border management
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) noted President Cyril Ramaphosa's recent address on migration and immigration and welcomes the commitment by government to address the complex challenges associated with undocumented migration, border management, and economic inclusion.

The PSA, representing more than 245 000 public-sector employees, including employees of the Border Management Authority (BMA) and the Department of Home Affairs (DHA), has consistently maintained that unemployment, poverty, and inequality are amongst the greatest threats to social cohesion and economic stability in South Africa. Whilst concerns raised by communities regarding unemployment and the perceived impact of undocumented migration cannot be ignored, these challenges require balanced, lawful, and evidence-based interventions rather than actions that may undermine social stability or economic growth. South Africa's migration challenges are closely linked to broader socio-economic conditions across the African continent, including unemployment, poverty, conflict, and limited economic opportunities. It is therefore important that migration discussions do not result in the stigmatisation of foreign nationals or the erosion of constitutional and human rights protections.

As the Union representing the majority of employees at the BMA, the PSA acknowledges the significant progress by the BMA in strengthening border security and improving migration management. Despite operating under financial and capacity constraints since its establishment, the BMA has continued to enhance border infrastructure, technology, operational capability, and law-enforcement capacity. The PSA noted that government has increasingly prioritised border management and that additional resources are becoming available to support the BMA in fulfilling its mandate. Stronger border management is an essential component of migration governance. Border security alone can, however, not resolve unemployment or labour-market challenges. Greater attention must be directed towards economic growth, industrialisation, skills development, job creation, and the enforcement of labour legislation.

The PSA is extremely concerned about reports that some employers deliberately employ undocumented workers to circumvent labour laws, suppress wages, avoid collective bargaining obligations, and exploit vulnerable workers. Such practices undermine decent work, disadvantage law-abiding employers, and create unfair competition in the labour market.



Enforcement efforts should therefore be for undocumented migration and employers who knowingly violate labour legislation.

The PSA also noted the President's announcement regarding plans to relocate Refugee Reception Centres to Ports of Entry. Whilst the PSA supports initiatives aimed at strengthening migration management and improving the efficiency of asylum and refugee processes, such measures will have significant implications for employees currently stationed at Refugee Reception Offices in various cities across the South Africa. The proposed relocation of these Centres has the potential to uproot employees and their families from their established homes and communities, resulting in substantial social, financial, and personal consequences. The PSA therefore emphasises that any relocation process must be preceded by meaningful consultation and negotiation with organised labour to ensure that employees' rights, family circumstances, and conditions of service are fully considered. Proper engagement will be essential to prevent labour instability and service disruptions whilst ensuring the successful implementation of government's migration objectives.

The PSA therefore calls on government to convene an inclusive national dialogue involving organised labour, business, government, community organisations, migration experts, and civil society to develop sustainable solutions that balance economic growth, labour-market protection, human rights, and regional cooperation. The PSA further calls for calm and restraint from all stakeholders. South Africa's economic recovery requires stability, social cohesion, and confidence in public institutions. Actions that fuel division, xenophobia, violence, or vigilantism threaten vulnerable communities, investment, job creation, and the country's international standing.

South Africa's prosperity depends on a balanced approach that protects jobs, strengthens border management, enforces labour laws, combats exploitation, and promotes economic development. The PSA is ready to participate constructively in efforts to find practical and sustainable solutions that serve the interests of all who live and work in South Africa. The PSA is committed to safeguarding the interests of public servants whilst supporting policies that contribute to an effective, secure, and humane migration system.

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