

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA welcomes integration of 4 000 police officers into Border Management Authority to strengthen border protection
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) noted overdue efforts to enhance South African border security through the integration of the South African Police Service (SAPS) Border Unit personnel into the Border Management Authority (BMA).

This strategic move aims to consolidate border management functions and improve operational efficiency. The PSA, however, emphasises the need for thorough scrutiny and due diligence during this transition. The transfer of SAPS personnel to the BMA must be conducted with transparency and adherence to established protocols to ensure that the integrity and effectiveness of border security are maintained.

The BMA is grossly understaffed with an approved structure of about 11 115 employees and only 2 566 positions filled. This leaves a massive gap of over 8 000 vacancies. Transferring the 4 354 police officers who are currently assigned to border protection duties would still leave the BMA with 4 195 vacancies. This shortage is impacting the BMA's ability to effectively manage and secure South Africa's borders. The SAPS is equally experiencing staff shortages and taking even a single police officer leaves it poorer.

The BMA was established to streamline and enhance border security. It is, however, currently grappling with a severe budget shortfall of R4.35 billion. This financial strain affects staffing and the acquisition of essential operational tools and technology upgrades. These challenges are affecting the morale of employees who cannot even be issued with adequate uniforms as with their former departments. The PSA has tabled some of these challenges at the Bargaining Forum and is continuing to engage. It is, however, clear that budget constraints is an enormous constraint.

The PSA urges government to address existing resource gaps in the BMA. The severe staff shortage and budget constraints must be resolved to enable the BMA to function effectively and fulfil its mandate. The PSA repeats the Union's call to the BMA Commissioner and National Treasury to adequately resource the entity to prevent it from failing to execute its legal mandate. The PSA is committed to supporting the Union's members during this transition and will continue to advocate for their rights and well-being. With proper planning and execution, the integration of SAPS personnel into the BMA will significantly strengthen South Africa's border management capabilities.

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