

<b>MEDIA RELEASE</b>	<b>PSA supports investigation of Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS) tender process at Home Affairs</b>
<b>DATE</b>	8 March 2019
<b>EMBARGO</b>	None
<b>ENQUIRIES</b>	communication@psa.co.za

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) as the majority trade union at the Department of Home Affairs welcomes the recommendation of the Home Affairs Portfolio Committee to investigate the tender process for the procurement of the Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS).

The Portfolio Committee on 6 March 2019 recommended an urgent investigation into the procurement process followed for the ABIS. The Committee raised several concerns regarding the contract, which is of substantial monetary value.

When the change in the system from the Home Affairs National Identification System (HANIS) to the ABIS was announced in 2018, the PSA raised various concerns in the Departmental Bargaining Chamber.

“An undertaking was made by the Department that the new system would not negatively impact employees. Noting this guarantee, the PSA supported the implementation of the ABIS. However, since it has now emerged that there are questions regarding the tender process that was followed, the PSA is in full support of the Portfolio Committee’s recommendation to ensure that the proper tendering process was followed. The Portfolio Committee’s stance supports efforts to curb corruption in government Departments,” said PSA General Manager, Ivan Fredericks.

The PSA challenged the Department of Home Affairs to cooperate with the investigation to ensure proper governance as set out by the National Treasury to restore public confidence in government institutions. The PSA further challenged the Department to play open cards on the Visa Facilitation Service (VFS) contract that was supposed to have ended in 2018, but the VFS to date still renders outsourced services that should be performed by departmental employees. “It cannot be ruled out that VFS is yet another project aimed at looting state resource as its shareholders include the Gupta family who is deeply entangled in state capture. There must be transparency in tender processes. Where evidence of corrupt activity emerges and there is a basis to prosecute, such action must take place urgently, and those responsible must be held accountable,” said Mr Fredericks.

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