

Migrant issues, opening of refugee offices, statelessness: stakeholder engagement, with Ministry; Electoral Amendment Bill: summary of public input

[Home Affairs](#)

Share this page:



20 September 2022

Chairperson: Mr M Chabane (ANC)

Meeting Summary

[Video](#)

[Electoral Amendment Bill \[B1A-2022\]](#)

The Department of Home Affairs met with the Congolese Civil Society of South Africa (CCSSA), the Department of Home Affairs (DHA), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) via a virtual platform.

The CCSSA briefed the Committee on the issues facing legal and illegal migrants in South Africa. It requested the reopening of Refugee Reception Offices and improved efficiency of immigration services which will improve the lives of migrants. This engagement resulted from a memorandum the organisation submitted to the Speaker of the National Assembly. Members raised concerns about the presentation's conflation of legal and illegal migration. They indicated that the concerns raised would be referred to the Department of Home Affairs to respond to.

The Committee Chairperson highlighted that Parliament and the Department are fully in support of any person or African brother or sister who enters South Africa if they fully recognise and appreciate the laws of the country. Like any other resident or citizen, when they go to other countries, the expectation is that they must adhere to the rules that govern that member state. South Africa has legislation and policies determined by the Department that must be implemented to the letter.

The DHA and the UNHCR presented the opening of refugee offices, the issue of statelessness, and the backlog project.

The Minister informed Members that it was difficult to say how many economic migrants there are in the country. No one comes to South Africa and states they are an economic migrant. They usually quote asylum laws because they know that that is in the Conventions and the Refugees Act.

The Deputy Minister said that the government needs to work on messaging that urges parents to register their children, even if they are going to be left with someone other than the parents.

He added that certain countries are dealing with adverse drivers that create negative conditions which force people to leave the country. People become asylum seekers because of human rights issues in their home countries. If countries of origin can also bear the responsibility of making sure that they deal with these adverse drivers, then the issue of immigration can also be dealt with. Immigration must be voluntary and not forced.

Members raised concerns about late birth registration and undocumented school children, migrants who are