



MEDIA STATEMENT

BMA CLARIFIES THE CITIZENSHIP ACT AS IT RELATES TO ENTRY AND EXIT RULES FOR SOUTH AFRICAN CITIZENS

The Commissioner of the Border Management Authority (BMA), Dr Michael Masiapato has noted a widely circulated message claiming that a new law, effective from May 2025, requires all persons born in South Africa to enter and exit the country solely using a South African passport, and that failure to comply will result in fines, arrest, or criminal records.

The BMA would like to categorically state that this claim is false and misleading. No new laws have been implemented in May 2025 relating to the entry or exit of South African citizens. The existing legal position remains unchanged and continues to be governed by the South African Citizenship Act, 1995 (as amended), which outlines that South African citizens are expected to enter and depart South Africa using their valid South African passport, even if they hold dual citizenship.

In the event that a South African citizen's passport expired whilst they were abroad, they are advised to approach the nearest South African Embassy to apply for and obtain an Emergency Travel Certificate (ETC). However, in the event that they were not able to obtain an ETC, they will not be refused entry into the country, provided that they have a form of South African identity in their possession at the time.

However, there is no new enforcement directive on solely using a South African passport, fine structure, or arrest policy introduced in 2025 as claimed in the false message.

We urge the public to verify all travel and immigration-related information through official government platforms such as the Department of Home Affairs and the Border Management Authority before acting on viral messages or unverified sources.

Please note that Commissioner Michael Masiapato will host a media briefing this Sunday, 3 August 2025, to provide information and updates on border operations, including the official unveiling of the new BMA Immigration Security tools, which are part of ongoing efforts to enhance border integrity and document authenticity.

The BMA remains committed to transparency, secure borders, and facilitating lawful travel. We encourage South Africans abroad and travellers to South Africa to remain calm, ignore sensationalised messages, and rely solely on official communication for accurate updates.

For verified information, visit: www.bma.gov.za or www.dha.gov.za and please follow our official social media pages.

Operation HI -TIVISE – Report suspicious activities on 0801 229 019, or via the BMA website platform on www.bma.gov.za

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ISSUED BY THE BORDER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY (BMA)

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