

# Gigaba says refugee centre will open 'soon'

## MAYIBONGWE MAQHINA

HOME Affairs Minister Malusi Gigaba says his department will reopen the Cape Town Refugee Reception Office as soon as the Public Works Department has finalised the allocation of suitable office accommodation.

Gigaba made the undertaking in a written reply to a parliamentary question from the DA's Archibold Figlan.

Figlan had wanted to know whether the department complied fully with the orders of the Supreme Court of Appeal to reopen the office by March 2018.

He had also asked if director-general Mkuseli Apleni submitted monthly reports to the organisations, including Scalabrini Centre, that instituted legal action against the department.

The office was closed in 2012 for new applications and served only asylum seekers who had already applied for refugee status.

New applicants were directed to Pretoria, Durban and Musina.

Gigaba said his department had engaged the department in the West-

ern Cape last December advising it of the judgment.

He also said his department submitted an initial needs assessment for office accommodation in January 2018.

"The Department of Public Works provided a project execution plan on 6 April 2018 whereby the estimated time of occupation is 1 October 2018, which will allow the department to start operating as soon as possible after the handover," Gigaba said.

He also said the Cape Town Refugee Reception Office was currently operating at 37.5% of the approved organogram.

He said five fully-equipped refugee reception computers have been procured and installed at the Cape Town office to provide capacity for the capturing of newcomers.

"The replacement of other computer equipment will only be done once occupation of permanent accommodation has been taken," he said.

Gugaba said the department had already submitted two reports to the Scalabrini Centre detailing the steps taken in compliance with the court order.