



Image for illustration only. Photo: File

Home Affairs failed, says client in north

The department says it suffered service interruptions because of an upgrade to modernise its live capture system.

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Home Affairs' systems may be online again according to the department, but customers are still being turned away, ostensibly being told by the department that "we are offline".

Social media users who visited the Home Affairs offices in the north of Pretoria and others around the country have reported that they are still being turned away.

Social media user Lindsay Smith Bossert said the department has "failed dismally in improving quality".

"The system is still down with no explanation – and 8 May is around the corner."

Last week, the 193 Home Affairs offices suffered service interruptions because of an upgrade to modernise their live capture system between 29-31 March, said spokesperson Siyabonga Qoza.

He said due to the magnitude of the software upgrade, "several technical errors were encountered that affected operations".

Yesterday, he said about 80% of the "front offices" would transact and issue enabling documents by Tuesday.

"To date, only nine offices are reported to have camera errors which are being addressed. However, all other services including collection of IDs, passports and processing of births, marriages and deaths are online and available."

Qoza said the modernisation of the department would include technology such as a new national identity system.

"We currently operate in an environment presenting many challenges regarding meeting service delivery standards consistently. A major factor is that the department's footprint is only partially aligned with the location and size of communities."

He said another problem was that the quality of infrastructure – such as office space, networks and access – varied widely from office to office.

Most of the department's front offices are rented by the Department of Public Works.

"This prevents us from modernising all of our offices," he said.

"Despite this, 193 out of 411 front line offices were converted to use a fully digital process for issuing smart ID cards and secure passports by March. Fourteen banks also operated during this period.

"The department is thankful to citizens for their patience, and reiterates its apology for service interruptions."