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'APPALLING STATE'

Home Affairs operational, despite poor maintenance

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STAFF at the Department of Home Affairs centre in Byron Place in Pretoria continue to work, despite an incident that resulted in the collapse of a ceiling and shutting down of the Smart ID section on Monday.

Yesterday, the department said the centre was operational and had already assisted 478 people after the incident.

DA public works and infrastructure shadow minister Samantha Graham-Maré said after an oversight visit to assess the damage that it was clear that maintenance issues were reported time and again, but not enough intervention was taken.

This included issues with the sewerage system that causes overflows, rat infestations and poor ventilation.

"It's an unacceptable environment for staff and citizens," she said.

The party has called on Minister of Home Affairs, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, and Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Patricia De Lille, to urgently resolve this issue and ensure an action plan was put in place for preventive maintenance at all Home Affairs offices.

"In a meeting with the portfolio committee this week, the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure revealed consistent underspending on maintenance, repairs and refurbishment of state-owned properties.

"The appalling state of the Byron Place Home Affairs offices is a reflection of the dire consequences this underspending has had," she said.