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Speech by: Mandisa Xulu (secretary general)

President Cyril Ramaphosa's critical addresses in June 2026—specifically his **Presidency Budget Vote** on June 2nd and his dedicated **National Address on Migration** on June 7th—directly tackled the intense pressure on South Africa's public infrastructure.

When addressing these shortages, the President's core strategy relied on a delicate balance: validating the very real frustrations communities feel regarding overwhelmed clinics, classrooms, and housing, while firmly redirecting the public away from blaming vulnerable populations or resorting to anti-foreigner sentiment.

The pressure across these four key sectors are the healthcare, education, housing and public service.

## **1. Healthcare & Education: Debunking the Numbers vs. Acknowledging the Strain**

There is a massive gap between public perception and actual data when it comes to who is using public facilities. In his June 8th brief, the President explicitly noted:

*"In reality, when one looks at the statistics, foreign nationals account for a very small proportion of users of these public services. Nevertheless, there is a perception among some people that our public services are being overwhelmed."*

- **The Reality:** Treasury allocates budgets to provinces and municipalities based on census data and historical population numbers. However, thousands of people move into urban hubs and economic centers every single month looking for work. Civil society has exploited that this increasing numbers which are not accounted for on the budget come from a direct impact of servicing foreigners. Which most are undocumented and have integrated into the society.

- **The Explanatory Pivot:** A clinic or school that was budgeted to serve 10,000 people in 2022 is suddenly serving 18,000 people in 2026. The infrastructure isn't failing because of a specific system failure or allocation of funds; it's failing because **the money hasn't followed the movement of the people**

Our frustration with the queues and the lack of housing is completely justified—we are living through the strain every day. Our focus must be on demanding that the provincial government



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updates its funding models to match our actual population growth, and that every cent allocated for our infrastructure is spent honestly." This will show a true reflection specifically on the numbers of the true population.

## 2. Housing: Shifting away from "Building" to "Subsidizing"

The pressure on housing and local settlement infrastructure remains an explosive issue in municipal areas. To address this, the government's approach is shifting away from the traditional, slow model of the state acting as the primary builder.

The traditional "waiting list" housing model actually worsened this tension: it left land vacant for years during bureaucratic delays, creating a vacuum for unlawful occupations, and it struggled to verify who was living in informal settlements when upgrading projects finally started.

### Verification via the Automated Housing Register

Under the old system, identifying non-citizens inside established informal settlements is extremely difficult, often resulting in legal gridlock during evictions or relocations.

- **The Shift:** The current model links state support directly to an updated, fully automated beneficiary management system (such as the National Housing Needs Register).
- **The Impact:** Because subsidies, serviced stands, and rental vouchers require strict biometric and legal identification (like a valid ID or legal residency permit), **state housing resources are strictly ring-fenced for qualifying citizens.** Undocumented individuals cannot access these legal, serviced sites, preventing them from integrating into the formalized municipal footprint. But what about the informal settlements like Marry me and the likes. Where CPF members were killed by illegal foreigners due to the social integration? The system has not catered for that.
- A major driver of informal settlement growth is the illicit "shack-lord" economy, where individuals unlawfully occupy land, erect shacks, and rent them out—frequently targeting illegal immigrants who have no alternative options.

**The Operational Reality:** While the housing model ensures that municipal funds and legal land titles only go to lawful residents, managing the physical removal of existing unlawful occupiers still depends on law enforcement, municipal bylaws, and court processes under the Prevention of Illegal Occupation of Land Act.

## 3. Public Services & Municipal Funding: Rebuilding Local Governance



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A core theme of the June Budget Vote was that the Presidency acts as a "strategic center" to unblock delivery failures, but local government must step up. The pressure on basic services (water, electricity, and maintenance) is primarily a crisis of local institutional collapse and corruption.

### *Enforcing Consequence Management for Ethical Governance*

Excellent policies are completely ineffective without strict consequence management. The decay of local government is rarely due to a lack of legislation (such as the Municipal Finance Management Act); it is driven by a lack of enforcement.

- **The Action:** Implementing the Presidency's directive means holding accounting officers, municipal managers, and chief financial officers personally and legally liable for unauthorized, irregular, fruitful, and wasteful expenditure.
- **The Outcome:** Removing compromised officials and prosecuting corrupt actors restores public and investor confidence, ensuring that the municipal treasury functions strictly to serve the community.
- Our law enforcements extort and take bribes from the perpetrators without fear because there is no consequence management. They at the end of the day become enablers of the increasing number of illegal immigration. This impacts the population growth and contributes to the pressures we face under public service.

**The Governance Bottom Line:** The Presidency can clear the path and unblock major macro-failures, but local government remains the primary point of contact for everyday citizens. Rebuilding this tier of governance requires an uncompromised commitment to ethical leadership, aggressive protection of project sites from criminal networks, and a strict rule that every single cent budgeted for infrastructure maintenance goes directly into the ground. Civil society should be part of this strategy to ensure bringing governance into task.

## **4. The Broader Solution: The Comprehensive Migration & Labour Crackdown**

Because public frustration over services often boils over into tensions regarding jobs and resources, the June 7th speech introduced the **Comprehensive Approach for Migration Management**.

The **Comprehensive Approach for Migration Management** directly connects state regulatory power with the economic realities felt on the ground. When local communities face high



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unemployment and strained public resources, the unregulated employment of undocumented workers creates an underground economy that drives down labor standards and fuels local frustrations.

- Historically, some industries (such as hospitality, agriculture, construction, and domestic services) have disproportionately hired undocumented workers because they could be underpaid and denied basic labor rights. This created unfair competition for local South African workers
- A regulation is only as strong as its enforcement. The greatest vulnerability in past labor laws was the sheer lack of physical capacity to inspect businesses
- A significant amount of community tension centers around the informal trading sector, particularly local retail and "spaza" shops, where an unmapped and unregulated cash economy operates outside municipal sight.

Bottom line: The presence of undocumented or illegal foreigners on municipal land directly intersects with law enforcement, national security, and judicial processes.

*The Comprehensive Approach for Migration Management* and the *White Paper on Citizenship, Immigration and Refugee Protection* address the physical presence and influx of illegal foreign nationals through direct, operational measures.

**The Operational Takeaway from the President:** The strategy is a passive urban monitoring. By combining strict border interdiction with rapid-processing immigration courts, the state aims to slowly systematically remove undocumented individuals from local municipalities and ensure that future migration is strictly legal, documented, and managed outside the local governance space. We as South Africans on the ground are requesting for a more aggressive approach and the policy set out in place can effectively be implemented. Deportation approach and then we can start fixing.

THANK YOU