

MEDIA STATEMENT-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEHAWU CONDEMNS THE PASSING OF THE BMA BILL

Friday June 09, 2017

The National Education Health & Allied Workers' Union [NEHAWU] is appalled by the passing of the Border Management Authority (BMA) Bill by the National Assembly yesterday.

Cost of setting up the authority is rumoured to be around R3 billion. These are funds that could be used to fund the filling of vacancies in customs. As things stands there is a mooted strike against the Department of Home Affairs and the department is pleading poverty when it has to pay workers for working on a Saturday, covering their transport costs and organising child care for workers. These funds should be used to improve the working conditions of workers instead of ridiculous authorities like the BMA.

NEHAWU has been at the forefront of calling for the filling of vacancies in customs in order to deal with the work load and enforcement of the laws and tariffs. The transference of customs to the BMA means that it run the risk of being outsourced to a private company, which can only means enforcement of the laws and tariffs is going to deteriorate in favour of profit-maximisation. Outsourcing also leads to the casualisation of jobs and poor pay; which in turn would expose workers to bribery and fraud

The passing of the Bill goes against the ethos of the African National Congress 2014 General Elections Manifesto which gave the new government a mandate of building a capable developmental state, however, what we are seeing now is further dismemberment and fragmentation of the state with the formation of agency to manage our borders. All such moves only serve to achieve the opposite of the developmental state envisaged by the ANC, as outside the public service entities such as these would outsource functions, and therefore deepen labour market flexibility, casualization, wage and social inequalities in our society.

Government has an obligation to build its internal capacity to undertake such key functions as outsourcing them has dire consequences for both workers and the people we claim to serve. As NEHAWU we condemn the passing of the bill and we will work tirelessly to ensure that it does not see the light of day as we are extremely opposed to the handing over the policing of our borders to a stand-alone authority answering only to the Minister of Home Affairs and the President and rendering SARS ineffective in the process.

Issued by NEHAWU Secretariat

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