

Traveller volumes up in 2015/16 festive season

Home Affairs Minister Malusi Gigaba says more than five million travellers went through South African borders over the festive season. He said the 2015/16 festive season recorded a notable 5.3% increase in traveller movement compared to 2014/15.



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Briefing the media in Johannesburg on Tuesday, he said the stats were recorded from 1 December 2015 to 7 January 2016. "From 1 December 2015 to 7 January 2016, a total number of 5 390 856 travellers went through our borders, much higher than the total earlier reported for 1 December 2015 to 3 January 2016, that is, 4 798 183," said the Minister.

He said 1 487 148 of the 5 390 856 were South African citizens, and 3 903 708 were foreign nationals. "There were 2 003 509 arrivals of foreigners and 706 365 arrivals of citizens, bringing total arrivals to 2 709 874," said the Minister. He said the increase in volumes in terms of arrivals was 7.6% for foreigners and 0.3% for citizens.

Regarding departures, the number for foreigners was 1 900 199 and for citizens it was 780 783. Total departures were 2 680 982.

The Minister said there has been an increase of 4.9% travellers from Africa, 6.1% from Europe, 7.8% from North America, 15% from Asia, 2.5% from Australasia, 21% from the Middle East, and a decrease of 1% for arrivals from South America.

The Minister said top nationalities arriving in South Africa over this period were from Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Swaziland, Botswana, United Kingdom, Germany, USA and Namibia.

"The top 10 ports in this period were Oliver Tambo International Airport, Beit Bridge, Lebombo, Maseru Bridge, Ficksburg, Oshoek, Cape Town International Airport, Kopfontein, Ramatlabama and Groblers Bridge," said the Minister.

He said the department did its best in facilitating smooth movement for citizens, tourists and other foreign nationals through ports of entry, empowered by extra resources and capacity including more staff, equipment, information technology support and extended hours for processing travellers.

"I thank all travellers and our citizens for their conduct in this period, in spite of challenges in some areas, including long queues. This is receiving our undivided attention," said the Minister.

In 2016, the Minister said, the department thrives for higher efficiency with regard to managing migration and he believes this will be of great socio-economic benefit to the country.

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