



MINISTRY
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, THEMBI SIMELANE, MP, ON THE RELEASE OF THE PREVENTION OF ILLEGAL EVICTION FROM AND UNLAWFUL OCCUPATION OF LAND AMENDMENT BILL FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS, 16 APRIL 2026

Director-General, Dr Alec Moemi
Deputy-Directors General present
Members of the media, ladies and gentlemen
Fellow South Africans,

About two weeks ago, the Cabinet approved the publication of the Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Amendment Bill in the Government Gazette. Today we can confirm that the Bill has been published as directed by the Cabinet.

We are undertaking this process to review and strengthen the laws governing illegal occupations and evictions. This work will culminate in amendments that will strengthen PIE Act, to ensure it is effective, easier to understand and simpler to enforce.

This intervention comes at a time when we are witnessing a growing number of unlawful land and building occupations across the country. When they occur, these incidents place a significant financial and administrative burden on us as government as well as the private sector.

The proposed amendment seeks to empower municipalities, state entities, and private property owners to respond more decisively to illegal occupations and evictions. It will strengthen our ability to address individuals and organized groups who are responsible for orchestrating these invasions.

As part of this process, we have reviewed key provisions of the current Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act of 1998. One of the major challenges identified is the inconsistent interpretation of this law, which often leads to lengthy legal processes and increased costs. The new Bill aims to close these gaps, thus providing greater clarity for everyone involved.

As indicated earlier, the PIE Amendment Bill has been Gazetted for public comments. This marks a critical milestone in the legislative process as it reflects our utmost commitment to transparency, inclusivity, and meaningful public participation.

We now call on all South Africans, including, ordinary community members, civil society organisations, and all interested parties to carefully study and review the Bill and make their voices heard.

Written submissions can be sent to the Department of Human Settlements for the attention of Lisa Masilo through the following:

- a. **Email:** PIE.AmendmentBill@dhs.gov.za
- b. **Hand** delivered at 240 Justice Mohammed, Sunnyside Pretoria,0001
- c. **Post:** Department of Human Settlements, Private Bag x 644, Pretoria

We have allocated 60 days for the public to submit their comments because we want everyone interested to have a say. We expect the public to seize this opportunity and submit their valuable comments by mid-June 2026. We intend to return to the Cabinet with the revised Bill by July 2026. This will pave a way for the Bill to be tabled before Parliament by late July or early August 2026.

In addition, the Department will be rolling out public information and consultation sessions across the country. These sessions are intended to ensure communities are properly informed about the proposed amendments and are given a fair opportunity to engage directly with the process.

The first engagement is expected to take place on 05 May 2026 in the City of Ekurhuleni (COE). Through our Communications Unit, we shall endeavour to communicate these engagements through various digital platforms, including website and social media.

We wish to underscore that the inputs from all the stakeholders and interested parties are vital in ensuring that this legislation is balanced, fair, and responsive to the needs of all who live in our country.

It is worth noting that in developing this Bill, we have and continue to consult key stakeholders such as the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), Provincial Departments of Human Settlements, affected National Government Departments and other government institutions.

Importantly, this Bill does not lose sight of the rights and needs of vulnerable individuals. It ensures that those who require alternative or temporary accommodation following eviction are treated with fairness and dignity.

At the same time, the PIE Amendment Bill takes a firm stance against criminality. It targets those who unlawfully sell land or property that does not belong to them and those who incite unsuspecting people to unlawfully occupy land. It proposes stronger measures, including the forfeiture of assets acquired through such illegal means and hefty fines.

To further improve the system, the Bill introduces mandatory joinder to the proceedings of relevant municipality, provincial department of human settlements or any organ of state or landowner where the order involves the provision of alternative accommodation, as well as mandatory mediation processes where the municipality

owns the land. These measures are intended to promote fairness and reduce lengthy and expensive court process. It provides clearer guidelines on alternative accommodation arrangements.

Ultimately, this reform is about restoring balance. It is about protecting property rights, supporting municipalities, safeguarding vulnerable communities, and strengthening public confidence in our legal system.

Let me conclude by highlighting some of the key proposals contained in the Bill.

They include:

- Introduction of additional offence - to include those who incite or organise illegal occupations, even where no money is exchanged.
- Imposing a fine of R2 million or imprisonment not exceeding 2 years or both on a person or individuals who incite people to unlawfully occupy land, irrespective of it being a building owned by government or private owner.
- A proposal that a court must order that all assets or money acquired using the proceeds of the said offences be forfeited.
- An expansion on the definition of "Person in Charge" to enable the municipalities to apply for urgent interdict even when it is not the owner of the land that is being invaded.
- That the court is also afforded a discretion to stipulate a period for which alternative accommodation or land must be made available to the unlawful occupier
- That a court that orders the eviction may make an order for retention or the demolition and removal of improvements or structures on the land

We firmly believe this Bill will contribute meaningfully to the development of sustainable human settlements and create a more stable and predictable environment for investment and growth.

I thank you.

