

Tourism body threatens legal action on visas

By [Bekezela Phakathi](#)

12 Oct 2016

The Southern African Tourism Services Association says it may be forced to take legal action to force the government to scrap the requirement for unabridged birth certificates for minors travelling to the country. The association says that despite the government announcing in late 2015 that some of the more onerous requirements of SA's new visa regulations had been eased, including the requirement that inbound travellers accompanied by minor children produce unabridged birth certificates, little has changed.



©Pavel Losevsky via [123RF](#)

CEO David Frost on Tuesday said that the requirement that visitors travelling with minors produce unabridged birth certificates was still being enforced, especially at airports, which had frustrated thousands of tourists.

Frost claimed that about 13,000 visitors had been turned away from the country since the controversial regulation was introduced in 2015. It has been estimated that the regulations caused massive reductions in tourist arrivals to SA, costing the economy billions of rand.

"If there is no reasonable dialogue in the foreseeable future, we may have to take the legal route to check whether unabridged birth certificate regulation is rational. We are the only country that has such a regulation. If it stopped child trafficking, then why are we the only ones that have it?" Frost asked.

Department of Home Affairs spokesman Mayihlome Tshwete on Tuesday said that some stakeholders were "deliberately creating confusion and an unnecessary fight". He said the immigration advisory board had formulated amendments to the immigration regulations, which were now available for public comment. Changing the unabridged birth certificate requirement requires a regulation amendment, which will have to go through Parliament.

"David Frost must make his input to the gazette. We have to follow the law and amendments have to go through the required processes. We agreed to the alterations and we are not dragging our feet," Tshwete said.

The unabridged birth certificate regulation will remain in force until new amendments are gazetted and come into effect. Tshwete said the processes would be completed by the end of 2016. In the meantime, immigration officials, should they be suspicious, are empowered to ask a parent or anyone travelling with a minor to produce an unabridged birth certificate.

Earlier in 2016, Tourism Minister Derek Hanekom said the decision to lift the unabridged birth certificate requirement was binding.

Source: Business Day

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>