

## BID TO PREVENT FRAUD

# Shake-up for private security industry

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**T**HE multibillion-rand private security industry faces a major shake-up after the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority (Psira) announced that it wanted all companies and security guards to re-register, as part of new, clean-up measures.

Benjamin Ntuli, chairman of the ministerial intervention task team, told leaders in the private security industry in Pretoria yesterday that the authority was working hard to "urgently" have Section 22 of the Private Security Industry Regulation Act – which regulates renewals – promulgated to legalise the renewals process.

The authority wants to start re-registering all the country's 1.4 million registered security guards and 6 392 security companies by October next year.

Ntuli has warned that some companies and employees may not be allowed back into the industry should they fail the vetting process.

"Our own investigations have highlighted the high number of fraudulent Psira certificates – which authorise work in the industry – identity theft and the illegal infiltration of immigrants within the security industry," he said.

Ntuli said although 1.4 million security guards were registered, only 375 315 of them were employed and working in the industry. There were 839 crimi-

nal cases pending against un-registered security companies.

Ntuli also called for the establishment of an ombudsman's office. As part of the re-registration process, all service providers and their employees would be screened for previous criminal offences to ensure that "dangerous criminals cannot be legally deployed to protect the public".

While illegal foreign nationals were "lawfully" prevented from entering the security industry, many registered South Africans were selling their identities and certificates to foreign nationals who would then use it to get jobs at "unscrupulous" companies.

The authority found that many locals demanded monthly payments after selling their identities.

Security companies and their employees are now only required to register once.

Psira manager for law enforcement Stefan Badenhorst said 104 unregistered security companies were discovered in the past financial year, and about 853 others were doing business illegally. More than 750 companies were charged with improper conduct for failing to pay the statutory minimum wage to employees.

"This is a multibillion-rand industry... illegal companies still employ undocumented foreign nationals as security guards who don't even know the basics of security," said Leba Mashao, vice-president of the Security Association of SA.