

## **Khanya College Hosts Mass Legal Advice Day Amid Disappointment from Home Affairs**

Viwe Mazwana  
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On 20 June 2024, Khanya College organised a Mass Legal Advice Day (MAD) for the communities of Eldorado Park, Kliptown, and surrounding areas in Soweto. This event was aimed at providing important legal assistance and advice to people who face barriers to accessing these services. But there was a major setback for the programme of the day as the Department of Home Affairs failed to honour its commitment to arrive at the event. This snubbing of the event after having confirmed participation left many community members feeling undermined and abandoned by the Department of Home Affairs

The Mass Legal Advice Day was organised as a method of solidarity, hope, and support to address critical legal issues in underserved communities. The issues range from identity documentation, housing rights, social grants, and other civil cases. Khanya College successfully put together a team of legal experts and community activists to offer free consultations, guidance, and advice to the community members who needed these services.

A key highlight of the event was supposed to be the participation of the Department of Home Affairs, which had agreed to provide essential service and advice, given the serious challenges faced by people, when it comes to accessing their services. The involvement of Home Affairs was seen as an important element of the event's success.

Despite their earlier commitment, the Department of Home Affairs did not show up and did not even bother to send communication that they would not pitch. Their absence caused huge disappointment and frustration among the community members who desperately needed their services.

“I walked such a long distance to this venue, especially for Home Affairs, I had hoped to resolve a long-standing identity document issue that has impacted my life negatively,” said Lerato Mokeona, a resident from Freedom Park.

"This was such an empowering event, seeing people getting help with their legal issues, but I'm deeply disappointed by the Department of Home Affairs not attending this important event," said Ntswaki Ratsoma, a community member from Eldorado Park,"

“MAD was an important opportunity for the communities to receive much-needed advice and assistance and Home Affairs' absence sends a message that our communities are not a priority, and it is painful to see a big department undermine the needs of the people”, Ratsoma, added.

Khanya College finds it disrespectful and inappropriate for Home Affairs to not deliver services to the people even after confirming attendance. The social justice organisation also believes it is the obligation of Home Affairs must serve the needs of the people and

communities, recognising the big impact which the Department has on the lives of ordinary citizens, said comrade Maria Van Driel Khanya College Director.

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