

VFS Global in soup over 'lease breach'

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VFS Global, which manages visa application centres on behalf of the Department of Home Affairs, could soon be kicked out of its offices in the Absa Building in Cape Town for allegedly breaching its lease agreement.



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Although the Absa Building management refused to comment, it is understood the high volumes of applicants entering the building were largely responsible for the breach.

The bulk of these applicants were applying for special permits under the Lesotho Dispensation Project.

The building is owned by Absa and managed by Rennie Property. VFS confirmed at the weekend it had temporarily moved offices to a building in Strand Street after Absa Building management restricted applicants from entering their offices due to overcrowding.

VFS Global Africa chief operating officer Jiten Vyas told *Business Day* the company was surprised when building management restricted applicants.

"We are in active discussions with building management... It must have been due to the overcrowding," said Vyas.

He indicated that VFS hopes to return to the Absa Building after resolving the dispute.

Gary Eisenberg, an immigration lawyer from Eisenberg and Associates, said this was just one of many risks linked to the appointment of a private company by a state department to act in an administrative function.

"As a private entity, VFS comes with no backing of sovereign warranty. So when civil issues like this arise, the company has little to no protection in being able to continue to provide its contracted services on behalf of the department.

"While VFS is a professional service provider, its existence in SA arose from the inability of the Department of Home Affairs to provide adequate counter services to the public."

Source: Business Day

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