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## Brokers slammed

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PARLIAMENT'S labour committee head, Lumka Yengeni, yesterday lashed out at labour brokers, likening them to drug dealers and slave traders.

"Nobody wants to be labelled an exploiter but you do exploit. It is a fact and it's the worst form of exploitation – it is slavery," Yengeni said.

This after various labour brokers told parliament that they were key to job creation, and that they provided skills for workers at their own expense.

Yengeni said: "We know the difference between labour brokers and recruitment agencies. You are not job providers."

An emotional contract worker yesterday told members of parliament how the brokers were turning the lives of workers into misery by paying them peanuts.

The worker, Patrick Busakwana, told parliament how he thought he was getting a job with the City of Cape Town at R28 an hour, only to discover that he was working for a labour broker instead.

The broker transferred Busakwana to another who told him he would be paid R15,50 an hour.

Busakwana spoke during a heated public hearing on proposed legislation to regulate labour brokers.

"Labour brokers are turning workers into the slaves of the past. All their rights are being waived," said ANC parliamentary caucus chairperson Machejane Rantsolase.

ANC MP Fred Gona proposed that the 6000 labour brokers in South Africa "be done away with".

Though the ANC promised earlier this year that it would "ban labour brokers" if it got elected, Labour Minister Membathisi Mdladlana now says the Labour Relations Act should be changed to regulate labour brokers.

He also wants the power to ban labour brokers from certain sectors .

South African Municipal Workers Union legal officer Roger Ronnie said the union was against "any attempt to merely regulate labour brokers".

Cosatu and the SACP are pushing for the total ban of labour brokers like in Namibia.



HARDLINE: Parliament's labour committee head Lumka Yengeni.

“Workers earn peanuts and forced into slavery”

But critics of a ban have pointed out that Namibian labour brokers were challenging their ban in Namibia's constitutional court.

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