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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The House met at Nieuwmeester Dome at 14:00.

The Speaker took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayer or meditation.

**TRIBUTES TO THE LATE MR M G P LEKOTA - FORMER MEMBER OF THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Thank you, Madam Speaker, hon members, today this House pauses to remember a son of our country, Mosiuoa Terror Lekota, a man whose life was deeply intertwined with the struggle for freedom, the building of democracy, and the ongoing search for principled leadership in our republic. And I am quite sure although this is a rare exception that when we extend our condolences to his family, friends and colleagues, we can go as far as to speak on behalf of this House.

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Mr Lekota belonged to that generation of leaders whose political consciousness was forged by the struggle. For that commitment he paid a heavy personal price. Like many of his generation, he endured imprisonment, spending years on Robben Island. Those were years of great personal sacrifice, but also years in which many pioneers of our democracy developed the discipline, political thinking, and resilience that later enabled them to help guide our country through the transition. As the first Premier of the Free State after 1994, he displayed immense emotional intelligence. Faced with the task of uniting a province which, like all other provinces were, at that time, deeply scarred and divided, his warmth, his ability to speak to more or less everyone in their mother tongue, and his passion for the Free State won over even the most sceptical. Mr Lekota also understood the unifying power of sport long before it became fashionable, training in those days with the Free State rugby team and Bloemfontein Celtic, of course always after having invited the media to come and observe.

That he was not to be bogged down by what one could describe as a broad consensus, or a dominant idea, was seen when he later, when the debate about whether this Parliament should remain here in Cape Town, or be moved to Gauteng, a debate, by the way,

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first opened up in the late 1990s, when he forcefully advocated for the Parliament rather be moved to Bloemfontein. I think that is an idea we should consider. This inability and unwillingness to merely go with the flow of course contributed to him playing a leading role in establishing the Congress of the People, COPE, reflecting his conviction that democracy requires not only loyalty to institutions, but also the courage to follow one's conscience. As a member of the National Assembly and the leader of COPE, he played the role given to him by the electorate, holding the executive to account vigorously but constructively. Through all this, he remained a true son of the Free State, making sure that he would meet up with newly elected members from the Free State to impress upon them that they are, yes, to represent their parties, but also firstly, the Free State. His absolute commitment to constitutionalism, and that he saw this as his guiding light, became apparent to me in 2018, and thereafter, when I, courtesy of the then airline SA Express, came to know Mr Lekota fairly well.

The ailing SA Express, that time, had the monopoly of flights between Cape Town and Bloemfontein, which we as MPs could book. It also very often, on short notice, would cancel these flights, causing many of us to fly to Kimberley unexpectedly. Every time

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this happened Mr Lekota would sneak up to me on the bus on our way to the aeroplane and inform me that I was to be his lift to Bloemfontein. And of course I obliged without question. These road trips were filled with conversations, about family and life, but mostly I listened and, was impressed again and again by the person that was Mr Lekota: principled, committed to South Africa and all of her people on the firm belief they ought to be served through a long obedience to our Constitution.

The generation to which Mr Lekota belonged confronted challenges that were immense. They had to imagine a democratic future when such a future seemed distant. In honouring leaders from this generation, we should however not merely remember their biographies. We should remember the ideals that animated them: democracy, accountability, integrity in public life, and equality before the law.

Ntate [Mr] Lekota's life reminds us that political leadership is not measured only by the offices one holds, but more importantly, also by the principles one is willing to stand for, even if that causes you to lose office, status and elections. On behalf of the DA, I again extend our deepest condolences to his loved ones.

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[Ho se utlwahele.] Ke a leboha, ntate Lekota. (*Translation of Sesotho sentence follows.*)

[[Inaudible.] Thank you, Mr Lekota.]

Mr D D D VAN ROOYEN: Hon Speaker, fellow members of Parliament, we gather today to reflect on a life that moved with the current of history while leaving its own distinctive imprint on the path towards liberation. The story we consider not a simple hero's arc, it is a life marked by conviction, recalibration and the hard choices that arrive when conscience meets the demands of governance.

Patrick Terror Lakota's journey illustrates how a fighter against oppression can also wrestle with shifting political loyalties as new realities unfold. It is right to acknowledge the courage of anti-apartheid work and equally fair to note the later chapters where allegiance and strategy moved in different directions in response to changing landscapes. This is not a condemnation of a life lived in the public eye but a recognition of the complexity that comes with leadership in a nation learning to be free.

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Imprisoned in Robben Island in 1974, Mr Lekota's generation carried the burden of resistance, turning personal sacrifice into collective hope. On release, he moved into the difficult space of negotiating and organisation, first participating in the United Democratic Front and later in shaping the democratic ascent in Codesa. As the first Chair of the National Council of Provinces, Mr Lekota helped give the provincial voices a seat at the national table, signalling a commitment to intergovernmental dialogue and constitutional significance. His tenure as the Premier of the Free State brought the realities of governance into sharp daily relief, service delivery, administration, accountability and the relentless need of making promises matter in people's daily lives.

His decision to depart from the ANC and lead the formation of COPE reflected a deep conviction that new political paths could be pursued. Many South Africans will remember that remarkable moment in this very Parliament when he confronted President Cyril Ramaphosa directly. Hon Lekota reminded the nation that during the struggle years, a letter had been written to the apartheid Special Branch claiming that fellow activists had put communist ideas into Ramaphosa's head. In his powerful intervention, hon Lekota argued that such actions had

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consequences, that some were released while others were condemned to years of imprisonment in Robben Island.

As the then executive mayor of Merafong Municipality, I witnessed firsthand how comrade Lakota and the late Minister Edna Molewa, may her soul rest in peace, stood up for the affected communities and helped elevate the grievances to the national stage when their voices were not heard. On behalf of the MKP, we extend our deepest condolences to the Lekota family and to all those who walked this long road of struggle with him. May his courage, his patriotism, his bravery, and his unwavering commitment to the truth continue to inspire future generations of South Africa.

Robala ka kgotso, mohlomphehi Mosiuoa Lekota. Tema ya hao o e phethile. Re a leboha. (*Translation of Sesotho paragraph follows.*)

[Rest in peace, hon Mosiuoa Lekota. You have fulfilled your role. We thank you.]

Ms S GCILISHE: Hon Speaker, the EFF joins millions of South Africans whose lives were touched and who are direct

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beneficiaries of Mr Lekota's bravery and generosity. We extend our deepest condolences to his family, members of his political party COPE, and his former comrades in the ANC and in the Black Consciousness Movement, as well as those he led with in the United Democratic Front.

That we are speaking of Mr Lekota in the past today is a scary reminder of just how impermanent life is, but also a strong reminder that deeds we do will outlive us. Before I speak of the politician, let me speak of the man I knew. I was just a young person when COPE was born. I had energy, I had passion and I had a lot to learn. Mr Lekota didn't look at my age and see inexperience. He looked at me and saw opportunity.

At the time when social media was still a mysterious new thing, he turned to me and said, I don't know what you want to do, I don't understand this thing but build it for us. That trust was everything. He gave me the keys. He let a young person shape a voice of a political movement in a new digital age. That is the kind of man he was. A risk taker, a believer in the youth and a leader who empowered others. I will never forget what drew me to him in the first place. When his comrade President Thabo Mbeki was being pushed out before his term, the room was full of

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people either silent or hostile, but not in Mr Lekota. He stood up alone. He stood up for his friend, for his comrade, and for what he believed was right. He was never scared. That image stayed with me. It taught me that politics is nothing without principles. But if I'm being honest, the same stubbornness was a double-edged sword.

A spine of steel that made him fearless in defending his comrade, also made him inflexible when flexibility was needed. He didn't know when to stop. And that stubbornness, that beautiful frustrating refusal to bend contributed to a death of a political party that was so full of promise. We loved him for his strength, and we mourned the party that his strength couldn't save. But today I choose to remember the men behind the headlines. I remember the long roads we travelled during election campaigns, the ups and the downs, the hope in the faces of people who believed we could change things. I remember the quiet moments between rallies. I remember how he would show up with biltong for me. I remember his invitations to go hunting and fishing.

To a young person trying to find her way, those invitations meant the world. And he never once tried to take advantage of

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me. He didn't take me just as a staffer, he made me feel like I belonged. While Mr Lekota may be no more, this generation and the next, will never forget the role he played in the struggle. As he disagreed with us on the need for the expropriation of land without compensation, his articulation was deeply rooted in the ... [Inaudible.] ... We shall miss him and his incisive mind and ability to speak the truth, no matter what. May his family be comforted and may his soul rest in revolutionary peace. [Time expired.]

Mr N M HADEBE: Madam Speaker, the IFP joins the nation in mourning the passing of Mr Mosiuoa Terror Lekota, a veteran of South Africa's liberation struggle, former Minister of Defence, and a dedicated servant of our democracy.

Mr Lekota belonged to a generation of leaders who sacrificed deeply in the fight against apartheid. Throughout his life, he remained committed to the principles of constitutionalism, accountability, and the protection of democratic values that sustain our Republic. He was known for taking principled stances, even when it meant standing apart from his peers. In this House, he contributed meaningfully to debates, often

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reminding the nation of the hard-won freedoms of our democracy and the duty we all share to protect them.

We also recall the period of principled collaboration between the IFP under its founder Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi and COPE under Mr Lekota, including their joint challenge in the Western Cape High Court defending human rights and constitutional values.

On behalf of the IFP, we extend our heartfelt condolences to his family, loved ones, and the COPE leadership. May his legacy endure, and may his soul rest in peace. Thank you. [Applause.]

Ms J A BASSON: Hon Speaker, on behalf of the PA, we extend our deepest condolences to Mr Lekota's family during this difficult time. Losing a loved one is never easy, and, in moments like these, we are reminded that, beyond our political differences and responsibilities, we first and foremost are human beings who share in each other's grief and sorrow.

We recognise the pain that comes with such a loss, and we want his family to know they are in our thoughts and prayers. May they find comfort in the memories they share, in the love that

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only family and friends can bring. May there be strength in the days ahead. As the PA, we stand in solidarity with his family in this time of mourning. May the soul of the departed rest in peace. May the family be granted strength in the days ahead. Some people die as humans, but others, like Mr Lekota, will always be remembered as heroes of this country. Rest in peace, sir. You deserve it. [Applause.]

Die MINISTER VAN KORREKTIEWE DIENSTE: Speaker, daar is by my geen twyfel dat Mosiuoa Lekota sou wou sien dat ek vandag hierdie toespraak in Afrikaans hou nie.

Hy het altyd vir my gesê hy is lief vir Afrikaans. Ek dink dit is juis wat hom so gewild gemaak het oor kleurgrense heen, oor politieke grense heen. Dit is wat hom ook so gewild gemaak het toe hy die Premier van die Vrystaat was. Hoewel hy 'n bepaalde politieke party - die ANC op daardie stadium - verteenwoordig het, het hy altyd gesê ons moet hande vat en ons moet die land bou.

Natuurlik, uit die aard van die saak, het ons politieke verskille gehad. Hy was die Minister van Verdediging. Ek was op die Portefeuljekomitee oor Verdediging. Ons het baie gesprekke

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gehad oor die afskaffing van die kommandostelsel, maar hy het altyd met respek verskil. Dit is die boodskap van sy optrede en dien as 'n voorbeeld vir almal van ons as parlamentslede: Ons mag met mekaar verskil, maar dit moet altyd met respek gedoen word.

Hy was 'n kleurrike politikus. Hy het COPE begin, en hy het uitstekend gevaar. In 'n kort tydperk het die party 30 setels in die Parlement verwerf – 1,3 miljoen ondersteuners – maar ongelukkig was hy 'n slagoffer. Soos ons altyd in die politiek sê, dis die mense wat die gate in die bodem van die skip slaan, doen dit omdat hulle kwaad is oor hulle nie die kaptein van die skip is nie. Daar was te veel mense wat kaptein van die skip wou wees.

Ons sê vir hom dankie vir sy bydrae. Die feit dat hy vereer word met 'n staatsbegrafnis is 'n erkenning – selfs van die President – vir die eer wat hy hom toestaan en die respek wat hy vir hom het. Baie dankie. (*Translation of Afrikaans paragraphs follows.*)

[The MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: Speaker, there is no doubt in my mind that Mosiuoa Lekota would have wanted to see me deliver this speech in Afrikaans.]

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He always told me that he loved Afrikaans. I think that is precisely what made him so popular across racial lines and across political boundaries. It is also what made him so popular when he was the Premier of the Free State. Although he represented a particular political party – the ANC at that time – he always said we must join hands and build the country.

Of course, by the nature of things, we had political differences. He was the Minister of Defence. I served on the Portfolio Committee on Defence. We had many discussions about the abolition of the commando system, but he always respectfully disagreed. That is the message of his conduct which serves as an example to all of us as Members of Parliament: that we may disagree with one another, but we must always do so with respect.

He was a colourful politician. He founded COPE, and he did very well. In a short period the party gained 30 seats in Parliament – 1,3 million supporters – but unfortunately, he was a victim. As we always say in politics, it is the people who punch holes in the bottom of the ship who do so because they are angry that they are not the captain of the ship. There were too many people who wanted to be the captain of the ship.

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We thank him for his contribution. The fact that he is being honoured with a state funeral is recognition – even from the President – of the honour he bestows on him and the respect he has for him. Thank you very much.]

Ms L M NGOBENI: Speaker, today we honour the life of Ntate Mosiuoa Lekota, a man whose political journey reminds us that democracy is not sustained by silence or blind loyalty but by conscience.

Ntate Lekota served this country for decades, from the struggle against apartheid to the democratic Parliament we sit in today. He remained deeply committed to the constitutional ideals of freedom, accountability, and democratic debate. Perhaps the most important lesson his life leaves us with is this: In a democracy, leaders must be free to think, to question, and, yes, sometimes to change their minds. Too often in our political culture, when someone re-examines their position or chooses a different path, they are quickly branded a sellout. Yet democracy itself depends on the freedom to disagree, even with those we once marched beside.

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Ntate Lekota understood that loyalty to the country must always be greater than loyalty to factions or personalities. His life reminds us that courage in politics is not only about standing against injustice; it is also about standing by your convictions, even when doing so is unpopular.

On behalf of ActionSA and the people we represent, we extend our sincerest condolences to his family, his friends, and his comrades. May we honour his legacy by strengthening the democratic culture he believed in, one where independent thought is not punished but respected.

Robala ka kgotso, Motshweneng. (*Translation of Sesotho sentence follows.*)

[Rest in peace, Motshweneng.]

I thank you. [Applause.]

Mr W M THRING: Hon Speaker, the ACDP offers its condolences to the family of the late Ntate Mosiuoa Lekota, born in Kroonstad in the Free State. Having served under Lekota personally and having worked with him in the years of the United Democratic

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Front in the struggle against apartheid, it is my privilege to stand here and pay tribute to this great man.

His nickname, Terror, was derived from his ability and skill with the football at his feet. In the 1970s he studied at the University of the North in Turfloop today, from which he was expelled because of his involvement in politics. Mr Lekota eventually led the South African Students' Organisation, which caused him to be banished to Robben Island, where he met the late former President Nelson Mandela, along with many other political prisoners.

He served with diligence as the first Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces. We also know that Mr Lekota served as the chairperson of the ANC and later as Minister of Defence, a portfolio that he held for almost nine years. He was part of the team that put our current Constitution together and was known as a defender of the Constitution. He was a man of great conviction, which caused him to leave his political home and form COPE.

Ntate Lekota was respected not only because of his conviction but because of his principles. When he was appointed as the

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first Premier of the Free State, he did not hesitate to deal with corruption and poor governance and hence leaves a legacy that is not shrouded in corruption. The ACDP prays that his family will be comforted by our God and that they will be healed from the pain of losing a father, a husband, an uncle, and a family member.

We salute you, the late honourable Lekota. May his soul rest in peace. God bless. [Applause.]

Mr N L S KWANKWA: Speaker, on behalf of the UDM, I wish to extend our deepest condolences to the Lekota family, close friends, and political party on the untimely death of Ntate Lekota. Today we gather not only to mourn but to honour a life that helped to shape the South Africa we live in today, a man who stood firm in the struggle for justice in South Africa.

I had the privilege of knowing him not only as a figure of history but as a colleague and a mentor here in Parliament. I worked closely with Tata Lekota on the opposition benches, firstly in my capacity as part of the secretariat of the forum of opposition parties, which he often chaired, and later alongside him here in Parliament. In those instances, I came

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across the man behind the public figure: a strategist of rare instinct, a tactician of remarkable political judgement, and a vigilant guardian of the Constitution for which so many South Africans had sacrificed.

He was also, if I were to put it with affection, a very stubborn man. I will miss his stories, his wisdom, his sense of humour, and his unmistakable charisma. I will miss those famous hour-long opening remarks during opposition meetings, where he would weave history and tell a long story before opening the meeting. Eventually Gen Bantu Holomisa would become impatient and interject, and say: Terror, Terror ...

... gqiba, ... *(Translation of isiXhosa sentence follows.)*

[... finish, ...]

... and the late Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi would lean forward and say: In fact, the press briefing is in 30 minutes, so we have to start our meeting. However, Ntate Lekota, in his small but firm voice would calmly reply and say: No, comrades. We must talk about these things. We struggled for this Constitution.

[Laughter.]

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In the darkest hours of our nation's history, when courage was demanded of ordinary people, Ntate Lekota chose to stand among those who believed that freedom was worth every sacrifice. He was part of a generation that refused to accept oppression as the destiny of our people. We will miss you.

Robala ka kgotso, Ntate Lekota. (*Translation of Sesotho sentence follows.*)

[Rest in peace, Mr Lekota.]

We will miss you. Thank you. [Applause.]

Mr S S ZIBI: Madam Speaker, allow me to quote some words, which goes like this:

Above all then, my dear, I am in prison for the sake of peace for our country and the world. I am in prison so that our generation may leave to yours and later generations a country and a world that has the greatest potential for progress.

These were the words that Gerard Mosiuoa Terror Lekota wrote to his daughter while on Robben Island. While many younger people

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will remember that Ntate Lekota in a light-hearted moment for attempting to eat his hat in fulfilment of a political bet that he lost, he was way more than that. He was one of the many co-founders of our democratic order. He was a ferocious organizer. His comrade in the UDF, Trevor Emanuel, once told me how in the South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal, Trevor asked to be dropped off at the taxi rank to get some people for a meeting taking place later that afternoon. By the time the meeting took place, he had managed to find several 100 people from somewhere. And he says the meeting was full of songs and energy. In an age where some of the younger people claimed the older generation did not fight hard enough and gave up too easily, let us use moments like this to never forget how personal a commitment and how much sacrifice it took to get us to the moment where we have a democratic Parliament from which to pay tribute to people like him. May we honour his life by continuing to fight for an ever better tomorrow for the most oppressed and unseen South Africans. Our most heartfelt condolences go to his family, his friends and political comrades. May his soul rest in peace. Thank you.

[Applause.]

Ng M A MAIMANE: Bagaetsho, dumelang. (*Translation of Setswana sentence follows.*)

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[Dr M A MAIMANE: Greetings, my fellow people.]

Several years ago, like a good husband, I had forgotten to tell my wife that Ntate Lekota was coming for dinner. Ntate Lekota arrived as this giant of a person who had fought so much for our country. He sat in our lounge. He, by then had just formed the COPE and was full of ambition about the future. My wife was nervous about what to prepare for Ntate Lekota. We sat eating a plate of rice and some chicken that we had managed to conjure up quickly. And I remember our conversation. Ntate Lekota reminded us that day that, Mmusi, whatever you do, keep consistently fighting for the Constitution. He would say even in speeches in this House, but hon members: What about the Constitution? He proceeded that in years and the many dinners we had subsequently, we spent our lives strategizing about how to amend the Electoral Act. And he was at the forefront of defending and fighting that, even tabling amendments here in Parliament. He would call me from time to time and say, Mmusi, we must keep advancing what freedom has meant for our people, continue to fight for dignity and to do the work that the people have sent you here in Parliament to do. I do not just mourn today a fellow parliamentarian. I do not just mourn a mentor. I mourn a brother who served this country with great distinction.

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Ntate Lekota, kgosi ya me, ke re, robala ka kagiso. (*Translation of Setswana sentence follows.*)

[Ntate Lekota, my chief, I am saying, rest in peace.]

I will miss the many dinners that we had. And to your family, and to your party, and to your colleagues, I send my deepest condolences.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon member. Hon V Zungula.

[Interjections.]

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: Speaker ...

...kuyashisa lana ... (*Translation of isiZulu sentence follows.*)

[... it is hot here ...]

... and I blame the Government of National Unity, GNU.

The SPEAKER: Order hon members, let us allow the speaker to make his tribute. We have switched on the aircons, but I think it is

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early enough for them to be cool right now. So, we apologize for that. Thank you.

Mnu V ZUNGULA: Somlomo, mandinibulise nani malungu ale Ndlu ahloniphekileyo. (*Translation of isiXhosa paragraph follows.*)

[Mr V ZUNGULA: Hon Speaker and hon members, greetings.]

As we honour the life and contribution of Ntate Lekota, a son of the soil who dedicated much of his life to the struggle for freedom, democracy, and principled leadership in South Africa. Ntate Lekota belonged to a generation of leaders who endured immense personal sacrifice in the pursuit of freedom and justice. During the dark days of apartheid, he stood firmly amongst those who refused to accept oppression as the destiny of our people. For his commitment, he paid a heavy price, including years of imprisonment in Robben Island, alongside many leaders of the liberation struggle. His passing reminds us that South Africa is gradually losing members of a generation that carried the burden of the struggle on their shoulders. It places then upon us the current generation of leaders the solemn responsibility to safeguard the democratic values for which they fought. As we reflect on his life, we must ask ourselves whether

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we are living to the standards of integrity, sacrifice, and patriotism that defined leaders such as Ntate Lekota. On behalf of the ATM, we extend our deepest condolences to the Lekota family, his comrades, and all those who were touched by his leadership and friendship.

Re re tsela tshweu, Ntate Lekota. Ya hao tema o e phethile.

(Translation of Sesotho paragraph follows.)

[We bid you farewell, Mr Lekota. You have fulfilled your role.]

May his soul rest in eternal peace. May his life continue to inspire us to serve South Africa with honour, humility, and unwavering commitment.

Sesotho:

Ke a leboha. *(Translation of Sesotho sentence follows.)*

[Thank you.]

The MINISTER OF LAND REFORM & RURAL DEVELOPMENT: Hon Speaker, South Africa has lost a committed patriot and a lifelong servant of the people in the passing of Comrade Terror Lekota. From the

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dark days of apartheid to the democratic era, Comrade Lekota stood firmly on the side of justice, freedom, and the dignity of the oppressed. His contribution to the struggle for liberation, his years of imprisonment on Robben Island, and his service in government reflected a life dedicated to the ideals of democracy and accountability. He was a leader who never feared speaking his mind and who remained deeply committed to the political future of South Africa even in moments of political disagreement. His role in shaping our national discourse and defending democratic principles will remain part of the country's history. As we mourn his passing, we extend our sincere condolences to his family, friends, comrades, and all those who walked the journey of struggle with him. May his soul rest in peace and may his legacy continue to remind us of the sacrifices made in pursuit of freedom. Thank you, hon Speaker.

Mrs D E MPAPANE: Hon Speaker, the ANC parliamentary caucus is deeply saddened by the passing of the former COPE co-founder, Ntate Terror Lekota. Ntate Lekota was a steadfast freedom fighter and a courageous servant of the people. His life embodied resilience, a commitment to social justice, and an unwavering love for his country.

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After enrolling at the University of the North, Ntate Lekota was expelled in 1972 for his leadership role in the student movement. In 1974, He was imprisoned and released in 1982. Ntate Lekota was elected publicity secretary of the United Democratic Front, UDF, in 1983. In 1985, he was one of the 11 anti-apartheid activists found guilty in the Delmas Treason Trial. While in prison, he wrote letters to his eldest daughter, Masetjhaba. In 1991, he released a book titled *Prison Letters to a Daughter*.

After the unbanning of the liberation movements in 1990, Ntate Lekota became the convener of the ANC in Southern Natal. In 1991, he was elected to the national executive committee, NEC, and its national working committee. The ANC recalls that Ntate Lekota had many firsts in his life. After the 1994 elections, he was elected as the first premier of the Free State province. He subsequently served as the first Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces from 1997 to 1999, before being appointed Minister of Defence. He was also elected as national chairperson of the ANC in December 1997, a position he held for two terms. He was a skilled orator, a truly compassionate and courageous public representative. He served in this Parliament until he announced his retirement in the Sixth Term of Parliament.

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We remember his unique voice, his laughter that defined an eternal youthfulness, and his unflinching confidence in his principles. He was a firebrand who remained true to his nickname, Terror, which he earned on the football field, where he terrorized his opponents with his left foot. He refused to let his flame be dimmed, even as he was one of the elders in this House.

Ntate Lekota was a lifelong Orlando Pirates fan who donated his own money when Amabhakabhaka had financial problems ...

[Applause.] ... As the ANC, we extend our heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, and comrades. May his soul rest in peace. [Applause.]

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon members. The presiding officers associate themselves with the sentiments expressed by the members. May we all rise to observe a moment of silence in memory of Mr Terror Lekota. May we be seated. Was that the shortest moment? ... [Interjections.] ... Apologies. Hon members, a condolence book is available at the entrance of the Chamber for members to sign. A special bound copy of members' contributions will be sent to the family to convey the sentiments expressed by the members. The next item on the Order

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Paper is Member' Statements. I hope we remember the difference between the member statements and the motions. Just a reminder. Does any member of the ANC wish to make a statement?

2026 BUDGET WITH NO MAJOR TAX INCREASE

(Member's Statement)

Mr S C SEKOATI (ANC): Madam Speaker, the 2026 Budget must be welcomed for prioritising stability, with no new major tax increases and the withdrawal of proposed tax hikes, bringing relief to households and businesses. The ANC believes we have a good story to tell. For the first time in two years, personal income tax brackets and rebates were fully adjusted for inflation at 3,4%, protecting workers from higher tax bracket creep. Medical Tax Credits were also inflation-adjusted, providing further relief to families.

We are backing growth through increased infrastructure investment and a R1 trillion-plus, three-year plan focused on removing energy, water, and port bottlenecks so the economy can grow. Small businesses also benefit meaningfully. The VAT registration threshold is increased to R2,3 million, easing

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compliance burdens for SMMEs – a potential game changer for township, rural and emerging enterprises.

Alleviating poverty remains a core priority. Social grants increase in 2026-27, alongside a strengthened social wage – health, education and social protection – which accounts for around 60% of non-interest spending.

We are also strengthening opportunity ... [Time expired.]

KHAMPEPE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

(Member's Statement)

Adv G BREYTENBACH (DA): Hon Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Democratic Alliance to remind the House that the integrity of South Africa's criminal justice system depends on one fundamental principle. That prosecutions are conducted without fear, favour, prejudice, or political interference. When that principle is compromised, justice itself is placed at risk.

Evidence emerging from the Khampepe Commission of Inquiry has raised serious concerns about the extent to which political

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considerations influenced prosecutorial decisions within the National Prosecuting Authority. Of particular concern are allegations relating to the work of the Priority Crimes Litigation Unit. A unit established specifically to deal with matters of national importance, including terrorism, organised crime, and other complex priority offences.

The purpose of such a specialised unit is to ensure that sensitive and high-profile prosecutions are handled with professionalism and independence. Yet the evidence placed before the Commission suggests that this independence was undermined by external pressures and political considerations. If prosecutorial decisions are influenced by political interests rather than the merits of the case, the consequences are profound. It means that some individuals may be protected from accountability while others are selectively targeted. It means that the constitutional promise of equality before the law is eroded.

The Constitution is clear, prosecutorial authority must be exercised without fear, favour or prejudice. This is not merely a legal requirement. It is a democratic imperative. Parliament must ensure that safeguards are strengthened, oversight is

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intensified, and prosecutorial independence is protected from any form of political interference. The Democratic Alliance will continue to insist that the rule of law prevails, and that no person - no matter how politically connected - is placed above accountability. I thank you. [Applause.]

THE NEW PRESIDENCY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

(Member's Statement)

Mr G MOTAUNG (MKP): Hon Speaker, something very disturbing has just happened in this Parliament. The ANC has now taken control of the very committee that is supposed to oversee the Presidency. Let's be honest about what does this mean.

It means that the government is watching itself. It's like allowing a student to write an exam, thereafter you tell the student needs to mark that exam, and you go to the public and tell the public that the results are fair. Oversight committee exists so that the Parliament can hold the executive accountable on behalf of the people of South Africa.

IsiZulu:

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I-ANC iyafana nokuthi ingumqeqeshi, ingumdlali futhi ingunompempe ngesikhathi esisodwa. [Ihlombe.]

English:

South Africans repeatedly told that the Parliament is to check on the executive power. Yet arrangements like this create the appearance of accountability while removing its substance. Oversight cannot become a political arrangement designed to protect those who are in power.

IsiZulu:

Thina njengeMK sikholelwa ukuthi ...

English:

... Parliament oversight must be independent, fearless, creditable, anything less than that undermines the trust of the South African people, especially in this institution. We thank you. [Applause.]

BBEE IS ESSENTIAL FOR REDRESSING HISTORICAL ECONOMIC EXCLUSION

(Member's Statement)

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Mr B M MANELI (ANC): Speaker, the ANC holds firm that Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment, B-BBE, is the primary legislative framework designed to address the systematic economic exclusion of Black South Africans, including Africans, Coloureds, and Indians during apartheid.

The DA and some civil society voices calling for B-BBEE to be scrapped or replaced—under the pretext of failure and corruption — is myopic, and advances a right-wing, regressive agenda rather than addressing implementation failures and accountability.

Emboldened by the growing global opposition against affirmative action, especially the US retreat from DEI, the DA and other opponents of redress have jumped on the bandwagon, calling for B-BBEE to be scrapped in open disregard of our painful history. This policy has worked well in achieving various levels of economic participation of black people, with over 500 companies involved in around R600 billion in transaction value. Ownership patterns have shifted, with around 30% of black ownership being reported among measured entities.

Currently, a two-phase review of the B-BBEE framework is being conducted which aims to refine the policy to better drive

transformation, reduce corruption, and ensure more inclusive growth. The review of the policy is intended to strengthen potential weaknesses and enhance its strengths. Thank you.

[Applause.]

WATER CRISIS IN DURBAN SCHOOLS

(Member's Statement)

Ms H O MKHALIPI (EFF): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker ...

IsiZulu:

... inkinga yamanzi emphakathini yethu isifinyelele ezingeni lapho ethinta ngqo abafundi ezikoleni. Kumasipala weTheku izikole ezingi zithola izikweletu eziphakeme kakhulu zamanzi. Okushoda kwamanzi okuqhubekayo la emphakathini sekudlulele nasezikoleni. Siyazi sonke ukuthi ingqalasizinda isindala kakhulu futhi uhulumeni akayingeni ukuthi iyakhe.

Ngenxa yalokhu uhulumeni usephendukele ekuhlinzekeni amanzi ngamathangi kodwa ke lokhu kungenelela sekuphenduke ingxenye yenkinga ngoba kunezinsolo zokuthi abahlinzeki abathile bezinsiza zamathangi bavunywa ngendlela engafanele.

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Okunye okukhathazayo ukuthi izikole kulindeleke ukuthi zikhokhele lezi zinsiza zamathangi amanzi. Umasipala uveza ukuthi awukwazi ukuphakela izikole amanzi ngaphandle kwesivumelwano sezinga lezinsiza .eziqinisekisa ukukhokhelwa. Lokho kubeka engcupheni abafundi ngoba bona abangeni kulokuklwebhana okukhona phakathi kwezikole kanye nomasipala. Nokho ke uma umasipala ubuzwa ukuthi ukuthathaphi lokho okushoyo, uthi uMvikeli woMphakathi uyena othi izingane zesikoleni azinganikwa manzi kuze kube izikole zikhokhela umasipala.

Sithi siyi-EFF siyakugxeka kakhulu lokhu ngoba abafundi bagcina ilungelo labo elibhalwe kuMthethosisekelo selingasakwazi ukuthi livikeleke ngenxa yokuthi isikole sikweleta umasipala. Umasipala uthi ngeke unike abafundi abangakweleti umasipala imali. Ngakho ke sithi amanzi awaye ezikoleni. Ngiyabonga Somlomo. [Ihlombe.]

CALL TO RENAME KWAZULU-NATAL TO KWAZULU

(Member's Statement)

Inkosi R N CEBEKHULU (IFP): Speaker, South Africa is constantly reminded of its history through its special geography,

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architecture, and its names. The past is never distant. It remains ever present, reinforcing itself in ways that are not always immediately recognised as harmful.

It is this reason that the IFP supports His Majesty the King of the Zulu Nation's call to rename Kwa-Zulu Natal to KwaZulu. This is not a new position, nor is it a populist one. It is well documented that during the Convention for a Democratic SA, Codesa, negotiations in the early 1990s, the IFP intensely debated the renaming of provinces, particularly Natal.

The IFP has constantly and firmly advocated for the recognition of KwaZulu in acknowledgement of the Zulu Kingdom and its profound historical, cultural, and political significance. The name we have today is therefore the product of a compromise rather than a full recognition of this historical truth. After 31 years of democracy, we carry a responsibility to deepen and accelerate the broader project of transformation. This is not merely a policy objective, but a matter of dignity, identity, and justice ... [Time expired.] [Applause.]

100% OWNERSHIP OF GAUTRAIN

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(Member's Statement)

Mr S D SELAMOLELA (ANC): Hon Speaker, the ANC envisaged the Gautrain as a world-class, safe and rapid public transport system designed to curb traffic congestion, stimulate economic growth, and modernise infrastructure. Africa's first high-speed urban train, served as a point of national pride. On 28 March 2026, the Gauteng Provincial Government will assume 100% ownership of the Gautrain, marking the end of the 19,5-year Bombela Concession Agreement. The high-speed rail network, which links Johannesburg, Pretoria and O R Tambo International Airport, was initially constructed at a cost of approximately R26 billion under a PPP arrangement with the Bombela Consortium and is now valued between R45 billion and R53 billion.

At the time, the project was one of the largest infrastructure investments undertaken by a provincial government in democratic South Africa. The conclusion of the concession agreement paves the way for a new operational phase. The provincial government is at an advanced stage in appointing a preferred bidder for the next concession period, which will govern the system's operations in the coming years, including its expansion into the South of Gauteng. The ANC view the Gautrain as one of the

country's most successful public private partnership, PPP, projects, with its financial growth and operational stability providing a template for other public service interventions.

RAPE VICTIMS AND CONVICTED SEXUAL OFFENDERS

(Member's Statement

Mrs N L HLAZO-WEBSTER (BOSA): Hon Speaker, how many members recognises the name, Thapelo Johannes Ntwaagae? None. How many members recognises the names, Uyinene Mrwetyana, Karabo Mokoena and Tshegofatso Pule? There are members who recognises them, and you should. These are names that we must remember, mourn and memorise. But I do want us to remember the name of Thapelo Johannes Ntwaagae because he raped a four-year-old girl, last year, and it was not his first offence, he was already a convicted sexual offender. That is why the national register of sex offenders exist, to prevent known predators from gaining access to positions or environments where they can harm the most vulnerable among us again.

As BOSA, we have written questions to many departments who all come and told us that while they have access to the register,

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none of them have used it in their departments, including the Department of Basic Education. Over a year ago, the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development promised the register would be made accessible, yet no amendments have been tabled before Parliament. So, as BOSA, we call on the Minister to act immediately, to bring the necessary legislative amendments before this House and ensure that the register is accessible to the public in lawful, responsible and effective ways. Thank you.

MAKANA MUNICIPALITY WATER OUTAGES

(Member's Statement)

Ms A M VAN ZYL (DA): Hon Speaker, the people of Makana Municipality have yet again been left high and dry by the ANC-run Council with large parts of the municipality stranded without water for days and sometimes weeks some end. Water outages are not new to Makana, but the situation is getting worse, not better. Efforts by the Department of Water and Sanitation have failed, including the secondment of an engineer who was forced to flee with his family due to death threats. The provincial government has given up on the people of Makana and it has failed to successfully intervene, time and time again.

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With five consecutive disclaimer audited opinions and collapsing infrastructure, the ANC has sent a clear signal to the people of Makana that they just don't care.

In return, the people of Makana sent a clear signal to the ANC in November 2025, and they rallied behind the DA in Ward 10 by-elections, taking the DA support from 1,5% to 26,5%, bringing the ANC under 50% for the first time. When the DA governs the Makana Municipality, we will put water first in every municipal budget and protect water and sanitation funds. So, we are reinvesting into fixing upgraded infrastructure. We will also bring the private sector partners to increase funding, improve frequent capacity, reduce water losses and train skilled staff. The DA has the plan, and we have the team that can get Makana working. I thank you.

TWELVE APOSTLES CHURCH IN CHRIST MOTHERS' PRAYER

(Member's Statement)

IsiXhosa:

Mnu V ZUNGULA (ATM): Somlomo, namhlanje ndiphakama egameni le ATM ukunqwenelela oomama beNkonzo yabaPostile abali-12 kuKrestu

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umthandazo omhle wokuvula eBizana. Umthandazo woomama yindawo apho oomama bathadaza khona. Bathandazela imizi yabo, abantwana babo kunye nesizwe uThixo asibeke kuso.

Xa oomama behlangene bemoya mnye, bayathandaza kutshintshe amakhaya, kuphele indlala, ubundlobongela, nabantwana baziphathe kakuhle. Oomama ngabo abamisa amakhaya ayintsika yesizwe. Eli lizwe lineengxaki ezidinga oomama abakwaziyo ukuzincama, bashiye izinto zabo nemizi yabo baye kuthandazo kuThixo ophilayo uMpostile oyiNtloko.

Siyazi ukuba umthandazo woomama uyamchukumisa uThixo.

Kwangexesha lengcinezelo, oomama babengalali bethandazela eli lizwe. Oomama bayakwazi ukuthandaza kume memigodi. Sicela ukuba xa nithandaza ke boomama nithandazele zonke ezi ngxaki sijongene nazo. Ize nithandazele iinkokeli zeli lizwe ukuba zikhawulwe ngumoya kaThixo. uThixo aze ahambe nani endleleni, abe lukhuselo kuni. uThixo uMpostile oyiNtloko anisikelele. Ndiyabulela.

MAJOR RAIL CORRIDOR REOPENS IN CAPE TOWN

(Member's Statement)

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Mr C N MALEMATJA (ANC): Hon Speaker, the ANC welcomes the Passenger Rail Agency, PRASA's reopening, of the Kapteinsklip passenger line on the Mitchells Plain corridor in Cape Town. Restoring rail services is a critical step in rebuilding a safe, reliable public transport network, easing pressure on congested roads, and getting more commuters back onto affordable rail.

This line reconnects communities such as Lentegeur and Kapteinsklip to Cape Town's economic hubs, a lifeline for workers and students and reduces dependence on more expensive long-distance taxi and bus options.

We also welcome the positive rail reforms announced by the ANC Minister of Transport, Barbara Creecy, including provisions for third-party participation on branch lines to unlock investment, as well as the finalisation of the National Rail Bill to strengthen co-ordination across spheres of government and enable wider participation. These steps advance a more dependable, accessible and affordable public transport system for all as envisioned by the ANC.

Afrikaans:

Dankie.

IsiZulu:

Ngiyabonga.

VOTE RIGGING CLAIMS BY MK PARTY

(Member's Statement)

isiZulu:

Nk P P MNGADI (MKP:): Somlomo, ayikho into eyathusa abantu kanye nenkolelo kuNtando Yeningi njengokuthi kusabalwa amavoti sezwa kuthiwa uhlelo [system.] lunenkinga khona kusabalwa kunjalo. Lokhu kwakusho khona ukuthi kunobuqhophololo phakathi. Ngonyaka ka2024 kunokhetho lukaZwelonke kwenzeka into engakaze yenzeke uma kubalwa amavoti. Kwacima imishini, kwama ukusebenza amahora amabili wonke.

Somlomo uma kwenzeka izinto ezifana nalezi abantu baseNingizimu Afrika babanemibuzo. Ngabe kwabayini imbangela yeyokuvala shaqa [shutdown.] Yiziphi izinhlelo ezenza u-IEC ukuthi uvimbe yonke le nto eyenzakalile. Futhi ingabe yikuphi okwenziwa ngalenkathi uhlelo lubuyela esimweni ukuvikela ukukhwabanisa kwamavoti.

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Kukho konke abantu baseNingizimu Afrika akaze bathole incazelo efanele. Intando yeningi ilele ekutheni abantu bayithembe. Thina siyiqembu loMkhonto weSizwe sithi akube khona ubulungiswa kwethulwe imibiko ecacisa konke ngenkathi kwenzeka konke. Abantu baseNingizimu Afrika balilwela ngegazi nezithukuthuku zabo ilungelo lokuvota. Kumele livikelwe njalo ivoti futhi lihlonishwe. Ngiyabonga Somlomo. [Ihlombe.]

SA NATIONALS PROHIBITED FROM PROVIDING MILITARY ASSISTANCE

(Member's Statement)

Mr M N PAULSEN (EFF): Deputy Speaker, the National Prosecuting Authority, NPA, is failing to enforce the Regulation of Foreign Military Assistance Act, which strictly prohibits South African nationals from providing military assistance to foreign states without authorisation. Records from the National Convention Arms Control Committee, NCACC, confirmed, that no such authorisations have been granted to South Africans serving in the Israel Defence Force, IDF. Yet dozens of South African citizens continue to serve in the IDF with impunity. The evidence is often self-incriminating.

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This follows years of ignored criminal complaints, including the 2024 complaint against Aaron Bayer who posted his participation on social media. The 2014 complaint against Deane Samuel Goodson, a decorated ideal of soldier, which remains without a prosecutorial decision after more than a decade of delay, the South African Zionist Terrorism Corridor Probe, which collides evidence of unlawful recruitment, financing and participation in the IDF, to name a few. The NPA silence is no longer a mere oversight, it is an endemic and systemic failure. The South African government warned that naturalised citizens would have their citizenship revoked and that citizens by birth would be arrested upon the return, but these threats remained hot air without a single arrest.

This inaction undermines our constitutional democracy ... [Interjections.] ... and our credibility as a champion of international law, and it ... [Inaudible] ... the NPA to fulfil its constitutional mandate and to act without fear, favour or prejudice and ensure that the laws of the Republic of three spheres ... [Interjections.] [Time expired.]

ORMONDE BUILDING COLLAPSE

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(Member's Statement)

Ms C M PHIRI (ANC): Hon Deputy Speaker, the ANC shares the collective sorrow of the families of the nine workers who lost their lives in Ormonde building collapse, South of Johannesburg. We wish the three injured workers a full speedy recovery. The City of Johannesburg has transferred a full control to the SA Police Service, SAPS, who are investigating the matter. The preliminary findings that were indicated by the executive mayor is that the structure was illegally erected, with no approved building plans submitted to the city. It was a flagrant breach of bylaws and the building control regulations.

We view the recent collapse of the buildings as a national crisis. Three weeks ago, a partial structural collapse occurred at a construction site in Sea Point, here in Cape Town. We, therefore, believe that there has to be intensification of bylaws for construction projects that is focused on regulating rapid urban development, improving safety standards, and streamlining approval processes for increased density. We demand professionalism by the administrators so that this kind of lawlessness does not run rampant. The ANC has been calling for

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this since we started this ... [Interjections.] ... term of the year.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member, your time has expired.

Ms C M PHIRI (ANC): We want to convey our message of condolences to the families of the workers who lost their lives ... [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member, your time has expired.

Ms C M PHIRI (ANC): I thank you.

LEGISLATION AGAINST INCITEMENT

(Member's Statement)

Afrikaans:

Mr C J POOLE (DA): Adjunkvoorsitter, die PA het verlede week hier in die Huis probeer om voorstelle teen die aanhitsing van onwettige grondbesettings aan te bied. Wat die PA egter nagelaat het om by hul aanbieding te voeg, is dat hulle die DA se

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Wetsontwerp teen die aanhitsing van onwettige grondbesettings gena-aap het.

Die DA is tot dusver nog die enigste party wat wetgewing teen hierdie aanhitsing na hierdie Huis gebring het. Sulke subtiele pogings tot nabootsing moet reggestel word. Dit is immers ons plig as wetsontwerpers om nie die kiesers om die bos te lei nie, maar eerder na die waarheid te lei.

Gun my dus die geleentheid om die Huis van die volgende waarhede te voorsien. Een, die DA se Wetsontwerp stel voor dat 'n swaarder vonnis, van tot vyf jaar tronkstraf, van toepassing sal wees, wanneer iemand skuldig bevind word aan die aanhitsing van onwettige grondbesettings, terwyl dit terselfde tyd ook ons howe bemagtig om alternatiewe akkommodasie vir besetters te oorweeg.

Twee, die DA-regering in die Stad Kaapstad is ook die nasionale voorloper wat die meeste staatsubsidies vir behuising aan minderbevoorregdes bied.

Drie, dit is slegs die DA wat waarborg dat meer Suid-Afrikaners gehuisves word, terwyl privaateiendom met ewewig belang beskerm word.

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Gevolgtlik wil die DA, deur middel van ondersteuning in die Huis, die PA motiveer om ons wetsontwerp te ondersteun eerder as om ... [Tyd verstreke.]

Mr M V DANIELS: Hon Deputy Speaker, on a point of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members, I cannot see who is raising a point of order.

Mr M V DANIELS: I believe you, Deputy Speaker because otherwise you would have recognised me.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oh yes there, now I see you hon member.

Mr M V DANIELS: Hon Deputy Speaker, my point of order is: I do not understand.

I did not want to interrupt out of respect for the hon member over there.

My point of order is: I wanted to ask hon Deputy Speaker: Why is it that and it is all good - we take a knock on the chin - when

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the PA is attacked - do they use a person of colour to attack us? Why are they doing the divide and rule tactic?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member, you are out of order!

That is not a point of order!

We are busy with Member's Statements. You can take a point of order in terms of the rules and not in terms of argument. The Ministers and Deputy Ministers will have the opportunity to reply to all members.

We now move on to the ANC.

Mr S H M VAN WYK: Hon Deputy Speaker, on a point of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members, I cannot see who is raising a point of order.

Mr S H M VAN WYK: Hon Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege.

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The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, hon member, could you please raise your hand for I cannot see you.

Mr S H M VAN WYK: It is the hon Van Wyk.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member, I have in fact ruled on this matter and I will not entertain a further engagement on this.

Mr S H M VAN WYK: Hon Deputy Speaker, that member of the DA has misled this House.

When have the PA ever told the masses to go and occupy the land?

No, hon Deputy Speaker, he is out of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member, please read the rules and you will see what you can do if you accuse a member of misleading the House.

You are also out of order and I am cautioning members; allow the House to proceed. If you do not like what someone says. That is fine.

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Mr S H M VAN WYK: Die DA is sleg.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members of the PA!

We all have freedom of speech here. Everyone respects everyone. If you do not like what a person says, it is your right, but it is not a point of order!

We now proceed. The ANC.

HYPOCRISY OF DA MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

(Member's Statement)

Mr S MAHLANGU (ANC): Hon Deputy Speaker, the ANC notes with concern the growing pattern of entitlement displayed by the DA Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Mr Dean Macpherson. The DA often preaches clean governance in public yet appears comfortable dipping into the public purse when it suits them and when they want to impress their romantic partners.

Multiple reports indicates that the Minister took his romantic partner along on an official Brazil, Russia, India, China and

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South Africa, Brics-related working visit to Brazil. The taxpayer cost of the trip remains sharply contested when estimates ranging from R350 000 to claims exceeding R830 000. The matter has now escalated with calls for formal investigation.

The Minister may dispute the headline amount but the central issue remains straight forward: Was his partner's inclusion necessary properly authorised under the Ministerial Handbook requirements and justified at a time when the department is battling significant service delivery backlogs.

Equally troubling, is the Minister's apparent preferences for frequent travel and media appearances over parliamentary accountability. The portfolio committee has publicly expressed frustration of his repeated absence. Such an approach is an unacceptable for any Minister tasked with rebuilding state capacity and restoring public confidence. Thank you very much.
[Time expired.] [Applause.]

CALL FOR A CEASEFIRE IN REGIONS OF ESCALATING CONFLICT

(Member's Statement)

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Mr I ISMAIL-MOOSA (Al Jama-ah): Hon Deputy Speaker, President Cyril Ramaphosa's call for a ceasefire in regions of escalating conflict must be supported by all who value peace and justice.

Al Jama-ah therefore adds its voice to the urgent call for de-escalation particularly in the recent United States-Israel attacks and continued bombardments including in Iran and other regions experiencing violence. Dialogue, diplomacy and justice must prevail over war and destruction. The United States' conduct of depopulating humanity is deeply concerning.

In the same spirit of justice, Al Jama-ah calls for renewed support for the "Bring Them Home Campaign," inspired by the historic global mobilisation that help secure the freedom of Nelson Mandela.

Al Jama-ah calls for solidarity in support of Nicolas Maduro and First Lady and parliamentarian Cilia Florace whose detention prevents her from fulfilling her democratic responsibilities in the Venezuelan parliament. Democracy requires that elected representatives be able to serve the people who entrusted them with that mandate.

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Al Jama-ah also welcomes the support of nine political parties for the implementation of the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid Bill. This step reaffirms South Africa's commitment that apartheid anywhere in the world remains a crime against humanity.

We also honour the legacy of Jesse Jackson whose lifelong struggle reminds us that the fight for justice knows no borders.

However, hon Deputy Speaker, Al Jama-ah strongly objects to clause 3,44 of the White Paper on citizenship. [Time expired.]

HYPOCRISY OF DA MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

(Minister's Response)

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: Madam Deputy Speaker, the problem about finger pointing is that when you point one finger, you generally have four others pointing back at you. The hon member from the ANC, who raised the issue of Minister McPhearson needs to be very careful, because I have been on a number of trips in my capacity as Minister where other Ministers of the ANC have

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had their spouses along with them. And there is nothing wrong with it. There is nothing wrong with it. [Interjections.] The Ministerial Handbook is very clear that a member of the executive may take a spouse or their registered companion on two trips a year provided that those trips are longer than three days. That is what the Ministerial Handbook says. Now, if the hon member is unhappy ...

Mr A D BEESLEY: Hon Deputy Speaker, on a point of order: two years ago, he said it was wrong. Now he is saying it is right.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Beesley, that is not a point of order. Hon Matiase, what is your point of order?

Mr N S MATIASE: Deputy Speaker, hon Steenhuisen must not abuse us. This platform is meant for him to provide ministerial answers, not party-political bickering between members of the Government of National Unity. Can he please take us seriously and take himself seriously and stop abusing us. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Matiase. That is not a point of order, that is your opinion.

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The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: I will start taking the hon member seriously, when his leader starts paying for his own overseas trip instead of asking Adriano Mazzotti...

Ms H O MKHALIPI: Hey, whose leader is that?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Mkhali, you see, you are out of order.

Ms H O MKHALIPI: No, but he is the one who is out of order. You must protect us as well.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Minister, please proceed.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: I would also advise hon Beesley to go and see how many overseas trips his current parliamentary leader, Athol Trollip, took when he was the mayor of Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality, as well as how many overseas trips he had accompaniment with as well. Again, pointing fingers, there is four pointing back at you.

Now, if the hon member of the ANC wants to not display hypocrisy, I would encourage him to be in contact with his Chief

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Whip in Parliament and to try and get the Ministerial Handbook then amended. But until then, you cannot throw stones at individuals who are sticking within the bounds of the handbook. I would also instruct my Chief Whip now to put Parliamentary Questions into every one of the ANC Ministers in this Parliament about whether they had their spouses to accompany them on the trip. That is the result of what the hon brings you. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members, once again, we raise points of order in terms of procedure and the rules, not a difference of opinion. We now proceed to the hon Minister of Finance.

BUDGET 2026

(Minister's Response)

IsiXhosa:

UMPHATHISWA WEZEMALI: Sekela Somlomo, bendifuna nje ukuphawula kula magama anyanisekileyo ohloniphekileyo uSekoati awathethileyo, ndingqine ukuba uhlahlolwabiwo mali lukhawulelana neemfuno zabantu baseMzantsi Afrika. Loo nto ingqinwa yinto yokuba abantu asibarhafisanga kulo nyaka. Siyithathe loo mali sayibuyisela kubo nabantu abadala sabanyusela inkamnkam.

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Ngokunjalo olu hlahlolwabiwo mali lwenzelwe loo nto kwaye lujolise ukwakha iindlela nezikolo. Loo nto iya kukhokelela ekuveliseni imisebenzi. Enkosi.

**NAME OF THAPELO ON NATIONAL REGISTER FOR SEX OFFENCES
POLITICAL INTERFERENCE**

(Minister's Response)

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Hon Deputy Speaker, on the issue that relates to National Register for Sex Offences, we have committed that we will be releasing it. But we cannot release it until the Confidentiality Clause has been amended. This is the legislation that Parliament has passed, and therefore we are working towards bringing it back for it to be amended. I thought it is important because we have got to act within the law. So, we cannot do the opposite of what the legislation gives us as a responsibility, and that legislation was passed by Parliament.

In relation to National Prosecuting Authority, NPA, I want to assure the members of the House that NPA is committed to ensure that the work is done within the integrity. That is why, for

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example, we have appointed an oversight judge from 01 March 2026 to start so that where people have complaints in terms of investigations, they can be able to do that.

The commissions that we have currently in the country, whether it is the Khampepe Commission of Inquiry, the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Criminality, Political Interference, and Corruption in the Criminal Justice System - Madlanga Commission, as well as the Nkabinde Enquiry into the South Gauteng Director of Public Prosecutions' fitness to hold office are meant to be part of our justice system or also our laws to be able to oversight some of the concerns that the people will be able to have.

So, I want to urge hon members that let us not jump into conclusions. Allegations are made, people will have to account, answer, especially at the Kampepe Commission. We have heard those who say this has been happening. We will have to wait until those that are alleged are able to answer for themselves. Once that has been done, we can have conclusion whether anything wrong has been done. So, to jump before even a report has been produced, I think it is premature, and I want to urge for us to deal with that in that way.

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Also rebuilding NPA is important. We do acknowledge that there have been some of the challenges that we experienced and that is why part of the issues that we have done is to establish the Office of Ethics and Accountability, so that each and every allegation against a prosecutor can be investigated. Therefore, I want to urge members, if you have a complaint, please let us not generalise and demoralise those hardworking prosecutors that are fighting cases daily, but to deal with those that are wrongdoing and therefore have full investigations. Thank you very much.

Mr M N PAULSEN: Hon Deputy Speaker, on a point of order: I think the Minister omitted to mention what they are doing about murderous South Africans serving in the Israeli Defence Force. We need a response on that as well. You cannot just brush it aside like the NPA does with every complaint about South Africans serving in the Israeli Defence Force. You need to respond.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Paulsen, this is not a question session. This is a statement session and the Minister can decide on what to reply.

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100% OWNERSHIP OF GAUTRAIN

MAJOR RAIL REOPENS IN CAPE TOWN

(Minister's Response.)

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT: Hon Deputy Speaker, I want to agree with hon Selamolela that indeed the Gautrain not only set a domestic benchmark, but in fact an international benchmark for a Public Private Partnership, PPP, project from conception until completion, taking only 10 years. I think that Transnet is going to need to follow this excellent example as we implement the Private Sector Participation, PSP, concessions for the Richards Bay Bulk Mineral Terminal, the manganese corridor, and also the container corridor.

Let me also agree with hon Malematja that it is truly wonderful that the Prasa line, the Kapteinsklip-Lentegeur line is now open. This brings to 38 out of the 40 priority Prasa lines that have now been completed and leaves us with only two that we will need to complete over the next two financial years. Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker.

SUPPORT TO HIS MAJESTY KING MISUZULU KAZWELITHINI

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ORMONDE BUILDING COLLAPSE

(Minister's Response)

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE (Mr S Zikalala): Hon Deputy Speaker, the statement about the renaming process, especially the call by His Majesty King Misuzulu kaZwelithini that KwaZulu-Natal should be renamed after KwaZulu. I think it is one issue that should be noted and welcomed. The process of renaming places is subjected to the South African Geographical Names Council. We are hopeful that once this process or this proposal is submitted to this council, it will receive an urgent attention.

However, the renaming processes should not be abused for political gains. They should be handled in a fair manner that tries and ensures unity of all in our country. Therefore, politicising the call of His Majesty will not be accepted. Equally, the renaming of places such as Graaff-Reinet, as proposed by others, to be renamed after Steve Biko, should equally receive an urgent attention because we do need to preserve the culture and the legacy of our country.

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Hon Speaker, may I conclude on the second question about the collapse of the building in Johannesburg. We want to commend the premier, the mayor, for the manner in which they have handled this matter together with the Minister. The matter is handled by the Council for Built Environment, which is currently investigating this matter. We send our condolences to all of those who were affected, in particular the four families of Edumbe Local Municipality and the other families who are in Johannesburg.

IsiZulu:

Ngiyabonga Sekela Somlomo ohloniphekile.

COUNTING PROBLEMS DURING VOTING

(Minister's Response)

English:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (Mr N B Nzuzi): Hon Deputy Speaker, on the statement by the member of the MKP on the Independent Electoral Commission, IEC, I would like to indicate that the IEC remains a Chapter 9 Institution which should be allowed to work freely and fairly and continue to operate

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independently. There is an Inter-Ministerial Committee that is doing work towards making sure that we support the IEC towards the local government elections. Whilst we call and work towards making sure that the IEC is supported, we can, however, not support ...

IsiZulu:

... ezinye zezinto ezihlongozwayo zokuthi akudonswe imigqomo nemiphongolo uma kuzobalwa amavoti. Siyacela futhi ukuthi asiyeke ukufuna ukucabangela phambili imiphumela sizibale njengabantu abaphumelele imiphumela ingekaphumi bese sithi uma sesiphoxekile bese siyakhala. Siyacela ukuthi futhi ezinye zezinto okukhalwa ngazo bazokwazi ukuthi bazidingide enkantolo njengoba bebekade befake icala. Mahluleke njengoba bebahlulekile phambilini. Ngiyabonga.

English:

Ms H O MKHALIPI: Minister of Water and Sanitation, please ...

IsiZulu:

... izingane ziyahlupheka.

English:

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The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Mkhalihi, you are not in the chair. The next item on the Order Paper is the statement by the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development on the 30-year anniversary celebration of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

**STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL
DEVELOPMENT ON THE 30-YEAR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF THE
CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: House Speaker, as I start, let me wish all the women judges, happy International Day of Women Judges.

Hon members, on 8 May 1996, elected representatives of the people of South Africa gathered in Parliament to celebrate the victory of the many years of struggle for freedom and democracy. Two years after our democratic elections, it was on this occasion that the Constitution, which is now part of who we are as South Africans, was adopted as the supreme law of the land binding the executive, the legislature and the judiciary alike.

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The adoption of the Constitution marked a significant and irreversible moment in our people's march towards a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic South Africa. Our Constitution did not only codify the norms and procedures of our democracy, but it also gave an expression to the aspirations of the majority of South Africans. Thus, becoming an integral part of who we are as South Africans.

The diversity of the parties that are represented here today in this Parliament is a testament to the enduring legacy of what the Constitution has made possible in the ever-evolving political landscape of our country. The parties represented here today were freely elected in open, free and fair elections, representing the will of the people, giving life to the expression, the people shall govern, which is one of the cardinal pillars of our Constitution and democracy. To truly appreciate how high we have risen as people in transitioning from apartheid to democracy and adopting a constitution, it is important to understand the depth from which we come from as a people.

During the more than 365 years of colonisation and apartheid, race-based dehumanisation and systematic disposition and

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exclusion of the majority from political and economic participation had germinated in our country. The apartheid system from which we emerged was grounded on a race-based hate and white minority rule. We lived in a country whose economy was defined by misallocation of resources in that the talents of the black population were never given the opportunity to fully express themselves in the mainstream economy, thus ensuring that the economic performance of the country was always suboptimal.

Not only was there exclusion of the majority of the population from the mainstream economy, but there was deliberate and systematic impoverishment of the black population through dispossessions and unfair labour practices. As Justice O'Regan observed in *Brink v Kitshoff* in 1996, black South Africans were confined to inferior facilities across nearly 90% of the landmass classified as white, not by accident, but by deliberate legislative design. The administration of justice reflected this design with equal deliberateness.

Eleven separate justice departments operated across the former South African Bantustans and homeland territories. This fragmented structure was profoundly consequential for access to justice. It meant that access to justice was racially

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determined, rights were selectively enforced and the rule of law served the interests of the minority, while systematically excluding the majority of South Africans.

Thirty years after its adoption, an assessment of what the drafters of the Constitution sought to achieve and how the Constitution has performed is critical. Broadly speaking, our Constitution was drafted to achieve peace, unity and stability after many years of painful and violent struggle. Secondly, it was drafted to lay a foundation for a transformation of the South African society to heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights.

The drafters of the Constitution sought to negate the many years of racial segregation and institutionalised racial hierarchy. In that quest, they were inspired by the idea well-articulated by Amartya Sen, who, in his book titled, *The Idea of Justice*, stated that, I quote,

The notion of human right builds on our shared humanity.

These rights are not derived from the citizenship of any country, or the membership of any nation, but are presumed to

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be claims or entitlements of every human being. They differ, therefore, from constitutionally created rights guaranteed for specific people. Unquote.

An honest assessment can only be done by looking at the provisions or elements of the Constitution and the concrete realities of the South African society. Except for sporadic and infrequent ill-informed discontent with our constitutional democracy, the Constitution, hon members, has, in large measure, achieved the goal of creating a stable and peaceful, united country. It was all of us South Africans who said South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white. South Africans refused to let the painful past get in the way of creating a future in which South Africans, black and white, could live together and build an equitable and prosperous country.

Our judiciary has been consolidated into a unitary hierarchical structure that has asserted its independence with decisiveness and stood the test of time as a protector and defender of the people's rights. It is, ladies and gentlemen, the transformation of South Africa in all its dimensions, all of which can only be realised progressively, where we must concentrate our examination.

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It is also precisely on transformational projects that our Constitution reveals its brilliance and foresight. The drafters of the Constitution had the foresight not to produce a static document, but rather a living framework that can respond to an ever-changing legal, social and political context, and the growing material needs of the population.

Ladies and gentlemen, a week ago, we launched the year-long commemoration of this important anniversary. During the launch, Professor Sarah Mosoetsa, the Chief Executive Officer of the Human Science Research Council, HSRC, shared with us findings of their research published in a book under the title, *The Future South Africa We Want: Democracy@30*.

The book's collection of research findings captures 30 years of democracy through lived experiences of diverse South African communities. Moving from QwaQwa to Vuwani, Soweto, Langa, Luka, Platfontein and beyond, the book focuses on citizens' reflections on progress, frustrations, resilience, aspirations and what they want to see in their country going forward.

The narrative blends grassroots voices with scholarly analysis to offer a textured portrait of South Africa's democracy as both

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a promise and a struggle, framed with the broader African and global contexts. I want to urge members to get this book because it's produced by an institution of research.

The study revealed various interesting findings. In QwaQwa, the study found that democracy has been met with mixed feelings. While the benefits of democracy have greatly improved their lives and the livelihoods of many, this is also met with differing voices of effectiveness and experiences of democracy. The high level of corruption that has been raised, the high level of unemployment, limited opportunities, closure of public schools, infrastructure decay and the closure of firms have contributed to the mixed feelings about democracy. However, they are also hopeful of a better future.

In Orlando, Soweto, some of the young people have benefited from democracy, while others have not. Some have lost hope, turning to substance abuse, whereas others continue searching for opportunities for a better life. Others have been able to access equal opportunities in education.

In Wentworth, since 1994, residents saw substantial improvement in gender equality and the relations between the different

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population groups. Opportunities for women had improved dramatically, though many believe the rise in gender-based violence was a consequence of gender equality in a community where men were unemployed. Residents also noted increased mixing of population groups through interracial marriages, settlement patterns and social activities such as polls. This would not have been seen prior to 1994.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Chapter on the Bill of Rights was framed by the drafters so that it treats socio-economic rights just as importantly as civil and political rights. The right to equality, human dignity, privacy and freedom of expression are articulated alongside the rights to housing, health care, food, water and education.

As I've already said, ladies and gentlemen, we have already launched a year-long commemoration of the 30 years of the adoption of the Constitution, which will be undertaken under the theme, "30 Years of Constitutional Democracy: One Constitution, One Nation - Reflect, Renew, Recommit".

Just like the constitution-making process, we envisage that the national commemoration will be an inclusive initiative involving

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multiple stakeholders including government departments, Chapter 9 institutions, civil society, organised labour, business, traditional religious leaders, youth formations and educational institutions. We will also oversee this process through the national day celebrations across the country to ensure that we reflect.

We've also taken a decision that will work alongside the conventions that have been taking place, but also in terms of the work that is conducted by the Deputy President of the National Dialogue, so that we will be able to have these conversations across. The Cabinet approved a concept document that outlines how this year-long celebration is going to unfold and we have shared it with parties here in Parliament. We'll also establish an Inter-Ministerial Committee, IMC, that will oversee this work that Cabinet has approved.

The programme will include public dialogues, civic education, cultural events, youth engagements, symbolic events at historical sites such as Sharpeville and Constitutional Hill, and other community-driven initiatives to deepen constitutional awareness and social cohesion. This year, we will also host an international conference on access to justice as part of

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reflecting on the journey travelled and renewing our commitment to the principles of our Constitution.

I must say, one of the things that we are urging is the reading of the Preamble at every event by government, but also reading of the Preamble by our schools, so that all young people as well can understand the importance of our Constitution. As I conclude, let me remind you of the words of former President Nelson Mandela, who on that day of the adoption of the Constitution said, I quote,

The new Constitution obliges us to strive to improve the quality of life of the people. In this sense, our national consensus recognises that there is nothing else that can justify the existence of government but to redress the centuries of unspeakable privations, by striving to eliminate poverty, illiteracy, homelessness and disease. It obliges us, too, to promote the development of independent civil society structures. Unquote.

It is time for us, hon members, to reflect on this 30 years of our Constitution and to recommit to improving the quality of life of our people and recognise that there is nothing else that

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can justify the existence of a government but to redress the centuries of unspeakable privations, by striving to eliminate poverty, illiteracy, homelessness and disease. We celebrate the 30 years of our Constitution not because it is perfect, but it is a vital framework for the sustenance of our democracy, progressive realisation of human rights and accountability. Thank you very much, hon members ... [Applause.]

Dr K LITCHFIELD-TSHABALALA: Deputy Speaker, I rise on behalf of MK Party.

Sesotho:

Lerumo la setjhaba! Ke dumedise mahaeng moo, Afrika Borwa ka bophara.

English:

Our voters, we cannot lie to you. Those who are excitedly waiting to vote for us in the coming local government elections, we cannot lie to you.

Sesotho:

Mafrika Borwa a matle ...

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English:

... we cannot lie to you.

Sesotho:

Re ka se le thetse!

English:

No self-respecting African can celebrate this Constitution 30 years after. We have had 30 years to see that there are matters in this Constitution that are very un-African. In this limited time, I will go through some of them.

The first one is: Who are elected representatives in this country? Are they inside this room or are they outside this room?

Sesotho:

Ha re re ka mohlala ona ...

English:

... we are all possessed by the spirit of Mujaji One and Mujaji Two, and collectively, without opposition, we all vote for land

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expropriation without compensation, and we live here jubilantly thinking, oh, we have done something for Africans. [Applause.]

It will take one person to go to the courts - two people, or even three. It will take a judge - two judges, or even three to sit and say, "Dear elected representatives, those who account to your constituencies. We are not in agreement with the decision you have taken. Therefore, we are repealing it."

How did we come to this? This is why critics are saying, you South Africans move from white minority rule to a judiocracy or a judicial overreach, where the judiciary has got more power than Parliament. Oh, understand us, please: We are not anarchists; we respect the rule of law; and we respect the independence of the judiciary, but we also respect the fact that this is the only and highest House in this country which houses elected representatives who report to the people - to the citizens of this country. [Applause.]

Another one is section 27(5). Please go look at it. It talks about returning dispossessed land. It looks good, but guess what, it only says land that was taken after 1913. In MK Party, we got concerned. We said, oh, maybe, you know, land had not

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been taken at large scale by that time. So, we said, let's look at this. We were shocked! Over 87% of African land was lost by 1913.

So, it means this Constitution is legalising daylight robbery of over 80% stolen land of Africans. [Applause.] This Constitution is saying it cannot see the pain and the tears of Africans. It is silent on it. But then again, I ask myself a question as an Afrocentrist: What manner of African can even write such a document? Where are they today? I am interested in their bank account because surely you cannot sell the birthright of Africans to this extent and not be paid for it. That is discussion for another day! [Applause.]

Here is a third reason: Section 235 is very innocent. It says that people who share the same language and the same culture have a right to self-determination. Guess what? It is the same section that has been misappropriated to justify the existence of Orania - an exclusionist, racist enclave. So, sections of this Constitution can be manipulated to block transformation: We are allowing Orania, but we are not even talking about the 87% land that was stolen before 1913. [Applause.]

For me, I am like: How did we come here? How did this happen? I am interested and I am telling ...

IsiXhosa:

... abamamele emakhaya:

English:

Go and check who wrote this Constitution. Also check their bank account. I don't think ...

IsiZulu:

... bahlala emkhukhwini.

English:

They are not poor Africans. [Applause.]

The last thing I want to say here is: That is why in MK Party we say without judicial transformation and revolutionising, there shall be no land justice in this country. This is why as government in waiting; we are a party that says we are going to repeal this Constitution. We are not hiding it! [Applause.] That is why this Constitution - listen to this one: This Constitution

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is more famous than our music icon Brenda Fassie in the chambers of Britain, France and America.

It explains thoroughly because this Constitution is ring-fencing white supremacy, white ownership and stolen land. [Applause.] It is not celebrated inside here, but it is celebrated outside.

IsiZulu:

Yingakho sithi kuMkhonto Wesizwe ...

English:

...you know, talking, talking and talking. Let us just take power and change this Constitution. [Applause.]

Sesotho:

Lerumo la setjhaba, ha re nukung puso, re ntshe batho bana ba GNU le Molaotheo wa bona ya makgowa ...

English:

... and put an Afro-centric Constitution in power.

IsiZulu:

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Thatha Mkhonto, thatha! Khiphani labantu Mkhonto; bakhipheni mani!

English:

Even on this one, I am speaking to everyone sitting on the left:

Sesotho:

Ha ba tswe batho bana maan!

English:

Viva MK Party; viva opposition!

IsiZulu:

Thatha Mkhonto, kuyehlela! [Ihlombe.]

Adv G BREYTENBACH: Hon Deputy Speaker, hon members, this year marks thirty years since the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa – a document born out of negotiation, compromise, but above all, extraordinary hope. When South Africans voted in 1994, we were not merely choosing a government; we were choosing a new national compact – one grounded in dignity, equality, freedom and the rule of law.

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The Constitution that followed in 1996 remains one of the most admired in the world. It is a remarkable legal and moral framework, forged in the aftermath of injustice and designed to ensure that never again would arbitrary power override the rights of the people. Hon members, we cannot change our past, but we can most certainly determine our future.

Anniversaries such as this one are not only occasions for celebration. They are moments for serious reflection. Thirty years on, the question before us is not simply whether our Constitution is beautiful on paper. The question is whether it has delivered in practice; and where it has not, what must we do to ensure that it does?

Let us begin with the highs. Our Constitution entrenched the fundamental principle that government derives its authority from the people. It entrenched the doctrine of the separation of powers and created an independent judiciary, a strong Bill of Rights and institutions designed to safeguard democracy. In a country emerging from centuries of racial exclusion, this was a huge achievement.

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The Constitutional Court has, over the past three decades, played a pivotal role in protecting the rights of ordinary South Africans. It has affirmed the right to housing, healthcare and social security. It has ensured that the state is subject to the law, and that power must always be exercised within constitutional bounds.

We must continue to acknowledge the peaceful political transitions that have taken place since 1994. South Africa has held multiple national and local elections, and governments have changed in municipalities and provinces through democratic processes. This stability, in a continent often plagued by unconstitutional changes of power, is something we should all be proud of.

Yet, we would be remiss if we suggested that the last thirty years have been an uninterrupted success story. The Constitution promises dignity, equality and freedom. However, for millions of South Africans, these rights remain distant aspirations rather than lived realities.

Thirty years after democracy, unemployment remains among the highest in the world, albeit that it is slowly coming down under

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the influence of the GNU. Poverty continues to trap families across our country. Crime and violence have spiralled out of control, and we must take urgent and bold reforms if we are serious about regaining control.

Perhaps most troubling of all is the reality that state failure – not constitutional design – has become one of the greatest threats to the realisation of constitutional rights.

The Constitution envisages a capable, ethical and developmental state. Instead, too often we have seen cadre deployment replace merit, corruption hollow out institutions and political interference weaken the structures meant to serve the public.

The era of state capture stands as a stark warning of how fragile democratic institutions are when accountability is ignored. Billions of rands have been, and continue to be, stolen. Public trust has all but evaporated. The consequences continue to be felt in failing infrastructure, collapsing municipalities and struggling state-owned enterprises.

These failures are not failures of the Constitution. They are our failures.

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Our Constitution cannot promise that government will never err. But it does require that those entrusted with power act lawfully, transparently and always in the public interest. Where this has not happened, the Constitution itself provides the mechanisms to correct course – through courts, through oversight, but ultimately through the ballot box.

The question before us today is not whether the Constitution should endure. It must! The real question is how we ensure that its principles translate into meaningful improvements in the lives of South Africans.

I would suggest that in order to do this, we must recommit ourselves to the rule of law. This means strengthening institutions that combat corruption, ensuring the independence of the prosecuting authority and protecting the integrity of the police and investigative bodies. The DA's Anti-Corruption Commission Bill aims to do exactly that. Without accountability, constitutional rights cannot be effectively enforced. We are currently dealing with our failure to ensure these principles.

We must build a capable state. Public appointments must be based on merit, not political loyalty. A professional public

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administration is not a luxury – it is a constitutional necessity. Economic inclusion must become a genuine priority. The Constitution recognises socio-economic rights precisely because freedom is hollow when people lack jobs, housing and opportunity. Policies and laws like the DA's Public Procurement Amendment Bill that encourage investment, support small businesses and expand employment are essential if we are to translate constitutional rights into real human dignity.

We must strengthen local government. For many citizens, municipalities are the face of the state. Fixing local government is one of the most important constitutional tasks before us. We must cultivate a culture of constitutionalism – not only in government, but throughout society. A Constitution is strongest when citizens understand their rights and demand accountability from those in power.

Thirty years ago, South Africans took an extraordinary leap of faith. They chose reconciliation over revenge, democracy over division and constitutionalism over authoritarianism.

That choice remains the most important achievement in our history. The task therefore clear: To ensure that the Constitution is not only a symbol of our aspirations, but a

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practical instrument for building a safer, more prosperous and more just society.

If we succeed, then when South Africa marks fifty years of constitutional democracy, the celebration will not only be about the strength of our institutions, but about the vastly improved lives of the people those institutions exist to serve. I thank you. [Applause.]

Sepedi:

Moh M R MOHLALA: E re ke thome ka go le dumediša kamoka.

English:

Deputy Speaker, when the leader of the Khoi here in the Cape, Autshumao, asked Jan Van Riebeeck in the 17th century, between the settler and the native, to whom does the land belongs to? He was grappling then with a question the post-1994 establishment has blatantly refused to deal with. When Chief Maqoma, after the bloody Eighth Frontier War in what we know as the Eastern Cape, boldly proclaimed, but we are to have our land back. He was not confused about what was needed to resolve the problem of colonial land disposition and the indignity that Africans were subjected to in this land.

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When Peter Nkutsoeu Raboroko, that towering Pan-Africanist, also boldly proclaimed in the 1950s that the crucial issue today is whether the interest of the 5 million Europeans throughout Africa must continue to dominate over those of the 280 million Africans or whether the reverse process should obtain. This is an issue that no social philosophy pretending to have a solution for Africa's social problems can afford to clause over.

It would be amiss and treacherous for us if we were to reflect on the past 30 years without being brutally honest about the kind of societal change the 1996 Constitution has enabled. The truth is, a tiny minority of European settlers armed with advanced weapons, came to our land and displaced our ancestors, killed them, raped our great-grandmothers, and amassed to themselves our land, our cattle, and deformed our humanity. That point of dispossession is still the most prominent marker of advantage in this country today. The descendant of the settler are still beneficiaries of that dispossession, and the descendant of the native are still emasculated, forced to live in squatter camp, and permanent servants in the service of the settler.

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Our fight for liberation was to undo the centuries-old systematic and brutal process of apartheid - African emasculation. Our fight was never to be assimilated into a system designed for the benefit of the settler minority. Our fight for liberation was not for peripheral ideas of equality before the law. It was not for us to share a table to a Groenewald or a Mulder. It was to reprocess the table and rearrange it in the way we see fit.

The 1996 Constitution falls far too short of that ideal. It does not answer Autshumao's question. It betrays Maqoma's prophecy that we are to have our land back. It makes mockery of Raboroko's question about whether or not the interests of a tiny minority of vicious settler community must still prevail over the interests of the natives. It boldly, wrongly proclaims that the land belongs to both the dispossessor and the dispossessed. It enjoins us to take the interest of the dispossessor into account when we want to repossess our land. It proclaims the dispossessor a landowner who must be compensated for having stolen our land.

The past 30 years has been a betrayal of all those who died fighting for freedom. This little transformative spirit, the

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Constitution must have is dependent on the generous interpretation of the judges.

Deputy Speaker, for a nascent democracy such as ours, it is perhaps time we ask some soul-searching question. Is choosing Constitution supremacy over parliamentary sovereignty the right thing to do in a society such as ours? Is the system of private ownership of land enabling continuing inequality in the country? And if so, is this not the time it is changed? Is it ever possible to redress past imbalances without taking forceful from the settler who benefited from colonialism and apartheid?

The vast majority of natives in this country have nothing to celebrate, with nothing to show for the past 30 years. The revolution is yet to come, and it will come when the EFF takes over. The only organization that stands for the poorest masses, the dejected and the marginalized. Thank you.

Mr T M LANGA: Hon Deputy Speaker, the Constitution is not the brainchild of a single genius. Rather, it is the product of a projected struggle to recognize everyone as human beings and citizens. The IFP played a significant and active role in negotiations. In celebrating the 30th anniversary of the

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Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, one principle that has remained unquestioned is its supremacy. Much has been achieved through the Constitution over the past eight years. However, given the centuries of colonialism and later apartheid, the transformation of our society remains an ongoing and complex task.

One of the predicaments South Africa has faced in transforming the lives of its people is corruption that has become entrenched in the public sector. When one reflects on the sacrifices made by so many who lost their lives so that this Constitution could exist, one is reminded that the Constitution does not merely invite us, it compels us to improve the lives of all South Africans.

It would be a disservice not to acknowledge the progressive role of the IFP played in shaping our Constitution, with numerous notable intellectual contributions that merit recognition. One such contribution was IFP's foresight in the Constitutional Assembly, recognizing the Constitution could not fully reflect the society it envisioned without acknowledging the safeguarding and safeguarding the rights and the role of traditional leaders.

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A critique of the Constitution does not signify a lack of commitment to it. Rather, the IFP has identified two deficiencies within the Constitution that warrant careful amendment. Firstly, an amendment to Chapter 12 is necessary. While traditional leadership is recognized, the Constitution short of clearly defining the powers, roles and functions of traditional leaders.

Secondly, the IFP maintains its long-standing principled position on the devolution of power to provinces. Power must be brought closer to the people, reaching even the lowest structure of governance. When communities are empowered to craft solutions to their own realities, governance becomes more responsive, accountable and effective. True democracy requires that authority reside as close as possible to the people.

The IFP joins South Africans in their diversity in celebrating this document that carries and protects their dreams and aspirations. Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker.

Ms M L MATHOPA: House Chairperson, ...

IsiXhosa:

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... mandinibulise nani malungu ahloniphekileyo ale Ndlu.

English:

Firstly, we welcome and support this important moment of reflection. The Constitution remains the supreme law of our republic and one of the greatest achievements of our democratic journey. It represents the sacrifices of generations who fought for justice, dignity, and equality. We also honour the brave woman of 1956, whose courage helped shape the democratic freedoms we enjoy today. Malibongwe!

As the PA, we recognize that the Constitution is not only a symbol of where we come from, but also a guide for where we must go as a nation. The Constitution gave South Africans a promise that the dignity of every person would be protected. That opportunity would be expanded, and that the injustices of the past would be corrected.

Setswana:

Re a leboga Ntate Lekota, ...

English:

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... for fighting for this Constitution. Thirty years later, we can acknowledge the progress that has been made in expanding rights, strengthening democratic institutions, and building a constitutional order respected around the world. At the same time, we must also recognize that many South Africans are still waiting to fully experience the benefits of these rights in their daily lives. Communities across our country still face challenges of unemployment, crime, inequality, and service delivery, but this is precisely why the Constitution remains so important. It gives us a framework and responsibility to continue improving the lives of our people.

The PA believes this moment calls for renewed commitment from all of us in government to ensure that the principles of this Constitution translate into real change on the ground. Human rights must be reflected in safer communities, functioning municipalities, quality health care, and real opportunities for our young people.

We therefore support the commemoration of Human Rights Month, not only as a time to remember our history, but as a call for all of us in government to work together to strengthen delivery, accountability, and dignity for every South African. In that

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spirit, we recommend ourselves to the Constitution and to build a country where its values are experienced, not only in law, but in the everyday lives of our people.

IsiZulu:

Ngiyabonga.

Mrs H DENNER: House Chair, the South African Constitution has stand as the supreme law of our land for 30 years - a world-renowned document intended to serve as a bridge from a past of injustice to a future of a shared dignity. Upholding its principles is not merely a legal obligation; it is a fundamental requirement for our survival as a nation.

However, three decades later, this miracle document is increasingly a hollow promise for millions. While the framework remains durable in high courts, the very custodians sworn to protect it have trampled on its essence through corruption and uneven implementation.

The Bill of Rights explicitly entitles every citizen to basic services like water and a dignified life. Yet, in countless local municipalities, predominantly ANC-led, these rights are

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treated as meaningless ornaments. We see the evidence of this betrayal in the collapse of local government management, where South Africans are forced to live with dry taps, sewage flowing freely between their houses and no access to electricity or basic services.

This is a reality felt most sharply by those whose material circumstances have not shifted despite 30 years of democracy. The law has advanced with speed, but the daily lives of the poor are neglected by a leadership that has failed to sustain the administrative conditions necessary for constitutional rights to take effect.

Afrikaans:

Die ANC misbruik dikwels ook die Grondwet as 'n instrument om hulle uitgediende politieke ideologie te regverdig. Onlangs het die agb Minister Lamola byvoorbeeld, in hierdie Huis voorgegee dat die Grondwet swart ekonomiese bemagtiging absoluut verplig, maar dit is 'n verdraaiing van die feite. Artikel 9(2) bepaal dat maatreëls getref kan word om gelykheid te bevorder. Dit is 'n diskresionêre bevoegdheid, nie 'n voorgeskrewe verpligting soos in die geval van die woord "moet" nie.

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Met ander woorde, dit is 'n keuse van die ANC om drakoniese wetgewing, wat nie werk nie, op sommige van die gelykes in hierdie land tot nadeel van al die gelykes in hierdie land teen die jaarlikse koste van R200 miljard af te dwing, alles in die naam van die Grondwet.

Die ANC-regering fokus eensydig op die regstelling van ongeregthede in die aanhef van die Grondwet, terwyl hulle die res van die teks, wat lui dat Suid-Afrika aan almal behoort wat daarin woon, om gerieflikheidshalwe ignoreer.

Dit is die ideologiese misbruik en ondermyning van die Grondwet, waar dit 'n politieke skild geword het vir mislukte beleid van nasiebou, en die land ekonomies kniehalter. Dit is 'n klad op die naam van hierdie dokument, waarvan ons die 30-jaar-bestaan vanjaar herdenk, en doen afbreuk daaraan.

Diegene wat hul daaraan skuldig maak, behoort hulself ook tegelykertyd te skaam oor die afbreuk wat hulle aan die Grondwet en die demokratiese bestel van die land doen. Ek dank u.

Ms L M NGOBENI: House Chairperson, a constitution must evolve with the aspirations of its citizens. As we mark 30 years since

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the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, our supreme law borne of one of the most extraordinary democratic transitions in modern history, we must ask ourselves a difficult question: Is our Constitution alive in the daily lives of the people it was meant to serve?

If the Constitution truly lives in the lives of citizens, then South Africans should feel its protections. They should feel it in their safety. They should feel it in their access to economic opportunity. We should feel it in the protection of our borders and natural sovereignty. Yet today, millions of South Africans are asking whether the state still has the will to enforce the very laws that give meaning to the Constitution.

The movement of illegal immigrants and illicit goods continues largely unchecked. Our borders remain porous, our immigration system is compromised by corruption and dysfunction, and ordinary South Africans, particularly the poor, are the ones who feel the pressure first. When citizens begin to feel that the state cannot control who enters the country, they cannot enforce its own laws. To that end, Action SA supports formations like March and March, led by Jacinta Ngobeze, because our Constitution was never intended to be passive.

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It was designed as a living framework, capable of evolving as our democracy matures and as aspirations of South Africans change. That is why it allows for amendments, not because it is weak, but because a living democracy must respond to the lived realities of its people. And the reality today is that South Africans are demanding a state that protects them, not one that pacifies them, a state that enforces its laws against illegality and lawlessness, a state that understands that constitutional rights and national sovereignty are not in conflict, they are mutually reinforcing.

Thirty years ago, South Africans chose a constitutional path that rejected division and embraced the rule of law, but the rule of law must apply to everyone, not one that manipulates citizens by calling them xenophobic.

If the Constitution is to remain meaningful, it must remain relevant to the citizens whose lives it was meant to improve, because a constitution is not alive in courtrooms or in commemorations. A constitution should be alive only when it puts South Africans first. I thank you.

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Rev K R J MESHOE: Hon Chairperson, hon members, this year marks 30 years since our Constitution was adopted. Since its adoption, it has been hailed all over the world as one of the most liberal and forward-looking constitutions. We appreciate the fact that everyone is equal before the law according to the Constitution. Human rights should be respected, and the rule of law must stand.

For those who may not know, the ACDP was the only political party in Parliament that voted against the adoption of the South African Constitution in 1996. There were a number of reasons for this, and I will highlight just a few.

Firstly, human rights are not balanced with personal responsibilities. Secondly, its failure to distinguish between rights that should only be enjoyed by citizens of the country and those who are not citizens. For example, section 19, 20 and 21 (3) and (4) refer to every citizen having specific rights, while section 27 states that everyone has the right to have access to a number of social privileges. We believe that access to these social privileges should be limited to citizens only, as is practiced in other democratic countries. In the President's Sona speech, he said, and I quote: "Our schools and

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hospitals should make no distinction between those arriving at their doors." This surprised me.

As we all know, there are confrontations that have happened and are happening at schools and hospitals where people are fighting over free resources. Illegal immigrants have been accused of receiving free access to education and health care when our own citizens are struggling to access them. We believe this must change.

The Constitution did give us a strong base for democracy, but Parliament has not always done its job well in terms of accountability and oversight. We all know the truth. When it comes to corruption and regard for the sanctity of human life, South Africa's name is not held in high esteem.

Transparency International put South Africa at number 63 out of 182 countries on corruption. SAPS statistics show that crime is still very high in the country. We have an average of 64 murders every day.

People live in fear, and they feel Parliament has let them down, and we believe this must change. As the ACDP, we celebrate the

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vision of the Constitution but also call for a fresh commitment to some demands. Parliament must rise above party politics and self-interest and make sure ... [Time expired.]

Xitsonga:

Tat S M GANA: Ndza Khensa, Mutshamaxitulu.

English:

Hon members, as we mark 30 years of our Constitution, we must reflect not only on how far we have come, but also on how far we still need to go. We must never forget where we come from, not for the sake of victimhood or nostalgia, but because the past is what we are waiting to correct and it is an era we must never return to.

The work we do in this House and in our constituencies must always be about building a South Africa we all deserve, a South Africa that is safe, prosperous, equal, and united. I was 13 years old when the Constitution was signed into law. At the time, there was a deliberate national effort to educate people about what the Constitution meant and how it could improve their lives.

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Communities were encouraged to understand their rights and responsibilities under a democratic order. Thirty years later, we risk taking that knowledge for granted. A new generation has grown up in freedom, but freedom cannot simply be inherited; it must be understood.

The Constitution cannot live only in courtrooms or textbooks. It must live in the minds of our young people and in the daily lives of our communities. Understanding the Constitution cannot be assumed, it must be taught and passed from one generation to the next. Our Constitution calls on us to recognise the injustices of our past and to heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights.

We can say with pride that our democracy has endured, our institutions remain standing and our Constitution remains the supreme law of the land. Millions now enjoy rights and freedoms that were once denied, but the promise of the Constitution remains unfinished.

The Constitution belongs to us all, just as this land belongs to us all, yet land and spatial apartheid remain deeply visible in

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our cities and towns. Poor communities remain largely black, while wealth remains concentrated elsewhere.

This is the legacy of legislative discrimination and it requires deliberate and lawful action to correct. Those who sacrificed for this Constitution did not do so for the status quo; they did so for a promise.

Thirty years later, we must renew that promise. Democracy and freedom are not once-off achievements, they are responsibilities that we must work on every day. Let us therefore continue to work on building a South Africa where no graduates are idle, no child goes hungry and no citizen is left behind in the shadows of our past.

Xitsonga:

Ndza khensa, Mutshamaxitulu.

Dr M A MAIMANE: Hon members, as we reflect on today and 30 years of democracy, I think South Africa can sit back and have much to celebrate. Democracies all over the world are being challenged. Populists are rising everywhere. The idea of voting seems to be something we dare forget. But what is truth is, as a country,

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we've been able to successfully hold elections, remove leaders, have peaceful transfer of power. All of these are a function of a rule-based order and an upholding of the Constitution.

Therefore, as South Africans, we need to stand strong and proud of those, that we reject this notion that says constitutions must be discarded. But along with that, what does it mean to be a true defender of the Constitution? Many of us come into this House and on the first day you take an oath to defend the Constitution. The President takes an oath to defend the Constitution. So, what we must do if we are truly going to be defenders of the Constitution, there are a number of things that we must do.

We must defend the institutions that come from the Constitution. It cannot be, hon members, that when whistle-blowers stand up and raise corruption, we sit back and watch the Babitas die and not do anything. It is our failure to defend the Constitution.

I would argue furthermore that, when state capture commissions eventually say that there are members who come to this House and have been found guilty in State Capture Commission, in acts of corruption, I would argue that they are not defending the

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Constitution. You can't state to stand for the oath of office and then come and be a lawbreaker and sit in this House, hon members.

The third issue I want to raise is the fact that the President speaks at the Zondo Commission and says perhaps it's about time that we amend the Electoral Act to enforce accountability. I would say if we genuinely wanted to protect the Constitution over a long period of time, let us amend the Electoral Act as the Constitutional Court has directed us to have a direct election of the President. Because then the President will be accountable to the people. So, when that preamble says, "We the people" it doesn't say, we the parties, it must say, "We the people."

Lastly, if we are going to defend the Constitution and its Bill of Rights, citizens cannot sit and say, we don't eat the Constitution. We must do better at delivering an education that empowers our citizens, a health care that protects our people, and make sure that our citizens are safe. For if we fail on that duty, citizens will look back and say, what then is the point of this Constitution? Hon members, we must choose today, are we

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defenders of the Constitutions or opponents thereof? I thank you very much.

IsiXhosa:

Mnu V ZUNGULA: Sihlalo weNdlu mandibulise.

English:

South Africans made constitutional amendment proposals to Parliament last year. To date, Parliament has failed to meaningfully respond to these submissions, nor inform the public on the process to be followed to deliberate on these submissions. This raises concerns about compliance to section 59(1) (a) of the Constitution, which requires the National Assembly to facilitate public involvement in its processes.

Public participation cannot be treated as a symbolic exercise; it must be meaningful. South Africans have a right to be heard in matters pertaining to the Constitution. Parliament must demonstrate that the voices of the citizens are taken seriously in the constitutional review process. We expect that after this sitting, Parliament must inform citizens where is the constitutional review process, because the citizens are very clear on the following amendments that must be made to the

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Constitution. Number one, the name South Africa, it is rooted on colonial history and geographical description. It does not reflect the self-determined identity of our people. When you identify as a South African, you are identifying based on ...

IsiXhosa:

... igama owalinikwayo ...

English:

... by a settler and the coloniser.

Section 19(3) (a) and (b) which speaks about political rights, the current wording of section 19(3) allows any naturalised citizen to run for public office, regardless of how long they've been in South Africa. Meaning, you can be a citizen for five years, and with enough money you can even become President.

Section 25(7), which speaks to land reform, the current cut-off date, which is 1913, for addressing land dispossession, ignores centuries of colonial theft that started in 1652. This perpetuates injustice as it fails to address the root causes of today's inequalities.

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Also on section 25, we must ban foreign nationals from owning land. The Constitution must be amended to prohibit foreign nationals from owning land in South Africa.

IsiXhosa:

Njengokuba sithetha nje ...

English:

... South Africans, especially ...

IsiXhosa:

... apha eKapa, baphefumla ngenxeba zezi ...

English:

... digital nomads who have increased and inflated prices. Lastly on section 25, there must be explicit provisions to secure South Africa's natural resources for its people. South Africa is rich with minerals, but black South Africans in particular are poor ...

IsiXhosa:

... ngenxa yalo Mgaqo-siseko wamaNgesi.

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English:

We are saying as the ATM, the Constitution must be amended instead of coming every year, coming to celebrate the Constitution ...

IsiXhosa:

... mayitshintshwe.

Mr I ISMAIL-MOOSA: *As-salaamu-alai-kum* [Peace be with you] in the name of Almighty, the most gracious, the most merciful. Hon House Chair, beloved family of South Africans, 2026 marks 30 years since the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Our Constitution is a historic document that transformed our country from a system of oppression and exclusion into a democratic state founded on human dignity, equality, and freedom.

Since its adoption, it represented the culmination of decades of struggle, sacrifice, and negotiation. Millions of South Africans contributed to its development through one of the most inclusive Constitution-making processes in modern history. It became a covenant between the people and the state. a promise that never

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again would injustice, discrimination, and abuse of power define our nation.

Hon members, when the Constitution was signed into law in Sharpeville on 10 December 1996, it carried deep historical meaning. A place once associated with tragedy became a symbol of justice, reconciliation, and hope. For 30 years, our Constitution has served as a moral compass of our democracy, protecting rights and guiding governance.

However, we must also speak honestly. For many South Africans, the full promise of the Constitution has not yet been fulfilled. Persistent poverty, unemployment, corruption, inequality, and gender-based violence continue to undermine the dignity and rights that our Constitution guarantees. For millions of citizens, constitutional rights must still translate into real change in their daily lives.

The Constitution calls upon us through restorative justice to yield the divisions of the past and build a society based on democratic values, social justice, and fundamental human rights. The responsibility lies with us all.

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Al Jama-ah therefore supports initiatives that promote constitutional literacy, civic education, and youth engagement because the next generation must understand that past injustice led to the adoption of our Constitution as a supreme law, in order to defend the values and the legacy of our democracy. A Constitution cannot live only in courtrooms or legal texts. It must live in Parliament, in this House, guiding our decisions and legislative process. It must live in the conduct of leaders, the accountability of institutions, and the everyday experiences of citizens.

As we commemorate 30 years of constitutional democracy, let us not only celebrate the progress we have made as a nation. Let us reflect honestly, renew our commitment, and recommit ourselves to building a just, ethical society where the Constitution truly serves every South African as it was intended. Al Jama-ah remains committed to ... Malibongwe! [Praise!] [Time expired.]

Dr L W MAHLATSI: Hon Chairperson, ...

Sesotho:

... kgotso, Maafrika.

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English:

Unity ...

IsiXhosa:

... Ma-Afrika.

English:

I must respectfully differ with the Minister on the state of justice in our country. The reality is that the institution entrusted with defending the rule of law, particularly the National Prosecuting Authority, is increasingly losing the confidence of the people. Many South Africans perceive the National Prosecuting Authority, NPA as deeply compromised, an institution that at times appears entangled with a powerful interest, including politically connected individuals and well-resourced business actors.

Such perceptions strike at the heart of the constitutional promise of equality before the law and due process, a principle embedded in the Constitution of the Republic in 1996. It becomes even more troubling when bail is opposed while investigations remain incomplete, raising serious question about adherence to the fair criminal procedure and the protection of individual

rights. If constitutional justice is to remain credible, the institution tasked with enforcing the law must themselves be beyond reproach.

Sesotho:

Ka letsatsi le leng, re tla kopana mabaleng.

English:

... because ultimately, the truth of justice must prevail because of the court of the people.

The Minister herself considered that although the constitutional framework has advanced significantly, its implementation has often fallen short of its aspiration. Many communities, particularly the historically oppressed black majority, have not experienced the pace of transformation envisioned by the Constitution. This admission should not be taken lightly. After three decades of constitutional democracy, South Africans continue to face deep structural inequalities, high unemployment, landlessness, partial injustice and widespread poverty. This condition raised legitimate concern about whether the constitutional project has effectively dismantled the economic legacy of apartheid.

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The Constitution must be measured by the lived experiences of our people. If millions of South Africans remain without adequate housing, quality education, economic opportunities, then the promise of socioeconomic rights contained in the Constitution remains incomplete. The contradiction we face today is clear, our constitutional democracy has advanced significantly in legal terms, but less in socioeconomic transformation.

The Minister correctly identified corruption, resource constraints, and uneven implementation as key obstacles that has slowed the realisation of the constitutional rights. But we must go further in our critique ... [Time expired.]

Xitsonga:

Khanimambo!

Mr O M MATHAFA: House Chair, members, it gives me great pleasure to stand on behalf of the ANC as we reflect on 30 years of our constitutional democracy. The anniversary invites us to reflect on a historic vision carried forward by the ANC and the broader liberation movement through decades of struggle against colonialism and apartheid. The vision ultimately found legal

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expression in the Constitution adopted in 1996, the supreme law of the Republic, which boldly proclaims that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.

Thirty years later, this moment provides us with an opportunity to take stock of the progress that has been achieved while also reflecting on the road that still lies ahead in realising the ideals envisioned in the Constitution.

Hon members, there are those who argue that the Constitution has failed because it has not, within 30 years, undone what was entrenched over centuries of colonialism and apartheid. Such arguments often overlook an important historical reality.

The system of colonial rule and apartheid was deliberately designed to subjugate, exclude, and dominate the majority of our people. By contrast, the Constitution is founded on an entirely different set of principles, reconciliation, human dignity, equality, and justice. It is therefore important that we approach our analysis with historical context and intellectual honesty.

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We must not compare systems designed for oppression with a constitutional framework designed for transformation. In that regard, we welcome the reflections made by hon Minister on the significance of the past 30 years. Indeed, South Africa has used the constitutional framework to dismantle apartheid law, expand access to justice, establish independent institutions, and entrench a culture of human rights.

The truth is that our constitutional democracy has achieved remarkable progress over the past three decades. Millions of households have gained access to electricity, housing, and clean water. Our courts remain independent and continue to protect the rights of the most vulnerable in our society.

Institutions created by the Constitution ensure oversight, transparency, and accountability within our democratic system. Social protection measures now reach more than 18 million South Africans, helping to reduce extreme poverty. These achievements are not abstract.

They are the material expression of the values embedded in our Constitution. However, while we celebrate these gains, we must also acknowledge that the transformative promise of the

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Constitution has not yet been fully realised. The structural legacy of apartheid continues to shape the economic and social realities of our country.

Many black South Africans, particularly the poor, remain excluded from full participation in the economy and broader social life of the nation. At the heart of our constitutional project lies the idea of transformative constitutionalism. Transformative constitutionalism recognises that the law and democratic institutions must actively transform society by dismantling the structural injustices inherited from colonialism and apartheid.

Our Constitution mandates us to advance human dignity, achieve equality, expand freedom, and progressively realise the socioeconomic rights such as housing, healthcare, education, and social security. This vision recognises that democracy cannot merely be political. It must also be social and economic.

Freedom must translate into justice in everyday lives of our people. Yet, despite our democratic transition, deep structural inequality continues to define South African society.

Recognising this reality is not a rejection of the Constitution.

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Rather, it is a call to deepen the constitutional project. As grassroots activist and leader of the Shared Dwellers Movement, S'bu Zikode reminds us in his reflections on law from below, the Constitution does not live only in courtrooms, law libraries, or parliamentary chambers. It lives in the daily struggles of ordinary people who instinct their dignity and their rights.

The movement he leads, Abahlali baseMjondolo, reminds us that constitutional democracy is stronger when it listens to those on the margins of society. Section 9(2) of the Constitution makes it clear that equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures may be taken to advance those who were disadvantaged by unfair discrimination.

It is within this constitutional framework that Parliament has adopted legislation designed to advance economic transformation. One such instrument is the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act, which seeks to promote economic transformation by enabling meaningful participation of people in the economy and ensuring more inclusive patterns of ownership and opportunity. Thirty years after the birth of our constitutional democracy, we stand at an important crossroad.

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The question before us is not whether the Constitution has value. The real question is how we fully realise its transformative potential. This requires three commitments.

Firstly, we must accelerate socioeconomic transformation. Economic equality undermines the promise of freedom. Land reform, inclusive economic growth, industrialisation, and job creation must be pursued with urgency so that the benefits of democracy reach all South Africans.

Secondly, we must strengthen democratic institutions. Corruption, as the Minister stated, and state capture have weakened the capacity of the state to fulfill its constitutional obligations. Rebuilding capable ethical and developmental institutions is essential if we are to restore public trust and deliver services effectively.

Thirdly, we must deepen our social cohesion and nation-building solidarity. Nation-building requires that we confront our past honestly while working collectively towards a shared future. As we reflect on the Constitution this month, we do so during Human Rights Month, a time deeply rooted in the painful history of our struggle.

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We must never forget the tragic events of the Sharpeville Massacre on 21 March 1960. On that day, 69 unarmed black South Africans were gunned down by apartheid police while peacefully protesting the humanising past laws. Those laws were to control every aspect of black life, where people could live, work, and travel, reducing the majority of this country to strangers in the land of their birth.

The massacre shocked the world and galvanised international opposition to apartheid. It is for this reason that the United Nations declared the day of International Day of Elimination of Racial Discrimination. We stand today on the shoulders of those who came before us, even as we carry the hopes of those who will come after us.

From a regime that ended black people, noncitizens in their own land, we have built a constitutional order grounded in human dignity, equality, and freedom. Our Constitution remains one of the most progressive on the land. Hence, we are standing here with pride and supporting the reflections by the Minister on the 30th anniversary of the Constitution. Thank you very much, House Chair.

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The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: House Chair, I want to take this opportunity to thank members who participated in this debate, but also committing to the principles of our Constitution and our democracy. Maybe just to indicate, hon Litchfield-Tshabalala, you are really out of touch.

We no longer talk about MaBrr. We talked about Tyler. We talked about Black Coffee.

These are international artists that are known. People cannot know MaBrr today. They will know Tyler, and they will know MaBrr. They will know Black Coffee.

So, do not be out of touch. But secondly, as a gender activist, I thought you would celebrate somebody like Hosi N'wamitwa, who became on the throne of chieftaincy out of the Constitution.

[Applause.]

It was a Constitutional Court that recognised her rights as a woman within the chieftaincy. Surely, as a gender activist, that counts for the Constitution that works for us. Honorable Denner,

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I think when you are used to privilege, redress becomes a burden, becomes uncomfortable ...

IsiZulu:

... hhayi, ngishadele kwa-Chauke. Uyeke ukubanga umsindo. MKP, ima kancane. Uyabona inkinga yenu ukuthi nihambisa izingane esikhundleni sokuthi nizikhulise nizinikeze umsebenzi niyozenza ukuba zibe amasosha. Nizibulele laphaya eRashiya. Hambani niyophendula izingane ziphi. [Ubuwelewele.]

ILUNGU ELIHLONIPHEKILE: Awungeni ndawo wena! Ungenaphi wena?

UNGQONGQOSHE WEZOBULUNGISWA NOKUTHUTHUKISWA KOMTHETHOSISEKELO: Ngiwumzali. Nginengane KwaZulu-Natal, ngakhoke, ngisaba ukuthi ingane nizoyithatha niyoyifaka emasosheni.

ILUNGU ELIHLONIPHEKILE: Suka! Suka la!

English:

The judges, hon members, actually interpret ...

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Minister, just take your seat, please. Hon members on my left from MK, I know who you are.

According to the Rules, you are not allowed to switch on your microphone unless you are recognised. There are two members who have done it now. Please desist from doing so. Otherwise, I will have to apply the Rule. Please continue, hon Minister. Yes, hon member?

Dr K LITCHFIELD-TSHABALALA: Chair, point of order.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): What is your point of order?

Dr K LITCHFIELD-TSHABALALA: Can the Minister answer what retains in Justice and Constitutional Development?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon member, that is the wrong application of the Rule. Please proceed, hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Thank you very much.

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IsiZulu:

Ungayijahi impi ngoba thina siyakwazi ukuzilwela.

English:

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Order, hon members.
Order! Please continue.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Hon members, the judges actually interpret our laws. They interpret our Constitution.

Where we find that there are weaknesses, it is our duty to be able to go and review those legislations and review the Constitution. That is why members stood here but the constitutional review mechanisms that we must work on must be quite important. So, the Constitution is a living document, and it is not perfect.

Neither our forebears, when they started and established this Constitution, have they said that it is perfect. Have they said that it answers all questions. We have a duty as this Parliament to be able to reflect, to be able to look at the weaknesses, but look at our laws and our Constitution and say where the issues

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are so that we can address them. It is our duty as this generation. We cannot keep on blaming the past. They have done their part.

It is our part to blame now. Now, I think hon Maimane spoke about a very important thing that I do not want to ignore. The issue of protection of our institution, but most importantly, protection of whistleblowers.

I agree. That is why we are finalising the Bill that will be brought this year to this House that protects whistleblowers in this country. We are committed to ensuring that we fight corruption as this government led by President Ramaphosa to ensure that we can have accountability but also make sure that we protect our institutions that were destroyed.

Now, let us come to the issues of land. Hon members correctly talk about the issue of land. Land is an economic value for every citizen in every country.

But to come and say that we have not done anything is not appropriate. Let me count. In terms of the reports that have been published, and I hope members will take time to read,

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approximately 9,2 million hectares of land has been allocated between 1994 and 2023.

Out of this, 82,2 million of that hectares of land are actually agricultural. Again, if we look at the report, out of the redistribution, and this is against even the National Development Plan, NDP, we have got 3,9 million hectares transferred in terms of 82 976 claims. Thirty-seven percent of these claims are for previously disadvantaged individuals, benefiting 456 and 89 000 households with 2,3 million beneficiaries.

Out of this, 1 246 are actually people living with disabilities. These are facts. These are statistics.

We say this does not say there is no problem. On the issue of closing borders and dealing with crime, I agree we will bring through maybe another member's statement just to deal with what we are doing in building the institutions and fighting crime and corruption. Thank you. [Applause.]

Debate concluded.

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CONSIDERATION OF PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONAL SERVICES ON
OVERSIGHT VISIT TO ZONDERWATER TRAINING COLLEGE AND ZONDERWATER
CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

AND

CONSIDERATION OF PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONAL SERVICES ON
FOLLOW UP OVERSIGHT VISIT TO POLSMOOR CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

Ms K A RAMOLOBENG: House Chairperson, good afternoon, hon members. The Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services visited both Zonderwater Training College and Zonderwater Correctional Centre on the 11th of November 2025. The primary focus of our oversight was on infrastructure, rehabilitation, social reintegration, treatment of offenders and general conditions of both the centre and the college.

Hon members, Zonderwater trainees, mostly from Kwazulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the Northwest regions. The committee visited the kitchen, accommodation for learners, gymnasium, computer room, and the auditorium. The college has seven housing companies, and each accommodates 72 learners, except a company which accommodates 60 learners. Each company has its own

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facilities, amenities such as bathroom, dry rooms, rooms and laundry rooms.

A number of challenges affecting the college were reported to the committee by management of the college and they include learners' mental health, load shading and power outages, lack of adequate resources centre and adequate resource library, lack of fencing around the college, lack of shelter at the access gate and shooting range and including shortage of staff.

The committee was very disappointed that the college received tablets for learners in November 2024, but at the time of our visit, November 2025, the tablets were not yet allocated to learners for their use.

The committee further received information, which later turned out to be untrue, that the tablets were loaded with learner materials and were used by learners. The committee viewed that in a very serious light and has since requested the department to submit a report on why the tablets have not been used and steps to be taken to ensure tablets were provided to learners for their use.

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In addition, the committee requested the report to include consequence management related to those responsible for keeping the tablets under lock and key as well as who misled the committee.

The committee is also concerned that learners from Gauteng did not receive their stipends since September 2025. The committee has since requested the department to provide a detailed report on what happened, who was responsible and the consequence management to be applied.

The committee further urged the department to prioritize the payment of stipends for learners and ensure that measures were put in place to prevent similar occurrences.

The committee visited medium A correctional centre, which is one of the two correctional centres under Zonderwater management area. Medium A is a maximum facility with an approved bed space of 825 sentenced offenders. At the time of our visit, the centre had a total of 1,187 sentenced offenders, translating to overcrowding rate of 69,5%.

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On the follow-up visit to Pollsmoor, the committee conducted a follow-up visit to Pollsmoor Correctional Centre on 21 November. The committee visited the remand detention facility, medium B and mother and baby unit.

The committee was briefed on progress in the implementation of the previous visit recommendation. This included progress on filling vacancies, measures to address overcrowding, high number of contrabands, dilapidated infrastructure, metal detectors and body scanners, as well as water leakages.

The committee was further briefed on the two investigations related to unnatural death on an inmates and stabbing of officials, as well as on the erroneous release, which later turned out to be an escape.

Hon members, the department was invited to brief the committee on all investigation reports, including the two Pollsmoor investigation on 3 February 2026.

The committee has welcomed the appointment of the area Commissioner of Pollsmoor management area, and hope this will bring stability in the management area.

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The committee equally noted from the registry for the destruction of confiscated cell phones that the confiscations of cell phones were not destroyed as the prescribed time frames. The committee was concerned that the testing of food, which is a part of the standard operation procedure, sop.

I present to you the oversight report on both Pollsmoor and Zonderwater for consideration by the House. I thank you.

Declarations of vote:

Ms K KGOBISA-NGCABA: House Chairperson, on behalf of the DA, I wish to share our reflections on the oversight visits ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): The hon member wants to be recognised, just take your seat, hon member. Yes, hon member.

IsiZulu:

Mnu S W MKHIZE: Sihlalo, nginephuzu lokukhalima okuphambukayo. Umshini wokuphephetha umoya opholile awusebenzi la. Uyasebenza kodwa laphaya kwi-Government of National Unity, GNU. Ngicela nisikhanyisele imishini yokuphephetha umoya opholile.

[Ubuwelewele.]

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English:

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon member, the matter is being attended to. The matter is attended to. Please proceed. Thank you.

IsiZulu:

Mnu S W MKHIZE: Kodwa iyasebenza kwi-GNU. Kwi-GNU kuphela.

English:

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon member, nobody gave you commission to use the microphone. You continuously doing the same thing. No, I am not going to discuss with, you must stick to the rules, if want to be seen. Hon member, you must stick to the rules. You must stick to the rules, please proceed hon member.

Ms K KGOBISA-NGCABA: I wish to share our reflections on the oversight visit to Zonderwater Training College and Correctional Centre.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon member, would just take you seat please. Why do you want to be recognised, hon member?

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Mr A NCHABELENG: House Chairperson, with due respect there is a technical problem, it's very hot in the House and people have conditions, can you just respect ... [Inaudible.] ...at least just get confirmation that this will be solved because we are suffocated now.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon member, even before the point of order was raised, I asked for the table staff to attend to the matter, and they will back to me. And if gets to that point that we have to suspend proceedings and I will do so. Please proceed.

Ms K KGOBISA-NGCABA: While we appreciate the professionalism of the staff in Zonderwater for maintaining the cleanliness of the facilities, we do wish to take a deeper look at what we found there to ensure that the department is in fact fulfilling every aspect of its mandate.

A key pillar of a functional correctional system is leadership and staffing. Currently, there is a significant gap that is hindering progress at these facilities. With a vacancy rate of 16% in Zonderwater management area and almost 13% at medium A, there is immense pressure on existing staff. This is compounded

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by the continued reliance on acting positions for the area commissioner and the head of medium A.

Similarly, Pollsmoor is suffering under a 16% vacancy rate. The department is not going to achieve its long-term goals unless it prioritizes the permanent appointment of qualified, competent, and ethical individuals, especially in senior positions.

Furthermore, the department must prioritize a complete review of its personnel allocation to address bloated administrative staff and senior management where necessary in favour of vital security personnel.

Regarding perimeter fencing and infrastructure, we must address the gap between what is approved and what is implemented. It is disheartening to see that while a critical need for fencing at Zonderwater was recognized and cost estimates of R32,5 million have been obtained, the project remains stalled. Despite these estimates being on the record, there is currently no scheduled or envisaged date for the erection of the fences because there is no funding.

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What's more concerning is that the deficient perimeter fencing is true for more than half of all correctional centres in South Africa. In fact, this is part of a national crisis where over one billion rand is needed for perimeter fencing across South Africa's prisons.

Facilities around the country have registered their needs and obtained the quotes for the work, yet they sit in the same situation as Zonderwater for the foreseeable future.

It is imperative that the department's budget allocation reflects the essential nature of security infrastructure. As I've said before, without perimeter fences at a minimum, we might as well call our facilities correctional resorts, or we can call them recreational facilities.

And we can also expect more escapes, like the one we saw at Pollsmoor last year. But the most sensitive issue of all is the sub-optimal use of available resources and the integrity of reporting. The discovery that tablets at Zonderwater Training Center, which were received in November 2024, have remained underclocking key, is a missed opportunity for learner development.

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It was particularly disappointing that we were given information at the time on the visit that they were in use, only to discover that this was a lie. The committee has played its oversight role in uncovering this wrongdoing. The department must fulfil its mandate in taking corrective action against the officials involved.

Finally, we must prioritize our duty of care to the trainees. At the time of the oversight visit in November, Gauteng learner stipends had not been paid since September. This is not an administrative hurdle. It is an impact on the well-being of our future. The department must carry out its functions with an emphasis on the dignity of learners in order to ensure that nothing like this ever happens again. I thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon members, the report that I've received indicates that there is a problem with the power supply to the air conditioners and also to some of the interior lighting. In the light of that, I'm going to suspend proceedings for the next 10 minutes. The bells will be rung for members to return so that we can continue with the business of the House.

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And I also want to request members just to take into account that it's actually hotter outside than it is inside. So, we'll suspend proceedings and the bells will be rung when we resume. Thank you very much. Proceedings are now suspended.

SUSPENSION OF PROCEEDINGS 16:59

BUSINESS SUSPENDED AND RESUMED DUE TO TECHNICAL ERROR.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Please be seated.

Hon members, the report that we have received - you may be seated.

The report that we received is that the power supply is now restored but there is no guarantee that it will last the duration of the sitting due to other technical difficulties.

In light of that the Speaker has recommended and decided that we will suspend proceedings for the day and adjourn, and the items will be rescheduled to next Tuesday. That brings us to the end of this sitting and the House is adjourned.

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The House Chairperson adjourned the sitting in terms of Rule 48(1) at 17:13.

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