FOCUS - 1 of 12 DOCUMENTS

The Star (South Africa)

February 29, 2012 Wednesday
E1 Edition

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Terry Crawford-Browne (The Star, February 27) is a magnificent fighter for the soul of this country. If he could convince Dr Mamphela Ramphele to enter politics, it would be such a coup. Our country is crying out for a strong leader whose character is above reproach. Dr Ramphele fits the bill. People would follow her leadership. Money would flow into the coffers of the party she chooses to espouse. [The rainbow would reappear. The beloved country would stop crying!]

Susan Tucker
Dunkeld West, Joburg

Jimmy Manyi should please use his power to get the "full might of the law" to prosecute the many government employees and tenderpreneurs who have been stealing billions from taxpayers' funds before he tries to punish 40+ million people for refusing to buy e-tags. The money that would be recovered can be used to pay the SA National Roads Agency Limited's debt in cash and there would even be change.

Val Oertel
Observatory, Joburg

How is it that the Powerball, having had no winner for draw after draw, has reached a jackpot of only R6 million? How is it that the Lotto, having had the price increased, cannot rustle up more than R1m per draw? The previous operator always pulled in about R3.3m.

Lynette Rens
Parktown, Joburg

I am in support of the National Union of Metalworkers of SA's resolution concerning the leadership of the ANC. The resolution of the Polokwane conference made the most of the working class believe that the ANC will change its neo-liberal capitalist agenda, but it has not. [I propose that Numsa lead Cosatu and the working class to establish a true Workers Party.

Mhlobo Gunguluzi
Chairperson of Housing Assembly of Cape Town

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

PUBLICATION-TYPE: Newspaper

JOURNAL-CODE: SW

SUBJECT: LOTTERIES (90%); POLITICAL PARTIES (77%); LIBERALISM (72%); CRAFT & TRADE WORKERS (69%); EDITORIALS & OPINIONS (59%) TheStar.Oped

CITY: JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA (90%); CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA (79%)

COUNTRY: SOUTH AFRICA (90%)

LOAD-DATE: March 1, 2012
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Mhlobo Gunguluzi
Chairperson of Housing Assembly of Cape Town

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

PUBLICATION-TYPE: Newspaper

JOURNAL-CODE: SW

SUBJECT: LOTTERIES (90%); POLITICAL PARTIES (77%); LIBERALISM (72%); CRAFT & TRADE WORKERS (69%); EDITORIALS & OPINIONS (59%)

CITY: JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA (90%); CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA (79%)

COUNTRY: SOUTH AFRICA (90%)

LOAD-DATE: August 18, 2012
Alderman De Lille is correct to say that the City of Cape Town has a plan for the future, but that plan does not belong to us, the working class and the poor.

Last year I attended a meeting of the backyard dwellers addressed by the mayor where she proposed the Basic Essential Services Improvement Programme, meaning that the city was only going to improve the living conditions of backyarders in shacks instead of providing houses.

Later Human Settlements Deputy Minister Zou Kota-Fredericks came with improvement plans for informal settlements. Both plans meant that those who lived in shacks in backyards and informal settlements would die in the same conditions.

The mayor told us that we have a housing backlog of more than 470 000 houses and she was only prepared to deliver 9 000 houses per annum. This formula does not address the housing needs of the poor because the city needs to build at least 100 000 houses per annum to address the housing backlog.

This year the mayor has allocated only R604 million to human settlements and, with the housing subsidy of R85 000 for RDP houses, we can only get 7 100 houses out of R604m this year.

The number of houses to be built is less than the number she promised us last year, given the history of insufficient usage of the human settlements budget.

Gugulethu was built by the apartheid regime with influx control in place.

Influx control was relaxed through our struggles and resistance, but this DA government does not consider redress as its policy.

Our township is now overpopulated with townships within a township. We have piles of dirty waste, blocked drains and our townships and locations are not safe at all - safety is in the suburbs of rich people.

We have more CCTV cameras in the suburbs than in our townships where crime is rampant.

This budget will not help us meet the needs of the poor.

Mhlobo Gunguluzi
Chairperson of Housing Assembly

Ny 57 - 96, Gugulethu
ANC provincial leader Marius Fransman is wrong again if he thinks the ANC can take the Western Cape ("We'll take back Cape," Cape Times June 11). The first myth that the ANC has created was that of the continuous lie that it is the ANC that liberated SA while people are still exploited under neoliberal capitalism. It is the people themselves that liberated themselves from apartheid.

From the outset, the ANC had never wanted to liberate the masses from oppression and exploitation of capitalism. All they wanted was to share the spoils of capitalism with white people, even getting crumbs of "white" monopoly capital.

In Cape Town we are aware of the lie that the ANC is a broad church and that it can change if the working class swells its ranks. We have been swelling the ranks of the ANC, but nothing has changed except for individual workers being promoted into higher office and forgetting about the interests of the working class.

As the working class we need to form our own workers' political party. The ANC has further implemented the neoliberal agenda that was initiated by the National Party. Neither the ANC nor the DA can liberate the working class from the chains of exploitative capitalism.

We also need to change this reactionary governance by having clear presidential, parliamentary and local government election. If we want to make Parliament independent of the executive, then it must be the people who elect the president not Parliament.

The people must also elect Parliament on proportional representation of political parties.

Cosatu must also end this unholy alliance with the neoliberal politicians of the ANC and the Stalinists of the SACP.

This alliance hides many things, and it is worse when the alliance agrees that the neoliberal political party, the ANC, must lead the alliance.

The ANC will never transform this economy for the benefit of all the people but only for the benefit of the capitalists.

Mhlobo Gunguluzi

Chairperson of Housing Assembly,

Ny 57 - 96

Gugulethu

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH
We, the working class communities of Cape Town, condemn the recent massacre of 34 mineworkers at Marikana in Rustenburg. There can be no justification for the use of live ammunition fired by semi-automatic weapons on striking workers or any other protesters.

The pain and suffering of the loved ones of the fallen heroes are our pain and suffering. We too have suffered police brutality when we have occupied land or protested our right to housing and services in the City of Cape Town.

We demand the release of all those who have been arrested and that all charges be dropped.

We also call for those who perpetrated the massacre to be brought to book.

However, we know that they were acting under orders and therefore call for the resignation of the Commissioner of Police, the Minister of Police and the president. We do not trust the official inquiry and believe it will attempt a cover-up. We therefore demand an independent commission of inquiry.

We are outraged that the rights of the Lonmin workers to organise themselves and to go on strike were infringed both by the police and their own union leadership.

We support the strikers' living wage demand of R12 500.

We know that the community of Marikana and the other mining areas, like us, suffer from appalling housing conditions and no decent services. Their struggle is our struggle.

Mhlobo Gunguluzi

Chairperson of Housing Assembly

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

PUBLICATION-TYPE: Newspaper

JOURNAL-CODE: CT

SUBJECT: STRIKES (90%); MINE WORKERS (90%); PROTESTS & DEMONSTRATIONS (90%); POLICE MISCONDUCT (87%); MINES & MINING (78%); LABOR UNIONS (77%); RESIGNATIONS (77%); LIVING CONDITIONS (76%); ARRESTS (76%); HOUSING ASSISTANCE (75%); WAGES & SALARIES (72%); POLICE BRUTALITY (71%); EDITORIALS & OPINIONS (59%) CapeTimes.Opinion
Flashes of genius put SA in the world arena

BYLINE: Duncan McLeod
SECTION: OPINION & EDITORIAL
LENGTH: 714 words

Flashes of genius put SA in the world arena

IN recent weeks, I have been fortunate to have met a range of smart South African entrepreneurs who are doing incredibly exciting stuff in the technology space, often with relatively few resources.

Despite all the doom and gloom that is our politics, and despite the poor state of our education system, there are pockets of genius shining through everywhere. It shows that South Africa can still compete with the best in the world.

The two-year-old, Durban-based start-up Emerge Mobile is a great example. The company, founded by father and son team Clive and Matt Putman, along with Matt's friend Ramsay Daly - the two attended Hilton College in KwaZulu-Natal together - have developed a mobile point-of-sale terminal that allows merchants and tradesmen, for example, to accept card payments using their smartphones.

Matt and Daly admired what US start-up Square, founded by Jack Dorsey, had done in the field and contacted the company. They wanted to represent it as its agent in South Africa. When they were told that Square had no immediate plans to expand in Africa, the pair, together with Clive - the technical brains behind the venture - set about building their own solution.

Clive, a successful IT industry figure in Durban who had all but retired when he was roped into the venture, has a strong background in cryptography and hardware development, which was key to Emerge Mobile.

"Clive looked at it and said he could do it," said Daly. "All we had to do was learn about the rest of the payments industry."

With funding from Capital Eye Investments, a private equity business that emerged from the UCS Group, the young start-up, having built a prototype, went through the rigorous and complex process of achieving the necessary international technical accreditation.

This was no mean feat.

Matt said it was tough as a small South African start-up. Unlike Silicon Valley, there was not much venture capital cash and mentorship was hard to come by.

What is next for Emerge Mobile? It has white-labelled its product and is talking to banks in Africa about plans to
expand to other emerging markets. And, in the coming months, it intends to offer its own branded retail solution in the South African market.

Remarkably, Emerge Mobile is not the only company developing a smartphone payments platform like this. Technology entrepreneur Stafford Masie is also developing a solution through his company, Thumbzup. It should be launched in South Africa soon through partner bank Absa.

Indeed, South Africa has a rich history of innovation in technology around financial services.

Stellenbosch-based Entersekt is doing incredibly geeky stuff in banking and payments security and is increasingly being noticed on the world stage. And let us not forget Fundamo, the Cape Town-based mobile payments company founded by former Sanlam group chief information officer Hannes van Rensburg. Remember, it was snapped up by Visa in 2011 in a blockbuster $110-million all-cash deal.

South Africans' ingenuity in technology is not limited to financial services. Take Thabo Lehlokoe, founder of Midrand-based Seemahale Telecoms. He is on the verge of introducing the first South Africa-manufactured smartphones and tablets. The company, which will build the devices at a factory in Boksburg, plans to offer two smartphone models and two tablets this year. The first products should go on sale within months.

Seemahale is importing the printed circuit boards, but the placement of all the components, housing assembly, manufacture of cables and accessories, and the printing of manuals and packaging are being done in South Africa.

The smartphones would cost substantially less than high-end devices "without skimping on the specs", Lehlokoe said.

He believes there is a big gap in the market between ultra-low-cost handsets and high-end smartphone models. Consumers were looking for "decent phones with decent specs but at a much better price", he said.

Lehlokoe must be commended for dabbling in a highly competitive market dominated by big international brands. But it shows once again that South Africans, if they put their minds to it, are capable, against the odds, of competing with the best in the world.

oMcLeod edits TechCentral.co.za. Follow him on Twitter @mcleodd

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

PUBLICATION-TYPE: Newspaper

SUBJECT: EDITORIALS & OPINIONS (92%); ENTREPRENEURSHIP (91%); SMARTPHONES (89%); MOBILE PAYMENTS (89%); BANKING & FINANCE (86%); PRIVATE EQUITY (78%); EDUCATION SYSTEMS & INSTITUTIONS (78%); VENTURE CAPITAL (78%); DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (76%); RETAILERS (73%); COMPUTING & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (72%); ACCREDITATION (71%); MOBILE & CELLULAR COMMUNICATIONS (70%); POINT OF SALE SYSTEMS (68%); MOBILE & CELLULAR TELEPHONES (68%); CRYPTOLOGY (64%); TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT (64%) Entrepreneurship; Cellular Phones; Banking; Technology

PERSON: JACK DORSEY (56%)

CITY: CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA (79%); SILICON VALLEY, CA, USA (79%)

STATE: CALIFORNIA, USA (79%)
Union to picket over wage subsidy

BYLINE: Shanti Aboobaker Political Bureau

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 4

LENGTH: 327 words

ROLLING mass action by the National Union of Metalworkers (Numsa) against the government's youth wage subsidy starts today with a picket outside Parliament.

And yesterday, the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) finally received a Section 77 notice from the union, paving the way for a national strike by Numsa next month.

Amid rumblings that Numsa will start its own political party, the union is likely to use today to test the waters and gauge its support, including that of unemployed, non-unionised youth.

This is as it faces suspension from labour federation Cosatu.

Numsa is joined today by the so-called "Numsa Nine" - the South African Catering Commercial and Allied Workers Union, Communication Workers Union, Public and Allied Workers Union of SA, Food and Allied Workers Union, SA Municipal Workers Union, Democratic Nursing Organisation of SA, SA Domestic Service and Allied Workers Union, Chemical Energy Paper Printing Wood and Allied Workers Union, and the Commercial Stevedoring Agriculture and Allied Workers Union.

Campaign

They will be joined by Equal Education, the Progressive Youth Movement, Abahlali baseMjondolo, the Housing Assembly, Youth Development Council and the Alternative Information and Development Centre.

In Cape Town yesterday, Western Cape Numsa secretary Vuyo Lufele said it had decided to drive a “jobs for youth campaign”.

Cosatu and Numsa remain opposed to the government's youth wage subsidy, the Employment Tax Incentive, on the grounds that it unnecessarily subsidises employers, could displace older workers and widens inequality.

But there was also anger from Nedlac and organised labour that the government had bypassed the forum in what Numsa said was "desperation" to capture the youth vote.

The charge was rejected by the Treasury on the basis that a discussion document on the wage subsidy was introduced at Nedlac in 2011, and that the tax incentive bill was a money bill, not a labour bill.
Union to picket over wage subsidy

The Mercury (South Africa) February 26, 2014 Wednesday

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

PUBLICATION-TYPE: Newspaper

JOURNAL-CODE: NM

SUBJECT: LABOR UNIONS (95%); ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (90%); LEGISLATIVE BODIES (90%); TREASURY DEPARTMENTS (78%); TAX LAW (78%); CRAFT & TRADE WORKERS (78%); POLITICAL PARTIES (78%); CIVIL SERVICES (78%); CHILD DEVELOPMENT (78%); POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS (77%); TAX INCENTIVES (77%); ECONOMIC NEWS (77%); PROTESTS & DEMONSTRATIONS (73%); NURSES & NURSING (73%); OLDER WORKERS (70%) News

ORGANIZATION: CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICAN TRADE UNIONS (83%); COMMUNICATION WORKERS UNION (56%)

CITY: CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA (79%)

COUNTRY: SOUTH AFRICA (92%)

LOAD-DATE: March 3, 2014

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Numsa heads to Parliament to stem youth wage subsidy; Picket to gauge support for oppositional stance

BYLINE: SHANTI ABOOBAKER Political Bureau

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 4

LENGTH: 607 words

ROLLING mass action against the government's youth wage subsidy by the National Union of Metalworkers was due to begin today with a picket outside Parliament.

And yesterday the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) finally received a Section 77 notice from the union, paving the way for a national strike by Numsa next month.

If today's picket is successful, it would be a show of force aimed at Numsa's opponents.

Amid rumblings that Numsa would start its own political party, the union was likely to use today to test the waters and gauge its support, including that of unemployed non-unionised youth.

Numsa was due to be joined by the so-called "Numsa Nine" - Southern African Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union, Communication Workers Union, Public and Allied Workers Union of South Africa, Food and Allied Workers Union, South African Municipal Workers Union, Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa, South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers Union, Chemical, Energy, Paper, Printing, Wood and Allied Workers Union, Commercial Stevedoring Agriculture and Allied Workers Union - this as Numsa faces suspension from labour federation Cosatu.

The unions were to be joined by civil society groupings such as Equal Education, Progressive Youth Movement, Abahlali Basemjondolo, the Housing Assembly, Youth Development Council and the Alternative Information & Development Centre.

Addressing a media conference in Cape Town yesterday, Western Cape Numsa secretary Vuyo Lufele said that in line with the resolution taken at its special congress, it had decided to drive a "jobs for youth campaign".

The campaign would mobilise workers, the unemployed, youth, with the working class as the leading motive force, to campaign for Decent Jobs for the Youth.

"We are clear that youth unemployment constitutes a ticking time bomb and requires a coherent and decisive break from the failed capitalist neo-liberal economic policies," Lufele said.

Cosatu and Numsa remain opposed to the youth wage subsidy, officially termed the Employment Tax Incentive by the
government, on the grounds that it unnecessarily subsidises employers, could displace older workers and widen inequality.

But there was also anger from both Nedlac and organised labour that the government had bypassed the forum in what Numsa yesterday characterised as "desperation" to capture the youth vote in the elections.

"The Employment Tax Incentive Bill bypassed the Nedlac processes, obviously due to the greed of the bosses and the desperation of ANC politicians to capture the youth vote as we approach the May 7 general elections," Lufele said.

The Nedlac Act requires that socio-economic policies be discussed with labour, business and community constituencies before they are tabled in Parliament.

Nedlac obtained a legal opinion after it said it was bypassed by the government in the processing of the bill.

This charge was however rejected by the Treasury on the basis that a discussion document on the wage subsidy was introduced for discussion at Nedlac in 2011, and further that the tax incentive bill is a money bill, not a labour bill.

Meanwhile, Numsa said mass unemployment, deepening poverty and widening inequalities affected black African urban and rural working class youth in the main. "As a result of this, we are experiencing daily community protests against poor service delivery," Lufele said.

"Political power is just a shell when it is not accompanied by genuine economic emancipation. Therefore, real political power firmly remains in the hands of white monopoly capital, which owns the decisive means of production in our country."

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

PUBLICATION-TYPE: Newspaper

JOURNAL-CODE: SW

SUBJECT: LABOR UNIONS (95%); LEGISLATIVE BODIES (90%); ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (89%); ELECTIONS (89%); ECONOMIC POLICY (89%); ECONOMIC NEWS (89%); PUBLIC POLICY (89%); UNEMPLOYED PERSONS (89%); TREASURY DEPARTMENTS (78%); TAX LAW (78%); CRAFT & TRADE WORKERS (78%); POLITICAL PARTIES (78%); CAMPAIGNS & ELECTIONS (78%); CIVIL SERVICES (78%); POLITICS (78%); LIBERALISM (78%); CHILD DEVELOPMENT (78%); POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS (77%); TAX INCENTIVES (77%); ASSOCIATIONS & ORGANIZATIONS (77%); PROTESTS & DEMONSTRATIONS (73%); NURSES & NURSING (73%); CATERING SERVICES (70%); TAXES & TAXATION (70%); CONFERENCES & CONVENTIONS (70%); OLDER WORKERS (69%); PRESS CONFERENCES (65%)

ORGANIZATION: COMMUNICATION WORKERS UNION (56%); CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICAN TRADE UNIONS (55%)

CITY: CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA (79%)

COUNTRY: SOUTH AFRICA (94%); SOUTHERN AFRICA (79%)

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Sidikiwe presents an enduring challenge to ANC

SECTION: Pg. 27

LENGTH: 813 words

In respect of Thami Ka Plaatjie, Mondli Makhanya was right - Ka Plaatjie is a turncoat and self-justifying political convert who dutifully defends the Marikana butchers.

The latest confession of his new ANC faith has been to discredit the Sidikiwe campaign that Ronnie Kasrils and Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge led ("Africans value hard-won vote", The Star Letters, May 21). Actually, in the overall scheme of things, his public statements on this would not matter.

However, his statements are a crucial part of sustained ANC and SACP propaganda to delegitimise any critiques of and challenges to their waning hegemony.

Together with Lindiwe Sisulu and Gwede Mantashe, Ka Plaatjie has claimed that Africans overwhelmingly rejected the Sidikiwe campaign. They have also accused the campaign of representing liberalism and they've sought to delegitimise Kasrils on the basis that he is white.

The more often they tell and believe this lie, the greater the likelihood that it can actually become a permanent truth. To leave it unchallenged would be a disservice to facts and history.

The Sidikiwe campaign was not only about the spoilt ballot. Unfortunately, this was the main message present in the media. The campaign advanced several core inter-related messages and strategies.

First, we called on people to go and vote. Second, we asked voters to use their power strategically by voting against the neo-liberal policies of the ANC and the DA.

We called on voters to vote for smaller progressive parties who could hold both the ANC and the DA to account. The final pillar of our campaign was to spoil the ballot if some voters felt none of the other options we proposed were appropriate. All of these pillars of the campaign are profoundly democratic acts.

If he is to be a worthy public intellectual, one of the things he must learn quickly is to do basic research on facts and not rely on rather shoddy reporting and shallow analysis that most of our media continues to provide.

How should the Sidikiwe campaign be assessed then? If one looks at the numbers of spoilt ballots, nothing much has changed. In this narrow scheme, Mantashe, Sisulu and Ka Plaatjie can gloat about the ANC's performance. As already stated above, spoilt ballots were a small component of a bigger strategy to start a long-term challenge to ANC hegemony.

In its leaflets and website, the Sidikiwe campaign called on our people not to stay away from the elections but to vote.
We even met with the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) to make this point. As a result, the IEC allowed the campaign to monitor the elections. Did Africans go out in their numbers to endorse the ANC as Ka Plaatjie has claimed?

According to ANC propaganda, the ANC remains the only choice for the majority of voters.

As the recent Numsa Central Committee noted, the actual figures show the ANC now governs with the conscious consent of a minority of voters.

The ANC almost lost control of Gauteng and Port Elizabeth. Sixty-four percent of South Africans did not vote for the ANC. The 62 percent of the vote the ANC got actually amounts to a mere 36 percent of all those who were eligible to vote.

Even in the Eastern Cape, where the ANC secured 70 percent of the vote, the actual figures tell another story: the ANC's 1.52 million votes in this province are less than the 1.55 million votes it received in 2009. Nationally, the ANC got fewer votes than those who stayed away: 11.4 million people voted for the ANC against 12.77 million who stayed away.

While we do not know the reasons for this massive stayaway, it can't be denied that a large silent majority has lost confidence in and does not provide its active consent to the ANC. The Sidikiwe campaign regrets that so many opted to stay away. By coming out in numbers, they could have strengthened democratic participation and perhaps used their votes to challenge the ANC.

The Sidikiwe campaign distances itself from liberalism. In our view, liberalism is political theory that narrows democracy to mere electoral contestation between elites and that also asserts individual rights without any attention to the systemic and structural systems that produce the violations of human rights.

In the DA, liberalism is represented by the worst unapologetic racists who unashamedly defend ill-gotten gains and benefits.

To attempt to problematise Kasrils on the basis of his race is narrow chauvinistic nationalism that the ANC of Morogoro and the SACP of Moses Kotane, Joe Slovo and Chris Hani detested.

Further, far from being the voice of a small elite as claimed by Ka Plaatjie, the campaign was actually endorsed by mass movements such as the Unemployed People's Movement, the Cape Town-based Housing Assembly and the Mpumalanga Mining Affected Communities.

If we'd had more time, we'd have been able to mobilise more such movements.

Mazibuko Jara

Co-founder and member of the Sidikiwe Campaign

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

PUBLICATION-TYPE: Newspaper

JOURNAL-CODE: SW

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS (89%); VOTERS & VOTING (89%); LIBERALISM (89%); CAMPAIGNS & ELECTIONS (78%); ELECTION AUTHORITIES (71%); ELECTION MONITORING (71%); EDITORIALS & OPINIONS (55%)
Sidikiwe presents an enduring challenge to ANC The Star (South Africa) May 28, 2014 Wednesday

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SAfrican protesters call for end to xenophobic incitement

LENGTH: 554 words

Text of report in English by South African News24 website on 4 March

Cape Town - A coalition of over 10 civil bodies has demanded that high-level government and tribal leaders refrain from making comments that could incite xenophobic violence.

Just over 100 people marched to parliament on Saturday [4 March] to hand over a memorandum of demands against xenophobia to a Presidency official.

Included in the group were representatives from the Africa Solidarity network, the Cape Town Housing Assembly, Gender Sonke Justice and Unifam.

Faeza Meyer of the Housing Assembly read from the coalition's memorandum and its first demand addressed the role of the country's leadership.

"Government and tribal leaders and officials must refrain from making xenophobic comments. Any such leaders must be held accountable for such statements," she read.

The memorandum was critical of government's role in the build-up to "Afrophobia" in the poor, working class areas in the country.

"Home Affairs has a long history of abusing both local masses and prospective immigrants," she continued from the memo.

"If one is rich and from Europe or North America, then Home Affairs is quick to react.

"However, if you are poor and from the rest of Africa, the Middle East or Asia, then Home Affairs treats you with total disrespect, not granting residency permits or travel documents to those who qualify for it."

They felt for the thousands who have died due to disease and poverty.

'Poverty can never be an excuse'

The memorandum also said that poverty can never be an excuse for poor South Africans to attack their poor, neighbouring brothers and sisters.

"The vast majority of local and immigrants masses are completely opposed to drugs and crime," she read.

"We all want criminals to be removed from our communities too. Xenophobia is not the answer to crime and poverty. Unity of the masses is the real answer."
"The real criminals will slip through the net if we are fighting each other instead of uniting. Poverty can never be an excuse to attack our fellow poor."

Imperialism and colonialism were two of the biggest culprits, robbing the continent of its natural wealth while the majority of its people remain poor.

They called on the state to fully guarantee the safety of all immigrants in the country.

"Immigrants and refugees are welcome here!" the memorandum ended.

Presidency official Charles Ford accepted the memorandum outside Parliament.

He said he could not say much other than government supports the call for an end to violence.

He said the president would respond between 4 to 6 weeks.

"Wow, a month and two weeks," some of the protesters could be heard saying.

Their other demands were:

- Home Affairs must treat all refugees with respect and process their applications efficiently.
- Police should stop harassing immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers.
- Stop collusion between the banks and big mining companies involved in "large-scale theft".
- Wealth stolen by big companies should be returned.
- Increase the tax rate on company profits back up to 40%.
- Jobs for all at a living wage.
- Decent integrated housing for all close to places of work.
- Free quality education for all, that reflects the true history of South Africa, exposing the role of imperialism.
- Free quality healthcare for all.

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Xenophobic attacks: The contradictions in African unity

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By Emma Emeozor The South African government deported some immigrants, including 97 Nigerians, last week.

The South African government deported some immigrants, including 97 Nigerians, last week. The exercise took place on the heels of wide condemnation of the xenophobic attacks on African immigrants in the country. The timing of the deportations calls to question the integrity of the government. Though it has been explained that the deportations are not connected to the attacks, it has not been explained why the government chose to do it now. Three reasons were given for the deportations: drug offences, criminal offences and immigration offences (lack of documentation). The three offences are among the reasons the country’s youth gangs gave for asking African immigrants to leave. Some of the Nigerians deported for lack of documentation have said they lost their papers to the xenophobic attacks but the authorities refused to listen. Certainly, the exercise was a strategic move deployed not only to distract public attention from the hate crime in the country but also to tacitly justify the attacks. But, more importantly, it is a wakeup call for Nigeria and other African countries to protect their citizens always.

When the first wave of attacks broke out, from December 1994 to January 1995, the thinking was that it was the handiwork of some miscreants and government would take proactive action to ensure that there is no repeat of the malady. But that school of thought has since been proved wrong as the exercise has almost become an annual ritual during which immigrants are killed and their property looted.

Reports said during the 1994/1995 attacks, armed youth gangs in Alexandra Township outside Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, destroyed the homes and property of migrants and marched the individuals down to the local police station, where they demanded that the foreigners be forcibly and immediately removed. Series of xenophobic attacks had, since followed for the fact that the government did not make the leaders of the hate campaign face the law. Such violent attacks took place in 1998, 2000, 2008, 2009, 2013, 2015, 2016 and, now, 2017. And the organisers are boldly
threatening to carry out more attacks. All the attacks have followed the same pattern of killing and looting.

Following the recent attacks, tempers have been high in Nigeria. The Federal Government has issued statements (as usual) calling the South African government to halt the act and protect Nigerian citizens in that country. The Senate immediately sent a delegation to South Africa to hold talks with the parliament, a move that has been condemned by Nigerians, who are worried over the lackadaisical response of the Federal Government to the plight of its citizens in South Africa and other hostile nations.

Nigerians do not understand how their interest is provided for in the foreign policy of government. The Federal Government should be able to guarantee the safety of its citizens in the Diaspora. This should not be a subject of negotiation between it and its citizens. Kill one American in the Diaspora, Washington will go into action. Kill one Briton in the Diaspora, Number 10, Downing Street, will not go to sleep until there is redress. Even in matters of drug, criminal and immigration offences, the United States, Britain, Germany, to mention a few, would match words with action before any roundtable talks.

The brutal killing of a 34-year-old Nigerian businessman, Tochukwu Nnadi, on December 29, 2016, by the South African police, which was caught on camera, was an incident that was sufficient for the Federal Government to tell Pretoria that “Enough is enough.” Perhaps, the current administration should learn from the Obasanjo administration.

In 2003, former President Olusegun Obasanjo did it. He matched words with action when he closed the Nigeria-Benin border until the government of former President Mathieu Kerokou took tougher measures to tackle the rampant smuggling and banditry along the border. The Federal Government’s surprise action sent a clear and precise message to the Beninois that Nigeria could bark and bite. The border was re-opened after intense negotiations and an undertaking by Kerekou to maintain sanity along the border. Even with that rare action of the Obasanjo administration, diplomatic relations between the two countries has remained cordial.

Xenophobic attacks may not end soon

The response of the South African government to the recent attacks on Nigerians and other immigrants is not different from its response to previous attacks. It is usually a call for calm with a promise to address the problem. After the attack, President Jacob Zuma, insisting that South Africans were not xenophobic, called on everyone, citizens and non-citizens, to work together to combat the country’s crime rate, which is at its highest level ever.

He told the country that “many citizens of other countries living in South Africa are law-abiding and contribute to the economy of the country positively.” But almost three weeks after the attacks, the international community is still waiting to hear what measures the South African government is taking to ensure there is no repeat of the mayhem on foreigners. Also, there has been no verifiable report of punishment of the attackers and their sponsors.

The authorities should worry about the brutal killing of foreigners. Reports said during the 2008 attacks, foreign nationals were dragged through the streets of Alexandra and "necklaced," a throwback to the summary execution tactic used in the Apartheid days: a rubber tyre, filled with petrol is forced around a victim’s chest and arms, and set alight.

An analysis of the situation shows that the government is constrained to resolutely deal with the problem because there are powerful individuals, groups and politicians instigating the youth gangs to unleash terror on foreigners.

The 2015 attacks took place after the Zulu King, Goodwill Zwelithini said: "Foreigners should go back to their countries because they are changing the nature of South African society with their goods and enjoying wealth that should have been for local people."

After the mayhem, Zwelithini denied inciting the youths to attack foreigners. Of course, the public knew he was not telling the truth.
The recent attack took place after the Mayor of Johannesburg, Herman Mashaba, issued a public statement, saying: "all illegal immigrants in Johannesburg are committing crimes so they must go."

Mashaba's statement was backed up by a march organised by the Mamelodi Concerned Resident, with the full approval of the police. The march was organised to drum home the alleged atrocities being committed by immigrants. The group marched to the Department of Home Affairs, the Department of Labour and the police. These are key ministries that handle immigrants' matters.

The police approved the exercise even as the coalition of the United Front, African Diaspora Forum and former COSATU Secretary-General Zwelinzima Vavi's new trade union federation steering committee had warned against the march, drawing attention to its xenophobic implications. The South African Human Rights Commission would later confirm that there were WhatsApp reports that encouraged the marchers to take violent action against foreigners.

Also worrisome is the discriminatory immigration policy of the Home Affairs Department. It would seem it has a set of norms for African immigrants and another for European immigrants. The rules for African immigrants are more stringent than the rules for Europeans. Until there is a review and streamlining of immigration rules, it will remain rough for African immigrants seeking to live in the country.

But what is the socio-economic status of the youths being used to launch the attacks? They are the impoverish and frustrated and unemployed; they are the uneducated black youths who are not able to compete with white South Africans and foreigners, those who have been used and dumped by politicians. Sad enough, it is this group of lazy and never-do-well South Africans that are being brainwashed daily into believing that their woes have been caused by immigrants.

South Africa is a classic example of the failure of leadership in Africa. When the African National Congress (ANC) took over government after the collapse of apartheid, expectations were high. The thinking was that the ruling party would consolidate the gains of apartheid and improve the lives of the majority black population. But this has since been a forlorn hope. Corruption, mismanagement, ineptitude have become the hallmark of the government while the population of jobless youths grows. Therefore, until the government addresses concretely the problem of unemployment, rural-urban drift, socio-economic development and growth, the restive youths would continue to target helpless foreigners even as the latter are contributing to the socio-economic advancement of the country.

South African officials' excuses

South African officials, including its envoys to other African countries, have always given excuses for the attacks on foreigners in that country. But the excuses are baseless. They say immigrants are taking over jobs and businesses across the country. They blame employers of labour for choosing foreigners to maximise profit. But the immigrants have repeatedly argued that they don't seek employment in public or government-owned establishments. Most of them are self-employed while others are employed in private business, depending on their skills. Therefore, they are a strong labour force contributing to the development and growth of the country. They cannot be described as parasites.

On the issue of crime, government officials, particularly the security forces, have never come out with statistics of crime rates showing the percentage of foreigners on one hand and South Africans involved in crime on the other hand. Again, how many foreigners are in South African prisons, when and how were the crimes committed?

It beats the imagination of any right-thinking person for some officials to argue that the youth gangs attacking African immigrants are ignorant of the contributions of African countries to the success of the fight against apartheid. Apartheid ended in 1994, that is, 22 years ago. Certainly, majority of the organisers of the march against immigrants are above 22 years. And of course, South Africa cannot be a country without history. Therefore, it is an understatement for anybody to claim the youths do not know their history. Perhaps, it is pertinent to know why they don't attack European immigrants.
Thabo Mbeki's sound bite

South Africans who seem to have difficulties accommodating their fellow Africans should listen to former President Thabo Mbeki's sound bite following the recent attacks. At a press conference, where he condemned the attacks on migrants, he said: "As South Africans, we should never forget the enormous sacrifices that were made by the people of Africa to help us achieve our liberation.

"We cannot now behave in a manner that treats other Africans, who are now residents in our country, as enemies or unwelcome guests."


Equally, the Nelson Mandela Foundation has criticised the authorities for giving the Mamelodi Concerned Residents the "permission for a march of hatred."

Reports said at the weekend a coalition representing more than 10 civil groups had marched to the Parliament to protest the attack. They include the African Solidarity Network, the Cape Town Housing Assembly, Gender Sonke Justice, Unifam and Lumumba Chia. There had been calls on churches and mosques to educate their adherents on why they must embrace their fellow Africans and halt the attacks. Perhaps the youth gangs will listen to the voice of reason this time.

Attack on Nigerians, wakeup call on FG

It was disheartening hearing the 'lamentations' of the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Khadija Bukar Abba Ibrahim, when she appeared before the House Committee on Diaspora Matters.

Reports quoted her as saying that though it is the responsibility of the ministry to protect the interest of Nigeria and Nigerians abroad, funds were not made to the ministry until the 2017 budget proposals that are presently being considered by the National Assembly.

She said, "It is estimated that there are up to 15 million Nigerians abroad. ...No provision was made for that purpose in the budget. Other countries make financial provision for repatriation of remains, lost income and loss of passport, funeral expenses, and medical bills, among others, which our missions can't (handle) due to paucity of funds. Yet, Nigerians expect, unrealistically, missions to offer these services."

The minister noted that it was only in the 2017 budget that the sum of N400 million was appropriated. But is this amount enough? Her response: "This is clearly inadequate to cover the sheer volume and complexity of the consular challenges facing Nigerian missions abroad, including the strategic engagement with Nigerians in the Diaspora."

Ibrahim also commented on Nigerians in prisons abroad. According to her, there were 15,316 Nigerians in foreign prisons by December 2015. But she was quick to say "the update for 2016 is not complete as the Ministry is awaiting updates from our missions abroad." Interestingly, she disclosed that Nigerians in Diaspora remitted over $21 billion in 2015 and "in recognition of the huge potential of Nigerians in Diaspora for national development, the Diaspora Desks in Nigerian Missions abroad are now to be part of the Economic Section."

Chairman, House Committee on Diaspora Matters said it all when she accused the government of showing more interest in the remittance Nigerians in Diaspora make to the country than their safety in their respective countries of residence. She was emphatic when she said she was not going to be part of the "conspiracy of silence," on the pains of Nigerians abroad, an apparent reference to the killing of Nigerians in South Africa.

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