



EFF STATEMENT ON THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS OF COVID-19, VACCINATIONS, SCHOOLS, AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Thursday, 14 January 2021

The Economic Freedom Fighter's notes the situation across the world which has continued to deteriorate. In South Africa, we have seen an average of 400 people die every day in hospitals and parking lots, as a result of COVID-19, with hospitals which have reached their capacity and funeral schemes facing a shortage of coffins. As such the EFF reached a decision to close all its offices (national, provincial, regional), and to suspend all political activity given what it may have on the spreading of the virus and how it may contribute to the further loss of life. The EFF's Plenum has also been postponed indefinitely. We will however, continue holding businesses accountable and ensuring that justice is served through our Labour Desk and GBV Desk respectively. We will also resume with online political classes.

The EFF calls for the reinstatement of all social and economic relief measures to protect the livelihoods of small business and the poorest of the poor. This includes the extending of the COVID-19 grant beyond the current regime, which sees the last payments being made in January 2021. Government must ensure that they continue to provide relief to small businesses through the Unemployment Insurance Fund and TERS Relief Scheme, and any businesses owners who claim from government yet do not pay employees must face harsh consequences. Government must compel all banks to provide payment holidays on repayments of mortgages, rents repayments, loans and credit facilities for a period of 6-months, as our people are bound to struggle due to the measures put in place to protect lives. Furthermore, there must be a complete halt on all evictions, as it would be inhumane to subject people to homelessness in a time of national and global tragedy.

The EFF encourages all of those who are within the manufacturing sector, and production of Personal Protective Equipment's (PPEs) to play a progressive role in fighting the pandemic. The culture of stealing must also be punished harshly, as it jeopardizes life and undermines our capacity to fight this virus effectively. This is because the role of ethical and legitimate business people becomes ever more important as we confront the surge of cases, and healthcare workers as well as essential personnel require protection in order to save lives and provide services to people. The Special Investigative Unit, the Hawks and the South African

Police Services must work diligently in identifying and arresting all criminals; including those who are members of the state, who abused the tender system in order to line their own pockets.

To allow for free and fair elections during this pandemic, we call for the elections to be postponed to 2024. This is because the current climate does not allow for an open campaign, engagement with prospective voters due to fear of participating in the massive spread of the virus, as well as to prepare election machinery. Moreover, Public Representatives and political parties ought to focus on the mandate of service delivery, and not be put in a permanent state of elections. Furthermore, South Africa lacks the technical capacity and moral integrity to attempt to run an election in any other way besides direct voting through the ballot.

We further call for the postponement of the reopening of all schools. As the EFF we oppose the gambling of the lives of children, to a virus that all of humanity is yet to properly understand. It will be extremely painful when families start losing their children, because as leaders we failed to respect the situation we find ourselves and preserve the future of our nation. All of civil society, trade unions, school principals and parents ought to unite and call for the postponement of the resuming of schooling activities, until such a point where it is safe to send children to classrooms. Furthermore, we call for the closure of Parliament, Legislatures and Councils, and for all legislative activity to be conducted online. The loss of political leaders has already taken a great toll on all political parties across the board and must be put to an end.

In what is deemed to be a historic process, the Department of Health has announced a vaccine roll-out strategy that one-million doses of the vaccine will be received by South Africa in January 2021, and a further five-hundred thousand doses are set to be received in February 2021 - to curb the spread and impact of the deadly Corona Virus in South Africa. This announcement is represents a breakthrough in efforts to fight the deadly Corona Virus, which has left a dark and painful cloud of death and trauma across the world for over a year. All unscientific and nonsensical conspiracy theories from extremists that seek to suggest vaccines are part of an agenda for population control should be condemned.

We urge the Department of Health to be transparent, and to work hand in hand with the Centre for Science and Innovation, the South African Healthcare Practitioners Association, and all relevant experts in virology and epidemiology, to ensure the speedy roll out of the vaccine and as a matter of priority. The role of billionaires such as Bill Gates in medical research and messaging ought to be decisively called out and undermined by the South African Government, the African Union and the World Health Organization. These individuals only

serve to further suspicion around critical medicine and vaccines, as profit-orientated individuals should have no place in matters of societal good such as medicine.

Big pharmaceutical industries must also shy away from suspicious activity such as pricing of critical medication, which leads to racial and economic discrimination of the roll out of medicine. It is the most disgusting height of imperialism, when medicine is rolled out on the basis of the wealth of a nation, particularly considering the history of the world and the deliberate under-development of the Global South. Pharmaceutical agencies must also be discouraged from instituting non-disclosure agreements to governments who lead democracies that they are accountable to.

In the immediate, the EFF calls for a patent waiver on all vaccines to be implemented, in order to ensure internal mass production of vaccines in order to suit specific African needs. It is the patent waiver that will undermine all those who seek to profit out of a human tragedy.

Our commitment to logic and science must never be confused as an alliance with Western Medicine, We must not depend on Western Pharmaceutical companies alone, and unwittingly become the champions of the interests of capitalist medicine. There must be integrated strategies, and this includes working closely with nations such as Cuba in vaccine and pharmaceutical development. It has been demonstrated for instance that traditional forms of medicine are helpful in dealing with the symptoms of COVID-19 and development in this regard must be prioritized.

Without building internal capacity, we will continue to be at the mercy of billionaires who masquerade as medical experts. We urge all South Africans to comply with all behavioural and medical requirements to curb the spread of the Corona Virus, and this includes voluntary participation in the vaccination process.

The EFF also condemns the classist and racist closing of 20 local ports of entry by South Africa as an self-hate and deepening of the divide amongst Africans. We also condemn the leadership of SADC for failing to mitigate the needs of our people in terms of cross border travel, particularly at the Beitbridge border. The EFF calls for a high-level meeting by SADC to resolve the matter and resolve on common protocols and procedures for travel including free testing and provision of clearance permits to enter South Africa. It is irrational to close the borders of Lesotho and Zimbabwe, yet allow inter-provincial travel as if there is a special type of Corona in Lesotho that is more dangerous than the one in Free State. The closing of borders within SADC has nothing to do with Corona, but reveals a self-hate and desire to appear tough

to European nations who have closed their ports of entry to us, yet they can come as they please into our country.

Lastly, we call on Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni to desist from practicing thuggery, intimidation and violence in order to secure electoral victory. Africa must stop being a site of violence at times of elections, because of aging leaders who refuse to let go of power. We call for free and fair elections, and tolerance and for all parties to accept the democratic outcomes of the election even if they are not in their favor in Uganda. As Africans, let us practice tolerance and peace, towards building a prosperous African continent. May we all remain strong in the face of depression and despair and may we all live lives in a manner that will honor those we have lost in what has been a war of survival against a brutal disease.

We pay tribute and extend our deepest condolences to the families of the thousands of South Africans have lost their lives as a result of the deadly Corona Virus Pandemic. May we all remain strong in the face of depression and despair and may we all live lives in a manner that will honor those we have lost in what has been a war of survival against a brutal disease. To the frontline workers who are overworked and traumatized by the unprecedented amount of death they have witnessed, we also salute you.

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