



EFF STATEMENT ON THE LONG OVERDUE BILL TO DECRIMINALISE SEX WORK

Thursday, 2 February 2022

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) notes that the Department of Justice and Correctional Services (DCS) introduced a long overdue bill to decriminalize sex work to Parliament's DCS Portfolio Committee. The EFF, since its inception 10-years ago armed with superior logic has called for and adopted the framework for the decriminalizing sex work in consultation with sex workers.

The Decriminalization of Sex Work Bill, which is to be called Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act) is expected to be tabled during the course of the year (2023).

Controlling sexuality and, in particular, women's sexuality has its origins in patriarchy. Patriarchal oppression which often is patriarchal violence, has saturated all societies globally.

Colonialism has perpetuated the patriarchal control and oppression of societies and the control of sexuality. Bodies of women, girls and gender-diverse people have for way too long been subjected to discrimination, violence and oppression where human rights violations have occurred persistently.

Colonialism made morality a commodity possessed by colonial powers, which was subsequently used to establish nationhood and which is underpinned by norms and values applied to subjects that are marginalized in relation to sexuality and gender.

The continued criminalization of sex work places sex workers in danger of abuse and sexual offences by misogynist men and often by Law Enforcement Officials who ignore

and sweep under the carpet all criminal activities reported by sex workers. The decriminalization of sex work will therefore significantly reduce the abuse sex workers are subjected to on a constant basis.

Further, criminalization of sex work is a tool that infringes on sex workers' rights to bodily autonomy, dignity, privacy, equality and freedom from violence.

The decriminalization of sex work means that sex workers would be protected against sexual harassment, violence, rape and unfair working conditions. Sex workers must access comprehensive health care services, free from stigma, discrimination and where this fails to happen, they will be able to seek recourse without further violence due to hostile laws and practices.

The EFF will continue to work with sex workers and advocacy groups to ensure the adoption and implementation of the bill.

ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS

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