



EFF MEDIA STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Wednesday, 08 March 2023

Today the EFF takes this opportunity to commemorate International Women's Day (IWD), a day that not only stands to celebrate women, but also recognises their collective fighting spirit, and generational activism across the globe. The origins of IWD are mostly attributed to the 1911 march organized by women led socialist labour movements advocating for fair labour practices, and equal wages.

However, what is little known about the day is the 1917 march led by Russian woman activist Alexandra Kollontai, which led to the Russian Revolution, and the incoming government giving women the right to vote for the first time; while the Communist Party leader Vladimir Lenin became the first to declare the day Woman's Day, an official Soviet holiday.

It is this moment that motivated several socialist and communist states such as China and Spain to also adopt the day as Woman's Day, until its official recognition by the United Nations in 1975 as International Women's Day.

While over the years the day may have lost its essence and become highly commercialized, this often-overlooked history is important to highlight, as it aligns with the erasure of African women activism and leadership over centuries.

In recent history, Women's movements on the continent have questioned and fought against patriarchal structures, participated and lead in movement building, and have developed radical agendas, and political strategies that have seen them enter our political and institutional systems as leaders, thinkers, law makers, teachers, artists, and more.

This has seen improvements in reproductive rights for women, increased access to education, legislation against the discrimination of women in workplaces, mandated representation in democratic leadership bodies, and the recognition of women's right to dignity, to name a few.

On the other hand, while we celebrate these gains, the struggle continues as women in positions of influence and power must now battle it out internally to uproot embedded patriarchal practices in those spaces.

The battles that women have won has reached stalemate and in some instances, degenerated by the ANC Government, led by Cyril Ramaphosa. Ramaphosa has demonstrated his hatred for women and girls – in 2022, almost half of the women's labour force was out of employment, with lower absorption rates compared to men, and women spending more time looking for work. Furthermore, under the ANC, women are still finding themselves in forms of employment that are vulnerable and provide low earnings in difficult working conditions, while women remain head of households. Statistics South Africa latest report indicates that 42% of children lived only with their mothers and 4% with their fathers.

The failure of the ANC Government to dismantle institutionalized patriarchy and misogyny allows men to rape and abuse women and children and worse, without justice been served. Also, it is not uncommon for these vile men to even be protected when they are politically connected.

Additionally, there has been no justice for the African women who were tortured via forced sterilization by the ANC Government in public hospitals. The ANC Government stripped them of their reproductive rights that the women have fiercely fought for over decades.

The liberation of women is central to the EFF's ideology and the spirit of revolution portrayed in the conception of IWD will be on display at the National Shutdown on the 20th of March, 2023 as we demand the resignation of Cyril Ramaphosa as the President of South Africa.

ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS

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