



EFF STATEMENT ON WEEK 5 OF PARLIAMENTARY PROGRAMME

Sunday, 14 July 2024

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) welcomes the commencement of oversight work of Parliament since the establishment of the 7th Parliament and elections of presiding officers.

The EFF welcomes the designation of President Julius Malema to serve in the Judicial Service Commission (JSC) together with other members of the National Assembly. The EFF further welcomes the election of National Chairperson Veronica Mente-Nkuna to serve in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Parliamentary Forum.

We additionally note the elections of chairpersons of portfolio and standing committees. However, we reject the appointment of Mr. Songezo Zibi, the leader of Rise Mzansi, as the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA) while being part of the Governance of National Unity (GNU).

Effectively, this means that Parliament has departed from the tradition and practice of a member of an opposition party chairing SCOPA. This practice was meant to strengthen oversight, which will now be weakened as members of GNU have all the intentions to protect each other, resulting in not holding each other accountable. The EFF, together with the progressive caucus, will continue to hold the executive accountable and ensure that SCOPA continues to be robust in exposing corruption in the state.

The EFF is further concerned by the manner in which the National Assembly is handling the process to pass the 2024/2025 draft budget. The National Assembly portfolio committees considering proposed budget votes are rushing the process, and

not giving members enough time to evaluate proposed budgets and make informed observations and recommendations.

The budget that is being adopted is part of the 2024 medium term expenditure framework which cuts the budget by more than R80 billion and continues to entrench austerity. As a result, the budget votes being adopted in the committee without thorough consultation with civil society and key stakeholders just to meet the deadline of the 31st of July, is nothing but malicious compliance. The EFF has, therefore, raised an objection in the National Assembly Programming Committee (NAPC) and cautioned against the failure to properly engage with the proposed budget votes.

The EFF participated in the Health; Employment and Labour; Office of the Chief Justice; Statistics South Africa; International Relations and Cooperation; Mineral Resources and Energy; Water and Sanitation; Small Business Development; Public Service and Administration; Government Communications and Information Systems; and Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities budget vote debates.

We rejected the proposed budget cuts, the failure to review programmes and policies that have failed to deal with high levels of court backlogs, the water and energy crisis, gender-based violence, and the incapacity of the state to deliver basic services. We further raised our concern that the involvement of reactionary parties like the Democratic Alliance (DA) and Freedom Front Plus (FF+) will undermine South Africa's commitment to BRICS and threaten our solidarity with the people of Palestine, Western Sahara, and Cuba.

The EFF is additionally concerned by the failure of the National Assembly to finalise bills with Constitutional Court deadlines, and is concerned that many of the bills that will be revived will not be finalised on time. The challenge that Parliament faces is the incapacity of the Bills Office to provide meaningful support for members to engage and finalise legislation on time. This is mainly because Parliament's executive has failed to build much-needed capacity over the years, has lost skills, and waits for the executive to table legislation, and only reviews it.

Consequently, the National Assembly has been unable to assist members to table and finalise private members' bills. In August 2018 the EFF tabled the South African Reserve Bank Bill to nationalise the Reserve Bank and it is still not finalised. The EFF, therefore, calls on the executive to prioritise the filling of vacant positions in the Bills Office and employ additional staff.

Furthermore, we call on the Parliament executive to employ additional language services staff to ensure that there is translation for all official languages. We witnessed a sitting of the National Assembly with a presiding officer who expected everyone to either speak English or Afrikaans, and because there were no translation services for other languages, members could not express themselves in their language of choice. The failure to make translation services available is another clear indication of perpetuating colonial traditions that view English and Afrikaans as the only superior languages, and this must come to an end.

Finally, the EFF calls on Parliament to bring to an end all virtual meetings and put in place necessary arrangements to ensure that all sittings, including committee meetings, are held physically. We further call on the parliamentary communications office to increase their capacity to ensure that Parliament's YouTube channel broadcasts all meetings of Parliament.

ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS

Leigh-Ann Mathys (National Spokesperson) 082 304 7572

Thato Lebyane (Media Inquiries) 078 563 1581

 communications@effonline.org
 <http://www.effonline.org>

 @EFFSouthAfrica
 @EFFSouthAfrica

 Economic Freedom Fighters
 @EFFSouthAfrica