



EFF STATEMENT ON UNANSWERED PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS BY MINISTERS

Tuesday, 17 September 2024

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) is concerned by the growing number of unanswered parliamentary questions by ministers of the DA-led coalition government. Since the beginning of the 7th Parliament, there have been 133 questions for written and oral reply that have not been answered by ministers as of the 13th of September 2024, 33 of which are EFF questions.

The EFF is highly concerned that there is a continuation of the trend of ministries that perpetually fail to answer questions by Members of Parliament in the 7th Parliament, including the ministries of police, finance, justice and constitutional development, defence, and higher education. These Ministers are habitual failures when it comes to answering questions in Parliament.

The purpose of questions to Ministers is to exercise oversight of the executive and hold them accountable. When Ministers answer these questions, Members of Parliament are able to hold the executive accountable and report back to the citizens on the work they are doing in Parliament. Failure to answer questions by Ministers undermines the constitutional obligation of members to hold Ministers accountable.

The EFF is concerned by this lacklustre attitude of Ministers when they come to the House and Council to respond to questions, if they do, including questions directed at the President and Deputy President. They have reduced such an important exercise into a box-ticking exercise.

The EFF has raised the matter with the Speaker and the Leader of Government Business, the Deputy President, and thus far, it does not appear that there is interest in strengthening the use of questions as a measure to hold the executive accountable.

The EFF will once again write to the Speaker and the Chairperson of the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces, to demand that, in the next sittings, all Ministers who have failed to reply to questions must be named, and be made to apologise and commit to submit all outstanding questions within 3 working days.

It is obvious that the 7th Parliament of the DA-led coalition is plagued by one crisis after another. This is evident after the Parliament failed to establish important committees such as the Joint Multiparty Women's Caucus, the Joint Standing Committee on Defence, the Joint Standing Committee on Ethics and Members' Interests, the Joint Standing Committee on the Financial Management of Parliament, and the Petitions Committee. Now, the failure to ensure that mechanisms are strengthened to hold the executive accountable is another crisis.

ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS

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