



EFF STATEMENT ON THE ESCALATION OF EXTORTION RACKETS TARGETING SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE WESTERN CAPE

Tuesday, 17 September 2024.

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) are outraged at the brazen extortion rackets that have now spread to social workers, an escalation that exposes the complete collapse of law and order under the ANC government and the utter neglect of the Democratic Alliance (DA) in the Western Cape. These criminal syndicates, operating with impunity, are now targeting those who provide essential social services, demanding protection fees from social workers under the threat of violence.

This is nothing short of a war on the most vulnerable members of our society and those who serve them. In areas like Delft, Khayelitsha, Mfuleni, and Gugulethu, social workers are being extorted by gangsters who demand money in exchange for their safety. In Delft alone, there have been multiple incidents where social workers were forced to pay extortionists just to carry out their duties without fear of being attacked. These attacks have left many traumatised, with some social workers unable to return to work for months due to the psychological toll. This situation is untenable and must be condemned in the strongest terms.

There have been 41 reported incidents involving the targeting of social workers, including 6 robberies and assaults, and 35 hijackings and attempted hijackings. These criminal attacks have only worsened over time, creating an environment where those tasked with serving the public cannot even protect themselves, let alone the communities they serve.

The syndicates, emboldened by the government's inability to maintain law and order, are exploiting a system in disrepair. It is disheartening that R20 million has already

been spent on overtime for social workers, forcing them to double up in high-risk areas while the root causes of their insecurity remain unaddressed.

The EFF has long sounded the alarm on the escalating criminality in the country and just recently, the Commander-in-Chief (CIC) Julius Malema tabled a Draft Resolution in Parliament calling for the establishment of an Ad-Hoc Committee to address the extortion crisis. The purpose of this committee will be to hold public consultations, collect insights from small business operators, civil society, and subject matter experts, and put forward thorough policy and legislative measures to eliminate this criminal activity. It is crucial that Parliament fulfils its responsibility in ensuring government accountability and providing strong oversight in the battle against extortion.

The DA and ANC, in their debates on the Draft Resolution made it clear that there is no urgency and need for Parliament to use its powers to establish this Ad-Hoc Committee. In fact, the DA attempted to sabotage this sound and progressive Draft Resolution in the National Assembly, which is a betrayal to the people of Western Cape that is the hardest hit with this unchecked community terrorism. Once again, the white supremacist party is showing their disdain for black people.

However, the EFF will continue to engage political parties to adopt this Draft Resolution that is to be re-tabled in the National Assembly, for an end to these extortion rackets.

ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS

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