



EFF MEDIA STATEMENT FOLLOWING NATIONAL SHUTDOWN

Thursday, 23 March 2023

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) is pleased that the National Shutdown which was held on the 20th of March 2023 was an overwhelming success and registered the demands for a stable supply of electricity and the resignation of Cyril Ramaphosa across the country, the continent and the world.

The National Shutdown, which arose as a result of the continued mis-governance in South Africa, high levels of unemployment, crime, Gender Based Violence and lack of service delivery was a success as it saw activists come out all across South Africa and register their dissatisfaction with the conditions confronting them.

As intended, the people who bear the brunt of the failures of Cyril Ramaphosa's government heeded the call, and as a result taxi ranks, train stations and shopping centres were all ghost towns. Taxis and buses were empty on the 20th of March all over South Africa, while load-shedding was ultimately suspended, due to a low level of demand for electricity supply. The low level demand for electricity was only possible due to the the operations of major industries and businesses being suspended as a result of the shutdown.

It was not business as usual, as the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) and South African Police Services (SAPS) were deployed in their numbers because this government knew that the National Shutdown was a just cause, and they resorted to deploying the armed forces to suppress legitimate and peaceful protests.

The EFF salutes all activists from all political parties, unions and civil society who expressed their frustration with the regime of the day, peacefully and with the highest levels of discipline. We particularly extend our gratitude to the South African Federation of Trade Unions (SAFTU), the African Transformation Movement (ATM), the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), the United Democratic Movement (UDM), the Land Party, the African Radical Economic Transformation Alliance (ARETA) and all progressive forces that supported the

National Shut Down. We want to assure all the forces of progressive change that the EFF will always fight side by side with you and will never forget your contribution even when we take political power from 2024 onwards.

The excessive fear-mongering by the State and media, which sought to distort the National Shutdown into an activity of violence and chaos, was proven wrong and the core purpose and message of the protests was delivered.

The EFF condemns the senseless and wasteful deployment of the SANDF, which will cost the taxpayer over R166 million up until 17 April 2023. The state deployed the armed forces purely for the purpose of intimidation, and they did not succeed in their attempts, but this must concern South Africans who have an interest in a free democracy characterised by accountability. The deployment of the military against opposition is the hallmark of dictatorship and is a sign of things to come as the ruling party edges closer to losing political power in South Africa.

Thankfully, the deployment of the Army and the police to suppress political dissent was a complete failure and embarrassing because the people of South Africa refused to be intimidated.

We condemn the raids conducted by the police on the homes of activists ahead of the National Shutdown, particularly the raid of the home of the EFF Gauteng Provincial Secretary Moshe Koma in Soweto. The ruling party has resorted to utilising Apartheid tactics of isolating individuals and attacking their family homes, in an attempt to discourage them for standing up for their rights. It is ironic, that members of the ruling party who had their homes raided by the Apartheid government, are today the ones who are using the tactics of persecution against those who oppose them.

We commend the fearlessness of all activists and ordinary citizens who came out in their numbers, despite these numerous forms of intimidation and even illegal arrests. Many activists, and disturbingly many young women were arrested without just cause in an attempt to strike fear into the hearts of South Africans. Of those who were arrested, is EFF Central Command Team Member and Member of Parliament Yoliswa Yako, who was arrested simply for walking.

The EFF has ensured that a majority of all those who were arrested on the day of the National Shutdown are released. We are inspired by the high spirits of all Fighters who were held in police cells after we ensured their release, and their

determination to continue to call for the fall of Cyril Ramaphosa. Their enthusiasm is encouraging, and proves to us no one can intimidate committed revolutionaries.

The EFF condemns the illegal instructions which came from the Minister of Transport Lydia Chikunga, who threatened bus companies with termination of contracts if they provided transport for towards the National Shutdown. The EFF will lodge a complaint against the Minister of Transport with the Office of the Public Protector, as her actions constituted an abuse of her power as a Minister, to serve a personal and partisan agenda.

All of the attempts by the State to suppress the National Shutdown failed dismally. Their efforts, which included massive deployment of law enforcement and the military, disinformation tactics and narrative manipulation by Cabinet Ministers and the President himself, all failed. Ordinary citizens and businesses all registered a motion of no confidence in Cyril Ramaphosa, who encouraged business to open and people to proceed like it would be a normal day, and no one listened to him.

The assurances of the President of South Africa that it would be business as usual were ignored by the people of South Africa, confirming that he lacks the legitimacy to lead our nation. The National Shutdown was already a success the moment a majority of businesses refused to open their doors despite Ramaphosa's promise of a normal day. The success of the shutdown was further enriched by the fact that on top of the closure of businesses, our people took to the streets to demand the resignation of Ramaphosa.

The state-sponsored narrative of "business as usual" collapsed and central to this is the arrogance of incumbency. The ruling party is so detached from the realities and frustrations of our people, that they began to believe their own rhetoric and propaganda. They were humbled by businesses and ordinary people who showed them that nothing would be normal.

Trucks and trains which are central to the transportation of goods and minerals in our country did not move. The ports of South Africa, particularly in Richards Bay in KwaZulu-Natal did not operate. The busiest airports and municipal roads were abnormally empty on the day of the National Shutdown, proving its success.

The state itself contradicted its own narrative of a “normal day”, because they deployed a massive contingent of the military and police on the 20th of March 2023, spending millions trying to combat the National Shutdown. South Africans saw the highest level of police visibility on that day, proving that it was not a normal day.

The road to the removal of Cyril Ramaphosa as President of South Africa has begun and will continue with sporadic protests in demand of his resignation. The EFF will pursue this end through legislative means, the courts and on the picket lines. Ramaphosa is corrupt, violent and grossly incompetent, and his continued Presidency will descend South Africa into dictatorship and collapse. He Must Resign and He Must Resign Now!

The EFF takes this opportunity to wish all Muslims a blessed and peaceful Ramadaan. May this holy month be characterised by the core values inherent in Islam such as compassion, mutual respect and humility. As our nation struggles with the pain of poverty, corruption and inequality, may this be a month of generosity and kindness towards all.

ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS

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THE YEAR OF MASSIVE

POLITICAL EDUCATION AND VOTER REGISTRATION