



EFF STATEMENT ON RETRENCHMENTS AT ARCELORMITTAL DUE TO LOADSHEDDING

Thursday, 30 November 2023

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) notes, with dismay, the announcement by steel producer ArcelorMittal South Africa that it will be retrenching over 3,500 workers at its Newcastle and Vereeniging plants as it closes down operations due to loadshedding. This decision is a direct consequence of the ANC government's catastrophic failure to address the energy crisis that has gripped our country for years.

The EFF has consistently warned that loadshedding would lead to job losses, economic instability, and a decline in the quality of life of South Africans. We also warned that the ANC government's mismanagement of Eskom would have severe consequences for our economy and our people, and this announcement is a stark reminder of the severity of the crisis we face.

The retrenchments at ArcelorMittal are just the latest example of the damage that loadshedding is causing to our economy. Car manufacturers Volkswagen, have also been forced to cut jobs or consider closing plants due to the power crisis, while Telkom retrenched 15% of its workforce earlier this year.

Furthermore, it is reported that about 60% of small businesses in townships have had to lay off workers, and a further 7% have had to completely close down. This is a disaster for our economy and for the livelihoods of millions of South Africans.

The recent death of a patient who bled to death outside Northam clinic in Limpopo, after being denied entry due to loadshedding, is a further tragic example of the human cost of this crisis. Refusing access to healthcare services due to loadshedding is a

clear violation of fundamental human rights. South Africans deserve a healthcare system that ensures uninterrupted access, especially during critical moments.

Currently, hundreds of thousands of learners are facing the challenge of writing their matric exams amidst loadshedding, causing significant disruptions to their education. It is disheartening to witness these young individuals forced to study under such difficult conditions. These are children who rightfully deserve a fair opportunity to build a future for themselves, and the current circumstances make it even more challenging for them to achieve that.

Amidst this crisis, it's disconcerting to witness our Minister of Electricity enthusiastically welcoming donations of 450 generators from China, when this gesture does not provide a lasting solution to our energy crisis. These generators serve as a temporary fix to a deeper and more systemic problem, offering no substantial impact on load shedding.

It is therefore apparent that the ANC government is committed to providing no permanent solution to the issue of load shedding, nor are they capable of doing so. Evidently, the only way to end loadshedding and create a better future for South Africa is to vote out the ANC in 2024 and elect the EFF, a party with clear solutions to improve our electricity supply.

ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS

Sinawo Thambo (National Spokesperson) 072 629 7422

Leigh-Ann Mathys (National Spokesperson) 082 304 7572

✉ communications@effonline.org

🌐 <http://www.effonline.org>

🐦 @EFFSouthAfrica

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