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JUSTICE
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MOVEMENT



SAFSC
SOUTH AFRICAN FOOD
SOVEREIGNTY CAMPAIGN



Press Statement: The ANC's Nation-building Project has failed

23 July 2021

In the wake of the worst week of our young democracy, the National Food Crisis Forum convened on 22 July to discuss the multiple challenges that threaten our country and perpetuate the hunger crisis. Widespread looting of food has also demonstrated the depth of the crisis and confirms our consistent concern that the state has underestimated the hunger crisis. We do not agree with the criminalisation of those who took food from supermarkets. The forum discussed the appalling events of the previous week which left over 276 people dead and innumerable livelihoods destroyed and the horrific black-on-black violence which is indicative of a failed nation-building project. The forum supports a full-scale investigation of the 23 killings in Phoenix. The continued racism towards South Africans of Indian descent by some political parties, is appalling and unjustifiable; police must arrest those who have been perpetuating this racism and genocidal threats. The forum noted with grave concern the failure of Twitter, Facebook, and Tiktok to remove racial content and malicious lies on their platforms.

The absence of the state that left a vacuum for vigilantism and the ongoing taxi violence in Cape Town that has killed innocent commuters and left hundreds stranded without transport is symptomatic of a state which has failed to protect its citizens and the sanctity of human life as enshrined in the constitution. The South African Human Rights Commission and parliamentary institutions, community leaders, and progressive civil society groups must work together to quell this racial tension that threatens to destroy the country.

The forum reiterates its call for a fiscally neutral universal basic income grant #UBIGNOW which addresses wealth and income inequality. The #UBIGNOW Approach and [Policy Document](#) put together by leading economists and financial modellers shows how the grant can be financed and implemented as well as its impact in the fight against hunger and poverty. There is a societal consensus for a #UBIGNOW based on progressive financing mechanisms. The time for a caring government is now!

Commercial agriculture has failed to feed the poor and has ceased creating jobs. Since 2007, more than 11 000 jobs have been lost in commercial agriculture in South Africa. This is why the forum has been assembling small-scale farmers, activists, and organisations who are building food sovereignty hubs and pathways in their communities. This is a network of urban, peri-urban, and rural movements made up of young people, rural and urban women, NGO's and community organisations who are building an alternative food system. The Valley Food Gardens initiative has distributed over 800 seeds in Genadendal, Berea, Voorstekraal, and Greyton (see https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=s_gRsh3T1AI and <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=RznAX-KFu88> for more) while Amandla activists have been building successful community gardens in the townships

of Gqeberha. The West Coast Food Sovereignty and Solidarity Forum have established community agroecology gardens with 35 women and youth who are empowering the community in and around Lutzville to produce food for themselves. The student-led, University of the Free State Food Sovereignty Campaign has taken the demand for food sovereignty to the municipality, and they have begun a local municipal campaign to convert unused land for food production. The forum reiterates its solidarity with the Philippi Horticultural Area food farming campaign which produces over 200 000 tons of vegetables and supports over 30 000 livelihoods and rejects the planned destruction of the farming area and aquifer by the City of Cape Town.

These activists need land to expand their farming from backyard gardens to one-hectare farms which according to research, feed 70% of the human population. This is why the forum calls for a progressive approach to land reform based on the need to develop an alternative food sovereignty system. Municipalities have a constitutional obligation to prioritise the basic needs of communities hence they must play a leading role in tackling the food crisis by supporting small-scale farmers in their pursuit of a democratised food sovereignty system.

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