TUESDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2023

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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The House met at 14:00.

The House Chairperson Ms M G Boroto took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayer or meditation.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

(*The late Prince M Buthelezi*)

Mr N SINGH: Hon House Chairperson, I move without notice:

That the House—

(1) notes the passing of His Royal Highness Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the traditional Prime Minister to the Zulu Monarch and nation, the Inkosi of the

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Buthelezi Clan, and the founder of the Inkatha Freedom Party, IFP, on 9 September 2023;

(2) further notes that Prince Buthelezi was a Member of Parliament from 1994 until his passing;

(3) recalls that he was a Minister of Home Affairs from 1994 to 2004 and that within this period, he was appointed Acting President of the Republic of South Africa on 22 occasions;

(4) further recalls that Prince Buthelezi, mentored by the ANC's founder Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme and Inkosi Albert Luthuli, accepted the mandate of Mr Oliver Tambo and Inkosi Luthuli to lead the erstwhile KwaZulu, in order to undermine the apartheid system from within;

(5) recognises the legacy of Prince Buthelezi's unmatched leadership in KwaZulu-Natal, expressed in physical infrastructure, economic strength and social cohesion;

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(6) acknowledges the leadership which Prince Buthelezi gave to this House where his voice of reason often restored order in this House;

(7) celebrates Prince Buthelezi's immeasurable contribution to freedom, democracy, constitutionalism, education, conservation, peace, justice, equality and nation-building;

(8) honours Prince Buthelezi for his lifetime of service to South Africa, as a champion of our liberation struggle and a respected statesman in our democratic era; and

(9) extends its condolences to His Majesty King Misuzulu kaZwelithini, Prince Buthelezi's children, the extended Buthelezi family and to the family of his late wife, Princess Irene Thandekile, who was his anchor for 66 years.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Thank you very much, hon Singh. Hon members, as I welcome the family of uTata Buthelezi and the extended family, I will now call on the hon The Leader of the Opposition.

The LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Hon House Chair, the Mahlabathini plain is a wide and sweeping grassland plain in northern KwaZulu-Natal. It is rolling and magnificent in its ruggedness, populated by historic places and towns like Ulundi and Nongoma. The hills, soils and rivers of this plain have, for centuries, borne silent witness to monumental bloody battles, the rise and fall of empires and the very struggle for survival of the Zulu nation. The mighty plain is also where the life story of Mangosuthu Buthelezi began and where, laid to rest at his beloved Phindangane, it ended.

Where does one even start to deal with such a long life? How does one choose which elements of a life so full and so richly lived to focus on? Perhaps it is best to start in the beginning. Born on 27 August 1928 as a Zulu prince into a distinguished royal bloodline, Shenge attended university at Fort Hare where his political activism and awakening began. He was ultimately expelled from the university for participating in a political student protest against the then governor general.

In 1953 Shenge became the Inkosi of the Buthelezi clan and a year later was installed by King Cyprian as the traditional

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prime Minister to the Zulu nation, a role that he continued to discharge for 69 years until his passing this year.

Prince Buthelezi served as chief Minister of the KwaZulu-Natal where he oversaw the building of hospitals, schools and other infrastructure and also secured the funding for the Mangosuthu Technikon which operates to this day, and which has been responsible for the education of thousands of young South Africans.

However, the largest contribution he made to politics, the country and to this House was the establishment in 1975 of what ultimately would become known as the Inkatha Freedom Party. It was to this cause that he dedicated his life, turning the IFP into a formidable political force in KwaZulu-Natal and a national player in the political arena.

It was as the leader of the IFP that Shenge first took his seat as a member of this House in 1994 and was soon appointed as the Minister of Home Affairs in the government of National Unity, serving under both presidents Mandela and Mbeki.

His television appearances, missives to the newspapers, formidable debating skills and keen love for history,

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particularly of his beloved Zulu nation, marked him out. His ability to recall the intricate details and dynamics of the famous battles fought by his ancestors against the British and the Boers made him a fascinating companion in any forum.

When the book closes on a person’s life it is always tempting to cherry pick a certain chapter or paragraph and then try to use that as a basis to judge their full contribution. We have seen, in the weeks following Shenge’s death, attempts by critics and former opponents to do precisely that. I have always believed that a longer view is required particularly when it comes to a life as well and fully lived as that of Prince Buthelezi.

The Democratic Alliance and our predecessors are proud of our long association with Prince Buthelezi. He enjoyed endearing friendships with many people, from Ray Swart and Harry Schwartz to Helen Suzman, Colin Eglin and Tony Leon. He was a man of impeccable manners and great compassion, a man who could sit with royalty, prime Ministers and presidents but retained a humbleness about the common man whose plight he felt so deeply.

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He was also a man of deep faith who drew strongly on his Anglican faith and the trials, tribulations and tragedies that characterised his private and professional life. It was also a great source of comfort when he lost his beloved Princess Irene.

In later years, he came to fill the role of an elder statesman, and even when the health would fail him, he would still participate well into his sixth term as a member of this House.

Today we say thank you for the life of Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi. On behalf of the Democratic Alliance, we extend our condolences to his family and friends. We pray for comfort and healing, and we thank you for sharing him with the nation. To his beloved IFP, we extend our sympathies on the passing of your president emeritus. To the leader and members of the IFP, we hope that you will carry his memory as a lodestar into the future. Bulawayo may you continue to draw wisdom from as many lessons and inspirations.

I have no doubt today that those windswept grasslands of the Mahlabathini plains whisper his Isithakezelo – Shenge, in tribute to this great son of its soil.

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I conclude fittingly with the words uttered by Horatio in Shakespeare's Hamlet, a favourite of the Prince, and I quote: "Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince, and flights of angels sing thee to thy rest."

We look forward to working with the IFP to find an appropriate way to honour the prince in his home province of Kwazulu-Natal.

Dr M Q NDLOZI: House Chairperson, we take this opportunity to join in the condolence motion on the passing of the Prince of Phindangene, the hon Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi. We convey our heartfelt condolences to the family, the IFP, the Zulu people and South Africa as a whole. Indeed, the prince sat in these Chambers from 1994, when the first democratic Parliament was constituted and served the people of this country even as a Cabinet member under President Mandela. He operated majority of his life under difficult years of apartheid. We consider him to have formed part of an important generation of black leaders who were confronted by a very difficult hour in the history of black emancipation playing a crucial role in peace and political stability alongside Mandela, Mbeki and Zuma.

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We must underscore this because IFP and ANC in those days unleashed unspeakable forms of violence against each other, contesting on the direction of our country. Over 30 000 people died on both sides. Ideologically, the differences are on record even we in the red overalls have had our own disagreements together with the prince as well as his party. However, we refuse to talk about this history as if we have not had 30 years of hindsight, which allows us to re-evaluate the true nature of our liberation. We refuse to be victims of ANC propaganda and dominant historic narrative. We must ask ourselves a simple question. How is it that many black political parties had violent confrontations with the ANC before the collapse of apartheid, particularly in the 80s? Who can forget the killings and brutality that characterise confrontations of Azapo and United Democratic Front, UDF, supporters in Soweto, violence that often-involved gangsters? Who can forget the violence involving torture of homes and rape? The same occurred in Zamdela in Sharpeville in the 1990s, the biggest horrors of political violence were of self-defence units belonging to the ANC that terrorised communities and each other including gang rapes, kidnapping and necklacing.

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Therefore, you can disagree all you do, politically and ideologically with the great prince or the IFP, but violence in the 80s and the 90s also largely included ANC whose ... [Inaudible.] ... was often enforced with brutal violence. Seemingly, apartheid created conditions where all disagreements could only be resolved with violence, particularly amongst black people. It is on these grounds that we must accept that the prince, Mandela, Zuma and Mbeki as leaders had to turn a painful leaf together and end enemy tensions in tolerance that threaten to collapse the black collective political subject of emancipation. They had to build peace because you cannot make peace with friends. Peace is made amongst enemies. We do this because we recognise the pain of all our people, from Boipatong to the Midlands, eThekwini to the north of the rivers of Tugela, who continue to live with terrible scars of those dark days. The violence intolerance was ended because of the efforts of the great Prince of Phindangene, and this is his most important legacy.

Today we can tell of a history of the IFP that won KwaZulu-Natal and lost it later to the ANC without the violence that characterised the 1990s. The ANC’s losing municipalities now to the IFP, you don’t see that violence that characterise the 1990s. This is what we mean by building peace, and this is the

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legacy of Prince of Phindangene. However, let us conclude with the basic ideological observation. The prince led a centre-right liberal political party, which pursues honestly its policies and never lies about them. Therefore, this is important ethic in politics. His opponents on the other side of the House are the true hypocrites, promising to be custom of the Freedom Charter, which speaks about nationalisation, but have pursued for 30 years, privatisation, particularly of state-owned entities.

On the score, the prince is a better human being because he never lied about what he believed in. We must ensure that when the ANC loses power next year, it also accepts in political tolerance. Therefore, he was a great Christian, a great democrat and may his soul rest in permanent peace and the peace that he built in this country together with Nelson Mandela. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): I don’t usually stop people on this, but you went too far. Hon members, we now call on uBaba Hlabisa.

Mr V F HLABISA: Hon House Chairperson and hon colleagues, it is fitting that my maiden speech in this august House is to

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pay tribute to His Excellency Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, my late mentor and leader and one of the greatest statesmen of our democratic South Africa, having made a profound contribution to our liberation struggle. Prince Buthelezi entered our first democratic Parliament on 9 May 1994. The IFP had won more than two million votes, securing seats in Cabinet in the government of national unity. President Mandela appointed Prince Buthelezi as a Minister of Home Affairs, tasking him with the full transformation of immigration law and policy, opening our once pariah state to investment, skills, tourism and growth. The department which had served only a small minority was now to administer the documentation for millions of South Africa from ... [Inaudible.] ...to grey. He would oversee elections, Government Printing Works, the Films and Publication Board, and much more. Therefore, Prince Buthelezi excelled, he took the ball and ran with it, giving to South Africa laws and policy that had the potential to build both our economy and social cohesion.

In 1999, when President Mbeki’s offer of the Deputy Presidency was scooped by the ANC in KwaZulu-Natal, Prince Buthelezi’s service as Minister of Home Affairs was renewed for another five years. Throughout his time as Minister, Prince Buthelezi served as Acting President of the Republic 22 times. He was in

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fact, our first Acting President appointed by President Mandela as a sign of respect to Prince Buthelezi. That respect was echoed by everyone in this House over the course of almost 30 years, reluctantly or willingly, everyone who served with Prince Buthelezi recognise his leadership, integrity, and wisdom. He became the voice of reason in this House so often. He rose to restore decorum when the dignity of Parliament was undermined by unbefitting behaviour. He will be remembered for his analysis of the state of nation telling the people of South Africa what they wanted to hear. We extend our condolences to his family, to the IFP and to the nation.

IsiZulu:

Shenge! Shenge! Sokwalisa!

English:

Thank you, hon House Chairperson.

Afrikaans:

Dr P J GROENWALD: Agb Voorsitter, ...

English:

... I said many times from this podium that what we need in South Africa is respect, respect for yourself, respect for

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other people, respect for our differences, respect for our different cultures and respect for South Africa. Hon Buthelezi was a symbol of that respect and all those features I have mentioned. I was in the House; I think it was about 10 years ago when a member of the IFP stood up and made negative and derogative remarks towards the then Leader of the Official Opposition about her hairstyle. It was hon Buthelezi who stood up in Parliament and apologized for his member on behalf of the IFP to the member. Now that takes leadership to stand up and to repudiate your member.

Yes, I know people have different views on these views but that was also a strong feature of the late Doctor Buthelezi that if he believed in his principles, he sticks to those principles. There were many criticisms against him, but he decided, like we say in Afrikaans...

Afrikaans:

... jy hou koers.

English:

That was the character of the hon Buthelezi. As a devoted Christian, his actions will also always in the light of his belief. Therefore, the FF Plus wants to say that, he was a

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real example and a symbol of enhancing the decorum of this House. He was a person who contributed in a positive way, also in terms of the future of South Africa.

On behalf of the FF Plus, I want to say to the IFP, his family, his loved ones, may his soul rest in peace with his Heavenly Father and surely, he is at the moment at a much better place as he was here on earth. I thank you.

IsiZulu:

USIHLALO WENDLU (Nk M G Boroto): Ungaqali ukhulume Mfundisi. Mama uLubengo ...

English:

... please mute.

Rev K J R MESHOE: Hon House Chair, it is with great respect, admiration and affection that the ACDP extends its condolences to His Majesty King Misuzulu kaZwelithini, Prince Buthelezi's children, extended Buthelezi family and members of the IFP on the passing of an exceptional leader, Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi who was a member of this House from 1994 until his passing?

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This extraordinary man’s immeasurable contribution to freedom, constitutionalism, peace, justice, equality and democracy, nation-building included, has been acknowledged both locally and internationally. There, ACDP will always remember the leadership which Prine Buthelezi gave to this House. His voice of reason often restored order in this House. The ACDP joins this House in honouring Prince with lazy for his lifetime of service to South Africa as a champion of a liberation struggle and a respected statesman in our democratic era.

His first-born child of seven children, Princess Phumzile, says, he was a good father and an exceptional leader. Speaking of her father's love, she said he shared his wisdom with them on life and marriage, and that he sent all his children to good schools and that despise being extremely busy he always remembered to send boxes of groceries to their schools to ensure they had nutritious food. As I conclude, my prayer is that the great shepherd and saviour of our souls, Jesus Christ, will heal all broken hearts. And that the precious Holy Spirit will comfort all our souls, particularly that of the Buthelezi family, I thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): ICT, I do not think that anybody is allowed on the platform without a name and we

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are always disturbed by people that use alphabets. Please mute them even before because maybe it is your staff or somebody. We cannot be disturbed all the time by Z, we do not know who Z is.

IsiXhosa:

Mnu N L S KWANKWA: Sihlalo weNdlu, sifuna ukuqala sithi, egameni leUDM endiyisekelayo ukuyikhokela, sifuna ukudlulisa umyalezo wovelwano kwiIFP, kusapho kunye nabo bakufutshane kwiIFP ...

English:

... on the passing of Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi.

IsiXhosa:

Uyazi kudla ngokuthiwa ngesiXhosa, xa kuf'intaka enkulu amaqanda ayabola. Sinoxanduva ke ngoko thina bantu bashiyeke ngemva abafundileyo kuNkosi Mangosuthu Buthelezi ngakumbi kule Ndlu, kuba kaloku ebengakhethi buso bamntu. Ebesithi xa kuthethwa inyaniso, eme avume okanye angavumi. Ebengavumi ukujika ngenkani kuba nina ningamthamdi okanye ningavumelani naye.

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INkosi Mangosuthu Buthelezi ubekho eMzantsi Afrika ngexesha lembali enzima, apho siya khona kwinkululeko yelizwe. Into yokuba ebehleli ndawoni akuyiyo ingxaki yethu, yeyakhe. Okubalulekileyo kukuba igalelo lakhe kwidemokrasi yoMzantsi Afrika nokuyifumana silivume. Okwesibini, mna ndibe nenyhweba yokusebenza naye iNkosi Mangosuthu Buthelezi ndingu ...

English:

... Secretary of the Forum of Opposition Parties as a ... [Inaudible] ... carrier at the time. I used to be mesmerised by the man's intelligence, his photographic memory. He could be able to remember and recall in significant detail the last time you had a meeting, what were the discussions, what time the meeting started, what time the meeting finished and what way forwards did you actually decide upon. Through that he would be able to guide discussions in our meetings.

IsiXhosa:

Thina sifanele ukuba sifunde kwiinkokheli ezifana noTata uButhelezi, sazi ukuba ezi zinto zintle bazenzele uMzantsi Afrika zezi thina kufuneka siqhubeke nazo. Ndizixelele ukuba andizi kukhumsha kuba ndifuna abantu baphaya kwaNongoma bandive, ndingabi nencilikithi ndithetha isiNgesi apha baphele bebhideka bengandiva. Makalale ngoxolo. Menze Thixo aphumle

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ngonaphakade umkhanyisele ngokhanyiso olungacimiyo. Ndiyabulela.

Ms T L MARAWU: Hon House Chairperson, greetings to the Buthelezi family at large. The ATM conveys heartfelt condolences to the late Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi kaPhindangene, Shenge, Sondiya family, to the IFP people of and to the people of South Africa. A wonderful leader, not only in politics, but in defending and protecting the culture of the Zulu nation at large. A Prime Minister of KwaZulu-Natal government, where he delivered a lot of service to the people of KwaZulu-Natal. Among those, we can mention several agricultural colleges like Owen Sithole College of Agriculture and others.

He has been prominent in establishing financial institution like Ithala Bank Corporation Limited, a KwaZulu-Natal Development Finance that aimed at developing the people of KwaZulu-Natal. He was a unifier, A peacemaker, a man of a strong character who could not hide his feelings in anything. We lost a hero, a true leader, a voice of reason in this House. On behalf of ATM, we are saying, may his soul rest in peace.? Thank you very much.

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Mr A M SHAIK EMAM: Hon House Chair, allow me to acknowledge the presence of the Buthelezi family. The hon late Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi was born into the Zulu royal family as the son of Princess Magogo kaDinuzulu ... [Interjections.] ... Magogo ... thank you very much ... royal family as the son of Princess Magogo. He joined the African National Congress Youth League at the University of Fort Hare and completed his studies at the University of Natal. On the advice of Inkosi Albert Luthuli, he responded to the call of the Buthelezi clan and returned to Mhlabathini - have I got that one right, thank you - in 1953 to take up his duty position as Inkosi to reignite the struggle for liberation of South Africa. Following the banning of the African National Congress and other parties, Prince Buthelezi founded the Inkatha Freedom Party. Therefore, Inkatha Freedom Party quickly grew into a formidable liberation organisation.

Now, he served in his capacity under President Nelson Mandela and often served as the Acting President as well. The National Freedom Party is very grateful to our late hon Buthelezi because he identified our former leader Zanele kaMagwaza-Msibi and gave her a platform to be who she was until her untimely death. On behalf of the National Freedom Party, we want to thank the late hon Buthelezi and the Inkatha Freedom Party. We

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want to extend our condolences to the family, friends and the party at large. However, finally, we want to send one message to you. Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi has always had one thing in mind and that he wanted to unite the IFP and the ANC. Therefore, I want to urge you to continue in that direction for the legacy of the former leader Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi. I thank you.

Mr S M JAFTA: Hon House Chair, I must apologise, we are traveling in Gauteng doing public hearings, my background may not be that much great. We must record from the onset that the legacy of Prince Buthelezi is multilayered. Prince Buthelezi transitioned in September this year at the age of 95. The prince was a traditional Prime Minister of the Zulu monarch from 1968 to 2023. He also became Chief Minister of KwaZulu from 1972 to 1976. He is known for refusing nominal independence for KwaZulu from the apartheid government, resisting efforts to turn the then KwaZulu into a Bantustan. Prince Buthelezi was also highly educated. He attended Adams College from 1944 to 1947. He also obtained a Bachelor of Arts, BA, degree at the University of Natal and was conferred honorary doctorates by the following universities: University of Boston in United States of America, USA, the University of

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Fort Hare, the University of Zululand and the University of Cape Town.

Prince Buthelezi's legacy is that of a patriot and a builder. To this end, we know that the prince built the University of Zululand, opening up the frontiers of academic learning to many impoverished families. We know from history that prince advocated for the recognition of traditional leadership, which is today entrenched in the Constitution. We hailed him for his unwavering commitment to the institution of traditional leadership. We cannot thank the prince enough for his role in enabling the 1994, democratic election to take place. We applaud him for remaining true to his oath of office as a Member of Parliament. He respected the supremacy of the Constitution, the rule of law and the independence of our ... [Interjections.]

He respected the supremacy of the Constitution, the rule of law and the independence of our courts. May the spirit of prince be spared. May it rest in eternal peace. We wish to pass our condolences to the family of the prince and his loved one, including his party, the IFP. I thank you, hon House Chair.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): You may mute, hon Jafta. Mute, Baba Jafta. Information technology, IT, may you assist him with the muting. Okay.

Setswana:

Ntate Loate, le ka tswela pele.

English:

Mr T LOATE: House Chair, the Congress of the People expresses its sincere condolences to the family of Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the IFP and to all who loved him so dearly. Prince Buthelezi, affectionately known to many of us as Shenge, observed that no one had a ... [Inaudible.] ... large enough to ride two horses. He understood this because on the one hand he had to be the Prime Minister of the Zulu monarch and protect and preserve the interests of the Zulu nation. At the same time, he was committed to advancing national interest. He served as a Cabinet Minister in this government and in the government led by President Nelson Mandela. He was also a very long-standing member ... [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Mam Siwela ...

Setswana:

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... tswalela.

English:

This is disturbing. I'm sorry, Baba Loate ...

Setswana:

... tswela pele.

English:

Mr T LOATE: No, it's fine some of these things are expected at times like this, House Chair. He was also a very long-standing member of this very House. He was a great balancing act in South African politics. The hardest part for him was to navigate being both IFP leader and maintaining a strong connection with the ANC. He wanted very much to be reconciled with the ANC. His lasting legacy was in his struggle in 1993, for a federalist state, while most of the parties at Convention for a Democratic South Africa, Codesa, favoured a unitary state, brings Buthelezi's insistence on federalism, led to a compromise which allowed for a system of co-operative governance to be adopted. Chapter 3 of our Constitution captures much of what Prince Buthelezi's strove for. We in the Congress of the People also thank him for the support he lent to the efforts in 2013, to establish a multiparty coalition

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involving 11 parties represented at that time in this House. We thank him for his sterling service to the nation. May his soul rest in peace! I thank you.

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: Hon House Chair, the family of Prince Gatsha Buthelezi has brought light to this Chamber. The Prince Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi was, indeed, a history maker, both before the new dispensation and during his term as an hon Member of Parliament. We recognise his political talent, some of which many of us learned from and grew. He was a dedicated Anglican and as a young man embarked on politics under the influence of Chief Albert Luthuli, he embraced fatherhood. It was just not surprising that he helped to deliver South Africa's negotiated settlement, albeit the challenges, and took on the role of a Cabinet Minister and elderly statesman. We need more elderly statesmen.

There were times when he was entrusted by former President Mandela to the role of Acting President of South Africa, the highest office in the land, and he served his two terms at Home Affairs Minister responsibly. He was a strong leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party and the bank acclaimed by Afrikaner nationalists that their policies for the independent Republic of KwaZulu-Natal had a full support of the Zulu nation. He did

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not want KwaZulu-Natal to be the 55th country of Africa. Al Jama-ah will remember this prince's role as a responsible Member of Parliament, and we consulted wisely on all matters. Al Jama-ah thanks the governing party, the African National Congress, for honouring a great South African in befitting ways, and for the Speaker taking Parliament to the homestead of Chief Buthelezi, the Revered Prince of Africa. We now look forward to his son, the new prince, to continue his legacy. Thank you very much.

The MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION: Madam Chairperson, hon members, the loss of one of our longest serving politicians, Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, has left a vacuum in our Parliament and in our nation. On behalf of the ANC, we would like to extend our deepest condolences to his family and the people of KwaZulu-Natal, as well as his party, the IFP.

Shenge, as he was fondly known by many, was many things, but we can all agree that he was a towering figure, both in the Zulu nation and within the country as a whole. At the ripe old age of 95, he had truly lived his life to the fullest, having served as a member of this postdemocratic Parliament until the age of 95. His legacy is one of service to his people, having

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dedicated more than seven decades to public service. He was always committed to servant leadership, self-help and self-reliance, and his dream until the end of his life was to create a just, prosperous and moral society, whose citizens engage with each other on the basis of respect and Ubuntu.

The history of Prince Buthelezi had often been entwined with that of the ANC. Prince Buthelezi's uncle was one of the founders of the ANC, Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme. He used to assist Dr Seme with writing correspondence, while he was studying for his matric. Seme had been an adviser to the princess's uncle, King Solomon kaDinuzulu.

Prince Buthelezi was a close and dear friend of my father, Joe Matthews. This friendship dated back to 1948, when they both attended the University of Fort Hare, and in fact, Prince Buthelezi was the best man of my mother and father when they got married. They were both members of the Fort Hare branch of the ANC Youth League, were both political activists and were inspired by men such as Oliver Tambo and Albert Luthuli. Chief Luthuli would often visit Prince Buthelezi's uncle, the Zulu Regent, at the palace in which he grew up.

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My father and Prince Buthelezi were bound by a great love for law, history, music and politics. At the time, my grandfather was the Vice Principle of the University of Fort Hare and he is the one who expelled Prince Buthelezi. And he taught both students Roman-Dutch law and Criminal law.

After Prince Buthelezi completed his legal studies and began working as a clerk, he began attending political rallies and was mentored by Chief Luthuli and formed close bonds with leaders such as Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu and Nelson Mandela.

Prince Buthelezi often reported that it was on the instruction of Chief Luthuli and Tambo, who believed that Prince Buthelezi could undermine the apartheid system from within, that he took up leadership of the Zululand Territorial Authority, later becoming Chief Minister of KwaZulu-Natal. In 1971, Oliver Tambo announced that the enemy's own creation, the Zulu Bantustan has become battlegrounds of freedom where the true representatives of the people are fighting the racists and rejecting their regime.

In 1974, with the ANC, PAC and other political organisations having been banned, on the advice of President Kaunda and with

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the support of Oliver Tambo, Prince Buthelezi was called upon to form a membership-based organisation to reignite political mobilisation within the borders of South Africa, while our leaders were in prison or in exile. Prince Buthelezi thus established the IFP as a cultural liberation movement in 1975.

During the dark days of apartheid, Prince Buthelezi held rallies under the banner of Free Mandela, openly calling for the release of President Mandela and other political prisoners, as well as the unbanning of political organisations that were forced to operate in exile. When Madiba was released from prison in 1990, he spoke of the contribution made by the Prince in ensuring that he and other political prisoners were set free and that political organisations operating from exile were unbanned and allowed to come back home.

Of course, we all know, as has been said earlier, that both the ANC and the IFP would always grieve the loss of over 20 000 black lives in the civil war that raged in KwaZulu-Natal between members of the UDF, the ANC and the IFP and other organisations in the 1980s and early 1990s. He wouldn’t want us to brush history. Revelations that the apartheid regime provided arms to the IFP during this time remained a source of tension between the two parties. It is an issue that

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President Mandela attempted to rise above in his own quest for national reconciliation.

Prince Buthelezi and my own father remained close friends throughout their lives. It was Prince Buthelezi who paid tribute to my father, after he passed away in 2010, and he did so again in the National Assembly and at a memorial service here in Parliament. So, it is indeed an honour for me to be one of those asked by my Chief Whip to pay tribute to Prince Buthelezi.

He was also extremely kind to me and took us on, as though we were his children, once we had lost our parents. He attended family events, where he was very careful about what he had and was present at my PhD graduation and extremely proud that I had pursued it beyond the age of 60.

When people remember Prince Buthelezi, they often describe him as a committed traditional leader, a conservationist, family man, a man of faith and a humanitarian. He was considered a lifelong humanitarian, dedicated to the upliftment of his people through education and economic empowerment. What is less said is his role as a conservationist, who supported rhino conservation and initiatives to save the ocean.

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Under his leadership, the IFP spoke out about the impact of shark nets on the oceans and the horrors of captive lion hunting. Prince Buthelezi was a patron of the Rhino and Elephant Foundation, the Wildlands Conservation Trust and the Mabula Ground Hornbill Project. These organisations will surely carry out his legacy of conservation for many years to come.

His faith in God has been spoken about. So, I will not reiterate it, but I must indicate that throughout his life, he maintained the tradition of morning and evening prayers, which span all his life.

Throughout his 29 years as a Member of Parliament and as leader of the IFP's caucus, he was often the voice of reason, when tensions ran high in the National Assembly. Over his parliamentary career, he attempted to get the IFP to play the role of a constructive opposition and was never afraid to speak his mind, but also played the role, hon Ndlozi, of a bridge builder across the divide.

He played a significant role in the struggle for freedom in our country and made a contribution to creating a better democratic South Africa for all our people, and we will never

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forget this. He holds the record of being the only party leader sufficiently organised and efficient to provide his speech to leaders in every key national debate, before the speech was delivered, always accompanied by the most beautifully written note and in an envelope, addressed to the recipient - a man of order, a man of efficiency. May he rest in peace and may his family be comforted. Thank you.

Debate concluded.

Motion agreed to, members standing.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

(*The Late Mr C H M Sibisi*)

Mr A M SHAIK EMAM: Hon House Chair, on behalf of the NFP, I move:

That this House—

(1) notes a motion of condolence of the late former Member of Parliament, hon Christopher Howard Sibisi.

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(2) As we are all aware, hon Christopher Howard Sibisi, a former principal, joined the National Freedom Party in 2017; and

(3) in 2019, he joined this hon House as a Member of Parliament, having served in various portfolios.

(4) Unfortunately, at the age of 53, he succumbed to some illness. In fact, he was unwell for a short period of time before he passed on.

I so move.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Thank you. As we welcome the Sibisi family, I would like now to call Dr Gondwe to open the condolence motions. Before you speak, hon members, if you are late, make sure you don't speak when you switch on your gadget, please. You really are disturbing this process in the House. ICT, anyone whose mic is open, just mute now. Anyone whose mic is open, just mute it now please and help us. Thank you. Proceed, hon Gondwe.

Setswana:

Ngk M M GONDWE: Ke a leboga, Modulasetulo.

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English:

House Chairperson, three days before his passing on Sunday 15 October at exactly five past seven in the evening, the late hon Christopher Mzwakhe Howard Sibisi posted a message on the WhatsApp group of the Portfolio Committee on Public Service and Administration. The message was addressed to Ms Ntombi Diya, the committee assistant, and started with the following words: "Good evening, Sisi Ntombi. I wish to apologise about tomorrow" In this particular message, hon Sibisi was apologising for having to miss the public hearings on two Bills that the committee is presently considering.

The public hearings were scheduled to be held the next day. After hon Sibisi tendered his apology and explained that he had been admitted to hospital, individual members of the committee proceeded to wish him well, not knowing that they were in actual fact bidding him the final farewell. However, what is really remarkable and touching, is that despite being admitted to hospital for a serious condition, hon Sibisi made what must have been an arduous effort to respond to each and every member who wished him well. This singular act on the part of hon Sibisi was a testament to his character.

Setswana:

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One a nale botho le maitseo.

English:

He was not only polite and well-mannered, but also considerate and kind.

IsiZulu:

Ubhovungane's ...

English:

... humaneness and kindness also manifested itself in how he made an effort to greet and acknowledge everyone before our committee meetings. He would even go out of his way to make a witty remark or say something humorous before the start of our meetings, all in an effort to make everyone feel at ease. I have to also add that he was extremely quick to laugh at his own jokes. He had this copious laugh or chuckle that we will all sorely miss.

I further recall how he would advertently raise the various public service-related issues emanating from his province and his particular constituency during the course of our engagements with the relevant department. This was indicative

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of the high regard he had for the people he was elected to represent and their daily struggles.

IsiZulu:

Ubhovungane ...

English:

... also took his parliamentary responsibilities and duties in a serious light, despite sitting on multiple committees, including the Portfolio Committees on Basic Education and Sports, Arts and Culture. We really felt his absence as a committee because when it mattered most, ...

IsiZulu:

... uBhovungane ...

English:

... would avail himself and would enthusiastically and keenly participate in committee deliberations. Born on 27 July in a place called Schoeman, the late hon Sibisi was the first born of ...

IsiZulu:

... uBaba uJabulani noMama uThemba uMaKhumalo Sibisi.

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English:

He attended Rantjiesvlakte Primary School for his primary school education and progressed to Entonjeni High School for his secondary school education. After completing his matric at Entonjeni High School he studied towards and subsequently obtained a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Zululand. At the time of his passing, he was in the process of pursuing a degree in political science from Wits University. Even though we will miss ...

IsiZulu:

... uBhovungane ...

English:

... we know and acknowledge in our hearts of hearts that he has now embarked on a journey that none of us can escape or delay once it is time to embark on this journey. The late American Civil Rights Activist and baptised Minister, the Reverend Martin Luther King Junior, put it so eloquently when he said: "Every man must do two things alone: he must do his own believing and his own dying.". As such, all that we can really say is ...

IsiZulu:

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... Hamba kahle, Bhovungane! Sonke siyeza lapho osukhona.

English:

To the leadership and supporters of his political abode, the National Freedom Party, where he served as acting secretary general for the interim NEC of the party, please accept our sincerest and heartfelt condolences. We are grieving with you. To his wife,

IsiZulu:

...MaNtombela ...

English:

... their five daughters Akhona, Anele, Zanda, Olwethu, Olwami, ...

Setswana:

Gomotsegang.

Xitsonga:

Amukelani.

English:

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May the following words of the great Apostle Paul in the Book of Romans 8:38-39 console you during this difficult and trying time:

> For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The passing of our brother and colleague, ...

IsiZulu:

... uBhovungane ...

English:

... has therefore not separated you ...

IsiZulu:

... uMaNtombela ...

English:

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... and your daughters from the love that God has for you. He loves you and is fervently watching over you and he will continue to comfort and strengthen you.

Setswana:

Robala ka kagiso ...

IsiZulu:

... Mahlase! Bhovungane!

Setswana:

Robala ka kagiso.

English:

Thank you.

Ms R N KOMANE: Chairperson, I rise on behalf of the EFF to convey our deepest condolences to the wife, children, surviving siblings and the entire Sibisi family. We further send our condolences to the NFP organisation that he was the acting secretary general of, the people of uThukela region in particular, and the country for the loss of this giant.

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Mr Sibisi was a father, a husband, a brother who loved his family so much and for them he would stop everything and protect them. We served with Mr Sibisi in the Portfolio Committee on Public Service and Administration and because of his experience as a public servant, he engaged and assisted this committee so well. We stand here, speaking of a person who was very dedicated to his work and who gave all to our portfolio committee and who was not even afraid to tell the truth, even when he knew it would be overlooked by the majority.

It is very sad to bid farewell to a person of this calibre because really, there was still more than we expected from him. The courage and the energy - though soft - he had when he engaged was indeed that of a principal. He was one person who would always say his heart out and was not afraid of criticism, and he was also not afraid to criticise people, especially when that criticism was important.

Mr Sibisi had a much-needed personality which he used to unite. Even in heated discussions in the committee, he would be able to rise and provide solutions. His passion and love for the people is what always brought solutions, and that is one thing that we will miss dearly. We stand here today

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confident that Mr Sibisi never disappointed because he was really fit for the responsibilities that was bestowed on him and indeed, he delivered to his best.

Finally, we would like to remind the Sibisi family, particularly Mantombela, that God's plans superseded our plans as he has cut Mr Sibisi's life short with us as he had better plans for him away from this world. For that we say, ...

IsiZulu:

... alwehlanga lungehlanga.

Setswana:

A mowa wa gagwe o robale ka kagiso.

English:

Thank you very much, Chair.

Inkosi R N CEBEKHULU: Hon House Chairperson, as the IFP we would like to express our sincere sympathy following the unexpected passing of hon Sibisi, a leader who was wholly dedicated to his cause and the people of this country in the best way that the political climate permitted him. Chair, you will agree with me that as a nation we are experiencing one of

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the most challenging ends to the year. Throughout 2023, we have seen the untimely demise of some of the sharpest leaders this House has seen since the dawn of democracy. Although deeply saddened by this loss, I also personally feel very privileged and honoured to have had the opportunity to serve alongside the hon Sibisi even before his deployment to this House in 2019.

As I stand here today, I call upon other hon members and citizens of this country from all walks of life to not only join me in mourning but also to reflect with me on the contributions of hon Sibisi as not just a politician, but also as a teacher who positively shaped the lives of pupils in the rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal. As this going is proving to get tougher and tougher, I implore all of us here today to stand steadfast in our commitment to serve the citizens of this country, and to do so with honour, truth, transparency, dedication and most importantly, to the best of our abilities as we continue to lead one of the best nations in the world.

Despite all this, let us hold onto the promise of the American proverb which reads that the only ones who are truly dead are those who have been forgotten. In conclusion, may we all

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remember hon Sibisi for the values he stood and lived for, and may his soul rest in peace. I thank you.

Mrs H DENNER: Hon House Chair, losing a loved one, friend or a colleague is never easy and it reminds one of how short and fragile life actually is. It also reminds us that we should live every day as if it is our last day on earth. We should ask ourselves the following question. What will people remember about me when I am no longer around? What is my legacy and what impression have I left on those around me?

Hon Sibisi was always friendly and polite towards me wherever our paths crossed here in Parliament and in the committees. He was a soft-spoken, hardworking, kind and respectable man and left a positive impression on me as a colleague and as a human being. He was also quite funny, always ready with a joke.

To his loved ones, I am sure that the impression he has left on them is even more profound. On behalf of the FF Plus, may you, his friends and colleagues in the NFP, find comfort in the words spoken here today and strength for the road ahead. I leave you, his loved ones, with the words of Jack Thorne. "Those we love never truly leave us. There are things that death cannot touch". May he rest in perfect peace.

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Afrikaans:

Rus in vrede.

Die HUISVOORSITTER (Me M G Boroto): Baie dankie. Agb lid Sukers?

English:

It seems as if people don't want to get used to these chairs that we put here for them. Proceed, ma.

Mrs M E SUKERS: Hon Chair, the ACDP wishes to extend our sincere condolences to the family of hon Christopher Howard Mzwakhe Sibisi. Your loss as a family will be most profound because the deepest ties that bind us are those of love, family and friendship. May you receive grace as you travel this road of loss and grief. We wish to further extend our condolences to his political home the NFP and to those who worked closely with him.

We live in a time of great shaking and the loss of Mr Sibisi would be to many who relied on him a shaking and a realignment of their lives. There is but one solace in times of chaos and loss, and I wish to bless you with the words of an ancient hymnal that reads:

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In Christ alone my hope is found,

He is my light, my strength, my song;

This cornerstone, the solid ground,

Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.

What heights of love, what depths of peace,

When fears are stilled and strivings cease,

My comforter, my all in all,

Here in the love of Christ I stand.

The ACDP wants to bestow on you the peace and the love of Christ in your time of loss.

IsiXhosa:

Mnu N L S KWANKWA: Camagu.

English:

The UDM extends its heartfelt sympathies and condolences to the family, friends and loved ones of Mr Christopher Howard Mzwakhe Sibisi, and his party, the NFP. Christopher Mzwakhe Sibisi served as a Member of Parliament from 2019 until he passed away in October 2023. I had the privilege of working with him throughout the period, firstly, in his capacity as a member of various committees here in Parliament, and, secondly, in his capacity as an opposition party leader with

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whom I had to interact on quite a number of issues that affect us as the opposition collection and also on issues that affect our work here in Parliament. He was appointed as the acting secretary-general of the party in 2019, and in that capacity I also worked very closely with him on quite a number of issues.

It is a very big and a sad loss for Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, his family, together with his political party, the NFP. I would like to extend my heartfelt condolences to them.

IsiXhosa:

Hayi Thole maan.

English:

In conclusion ... a poem, *After the Funeral*, by Kelly Roper. Kelly Roper says: "Tomorrow is a new day, the first of many that I'll face without you here beside me, without your strength, your wit, your grace. I'll try to carry on ... " drawing from the lessons learnt from you and the warm memories that he leaves behind.

IsiXhosa:

Ndiyitsho le nto...

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English:

... to the family and his political party, the NFP, have to draw from his teachings and the memories that he leaves behind for them as a way of moving forward.

IsiXhosa:

Siyabulela.

Ms T L MARAWU: Hon House Chair, greetings to the Sibisi family. The ATM conveys heartfelt condolences to the wife of Sibisi and children as well as to the NFP. This House lost a dedicated servant leadership, a well-mannered servant and a former principal who served in various committees of the House. We will use his experience in advancing the better life for all. The House lost a soldier, a dedicated leader, a man with love of his family. We are saying to their family, that their loss is ours and to the NFP...

IsiXhosa:

... sithi uThixo akathathi nto anabeki nto.

English:

On behalf of ATM ...

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IsiXhosa:

... sithi kusapho akuhlanga lungehliyo,malilale ngenxeba uThixo uza kubakhona ukuba nceda ngawo onke amaxesha. Enkosi Sihlalo.

Mr A M SHAIK EMAM: Hon House Chair, allow me to acknowledge the presence of Sithule and Sibahle, you know, normally you would call them as the terrible twins. These are beautiful little twins of Sibisi that are sitting here in the House today. Hon House Chair chairperson, Christopher Sibisi attended his early education at Ranches Primary School and completed his secondary education at the Ntonjeni High School in Driefontein, Ladysmith in KwaZulu Natal. After completing his matric, he went on to study at the University of Zululand, where he obtained his bachelor's degree in education and began his stint as a teacher from 2002 until he resigned as a school principal in 2019.

He resigned as a school principal to begin his political career, which he started at the NFP and then he became the Acting Secretary General on the interim National Executive Committee of the party. Yeah, not much time here. I see 50 seconds. Be that as it may, yes, after becoming a member in 2019 of this hon House, and as you've correctly heard from

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many of our colleagues who worked with him in different portfolios, how committed and dedicated hon Sibisi has been, but over and above that, I want to say that there was another side to hon Sibisi. He was very committed and dedicated to the constituency that it served. And also, importantly, something that I did not know about him as well is that he took care of a lot of people, including his family, but more importantly, extended families, you know, and something which was very remarkable. So, on behalf of the NFP, we want to extend our condolences to his entire family, both locally and abroad, to his beautiful five children, that he has left behind.

We are calling on the children to follow in the footsteps of their father and ensure that his legacy lives on. Thank you very much your person. Thank you, hon House Chair.

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: Hon House Chair, AL Jama-Ah remembers, Christopher Sibisi as a dedicated, hon Member of Parliament who served his party, the NFP and his constituencies very well. We knew the late Sibisi for a few years, since we appointed one of their leaders as a deputy mayor of escort and one of their members as a PR counsellor, throwing them a lifeline when they failed to pay their election deposits in the in 2016 Local Government Elections.

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Mr Sibisi will be remembered as a hard worker who also served on several committees. AL Jama-Ah would like to thank the portfolio committee members who send him good wishes on his dying bed. AL Jama-Ah extends its condolences to the Sibisi family, the NFP and all those who he served with. His daughters must be proud of their dad, especially the beloved twins who are in Parliament and who I say, they rock. Thank you very much.

Mr S M JAFTA: Hon Chair, as the AIC, we wish to pass our condolences to the family of the late comrade Sibisi. Hon Sibisi joined our Parliament after the 2019 General Elections. He served in the Portfolio Committee on Public Service and Administration, the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education and was the alternate member of the Portfolio Committee on Employment and Labour. His role in the Portfolio Committee on Public Service and Administration was exceptional.

We note that he was a proponent of digital technology. In one of the meetings with the Department of Public Service and Administration, he enquired from the department about the pace of the organizational functionality assessment tool. The tool is used to measure public services performance in each specific capability. It is meant to improve the efficiency and

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quality of services rendered. Hon Sibisi also questioned the department about its process in infusing modern technology in public service.

In 2019, he made a sterling contribution on the Portfolio Committee on Employment and Labour in the BBBEE. In this debate, hon Sibisi encouraged gender parity in accordance with the department's Gender Equity Plan to combat gender inequality in the workplace. Hon Sibisi was committed to the struggle of women and lived by this motto. His commitment to our democracy cannot be under stated. May his soul be spared. I thank you, honourable. Thank you.

Ms T MGWEBA: Thank you very much, House Chair, hon members, the Sibisi family, we meet here today to mourn a loss for the nation and as Members of Parliament, a colleague we interacted with in the execution of our conditional obligations as a representative of the people. The ANC pays its respect and condolences to the departed patriot. We mourn with the family whose pain in this situation cannot be matched with ours because what we feel is far less compared to what they are going through in their time of mourning.

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We are about to conduct the public hearings on 17 and 18 October on the Bills before the Portfolio Committee of Public Service and Administration. Hon Christopher Howard Sibisi sent a message of apology to the committee's WhatsApp group informing us that he was consulting the medical practitioner at the hospital on 17 October. Being the free spirit that he was, he made what he was going through look so mundane. In hindsight, we realized that he was saying his goodbye, so we do not get shocked when we hear the news of his departure. He absorbed our shock by making it look so easy. This was the orientation of his spirit and intentions. Even in the committee work he took things with a lot of understanding that the person is the same being in the world, which is the philosophy by Martin Heidegger, the German existentialist philosopher. Hon Sibisi existed in community with us, as colleagues, in the portfolio committee. Political differences did not make him an enemy, but he was an opponent who conducted himself within the decorum of Parliament. He will differ with politeness and respect.

He fully understood that in politics the difference can be ideological, but issues we grapple with, concerning the people we represent, are immaterial to the society, in as much as political representation is different. He understood that when

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there is no peculiarity in issues there must be a common approach to work together to achieve a common good. That is what we admired about him. He served on the three committees in the NA, being our portfolio committee member on sports, basic education, and others.

He will not participate frequently within us, but when he did, he made it meaningful. He would always serve on the subcommittee to recruit and recommend National Commissioners of the Public Service Commission. When we have agreed on a principle,he would not want us to go back on it. However, he would hint without making anyone feel less than. He would respect the decorum of the meeting. He never did things or conducted himself with showmanship and political expediency. To him, it was always about the constituency we represent and the common problems they face as communities and society. Not as particular group of people. We will surely miss his integrity, to serve. He respected all of us and focused on issues to be addressed by all of us as collective, not poking hole where they were none.

To the members of his family, especially his wife, Mantombela and the children, we say to them...

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IsiXhosa:

... lalani ngenxeba, siyayazi ukuba kukrakra njengenyongo. Ngelishwa ke, aninakulunika omnye umntu usizi lwenu. Thuthuzelekani kuba nathi sinithwalisile intlungu yenu.

English:

Whenever you reminisce about him, be reminded of his natural smile and laughter as well as his seriousness when issues have to be dealt with. Have that heart and try to tackle issues like he would you were around. Be reminded of all these sweet words from his colleagues today that he was still the same person he was with you, even when you were not looking. With these words, I thank the family for loaning us his service to the nation.

We know that being a public representative also impacts quality family time. To his political home, the NFP, where he was its NEC member and the former Acting Secretary General, we say also remember him for what he did for your organization to represent you within the society and in this August house. Take the baton he held dearly to his heart and run with it to finish the course he has started. Thank you very much.

Question put.

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Motion agreed to.

SPRINGBOKS CLINCH RECORD FOURTH WORLD CUP TITLE

(Member’s Statement)

Mr M A ZONDI (ANC): House Chair, South Africa became the first rugby team to win the Rugby World Cup four times, in 1995, 2007, 2019 and 2023, when they defeated New Zealand 12-11 on Saturday, 28 October 2023 at the Stade de France. The Springboks showed determination, creativity, resilience, strength and patriotism against the All Blacks in the difficult and nail-biting final match.

As the country, we are proud of the mighty Springboks, under the leadership of captain Siya Kolisi, for gifting us an extraordinary, inspired and inspiring national achievement to lift our morale and spirit of patriotism. They have etched South Africa’s name in the annals of history. Our unwavering confidence in them was symbolised by the presence of President Cyril Ramaphosa in France to support the Springboks and help them lift the Webb Ellis trophy. President Ramaphosa also lifted the trophy with the Springboks in 2019 and will lift it again in 2027 for the fifth time.

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We would like to thank the supporters and fans, from celebrities to religious leaders, royalty, political leaders, academics and other sporting stars for echoing the slogan, Stronger Together.

Afrikaans:

Mnr J B MAMABOLO: Die Bokke! Die Bokke!

IsiNdebele:

USIHLALO WENDLU (Kkz M G Boroto): Awunalo ilungelo lokugandelela umbhobho lapho ukhona. Ungasakwenzi lokho.

RESPONSE TO MEDIUM-TERM BUDGET POLICY STATEMENT

(Member’s Statement)

English:

Dr D T GEORGE (DA): Chairperson, last week the Minister of Finance tabled the Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement. It set out the consequences of government's dismal failure to stimulate economic growth to generate jobs, keep debt under control and manage government spending. Failed economic policy has slowed our growth and resulted in less revenue and entirely avoidable cuts to spending on service delivery.

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In the week before his statement, the DA handed a memorandum to the Minister asking him to respond to the cost of living crisis, where 81% of households are skipping at least one meal a day, 12 million people go to bed hungry every night, 30% of children under the age of five are stunted in their development and millions of hungry schoolchildren are unable to concentrate and learn.

The Minister did not mention the action plan Cabinet mandated the economic cluster to develop to enhance food security and accessibility. Where is the plan? The Minister did not mention the cost of living, not once. He could've cut the tax and levies on fuel and expanded the VAT zero-rated food basket. Instead, we have the uncertainty of looming tax increases. There is no response from the ANC government because it simply doesn't care about the plight of battling South African households. Minister, do you know that the people are hungry and do you care enough to do something about it? Thank you.

CORRUPTION AT DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR

(Member's Statement)

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Ms C N MKHONTO (EFF): House Chair, the EFF has been the lone voice in exposing the corruption at the Department of Employment and Labour. We are the first and only party to point out that the Minister tabled legislation in Parliament to protect corruption at the Compensation Fund, CF, and called on the Hawks to investigate the former commissioner for corruption. We are the only party that spoke consistently about corruption at the *Unemployment Insurance Fund*, UIF. All the fraudulent claims against the UIF were made possible because there were senior people internally who facilitated the fraud and corruption.

We warned that fraud and corruption at the Department of Employment and Labour, the CF and the UIF was only possible because the Minister was involved. Such high levels of corruption will not be possible without the Minister playing a role. Three senior officials at the UIF were fired during the COVID-19 era. The former commissioner of the CF left after so much damage had been done because our warnings were ignored. The director-general, DG, of the department is also living under a dark cloud, yet the Minister seemingly remains the only clean one. If not for corruption, the Minister must be removed for incompetence. Worse, Minister Thulas Nxesi must be arrested for being ... compliance with all the corruption and

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fraud that has happened at the Department of Employment and Labour. Chairperson, we are not shocked that the five billion deal ... [Inaudible.]

Mr B A RADEBE: Hon Chairperson, the member has just breached Rule 85 by calling for the Minister to be arrested. She must bring a substantive motion to the House, Thank you, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Thank you. Yes, hon members, that order is sustained because we know that in the case of things that we read or something, if you have to put ... you have to come with a substantive motion. Let's do that please because we will blame everybody every day due to what we get from and read in the media.

PROTEAS QUALIFY FOR SEMIFINALS OF CRICKET WORLD CUP

(Member’s Statement)

Dr M M E THLAPE (ANC): The ANC congratulates South Africa’s national men’s cricket team, the Proteas, for qualifying to play in the semifinals of the Cricket World Cup in India. The Proteas defeated New Zealand on Wednesday, 1 November 2023,

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smashing the *Black Caps* by 190 runs and confirming their spot in the semifinals with two round-robin matches to spare.

Quinton de Kock produced yet another remarkable performance that saw him register a fourth century at this year's tournament, also becoming the first South African batter to score 500 runs at a single World Cup.

The Proteas have done us proud with their performance at the 2023 Cricket World Cup. We commend them for flying the South African flag high. Although they lost in their clash against hosts India on Sunday, the Proteas remain second on the log and have already qualified for the semifinals. We call on South Africans to rally behind the Proteas as they did with the Springboks. I thank you.

CRISIS AT NSFAS

(Member's Statement)

Mr S S ZONDO (IFP): Hon Chairperson, today I rise with a heavy heart to address ... and crisis that ... [Inaudible.] ... on our higher education system, the alarming collapse of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, NSFAS, and its

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devastating impact on our university students. The crisis demands our immediate attention and I call upon the Minister to take full responsibility for this failure, to consider the implications of his leadership and to step down.

The NSFAS was established with the noble intention of providing financial support to underprivileged students and grant them the opportunity to pursue their higher education. Regrettably, it now stands as a mere shadow of its noble purpose. Our students, the future of our nation, are suffering greatly due to the interference and mismanagement within the institution. As we speak, many university students are writing their exams on an empty stomach, unable to afford their meals or basic necessities. Their dream of a brighter future is being crushed under the weight of hunger and despair. This is not just a matter of statistics. These are the lives of our youth and we cannot turn a blind eye to their suffering.

The collapse of NSFAS goes beyond economic ... [Inaudible.] It erodes the social fabric of our nation. It undermines the principles of equality ... [Time expired.]

FOUR SOUTH AFRICAN PIANISTS TO PARTICIPATE IN 15TH UNISA INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION IN PRETORIA

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(Member's Statement)

Afrikaans:

Mnr P A VAN STADEN (FF Plus): Agb Voorsitter, die VF Plus het kennis geneem van vier Suid-Afrikaanse pianiste wat in 2024 die geleentheid gaan kry om hulself aan internasionale standaarde te meet wanneer hulle aan die 15de Universiteit van Suid-Afrika, Unisa, Internasionale Klavierkompetisie in Pretoria gaan meeding. Hierdie kompetisie gaan in die tydperk van 22 Januarie tot en met 3 Februarie 2024 in Pretoria plaasvind. Hierdie pianiste gaan in hul onderskeie afdelings teen pianiste van Brittanje, Spanje, Suid-Korea, Japan, Israel, Belarus, Rusland, Duitsland, China, Thailand en die VSA te staan kom.

Die VF Plus wil graag van hierdie geleentheid gebruik maak om aan Gerhard Joubert, Isaac van der Merwe, Brathew van Schalkwyk en Zibusiso Makhathini alle sterkte en sukses hiermee toe te wens. Mag die kunste in Suid-Afrika van krag tot krag gaan.

GAUTENG GOVERNMENT KICKSTARTS TRANSFORMER REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME

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(Member's Statement)

Mr S H MBUYANE (ANC): Chairperson, we welcome the initiative by the Premier of Gauteng in partnership with Eskom and City Power, aimed at restoring transformers in townships that have not had power in the Gauteng province. Some areas in the province have been malfunctioning transformers for some time but are now receiving new transformers, which will ease their electricity woes. Power utility Eskom and the province are carrying out a transformer replacement programme launched last month.

The new transformers consist of new smart meters to curb illegal connections and the purchase of electricity from unauthorised vendors. The ANC calls upon communities of Gauteng to take responsibility safeguard their infrastructure, and report illegal connection and cable theft to the authorities.

RAND WATER SUPPLY SHORTAGES PLAGUE GERMISTON

(Member's Statement)

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Mrs M O CLARKE (DA): Chairperson, I rise today to address the pressing issue that plagues the Germiston area within my constituency. For long periods our community has been deprived of one of the most fundamental means, access to clean water. This dire situation is a result of critical shortages of water supply from the Rand Water, which plays a vital role in providing water to the municipalities within Ekurhuleni. A blame game between the municipality and Rand Water has erupted, each pointing fingers at the other, but what we need right now is swift, decisive action.

The incompetence and mismanagement that has brought us to this point is inexcusable. The lack of consequence management only exacerbates the problem, leaving our constituents in a vulnerable and dire situation. As we speak, our children are sitting for their end-of-year exams and the lack of access to water not only disrupts their studies but also undermines the basic human rights as enshrined in our Constitution. Clean water is not a luxury, it's a fundamental right and our residents are suffering due to unavailability.

This is not just a local issue it's a matter of national concern within the broader South African context. It highlights the urgent need for a comprehensive approach to

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address the challenges facing our water supply systems and to ensure accountability at every level of the government. In conclusion, I call on the ANC government to get their house in order and urgently address this very urgent matter, essential service is at risk. Thank you. [Time expired.]

ACDP WELCOMES SA DIPLOMATS TEL AVIV RECALL

(Member's Statement)

Rev K R J MESHOE (ACDP): Chairperson, the ACDP welcomes the opportunity presented by the recalling of South African diplomats from Tel Aviv to consult the government on the current war between Israel and Palestine. We believe it is important that South Africans be truthfully informed regarding the recent developments in the Middle East. It is a known fact that this war, where many innocent lives have been and continue to be lost, was started by Hamas. When Hamas abducted, raped, paraded and killed innocent people, South Africa did not condemn their actions, but when Israel responded to the atrocious acts, the ANC government was quick to condemn their actions.

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The international community is fully aware that Hamas does not recognise the state of Israel and wants the state annihilated. During the 1967 Arab League Summit that was held on 29 August in Khartoum, the summit took a resolution that became famous as the three noes; No peace with Israel; no recognition of Israel; and no negotiations with Israel. So, how does one then broker a peace settlement with somebody who does not acknowledge your existence? House Chairperson, it is no secret that Hamas uses places like hospitals ... [Inaudible.] ... Thank you. [Time expired.]

IsiZulu:

Lalelani! Lalelani!

Mr W M THRING: Point of order, Chair!

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Oh, hon Thring, yes?

Mr W M THRING: Chair, on a point of order: It would be proper for members from the EFF to withdraw their comments calling the leader of the ACDP by improper names. If the ACDP would begin to call the EFF ignorant. [Interjections.] They must be prepared to take the insults.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Now, you are debating Where did they do that? We didn't hear them and please, if there is something like that, just rise and then put in that complaint.

Mr W M THRING: The hon Ndlozi!

Ms O M C MAOTWE: There is no one named hon members of the EFF here. No one. [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): No, hon Thring, that's not how it works because it is not here on the platform and if the hon Ndlozi has long left the platform, and a point of order must be immediately after that, so, please ...

IsiZulu:

... ungangifaki la ngingazi khona.

English:

Can we allow the hon ... who is that there is somebody who is calling?

Mr M W THRING: Chair, it is me hon Thring.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Okay, hon Thring.

Mr W M THRING: Just a correction, Chair. It happened after the ACDP president spoke. That's why I called a point of order it wasn't during.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): What? So you called the point of order now?

Mr W M THRING: No! Call him to order, Chair Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): No, hon Thring, don't do that to me. The Rules are very straight. You must call for a point of order immediately.

Mr T S MPANZA: They must explain it to you, Chairperson.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): No, it's fine. If there is anything that we did not all hear, put it on paper and submit it to the relevant office as a complaint. Thank you very much. I can't rule on it because I didn't hear it. Thank you. Hon Mpanza, once again, please proceed.

ANC CONDEMNS ISRAELI ACTIONS IN GAZA AND THE WEST BANK

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(Member’s Statement)

Mr T S MPANZA (ANC): House Chair, will my seconds that have been wasted by ... [Interjections.] ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): No, we are restarting, don't worry.

Mr T S MPANZA: Okay, because this is a useless point of order. Chair, ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Members of the ANC, you are disturbing your member, and I am not going to give him time. Proceed.

Mr T S MPANZA: The ANC condemns in the strongest possible terms the continued occupation of Palestine by the State of Israel. The recent events, which saw the State of Israel escalating attacks on Gaza and the West Bank, are but the latest in a series of atrocities against the people of Palestine, in violation of international law. Israel’s continued bombardment of Gaza and the West Bank is the worst attack in the 75-year history of this conflict with the Palestinians. Israel wrongly argues that the attack by Hamas

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on 7 October 2023 justifies their disproportionate and wanton destruction of Palestinian homes and community facilities, and murder of over 8 000 Palestinians, mostly civilians, women and children.

We further condemn Israel for blockading Gaza and denying food, water, electricity, fuel and health care to millions in the densely populated Palestinian enclave which is the biggest open concentration camp in the world. This worsened the living conditions in an area that has reeled under a crippling siege since 2007. Free Palestine! Free Palestine! [Time expired.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Hon members, order! Hon Thring, I didn't expect the shouting from you. I can't hear what you are saying but you were shouting I didn't want to disturb the speaker

Ms S N SWART: Chair, on a point of order: When our leader was speaking, I could hardly hear him when I was sitting here because he was being shouted out continually, so our leader was not protected earlier and so it is unfair that we are also ...

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Hon Swart, unfortunately, if I hear noise, I come in after, and that is why I didn't stop hon Thring from speaking afterwards and I am sorry if I didn't hear because of the noise that was made to talk about it after. Thank you. Hon?

Mr M HLENGWA: Chair, on a point of order: Madam Chair, I hope I am not going to be misinterpreted about the point of order I am about to raise, but I am rising, Chair to indulge you on Rule 90(1), the Rule of anticipation. There is a statement that the Minister of International Relations and Co-operation will be making on this matter after this. Now we have already had two members' statements on this matter. Is there now an expectation for the Minister to respond to these statements and then debate again? I think there may be a need for guidance, Chair on what happens to statements which anticipate ... [Inaudible.] ... Thank you, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): I think you on Rule 90 that you talk about, no member may anticipate the discussion of a matter. We are dealing now with statements and we can't stop people from speaking. Let me just say that, as we know, the parliamentary programme is prepared in advance of every sitting and members should be mindful of the parameters

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associated therewith. Maybe that's why we should be looking at ...

Afrikaans:

... asseblief.

English:

I know that we can't stop people from making statements.

NEGATIVE REPORTS WILL NOT DETER THE ANC

(Member’s Statement)

Mr G G MPUMZA(ANC): House Chairperson, the negative reports will not deter the ANC but will galvanise it. Contrary to the recent negative voices that predict an ANC loss in the 2024 general elections, the recent by-elections in eThekwini, in Ward nine and other by elections around the country showed otherwise.

These types of negative predictions that ANC will lose elections started as early as the second and third general elections in 1999 and 2004 respectively. The ANC achieved 67,8% and 70% in the general elections respectively. The ANC

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took the ward from the DA by a big margin in an outcome that we believe is an indication that the ANC continues to live and lead.

The ward encompasses Forest Hill, Waterfall, and other areas. The ANC candidate, Siyabonga "Mjo" Nala was victorious with 6712 votes compared to the DA's 2587, the EFF received 127 votes and the Africa Restoration Alliance only received 17 votes.

These victory shows that the majority of South African voters will have confidence in the ANC to lead, and we are humbled by their support.

The ANC has also laid bare the weaknesses of the Mike Moonshot pact, now called multicharter by the DA... [Interjection.] Thank you. [Time expired]

SPORTS HAVE A POTENTIAL TO UNITE SOUTH AFRICANS

(Member's Statement)

Mrs V VAN DYK (DA): House Chairperson, like every South African the DA is immensely proud of the Springboks and the

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historic World Cup victory. They have shown strength and persistence in face of great odds and inspired the whole country to do the same.

This back-to-back win is even more amazing when you consider the incredible pressure the players were under, that the world antidoping agencies threat of not being allowed to play in the South African colours hanging over their heads.

And while the national antidoping organisations non-compliance and its consequences are currently on hold until the Court of Arbitration for Sport has made a decision. This does not excuse the government’s failure to adopt the latest international standards for code compliance by secretaries in time. The government had two years to ensure compliance by amending the outdated Drug Free Sport Act, something the DA warned the ANC government about on multiple occasions.

The DA will do everything in our power to ensure that Parliament keeps to the extended timeline to amend the Act. The Minister must further ensure that the Act is amended in time to meet the extended deadline to prevent sanctions on South African sport teams.

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The Bokke has done their part, and the Protea are busy making us proud and let us not forget Banyana Banyana's amazing work, win last year and let's not ever let the team gender stand in the way of their compensation.

Sportsmen and women have the potential to unite South Africans. Therefore, the Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture and of Tourism, the Minister in the Presidency and in particular Brand South Africa has a critical role to play in the success of sport in South Africa.

South Africa's national teams should be properly funded and looked after. The DA will strive to keep them playing in national colours. Thank you, House Chairperson.

THE SPRINGBOK EMBLEM

(Member's Statement)

Mr M N PAULSEN (EFF): House Chairperson, there are many people who are deliberately misunderstanding us and want us to believe that their misunderstanding of the EFF regarding the Springbok emblem is justified. They don't want to deal with the facts.

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We love rugby, but it is a fact that the Springbok emblem was and continues to be a symbol of Afrikaner supremacy. It is a fact that the Springbok emblem is no different from the stem in the national anthem. They both represent a continuation of apartheid eras, racist white supremacy.

The same way the apartheid flag is a stain on our democracy. It is a fact that the custodian of white supremacy, its continuation and its main beneficiary is Johann Rupert. That is why he is the only resident in South Africa whom the Springbok team visited on private property to present the Cup.

It is a fact that the Springbok rugby team is white dominated, despite the fact that South Africa, particularly the Eastern Cape and the Western Cape has more black and brilliant rugby players than any other region in South Africa, yet they are a minority in a country that has a majority of African people.

We don’t believe that our people are celebrating a colour and symbol that has its genesis in the 1906 whites only national rugby team. These are the same colours in such that the apartheid government in 1971 passed a law stating that the Springbok colours would strictly be awarded to white sportspersons only.

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We are not going to be pressured to worship and glorify anti-black racist symbols just because very authorities are happy to do so on an international stage. [Time expired.]

OVER 100 WELISIZWE BRIDGES TO BE CONSTRUCTED IN RURAL AREAS COUNTRYWIDE

(Member's Statement)

Ms Z NKOMO (ANC): The ANC welcomes the launch of Welisizwe Bridges construction project in Port St Johns in the Eastern Cape recently.

About R3,3 billion budget has been put aside to construct 134 Welisizwe bridges in six provinces in the next three years. The sight of school children crossing swelling and dangerous rivers because of lack of bridges and infrastructure in the country's rural areas will soon be a thing of the past.

This programme is targeting rural provinces where there is a backlog in the construction of bridges which presented a real threat to lives during rainy seasons. R1,1b per year will be spent in the Eastern Cape, which was the pilot for Welisizwe

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bridges programme, followed by KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, and Northwest.

The Welisizwe Bridges project is a government project involving the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure. The South African National Defence Force and the Provincial Departments of Transport. I thank you House Chairperson.

MOBILE CLINIC BRINGS CARE TO SMILING VALLEY

(Member's Statement)

Mr S M DLAMINI (ANC): We welcome the latest initiative of the University of Fort Hare's Faculty of Health Sciences which brought smiles to residents of Smiling Valley near Mdantsane with a mobile clinic that provides weekly healthcare services to the community.

The initiative, which a partnership between the Faculty and the Eastern Cape Department of Health, comes after the university received R1 million grant from the Department of Higher Education, Science, and Innovation.

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The initiative has brought healthcare services closer to the part of the community which do not yet have a clinic. The mobile health facility provides primary healthcare services such as health education, basic screening for diseases and basic healthcare interventions. It is administered by students from the university's Department of Nursing Science and the Department of Rehabilitative Sciences under the supervision of qualified and professional health practitioners. Previously residents used to walk more than 10km to a clinic in Mdantsane, in N1.

The initiative has made a positive impact on the community. The project is a great example of academic institutions working with stakeholders to make an impact on surrounding communities.

The project will also imbue university ... [Interjection.] Thank you. [Time expired.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Before I call on the Ministers to respond as they will be showing, my table staff will check the hands. Hon members on the platform, you know it is easy to make a mistake of opening your mics but when the name comes and the other people are talking, it means we are not in the House anymore, we are in the street or somewhere.

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That is the implication thereof and it is more painful when it happens like that where you hear voices.

We don’t allow people in the House to speak that are not members, but people are speaking on this platform. Please be careful of what you are doing with those gadgets. We now ask if there are any ministerial responses. Do you have hands there we have? We have Deputy Minister Manamela will be the first, please speak.

CRISIS AT NSFAS

(Minister’s Response)

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INNOVATION (Mr K B Manamela): House Chairperson, we note the comments around the national Student Financial Aid Scheme, NSFAS, and I must say that as of August this year, based on the report which was presented in the portfolio committee, most students had already received their allowances through the new student-centred model.

The NSFAS has deployed teams in various universities and Technical Vocational Education and Training, Tvet, colleges to

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deal specifically with challenges of students not receiving their allowances and progress has been made in this regard.

The Minister has also received a report from an independent investigations law firm on the process of the appointment of the financial service providers who are responsible for paying students allowances and the involvement of the Chief Executive Officer, CEO and various executives at NSFAS and will be announcing further action pending advice from the NSFAS board.

We must emphasise, hon House Chair, that in the overall, close to 100% of students in many of the institutions have received their allowances and that those which are outstanding has to do with the status of their applications and whether those students did qualify for the National Student Financial Aid or not.

And as the Minister has indicated a few days ago, he, together with officials from the department, will be monitoring the situation and have asked for more focus on stabilising issues of governance, servicing students and opening applications for 2023.

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We want to assure South Africans and students, in particular, that the news about the collapse or crisis at the NSFAS have been greatly exaggerated and that whatever few challenges that the NSFAS is facing, we are on top of the situation.

We also acknowledge the statement made by the hon member, Sdumo Dlamini, on the role that students are playing together with the university in setting up a clinic in a community and we hope that more and more institutions, particularly those that are responsible for health and health sciences, will continue to do that so that institutions do not remain ivory towers within the communities where they exist in. Thank you very much, House Chairperson.

GAUTENG GOVERNMENT KICKSTARTS TRANSFORMER REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME

(Minister's Response)

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC ENTERPRISES: Chairperson, good afternoon to all of you and I want to hon Mbuyane for the statement and respond as follows: Firstly, the damage to transformers takes place as a result of illegal connections, which all of us are familiar with, vandalism and theft of

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transformers as well. And this kind of activity deprives communities of electricity when they most want it.

Now, Eskom has been working with provinces and with our department to make sure that within the budget available at Eskom, these transformers are either repaired or replaced and this is a costly exercise which runs into hundreds of millions of rands. And some instances, Chairperson, we also have Eskom's distribution staff involved in some of this illegal activity.

So, this programme will extend from Gauteng to possibly other provinces as well; we are in touch with some of them.

But I want to make a call to our communities that they join us in protecting these transformers and help us to combat and help Eskom to combat the theft and damage to the transformers. That the communities should actually encourage and welcome the installation of smart meters because ultimately it will be to their benefit as well. Stop the illegal connections in their areas, fight cable theft and in that way we will make sure that even with limited loadshedding, that our communities are able to use electricity, particularly at a time when students

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are writing exams and other curricula activities taking place. Thank you very much, House Chairperson.

SPRINGBOKS CLINCH RECORD FOURTH WORLD CUP TITLE

SPORTS HAVE A POTENTIAL TO UNITE SOUTH AFRICANS

PROTEAS QUALIFY FOR SEMIFINALS OF CRICKET WORLD CUP

(Minister's Response)

The MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE: House Chair, good afternoon. I note the comments made by hon members congratulating the performance of our national teams, particularly the Springboks on their achievements.

It was President Mandela who identified the unique power of sport to unite our people and to bring us closer to the nation of our dream, which is described in the preamble of the Constitution of the Republic.

It was President Mandela, too, who identified rugby as an instrument of national unity as well as Springboks as a symbol of reconciliation. Therefore, we must continue to make sure that we rally our support behind our national teams.

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It’s becoming clear the demonstration of our national teams that through sport, we are achieving the elements of the dream of our nation, which is described in the preamble of the Constitution: nonracial, democratic, nonsexism as well as prosperous. And I think through our national teams we are beginning to realise the elements of the nation of our dreams.

It’s important that this House must continue to support our national teams as we are now on our road to India again to lift another cup.

We must continue to rally behind the Proteas men’s cricket team in the same way we have done with Amabhokobhoko.

Our focus now is to grass-roots school sport to make sure that we build a foundation for the future of the nation of our dreams, which will make sure that we achieve nation-building and social cohesion. Thank you very much, House Chairperson.

ACDP WELCOMES SA DIPLOMATS TEL AVIV RECALL

(Minister’s Response)

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The MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION: Chairperson, despite the fact that hon Hlengwa was right with respect to the Rule of Anticipation, I am compelled to respond to the statements that were made by hon members and to say that it is vital that we reflect accurate history and do not distort the reality of the experience of the people of Palestine; not just for one day or one week or one month, but for decades, and we need to be honest about that. It is most distressing when Members of Parliament ignore facts. This cannot be something that we tolerate.

It is also untrue that South Africa has not criticised Hamas for its breach of international human rights law; it has. The President stated very clearly in concert with the Secretary-General of the United Nations that the killing of civilians and taking of hostages is a violation of international human rights law. So, we must be accurate in all our contributions, and I shall say more later. Thank you.

OVER 100 WELISIZWE BRIDGES TO BE CONSTRUCTED IN RURAL AREAS COUNTRYWIDE

(Minister’s Response)

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The MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS: House Chair, good afternoon to you and to hon members. Let me appreciate the input by the hon member that spoke about the infrastructure development in our country, which is supported, as Minister Zikalala has been rolling out part of the work that is in support of the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan, ERRP. That is work that will continue to support communities where we ensure that urban and rural communities are aligned and therefore, are able to assist and support for the economic development in our areas.

So, we appreciate this by the member of the ANC who has raised it and commend that and assuring our communities that as we continue with the implementation of the ERRP and the infrastructure development, more communities will be supported and we will see this programme arriving to them. Thank you very much, Chair.

CORRUPTION AT DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR

(Minister’s Response)

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR (Ms B E Moloi): Hon Chairperson, the point raised by hon Kgosi of the EFF

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earlier on, I must say that it is very sad and I don't think also it does ... I don't think it warrants any response from the Ministry because the hon member does participate in the Portfolio Committee on Employment and Labour and her concerns, all her concerns and fears are always addressed there and there has never been any given moment where we as the department refuses to give information to the portfolio committee or any member for that matter. I don't think it does warrant any response so far, hon House Chairperson, and I thank you.

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION ON THE ONGOING ISRAEL PALESTINE CONFLICT

The MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION: Thank you very much, Madam Chairperson, once more. I should have agreed with the hon Mpumza that the ANC is not deterred by these polls that are always made to frighten the ANC. We will campaign hard, and we will do well. Hon members and hon Chairperson, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to present this statement. Today, I believe all of us joined the world in expressing horror at the war crimes being committed in Palestine through the targeting of civilians, civilian infrastructure, UN premises and other vulnerable targets.

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These actions remind us of our experiences as black South Africans living under apartheid. This is one of the key reasons South Africans, like people in cities all over the world, have taken to the streets to express their anger and concern at what is taking place in Gaza and the West Bank. These demonstrations illustrate the frustration felt the world over, that people are being attacked and are losing their lives with little or no action to stop these atrocities.

The facts that have been released detailing the devastation of the current conflict are horrendous. Over 1 000 Palestinians are dead, thousands injured, public facilities destroyed, and cruel and wanton bombardment is ongoing. Therefore, as South Africa, we remain steadfast in calling for an immediate comprehensive ceasefire. The full as well as complete opening of all humanitarian corridors to ensure much needed aid and basic services reach those in need.

Madam Chairperson, the actions that we are witnessing daily, by Israel, are a violation of international law, including the United Nations Charter, the Geneva Convention and all its protocols. In its attacks on and kidnapping of innocent civilians, Hamas has also violated international law. While we express horror at the violence, it is critical that we

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acknowledge that the illegal occupation of Palestine by Israel, for several decades, has led to bitter hatred and increased violence.

This violence is not the first violence that the people of Palestine have experience. It has been going on for decades and decades and decades! Nothing we can say will obliterate that fact. However, Chairperson, the murder of children, of women and the agent by Israel is an act that should have resulted in the International Criminal Court issuing an immediate arrest warrant for key decision makers, including Mr Netanyahu, who is responsible for violations of international criminal law.

Madam Chairperson and hon members, it is important to stress that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can only be solved through the establishment of two states, Palestine and Israel, living side by side in peace. The Palestinian state should be created along the lines of the 1967 border, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and in line with standing multiple UN resolutions.

For this two-state solution to materialise, a peace process initiated by the United Nations needs to commence urgently. We

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are aware that increasing settlements and illegal occupation have been used to make the creation of a Palestinian state almost impossible. The world must reject the Bantustan-type balkanisation that has increased bitterness and hatred. We must reinforce all efforts aimed at creating two states.

Madam Chair and hon members, the collective punishment that Israel is exacting on all Palestinian people is an affront that has gone on for too long. The world has expressed horror at these affronts but has not acted effectively to save Palestinian lives. Sadly, even here in our own country, there are many who choose to turn a blind eye to these atrocities.

On 27 October, this year, our country was among more than two-thirds of the member states of the United Nations that called for an immediate ceasefire in the General Assembly. This decision of the General Assembly has been ignored. It is impossible for us to continue to proclaim the importance of international law and the importance of the UN Charter for some situations and not for others, as if the rule of law only applies to a select few.

For international law to be credible, it should be uniformly applied and not be selective. Let us be clear ...

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[Interjections.] Hon members, Israel is an occupying power, confirmed by the International Court of ... [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): Hon Minister, sorry about that. IT could you please remove ... [Interjections.]

The MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION: This is the third time this hon member has done this.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): Hon Papo!

Mr A H M PAPO: Just wanted to raise an issue which the previous Presiding Officer raised, about members who, when we are in the sitting, are busy with other things. I think that issue is very serious and it is not a matter which you can laugh about, as Dr Ndlozi is trying to do. It is a serious matter ... [Interjections.] ... and it affects all political parties, by the way.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): Thank you, hon member. It is noted. You may proceed, hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION: Chairperson, it is important that we should be clear on facts:

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Israel is an occupying power. This was confirmed by the International Court of Justice, as well as the United Nations. As an occupying power, Israel can use tools applicable to the rule of law, including policing powers to deal with criminal actions in the area it occupies.

An occupying state cannot exercise control over territory it occupies and simultaneously attack that territory on the claim that it is foreign and poses an exogenous national security threat. the notion of Israel’s right to defend itself through military means has been used erroneously in international law, by many, and deliberately by others, to justify the unlawful use of force by Israel on the people of Palestine in Gaza and the West Bank.

The crime of genocide sadly looms large in the current situation in Gaza. We recall that in 1994, a genocide occurred on the African continent, with much of the whole world watching as innocent people were massacred. During the Second World War, innocent people were massacred and placed under sea. In response, at the end of the war, and international system was created, including the establishment of the United Nations. Human rights instruments and judicial mechanisms were

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also established so that history would not repeat such cruelty.

However, the selective application of these international instruments and the utilisation of some of the mechanisms for attaining narrow interests has resulted in calling to question the effectiveness of the system. It is a system that has failed the people of Gaza, as it did in 1994 for the people of Rwanda, and later of Bosnia. What is needed now, more than ever before, is reform of the system of global governance so that it is fair, equitable and has the capacity to respond to the needs of all persons in situations of threat and harm.

The system that is needed should not just be a tool for the most powerful countries of the world, but one that provides protection for the most vulnerable. The inadequacy of the UN Security Council, which we pointed to, many times - a council that has a mandate derived from the UN Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security - has become a glaring fault in the international system.

The Security Council, due to aggravated politicisation, has not, at the very least, been able to call for a humanitarian ceasefire to allow for much needed humanitarian supplies to go

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to those that need it most. This, one once again, illustrates the urgent need for the reform of this body. Chairperson, many of us feel helpless looking at the images of the suffering children and other innocent civilians as they are battered.

As South Africans, we need to raise our voices and call for the following concrete actions to end the suffering: One, an immediate comprehensive ceasefire; two, the opening of humanitarian corridors, so that aid and other basic services reach all in need; three, all parties to exercise restraint and to desist from fuelling this patently unjust war and human suffering, including by seizing the supplying of weapons to the various parties; four, the release of all civilian hostages; five, in light of statements on the use of nuclear power, the establishment of a Middle East nuclear weapons free zone, just as we have created on our continent, Africa; six the resumption of a comprehensive dialogue, led and owned by Palestinians and Israelis themselves, and facilitated by the United Nations; and seven, the deployment of a UN rapid deployment force in Palestine, mandated to monitor the implementation of a ceasefire, cessation of hostilities and most importantly, to protect civilians.

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Chairperson, hon members, our common humanity dictates that all human lives matter, and the time for the international community to stand together and act is now. We, who enjoy the freedom from apartheid, can never ever be the ones who agree to an apartheid form of oppression. It is not merely ourselves who are saying this; it is international organisations that have done research on torture, imprisonment, and killing, who, previously when reporting on other matters, were regarded as credible, but when it comes to Israel, their reports are not accepted. This cannot be tolerated! This brutality should not be accepted! We must call for a ceasefire now, as hon members of the House of South Africa, I thank you, hon Chairperson.

Ms E L POWELL: Chairperson, the Democratic Alliance stands in solidarity with both Palestinians and Israelis who seek a two-state solution. We embrace rationality based on peaceful co-existence for a secure Israel and a free Palestine. We seek the triumph of rational forces committed to peaceful co-existence on both sides of this terrible conflict. That is why we stand united in our condemnation of the brutality unleashed on the Israeli people by Hamas on the 7th of October. This massacre conjured some of the darkest memories of centuries of persecution against the Jewish people.

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We condemn in the strongest terms the dehumanisation of any person based on their faith, their race, their lineage or their place of birth. But Hamas's actions on the 7th of October also betrayed the people of Gaza, unleashing a calamity that is unprecedented in living memory upon more than two million Palestinians. What is equally true is that the people of Palestine are not defined by Hamas and the people of Palestine cannot and must not be subjected to collective punishment. That is why the DA condemns in the strongest terms Israeli radicals like Minister Amihai Ben-Eliyahu who over the weekend threatened the use of nuclear weapons against the people of Palestine. Dangerous statements such as these are transparent dog whistles, escalation designed to perpetuate an already fractious climate of fear and terror, the disproportionate burden of which is borne by innocent civilians.

The DA remains concerned by the escalation of violence and the rising death toll in both Gaza and on the West Bank. The intense human suffering and the scale of civilian casualties must be brought to urgent conclusion. We again call on Israel to ensure that defensive action is indeed carried out within the confines of international law. Both the indiscriminate killing of civilians through the use of carpet bombing and the

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vile use of civilians as human shields by terrorists must be condemned as acts of immorality committed by men who betray the foundational principles of the very face they claim to represent.

The DA further calls for the creation of safe zones and for a humanitarian pause in the fighting to ensure the flow of increased aid into Gaza and to allow more civilians to access guaranteed safety. Importantly, as the fighting rages, we call on all peace-loving South Africans to recognise the deeper conflict playing out on both sides of this terrible war. This is not a war between the descendants of Ishmael and Isaac but rather a war between radicalism which seeks the demolition of the other side and rationality, which recognises the inherent rights of both the Israelis and Palestinians to statehood, sovereignty and security. Fundamentalists on both sides of this conflict who have been stung by an explosive combination of grievances for generations and who feed off of one another to ramp up and rationalise their extremism must be rebuked by all of us. For peace to be possible, rationality rather than radicalism must win the day.

Hon members, history will remember the significance of this moment and how we either use our voices to fuel hatred and

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division or advocate for lasting peace. This crisis can only be brought to an end by those driven by peace, building, reconciliation and possibility. The question that all of us in this House must today ask ourselves is how we can each be honest brokers of peace because, despite the lessons imparted by the giants of our democracy, some amongst us today have already descended into the fog of war and are now entirely blinded by it.

South Africa's history should serve as a beacon of hope, reminding the world that peace and reconciliation are possible, even in the darkest of times. Instead, the governing ANC has altogether dismantled our nation's once-respected international standing and exposed its inherent moral bankruptcy. The hon Minister Pandor cannot stand at this podium and position the ANC-led government as an honest advocate for peace. The truth is that the ANC seems to have no genuine interest in building peace in the Middle East. They are only interested in using this tragedy for their own political game, hoping that they can sow division and distract the South African people from their dismal failure as our government.

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The Minister’s recent telephone call to the leader of Hamas squandered any last remaining vestige of credibility her department had left. The hon Minister’s recent visit to Iran to meet President Sayyid Ebrahim Raisolsadati who is actively funding gas and whose government has ordered the execution of more than 1 275 of their citizens since August 2021 has exposed the ANC for the hypocrites that they are. As the prospect of electoral defeat looms ever closer, the ANC stands exposed before the world as the desperate political opportunists that they have now become.

But South Africa is more than her government and we heard people can still raise our voices in support of fundamental moral propositions that Israel has a right to exist and to protect her people. That the Palestinian people have a right to live in peace, free from occupation and the threat of unyielding retaliation for crimes perpetrated by terrorists and that through a two-state solution, both Israel and Palestine can enjoy freedom and prosperity. With these aspirations as our guiding light, the international community must stand together to support restoring the security of Israel and ensure the return of hostages and the urgent provision of adequate humanitarian aid to Gaza the establishment of safe zones for displaced civilians and an

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urgent humanitarian pause in the fighting to ensure the free flow of aid and to allow more civilians to reach these safe zones.

World leaders need to urgently come together and start building the conditions for peace. Now is the time for leaders from across South Africa to unite based on our shared constitutional values and call for peace. Drawing on the lessons of our nation's negotiated settlement in 1994 that averted war and built peace. We encourage all South African civil, religious and political leaders to come together and offer our mutual assistance in finding a resolution to this abhorrent crisis and mapping a pathway to lasting peace in the region.

Peace is possible, but we must have the moral fortitude to stand with those who pursue it and to condemn all of those who seek to destroy it. I thank you.

Mr X NQOLA: A complete distortion of what is happening in Gaza.

Dr M Q NDLOZI: House Chairperson, we are here to stand with Palestine. We are here to take sides in favour of the

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oppressed, condemn Israel and declare that it is a murderous apartheid regime engaged in the systematic extermination of Palestinians. It is not a single event. They are engaged in a system permanently subjecting Palestinians to racial humiliation. We do this because we understand that our freedom here was attained through massive international solidarity by peoples of the world, 90% of which had never set foot here. It is in this context that we are responding to the suffering of people who live thousands of kilometres from South Africa. We know that we are international citizens.

As we stand here, Israel has massacred over 10 000 Palestinians in Gaza under their military assault, killing children, and bombing churches, hospitals, and schools. Many have been painting Palestinians who have responded over half a century to Israeli systematic oppression as terrorists. But we know the label of terrorists very well because it is a label that was given to Mandela, it is a label that was given to Sobukwe, it is a label that was given to the Bill to the liberation movement.

The Israeli state was formed in 1948 with the full support of Western powers through forced removals and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, fact. It was inaugurated as a Jewish-only state

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where Palestinians who have the right to the land are not allowed to return. Yet, any Jewish person who was not born there, who has never been there can go and obtain citizenship with immediate effect. They control the movement of people through thousands of military checkpoints. They have built a wall and a fence around Gaza, controlling the entry and exit of people and goods.

There are separate roads for Palestinians and Jewish people around many Jewish settlements in Palestine. Palestinians do not enjoy the freedom to demonstrate against their oppressor, they get arrested and they even get killed. Thousands of Palestinians are arrested without trial, even charged in Israeli military courts. The world knows this and when Palestinians respond they are called terrorists.

The Israeli state is fundamentally racist. Nobody must be allowed to coexist with a fundamentally racist state. You can’t be asked in the interest of the values of our Constitution to recognise the racist state whose establishment is for a Jewish-only people at the expense of Palestinians. Why would you do that? Those are the facts. This is not a religious war, Moruti [the priest], it’s an evil war it is not a holy war. There are no people who have a God’s right to be

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superior to anyone. The Israelites don't represent the Jewish communities of the world they represent Zionism and racism. It must be said here. Whoever supports them supports racism.

So, what is South Africa doing in a relationship with a racist regime? If they are engaged in a genocidal exercise, Minister Naledi Pandor, why are you recalling people for consultation when it is clear that there is genocide? Why are we friends with people who are violating the values of our Constitution? Why are we friends with people who are massacring children in hospitals and schools? What must happen, what must be said before the whole world isolates Israel?

Palestinians for the longest time never asked you for a single bullet, which they should have because they've got the right to fight even with military arms against the racist regime. They have asked you for a simple thing, isolate Israel the way the world isolated apartheid. When are you doing that? Let's cut all ties because a relationship with Israel as South Africans offends our constitutional values. It offends any rational thinking about co-existence, it offends peace. We should recall the ambassadors, everybody, we should fire the ambassador of Israel. We can't be friends with Israel until they establish a society in compliance with international law

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on one hand and recognise the right of Palestinians to co-exist. I wish for once in our lives we could be on the right side of history. Let's sever all ties with racists. Thank you.

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: The good doctor.

Mr M HLENGWA: Hon Chairperson, hon Minister, I think of the seven action steps that you have enumerated in your statement, none of them can be faulted. The Inkatha Freedom Party has always advocated for the path of nonviolence and negotiations and remains steadfast in our belief that a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine could provide the peace, justice and stability that the Middle East so desperately needs.

Exactly a month ago, on October 7, the fragile peace in the Middle East was tested and shattered when a series of Hamas attacks were carried out against Israel, with civilians bearing the brutal brunt of this violence. As the Israel and Palestine conflict continues to inflict suffering on innocent civilians and disrupt regional harmony, the IFP strongly urges all parties involved to lay down their arms and engage in meaningful dialogue to find a lasting solution to this protracted crisis.

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We call on Israel to exercise restraint and commit to a ceasefire and peace process. We call on Hamas to join the peace process and come to the negotiation table to find an amicable solution to this conflict. After weeks of violence, many more innocent lives have been lost. These are not faceless statistics, but real people with hopes and aspirations, families and communities.

It is our moral duty, not only as South Africans but as a global community, to hear their cries and respond to their plight.

As the IFP, we want to caution the South African government that isolationism in a time of war is not a solution. Recalling or dismissing ambassadors merely amounts to regressive diplomacy, which in turn complicates the negotiations. If South Africa is truly to be a trusted mediator committed to reaching a negotiated peace, all parties to the conflict must be treated in the same way.

As the IFP, we echo the call of the United Nations for both sides to declare an immediate ceasefire and to return to the negotiating table. The nations of the world must stand together to condemn all violence against civilians regardless

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of their circumstances. The international community, including the United Nations, must facilitate and support these negotiations, ensuring they are fair, inclusive and conducted in good faith.

Chairperson, we want to reiterate that we remain committed to a two-state solution whereby both nations can peacefully co-exist. Achieving this solution will require both sides to make concessions for the greater good. It is therefore incumbent on all of us to be part of the solution and not to contribute to the problem.

Hon Chairperson, security is a fundamental concern for both Israelis and Palestinians. By calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities, condemning violence and urging a two-state solution, we are also advocating for the safety and security of those living in the region. We want to reiterate the call and need to ensure that human rights humanitarian aid reaches the people who so direly need it during this difficult time. But at the forefront of our thinking, House Chairperson is a clarion call for peace and negotiations. I thank you.

Dr C P MULDER: Hon Chairperson, today is the 7th of November, it was exactly a month ago on the 7th of October when a group

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of Hamas fighters, some call them terrorists, others will call them freedom fighters, attacked civilians in the southern part of Israel, and the worst atrocities you can imagine were committed by this group of people, 1 400 Israeli citizens, civilians were murdered, mutilated, raped, children beheaded, put in ovens and set on fire, this and that happened.

How did the ANC respond? The whole ANC Cabinet came out with their scarves and they said "We support and we stand with Palestine." They said they support and stand with Palestine with the flags and everything in their hands. Not one word, not one word of condemnation of Hamas and these atrocities, not one word. Only after Ahmed Abyss denounced Hamas. After that, a weak record came from the ANC.

The Minister today was more than the responsible Minister with good proposals creating an impression that the ANC is sincere in this whole process. No, you are not. While the hon Dr Ndlozi was speaking and attacking Israel, with all these statements on this side of the House, the ANC nodded in support. Look at this. Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, there you have it. That's the real ANC. That is the real ANC, not the position that the Minister has taken today.

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What was the relationship between Gaza and Israel before 7 October? what was the relationship? every day, 20 000 people from Gaza went to Israel to volunteer work - there was a good relationship. Every day hundreds of trucks went into Gaza to take goods and to bring exports from Gaza back. That was the relationship. But then Hamas decided to destroy all of that.

Minister, you have now recalled our embassy staff in Israel and said that this is for consultation purposes. It is not for consultation purposes. No, you can pick up the phone and consult, you can do a Zoom call and consult, but you are pulling these people back to send a message to Israel and also to send a message to your supporters. But you know how your message went on.

Today, two senators in the United States, Senator Christopher Andrew Coons and Senator Jim Risch, responded to this state of yours, the fact that you are with Russia, the fact that you are with Hamas, the fact that you are with Iran, you went there. Today they responded by saying that the African Growth and Opportunity Act, AGOA, process, needs to be corrected in Congress. That is the reality. - You are saying it is okay?

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Hon Minister, unfortunately, I don't have time to discuss all these things with you. I have got four minutes. But let me conclude. I have reason to believe that you have good contacts with Hamas and Iran. Oh yes, you do. Let me tell you that the conflict can be ended today. Three conditions: First, the rocket fire from Gaza must stop. Second, all hostages must be released immediately. Third, the perpetrators who committed these atrocities must be banished. I hope the Minister has listened, I hope you will pass this on.

I am telling you, you are not listening to me, you don't need to listen to me, you don't need to listen to me. The ANC is on the wrong side of history and therefore you will be rejected... [Time Expired.]

Mr W M THRING: Hon House Chairperson, the ACDP asserts that South Africa has a moral obligation to support a negotiated solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to distance itself from a radical position on Israel, a position which undermines any hope of a negotiated process and a peaceful outcome.

The ACDP believes that the recalling of South Africa's diplomats in Israel will not serve any benefit to the

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Palestinian people. It simply removes South Africa's ability and authority to play a mediating role in any future peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. By recalling our diplomats, we have lost that role. This was affirmed by conflict resolution expert, Dr Kingsley Makhubela, who said the move was incorrect, as the absence of a South African diplomatic mission in Tel Aviv will not change the situation and will not allow South Africa a better understanding of what is happening here.

The Cabinet's decision to recall our Israeli diplomats is based on the assertion that the Israeli government failed to respect international law. The ACDP notes and appreciates the breaking of the silence in condemning and flouting international law by Hamas when they raped women, murdered and burnt children and whole families and kidnapped over 200 hostages, including two South African women and there was silence from the South African government on that. Likewise, we cannot remain silent about the thousands of Africans, murdered by the Arab Janjaweed in Dafur, Sudan, who because of their dark skin, are called by the Arabs "anbai"- slaves. We cannot be silent.

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Israel's history with its land goes back some 4100 years and 3400 years ago, Israel was established as a nation. Christianity was established around 2000 years ago and Islam about 1400 years ago. It is a fact that Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005 and it is not an occupier but Hamas is.

The cause of the current conflict can be found in the opening paragraph of the Hamas Covenant which says and I quote:

> Israel will exist and continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it.

Article 7 of the Hamas covenant states that and I quote:

> The day of judgement would not come until the Muslims fought and kill the Jews. This is not a call for peace, but a call for genocide. More chilling are the Hamas chants, "First the people of the Saturday - Jews, then the people of the Sunday - Christians.

The ACDP takes no pleasure in the death of the innocent and calls on both sides of this war to come together to the table of peace... [Time Expired.] I thank you.

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Mr N L S KWANKWA: House Chair, the UDM supports the Minister's call for an immediate cessation of all hostilities between Israel and Palestine in order to create an environment that is conducive for dialogue to occur. The fact is that the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict which began in the mid-20th century is one of the world's longest continuing conflict. The international community must bear part of the blame and responsibility for allowing this conflict to continue for as long as it has, allowing and accepting the longest occupation in modern history.

The conflict is characterised, as we know now and we have seen, by war crimes from the intentional attacks on innocent women and children, innocent civilians and collective punishment of innocent people. For the actions of Hamas, the racist world unfortunately, which made the loudest noise during the war between Russia and Ukraine has conveniently and decided to turn a blind eye to the merciless murder of women and children who are innocent simply because they are of a different colour. As democratic countries around the world we have failed the brutalised civilians in Gaza.

The people are denied the most basic needs such as food, water and health services while you so-called democrats and human

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rights activists ... [Inaudible.] ... conveniently turn a blind eye to what we consider to be a serious human rights violation of human race. In the face of the murder of Palestinians, in fact, the Palestinians will in the end, borrowing the words of Martin Luther King Junior when he said that they will not remember the words of their enemies but the silence of their friends.

Throughout in history women and children have consistently borne the brunt of the consequences of war suffering long-term hardships. Israel's war in Gaza exemplifies this tragic reality as it continues to take a heavy toll on the lives of women and children with each passing day. We have said that while this occurs, the United Nations Security Council continues to bicker about insignificant issues while people are losing lives. We are calling not only on the South African government but would like to make a clarion call to continental leaders to do exactly what they did in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, maybe, trying to initiate its own independent mediation effort because the United States is discredited as a mediator.

The United States can't be arming Israel and giving aid to Israel and then pretend and parade on television, TV, this

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they are trying to actually call for an immediate ceasefire which is unadulterated claptrap. They think we are stupid. They are saying fight on the one hand and on the other they are parading in front of cameras posturing for the public saying that they are negotiating for a ceasefire and whatever they want to call it. In actual fact, they are supporting war because they are benefiting in their industry through war. Thank you.

Mr V ZUNGULA: Chairperson, this debate is of paramount importance to our nation's values, its commitment to justice, its legacy as a beacon of hope for those oppressed and seeking freedom first and foremost and condemns the continuous violation of human rights in the Israel-Palestine conflict. It is a humanitarian crisis that demands our collective outrage and immediate attention. We cannot remain silent whilst innocent civilians including the most vulnerable women and children suffered a devastating consequences of this protracted conflict. We, as a nation must uphold the principles of justice, human dignity and self-determination for all peoples including Palestinian people.

We express our full support for the South African government decision to recall all South African diplomats from Israel.

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This is a crucial step that signifies our nation's commitment to the principles of justice and human rights. We must stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people just as the world once stood with us during our own struggle against apartheid. Our history serves as a stark reminder of the value of the global support in the face of oppression and injustice. Furthermore, we strongly condemn the actions of Israel's ambassadors to South Africa. Diplomacy should be conducted in a manner that is consistent with international law and principles of mutual respect.

When such actions undermine these principles they demand our swift and resolute response. In our fight against apartheid we learnt the profound significance of international solidarity and support. We cannot remain silent when faced with the gross violation of human rights. The parallels between our own painful history and the Israel-Palestine conflict are undeniable. That is why as the ATM we are in solidarity with the Palestinian people. We call for the Israel embassy in South Africa to be shut down and the ambassador declared a *persona non grata* as a powerful symbol of our protest against apartheid and genocide.

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We must take all the necessary precautions to ensure that South Africa is not complicit in this grave human rights violations. Our nation's dedication to human rights should be unwavering and we must strive to set an example for the world by defending these fundamental principles. In conclusion, we align ourselves with the Minister of International Relations and Co-operation. We call for unwavering commitment to justice, peace and the protection of human rights in the Israel-Palestine conflict. Let us be a voice of the voiceless and work diligently towards a future where both Israelis and Palestinians can coexist in peace and security. I thank you.

Mr B N HERRON: House Chair, the dynamic and complex world of shifting geopolitical power, South Africa's foreign policy must be guided by the same constitutional values and principles that guide policy at home. On that basis we cannot look the other way when Russia invades a neighbouring foreign sovereign state nor when Israel perpetrates genocide against the people of Palestine. We can't maintain friendly relations with a state that has publicly committed itself to perpetrating unprecedented violence against innocent people to buttress unjust policies that trigger memories of our own experiences under apartheid.

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A state that is holding millions of people collectively responsible for Hamas on 07 October 2023 attack despite the overwhelming majority of them having nothing to do with Hamas. We can't look the other way when images of dead and wounded Palestinian children dominate our screens and consciousness. As such, we regard the further review of diplomatic relations with Israel as necessary, appropriate and as a matter of principle. We further call on the Department of International Relations and Co-operation, Dirco, to turn up the heat at the United Nations for a resolution calling for ceasefire. It is the right thing to do.

This does not mean we are anti-Semitic and pro-Hamas or do not believe that the people of Israel have the same right as the people of any other nation to live in safety. To be clear, for as long as Israel illegally occupies Palestinian land, encourages its farmers to grab more land and regards Palestinians as untrustworthy and deserving of contempt it breathes fresh oxygen on a smoldering fire. It provides fresh daily provocation for people who are willing to do what Hamas did four Saturdays ago.

Palestinians have a generational duty to struggle for their freedom from occupation and contempt. However, their actions

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must comply with acceptable international practices with respect to the protection of civilian lives. Neither the extremist leaders in Palestine and Israel nor their backers across the region and the Atlantic own solutions to their crisis. There aren't any military solutions, real solutions belong to ordinary citizens and civil society.

The people of Israel and Palestine must stand up against violence and hate and elect leaders willing to engage in meaningful dialogue to develop an environment in which Jews and Muslims can live in peace, be it in two separate states or single human community. In the meantime, the only short-term solution is an immediate and unconditional ceasefire. Thank you.

Mr A M SHAIK EMAM: Hon House chairperson, let me start off by saying that my colleagues here have either gone deaf or they have gone blind. I hear some of them saying that we must go and negotiate. Isn't that what was happening for all these years and Israel has not complied with one single agreement? So now you still say you must go and negotiate. What you are asking to go and negotiate is that you want to negotiate with the Palestinians on something that rightfully belongs to them. Why are you forgetting that Israel never existed? The

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Palestinians, Jews, Christians and Muslims have lived there peacefully side by side for thousands of years. It's Zionism that is only somewhat 100 years old. That is what the problem is. And I'm not surprised by you FF Plus. I cannot be surprised because you and the Zionist State of Israel are not different. That is exactly what you did to ordinary South Africans during the days of apartheid.

So, when you talk about wanting to have a settlement and agreement ... Now I see you raising a question that there was peace, particularly in Gaza. Where do you get your facts from every other day? Palestinians have been massacred in Palestine and you don't see that. Suddenly you see 200 hostages and suddenly you are rising. Your temperatures have gone very high.

To the DA, let me turn on and say to you that you should stop living a lie. You should go back and search your conscience about what is the truth about Palestine - go and do that. You get funding from the Zionist state, that's why you come here and sing their praises. That is exactly what you are doing. Your survival depends on that. That is the problem to you. To the IFP I want to ask, What dialogue can you talk about? What about the agreements that were entered into? Tell me, so many.

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They have not complied with Israel and have not complied with one single agreement. You heard the statement by the Minister in Israel. What did he say? Go and throw an atomic bomb there - a nuclear bomb. That is what he said.

Now, are you telling me that it’s a conducive environment for negotiation? No! We are saying there’s only one way, and that is to expel the Israeli ambassador to South Africa once and for all, and shut the embassy in South Africa. Shut the embassy – the South African liaison office in Israel. Shut it down, it’s the only way they’re going to learn. You said that during a apartheid, but we got it.

Chairperson and Minister, visa conditions must be stringent for Israelis wanting to visit South Africa. On the issue of dual citizenship, we need to have a real look at it, because you cannot be using dual citizenship to go and participate in that military and commit atrocity. Remember, it’s a serious threat to South Africa as well. The monies that are coming into this country to fund these political parties here, we need to deal with that as well. Until you stop the funding that's coming, these people remember they are led by the United ... [Time expired.] ... the big boss. This is what it’s all about. So, we need to take this stringent action and we

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need to take it now. But lastly, I want to say if you are silent, you are supporting genocide ... [Time expired.] ... been supporting genocide. And today ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): Hon Shaik, your time is up.

Mr A M SHAIK EMAM: ... using religion. Religion won't work anymore.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): Hon Shaik, the time is up. Order, hon members. As the tempers are flying, please let's consider time. The hon Jafta?

Mr S M JAFTA: Hon Chair, when the South African government downgraded Israel embassy, we were hopeful that the Israeli embassy in South Africa will be permanently closed. We note that the onslaught against the innocent civilians of Palestine has been justified by the SA Jewish Board of Deputies. We condemn this justification with the condemned it deserve. We also have not ... [Inaudible.] ... from the utterances sponsored by the then Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities, CRL, Commissioner, Ms Thoko Mkhwanazi-Xaluva, who

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had argued that the downgrading of the Israeli embassy was set to unfairly impact on the ability of South African Jews to practice and identify with their religion and cultural heritage. This line of reasoning was shortsighted as one could not elevate some ... [Interjections.] ... cultural rights over human rights.

We believe that there is a greater discourse to be heard with the SA Zionist Federation, particularly to condemn Israel's destruction of human life. We also believe that the dialogue must be held with SA Union of Jewish students and Bnei Akiva South Africa. We must foster a common understanding of human rights. Moreover, and most importantly, we call on a national boycott of the following brands, the Volvo Group, which allegedly supplies equipment used to bulldoze Palestinian homes, Procter & Gamble, which produces pampers, Motorola, which allegedly provides surveillance equipment used to round Palestinian settlement and McDonald's, which is accused of unfairly discriminating against Arabic workers at their restaurants.

We cannot allow apartheid Israel to haunt the innocent people of Palestine. We therefore demand that the Israeli embassy here in South Africa be downgraded with immediate effect. Our

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freedom is not complete without the freedom of the people of Palestine. I thank you.

Mr T LOATE: Chair, the horrible war between Hamas and Israel is full of such intense hatred between them that neither an end game nor any path to a lasting solution is in sight. I hate to say the word at least, although we know that 1 400 Israelis and more than 10 000 people in Gaza have been killed. Many of these are women and children. War crimes have been committed on both sides. The deliberate and discriminate targeting of civilians on either side reflects depraving of the worst kind. Hamas fired thousands of rockets to Israeli towns and attacked and killed civilians, including children, women and old people. It also kidnapped hundreds of people. The Israeli military has flattened big parts of Gaza with airstrikes, it block deliveries of food, water, fuel and electricity. The 56 years of military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, 16 years of air, land and sea blockade on the Gaza Strip, Israeli right-wingers wilfully destroying Arab homes in the West Bank and causing continuous provocation at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and Netanyahu in February 2023, signaling clearly that it was extremely unlikely that Israel and Palestinians will make any measurable progress towards a long-term peace anytime soon, provides the context to this war.

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While Hamas has to be stopped, the inhumanisation of Palestinians also has to be stopped. Right-wing Israeli Defence Minister, Yoav Gallant, recently referred to the more than 2 000 million inhabitants of the Gaza Strip as, and I quote, “human animals”, when justifying a complete tightening of the siege on the street. While the world looks to engage the parties for a solution where no viable solution is available, a ceasefire must occur and humanitarian issues must receive the highest priority.

Further, military actions will solve nothing but aggravate the situation even more. The madness must stop. The United Nations must step up to the plate and must do so quickly. I thank you.

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: Hon Chair, the resistance in Gaza will not stop. The Arab ambassadors in South Africa has come with what they label a reasonable call, Hamas to release all the Israeli hostages on condition that Israel immediately stop the war in Gaza and withdraws from Gaza entirely. There is also a call that the resistance continues its firepower and used Allah and call him Allah ... [Inaudible.] ... to Allah to support him to defeat Israel.

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Al Jama-ah is torn between these two positions. But let me applaud Mama Naledi Pandor. Al Jama-ah stands with you. And let me applaud President Ramaphosa, who wants the arms sales of South Africa to Israel to stop. Last year it was R30 billion. And the white rule, led by adorable Steenhuisen, such calls will not be made in 2024 in the South African which the DA has a hope to rule. Israel may not be a state. It is a people, Al Jama-ah condemns the Zionist groups, especially the Jewish Board of Deputies for heaping insults on the Minister and for disparaging her office. This is treasonous behaviour, and the Minister of Justice must act.

It is now time to enforce the legal provisions of the Regulation of Foreign Military Assistance Act by prosecuting the African citizens taking part in the genocide in Gaza and serving in Israel's army of fascists, barbarians, and the worst of all mankind. Also to be prosecuted are those engaged in the alleged recruitment and development of South African citizens. Occupying powers do not have a right to defend themselves. Occupied people can shoot rockets. The Al-Aqsa Flood has opened the eye of everyone globally that the real enemy of humanity is the triumphant of the West, the US's Biden, UK's Sunak and France's Macron. They've contributed arms to the Zionist state that has been responsible for in the

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endless atrocities in Palestinian areas. The Israel people are their puppets.

Al Jama-ah thank Minister Naledi Pandor for unwavering support for Palestine's freedom struggle and for the decision to recall South African diplomatic staff from Tel Aviv. Al Jama-ah calls for an immediate, unconditional ceasefire. Thank you very much, hon House Chair.

Mr S O R MAHUMAPELO: Thank you very much, Chairperson. I also take this opportunity to greet the collective of hon members, the esteem ears and eyes of the people of South Africa and elsewhere. I thought that we need to start by just doing a succinct characterisation of the State of Israel. It is a consequence of war. It lives and survives on war. It is a settler, heartless, apartheid, immoral, genocidal vampire state.

The only political relevance of its Prime Minister, Netanyahu, is war. It perpetually quenches its test for war through the blood of the Palestinian people. Like a vampire, its primary prey is the people of Palestine. It respects no rules of international governance. It has no ear to listen to Israeli voices that say, "Not in our name!". It has no brain to

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comprehend truth that no force can defeat a just cause of the people.

The genesis of its stupendous superiority is parented by the UK and the US, at all. It lacks the necessary political consciousness to realise the danger it poses to a correct proposal for the two-states solution. It has no ear and emotions to listen to the painful voices of dying children of Palestine. It has no comprehension that perpetual genocidal maiming, suffocation and annihilation of Palestinians will be met with perpetual, protracted and just struggle by the Palestinians to liberate themselves.

Let us just deal with some of the distortions: The war in Palestine did not start on the 7 October 2023 and the subsequent propagandist tirade of the so-called 'right to self-defence' by the State of Israel. We do not condone violence, but a question might be posed: What right of self-defence do you have, when you arrive in a place of not your own, take what does not belong to you by force, while any enquiry or resistance to your immorally. Illegal and insane act is met with declaration of death of innocent people?

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Among the many onslaughts that the Palestinian people had to face was in 1917-18, when the British used force to colonise Palestine under the command of General Allenby. The British notoriety in 1820 was extended to South Africa upon their arrival here in Cape Town, in Table Bay. By fire by force, the State of Israel was declared in 1948, the same year when the National Party was formed and immediately started the apartheid system here in South Africa.

As we speak, hon members, indications are that more than 10 000 Palestinian people have been killed in 30 days. More than 70% of these people who are maimed are women, the elderly, the disabled, the sick and children. What is the sin of the Palestinians? Their only sin is to say that they must have their land without occupation. The genocidal apartheid state of Israel expects the Palestinian people to allow them to annex more and more land, restrict their movement, suppress their human rights and, rob and deny them of their dignity without any form of resistance.

Because of time, I will not mention the number of UN resolutions that the State of Israel has defied, from 1947 to the recent history. They also defied the two agreements that

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were made in Oslo, whilst they had participated in that particular process.

Let us talk about our friends on the left here, hon members who are collective of the 'moonshotists'. Your hypocrisy is exposed because I characterise you as political 'pendulumists'. Conveniently, you forgot that you called the ANC and its leader, President Nelson Mandela, a terrorist. You will not tell your friends in the apartheid state of Israel that today.

You will live side-by-side in relative peace with the people you call terrorists, monkeys, subhumans - people you maimed, killed and throttled. You took their land, their animals, their being and completely dehumanised us as black people.

Steenhuisen, I want to challenge you and your friends – hon Steenhuisen. As much as you were a populist and went to Ukraine, I challenge you to get into a flight and go to Gaza. Tell your Prime Minister Netanyahu on how the ANC and other progressive formations liberated you and your ancestors, despite the fact that as blacks were subject of apartheid colonial subjugation.

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Try and draw Prime Minister Netanyahu's attention to the reality and the truth that the collective apartheid onslaught of 342 years on black people, in South Africa, was resolved through peaceful negotiated settlement. Advise him that as a country, we rank among the best examples on political conflict resolution and working through the United Nations, we stand by a South Africa to assist.

Please tell him that we, as the ANC, declared in the Freedom Charter that all national groups shall have equal rights. As we speak here today, all national groups have got equal rights. He might listen to you because you are birds of the same feathers. Today, you seek to separate Nelson Mandela from the ANC and we have not succeeded.

Now, let me come to you, hon Meshoe, of the CDP. I want to quote from Deuteronomy. It says, "Foreigners who live in your land will gradually gain more and more power, while you gradually lose yours". This is what the apartheid state of Israel is doing to the Palestinian people.

You will never comment and thank the people of Palestine and the ANC for advocating tow-state solution, with Israel and Palestine living side-by-side in peace. You will never say

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this truth, you, hon members, on the left. Some of you are offsprings and permanent beneficiaries of the apartheid colonial brutality, whose consequence today is painfully reflected in a white minority of only 7% controlling and owning more than 90% of South Africa's economy.

You say you respect human rights, but you will not tell the US-backed Prime Minister Netanyahu that it is inhumane and genocidal to announce on TV that you will deny innocent people access to water, fuel, food, medication, free movement, prayer; and that you will destroy their hospitals, ambulances, schools, places of worship, and so on and so on.

On way forward, we suggest that: One, the United Nations-led immediate peace initiative must be implemented; two, the UN decisively act against the State of Israel, and as the Minister has said, the ICC must charge Prime Minister Netanyahu; three, the UN must enforce its own resolutions that have been defied by Israel; four, we applaud the President for recalling the ambassador, but in addition, we will suggest that the Ambassador of Israel must go home until a negotiated process has been started in Gaza and Palestine.

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South Africans who are in the Israeli Défense Force must be brought back, named and action must be taken against them. As Yasser Arafat said, and I quote, "The victory march will continue until the Palestinian flag flies in Jerusalem and all Palestine."

Sesotho:

Ke a leboha!

The MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION: Hon Chairperson, I thank all members for participating in the debate that followed my statement, even those I disagree with. I was taught when I was very young that insults are the last refuge of a scoundrel, and so calling me a terrorist friend of Hamas, etc, is like water off a duck's back because it is an absolute untruth and is a mere insult of a scoundrel who has run out of ideas. It has been clear in all our contributions that we support a two-state solution. This means we believed Israel has the right to exist as a state alongside a state of Palestine. This has been the longstanding view of the ANC before anyone expressed a view on Palestine. So, don't come here and attempt to claim any knowledge.

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The rights of Palestinian people are infringed on a daily basis. The hon Lekota was reported in a Jerusalem newspaper as saying that there is no apartheid in Israel, people ride on buses together. He forgot to say that Palestinians are forced to live in small enclaves and they are not allowed to own their own property. Their land can be seized without any compensation and they have to carry identity documents, go through a range of points where their identity is constantly checked. In some they exist in an apartheid state. So, attempts to cast aspersions will not cause us to fail to speak for the oppressed, wherever they may be. The atrocities we have reported upon in this debate are real and they are acknowledged by millions. The fake news of baby beheadings has been tried by the greatest in world power and have been proven to be false social media reports. And for such to be reported in this House as though it is factual, is absolutely disgusting lies. The bombing of hospitals which was denied has been proven to be real.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): Minister, please take your seat, there is a point of order requested.

Dr C P MULDER: Thank you, hon Chairperson. Is the hon Minister prepared to take a question?

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): You can take your seat, hon Minister. Hon Dr Mulder?

Dr C P MULDER: I have asked if the hon Minister is prepared to take a question.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): Hon Minister, are you prepared to take a question from the hon Mulder.

The MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION: The hon member can pose it?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): Allow?

Dr C P MULDER: Did I hear you correctly saying that the atrocities that we are speaking about - the beheading of children - that those are fake news and it’s not true? Is that the position of the South African government? I want to ask you now.

The MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION: No, it is evidence that has been provided by a range of nongovernmental organisations, both in Israel and Palestine, because we don’t only speak to Palestinians, we speak to

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peace-loving Israelis as well. We know that there is a lot of fake news that attempts to cast Palestinians in a bad light. It has been admitted, even from the White House spokesperson, that that statement that was made at the highest level was actually proven not to be factual. So, hon member, I've responded to your question. And it is important, as I said at the start of my contribution, that when we speak on these matters, let us speak being honest and factual.

The facts are The people of Palestine are denied the right to exist as human beings. They are denied the right to enjoy the freedoms and rights we so love as South Africans - the rights and freedoms we fought so hard for, the rights and freedoms we united on as a diverse South African people. Today some of us in this House believe these rights belong to some and not to others. That is not the South African way. We believe all human beings enjoy the right to exist in freedom, enjoying justice and humanity, and that is the message that has to come out of this House.

This House cannot stand up for abuse. It cannot stand up for the infringement of other human beings, no matter who those human beings are. We've never sought retribution. I have the story that my grandfather died of a broken heart. He was a

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tailor and he had worked very hard - his fingers down to the skin to make enough money to buy a House in Durban and they got that House - my grandfather and my grandmother. Two years after they got it, the area was declared a white area. They lost that House without compensation and he essentially died of a broken heart. I have no retribution because today I am part of seeking to build a better South Africa. Our role must be to seek to build a better world that that benefit we enjoy of human rights, of a fantastic Constitution, of having institutions that are democratic and work for all of us - that privilege is not just for us, it must be for everyone. In any debate we have, if we are true to ourselves, if we are true to our history, if we are true to what we have achieved, we will stand up and say what is being done to the people of Palestine is wrong, is intolerable and we will not pretend to accept it. I thank you, Chairperson.

Debate concluded.

CONSIDERATION OF BUDGETARY REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION REPORT OF PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH ON PERFORMANCE OF NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENTITIES 2022-23

There was no debate.

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The Chief Whip of the Majority Party moved: That the Report be adopted.

Declarations of vote:

Mrs M B HICKLIN: House Chair, the public health sector is in severe crisis and in need of a major turnaround strategy. There is no indication that the national Department of Health has any tenacity in achieving fiscal stability through controlled government expenditure and debt reduction. Just look at the medico-legal claims of R77 billion under the department and expenditure that was returned in the financial year of nearly R1,7 billion. At this stage the public health system is on life support and there is no political will to fix it. Instead, the ANC government is touting the National Health Insurance, NHI, which is totally unachievable in this economic climate.

This ANC government speaks about protecting vulnerable South Africans, but the decline of the health system year on year is dismal. The lack of sufficient management of funding and resources has resulted in an overburdened system that struggles to meet the basic health care needs of citizens. This is further exacerbated by the growing population and the burden of infectious diseases, including HIV and Aids and TB.

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There are severe shortages of health care professionals, understaffing that needs to long waiting times, reduced quality of care and exhaustion of health care workers.

In addition, health care infrastructure is in disrepair. Many public hospitals and clinics lack essential equipment and facilities, making it impossible to provide adequate care, compromising the health and safety of patients and demoralising workers. Corruption and mismanagement are plaguing the public health care sector, diverting funds and resources away from where they are most needed. This not only undermines the system, but erodes public trust in the ANC government's ability to provide essential services. The NHI is not the answer. The ANC government must address several challenges and allocate resources accordingly. [Time expired.] This time to act is now after the 2024 elections, the DA will ensure that that happens. I thank you.

Question put.

Objections noted.

Ms Z MAJOZI: House Chairperson, corruption, crumbling infrastructure, patient neglect, equipment failure, theft,

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organisational chaos and staff work overlords have become synonymous with our country's public healthcare system. The expected decrease in the health budget causes even more concerns, as we can foresee that it will only exacerbate the challenges that are already weighing down on quality health care.

While we understand that the implementation of fiscal consolidation measures, to reduce spending and manage debt is the government's attempt at finding a solution to the enormous financial crisis facing our public health care, we have to lament once again the fact that we cannot continuously be a country stuck in a reactive cycle of implementing desperate solutions.

Our government and specifically the Department of Health should have paid close attention to the management of our public hospitals and clinics. The Auditor-General, AG, has reported to us that, across provinces, material misstatements in the financial report and the overall quality of these reports have been an issue that requires correction on an annual basis.

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The sheer apathy displayed by the provincial departments of health for the implementation of the AG's recommendations is simply unacceptable. Considering this, it does not come as a surprise that medico-legal claims are consuming the health sector, totalling approximately sixty-seven billion rand.

Therefore, the IFP would like to emphasise both the AG and the portfolio committee's recommendation that the Department of Health must assist provincial departments in strengthening financial management, planning and internal controls to improve and maintain audit outcomes. Challenges of patient neglect, equipment failure, organisational chaos and staff work overloads will persist and South Africans will continue to bear the brunt if financial management is not sufficiently addressed. Notwithstanding the concerns raised, the IFP accepts the report. Thank you very much.

Afrikaans:

Mr P A VAN STADEN: Agb Voorsitter, aan hierdie departement is daar geen salf meer te smeer nie. Wanadministrasie en korrupsie is besig om op 'n daaglikse basis hierdie departement op sy knieë te dwing en ons sien dit in ons openbare hospitale en klinieke uitspeel.

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Vir die 2022-23 boekjaar het onreëlmatige uitgawes vir die gesondheidsektor te staan gekom op ’n skrikwekkende R7 miljard. Die departement het ’n onderbesteding van R2 miljard aangetoon. Mediese regseise vir hierdie boekjaar het op R67 miljard te staan gekom. Die agterstand in mediese prosedures is nog nie opgelos nie.

Daar was ook geen verbetering in terme van oudit uitkomste vir vier agtereenvolgende jare nie. Die groot sondebokke hier is die Oos-Kaap, Vrystaat en die Noord-Kaap.

English:
Material misstatements were identified for Gauteng, Mpumalanga and the North West. Critical positions that are not filled timeously with the right skills is alarming. Another concern is the lack of internal controls and a lack of oversight.

Afrikaans:
Wat wel kommerwekkend is, is dat die Mpumalanga provinsie fiktiewe, gafabriseërde uitbetalings gedoen het vanuit hul onderhoudsbegroting vir infrastruktuur-instandhouding. Die Vrystaat het betalings nie binne 30 dae gemaak nie, en daar was betalings gemaak vir werk, wat nie gelewer was nie. Die Oos-Kaap het nie fakture binne dertig dae betaal nie en die

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Noordwes het pryse vir mediese toerusting betaal, wat nie markverwant is nie.

English:

The provinces, together with the relevant MECs must come and account before the Portfolio Committee on Health. They must start to take responsibility for the mess the provinces are currently in and there must be consequences due to this.

Afrikaans:

Daar is ’n oplossing vir hierdie probleme wat tans hierdie departement en hierdie gesondheidsektor daagliks in die gesig staar en waar pasiënte nie die behandeling in hospitale en klinieke kry, wat hulle verdien nie. Daar is ’n oplossing hiervoor. Die oplossing is eenvoudig.

English:

The solution is to defeat the ANC during next year’s election and to elect a government that is accountable and that is responsible. That is the solution for all South Africans. Thank you.

Mrs M E SUKERS: Hon Chairperson, the mandate of Parliament is not to be the praise singers of departments, but to fulfil our

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constitutional obligation of oversight. It seems that we forget that. We forget the indictments of the Zondo Report, because many of our members think that we need to flatter the department. That is not our role.

The ACDP has committed itself, through it public office bearers, to address this function and poor performance in governance, because of the devastating effect on the people of this country. The ACDP requested a report on the utilisation of the R7,6 billion loan from the World Bank made for procurement of vaccinations in 2022. This report was never provided.

The ACDP requested that the committee receive a briefing on the No-false Compensation Fund. No such briefing was given, in spite of two letters. Yet, Covid-19 had a devastating effect on our health services and contributed to increase in government debt. It would be failure for us not to be provided with the comprehensive report on the expenditure on Covid-19 vaccinations, especially in light of the loan.

The expenditure of the Department of Health does not translate into better services on the ground. It means that the money we spent does not change the lives of the people that need the

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health services. The idea that the NHI will be the silver bullet for our challenges ignores the capacity of the incapable state.

We have a leadership and governance deficit that the NHI simply will not rectify. It is time for this government to acknowledge that it cannot provide the essential services that our people need. It cannot. It is incapable to do that. I thank you.

Mr A M SHAIK EMAM: Hon House Chair, the NFP will support the report tabled here today. We have taken note of the Financial and Fiscal Commission and particularly, the Auditor-General of South Africa’s findings, and particularly on the national Department of Health and the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority, Sahpra. The NFP has repeatedly called for a preventative health care system in this country and now we can see that it is more needed than before, because we have people who have a hearing and a sight problem in this very House. Given the fact that so many ambulances and hospitals were burnt in Gaza and they could not see that. So, perhaps they need more attention than others.

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Having said that, our concern is that there is going to be a budget cut and having a budget cut means that it is going impact the health sector. Our serious concern is that .... And this is the question I want to ask: Why do we need to wait for somebody to die, before we act. We have repeatedly raised the concern of food products manufactured in South African and there are no oversight mechanisms to the extent that our people are dying at a very young age, firstly. That is why the previous Minister of Health emphasised on a preventative health system that we have in Cuba. I think it is time that we looked at that very seriously, so that our people don't have to get sick and die.

I think that is very important and my concern is on the implementation of the NHI with such a large budget cut. Is it going to able to be implantable timeously and be effective? So, as the NHI, we also want to call on government at some stage to consider moving away from the World Health Organisation and we need to create a new World Health Organisation, if you look at the reports of the effects of the vaccines that we have taken and the number of people that are dying from cardiac arrest and strokes.

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I agree with President Putin that we need a new World Health organisation, a new ... [Time expired.]

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: Hon House Chair, the DA wants fiscal disability. That's a new word for this Parliament. So, that means you die if you are poor and you live if you have money.

Afrikaans:

Die apartheid salf waarvan die VF Plus praat ...

English:

... also means that blacks should not live, so there's fewer people that will vote for the parties of the liberation movement. A vote for the DA is a vote for blacks to die because they cannot afford medical costs and shouldn't get medical treatment.

Every year that universal health is delayed, it puts us 10 years back. Apartheid has put us back for more than a century. So, a solution as proposed by Parliament, the people's Parliament, is the way forward. National Health Insurance, NHI, is the answer. Bite the bullet to save lives. Thank you very much, hon House Chair.

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IsiXhosa:

Nksz A GELA: Ndikuhloniphile Mbhexeshi oyiNtloko kodwa abanye bethu bafika apha bakhamise batyhale kodwa kwikomiti yeMicimbi yeSebe bayathula bangakwazi nokuthetha.

English:

The ANC supports the Portfolio Committee on Health’s Budgetary Review and Recommendation Report. We welcome and applaud the Department of Health's improved audit outcomes from a qualified opinion to unqualified findings. We are encouraged by the department's HIV and Aids response by achieving 94-76-92 targets against the 95-95-95 targets.

The committee's report provides a number of crucial recommendations, including an emphasis on the significance of strengthening accountability and consequence management mechanisms in order to promote transparency, as well as good and ethical governance. The report gives recommendations on strengthening the department's systems to ensure a better budget, expenditure and infrastructure development.

As the ANC, we believe the recommendations in the report are vital and enhances systems and processes for implementation of NHI, which will be a key milestone for our country's growth

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and position health care as a human right and not as a privilege based on people's economic standing.

The ANC's support of the report is rooted in ... [Inaudible.] ... of improving the quality of health services, transforming our country’s divisive two-tier health system, addressing systematic and structural imbalances and forging a future towards universal health coverage.

As the ANC, we are committed to the report's recommendations geared towards a system in which every rand is tallied and all the department's programmes are evaluated for their impact on improving the health outcomes of all our people. Thank you very much.

Motion agreed to.

Report accordingly adopted.

CONSIDERATION OF BUDGETARY REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION REPORT OF PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

There was no debate.

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Sesotho:

SEPHADI SE KA SEHLOOHONG SA MOKGA WA BONGATA: Ha ke lebohe Modulasetulo. Ke sisinya hore Ntlo e amohele tlaleho ena. Ke a leboha.

Declarations of vote:

Ms B S MASANGO: Hon Chair, it was reported to the committee that the Department of Social Development and the National Development Agency, NDA, had obtained clean audits. The whole portfolio showed an improved performance as far as its audit findings are concerned. We congratulate the department for its efforts in this regard. However, at the same meeting we had to express our grave concerns about repeat audit findings of inadequate oversight by the Department of Social Development over the SA Social Security Agency, Sassa, slow response of management to address weaknesses, payment of social grants to ineligible beneficiaries and invalid lease contracts, to mention but a few. To add insult to injury, the department returned over R6 billion to Treasury; R6 billion while South Africa is reeling from a shortage of social workers. We are a mere six years from the National Development Plan, NDP, deadline of 2030, which recognises the critical need for social welfare services, particularly in the areas of gender-based violence, crime, child protection, violence prevention,

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substance abuse, trauma counselling, mental health and care for the elderly. At this rate, it is absolutely impossible that the target of 55 000 social service practitioners by 2030 will be achieved.

The DA will however be keeping a close eye on the implementation of the department's strategy at an estimated cost of R9 billion. At the rate and pace of absorption of unemployed social workers into the system, this is just another ANC pipedream and lip service to which the most vulnerable in this country have become accustomed. That is, until 2024, when the DA will implement a decent social development policy. I thank you, Chairperson.

Mr E MTHETHWA: Chairperson, the EFF rejects this report. In a country where we have so many social ills, it is inconceivable that a department tasked with the mandate that it is tasked with can fail to employ the very same social workers that it has paid in terms of their scholarships.

The country is in dire need of social workers and we have thousands of social workers currently unemployed across the country because of this department. Not only that, there is no staff stability in the department. The department is run by

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acting senior managers. I think it is a Hollywood set-up there. There is no plan to appoint managers on a permanent basis anytime soon.

The Social Relief of Distress, SRD, Grant is a total mess because people who apply are never given feedback. There is a serious audit that must be done to determine where these monies go to, because in most cases the money never reaches the people it is intended for. Not even the department is able to act swiftly in helping elderly people in the interim, like those who were recently paid with fake notes by Pick 'n Pay in Ivory Park. Had it not been for the Good Samaritans of the EFF, the elderly people would have gone without food for the month because they had not resolved that matter.

The department keeps rejecting applications from nonprofit organisations, NPOs, that are rendering crucial services simply on the basis of some vague criteria that the department uses. The most ridiculous of this department's failures is that relating to Sassa and the administration of grants. Sassa constantly fails our elderly people and all other grant recipients with their failure to upgrade their systems, leaving thousands of beneficiaries stranded each month. The department is also not friendly towards disabled people.

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People who would otherwise qualify for disability grants, must wait for months before they are admitted. Thank you, Chair. We reject the report.

Ms L L VAN DER MERWE: Hon House Chairperson, at a time when South Africa faces deep and severe social challenges, Prince Buthelezi's legacy, which we remember today, was one of service to the poor and marginalised. History records that the schools, the hospitals, the homes, the universities that were built in KwaZulu-Natal were due to his leadership. He remained deeply rooted in the service to his people. His example of servant leadership saw life changing opportunities for many disadvantaged South Africans.

Turning to this Budgetary Review and Recommendations Report, BRRR, it is unfortunate to note that not much has changed since last year. Vacancies remain, fraud and corruption at South African Social Security Agency, Sassa, remains, Sassa still pays people who are not eligible to receive the grant.

The grant chaos which recently saw millions of beneficiaries, especially the elderly, go without food for almost a month, speaks to a system that is struggling and on the verge of collapse.

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Hon House Chairperson, let me point out further gaps: This department has made little to no progress in the fight against gender-based violence or in protecting the rights of children or in protecting the rights of the elderly. The Department of Social Development, DSD, has failed to make any progress in employing the thousands of trained social workers who are sitting at home. Let me remind you, we need these social workers to protect children at schools, to fight substance abuse in our communities and to protect the children on gangsters that are in Cape Flats and in Wentworth.

As the IFP stands ready to govern in KwaZulu-Natal in 2024, we as a government in KwaZulu-Natal will support nonprofit organisations, NPOs, who are facing closure because the Department of Social Development in KwaZulu-Natal are paying them late, thereby forcing them to close their doors and failing the most vulnerable who rely on their services. We, as the IFP, will rise to protect abandoned babies by legalising baby savers. We will protect our children. We will protect those living with disabilities and we will lead the fight against gender-based violence. Simply put, an IFP in government will do what the ANC is not doing, prioritising the marginalised and poor just like Prince Buthelezi did. I thank you.

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Ms T BREEDT: Hon House Chair, this department and its entities have more than half of South Africans reliant on them in some form or another, yet challenges continue to persist. The challenges being faced by DSD and Sassa are so great that one almost forgets about the National Development Agency, NDA, also being an entity of this department.

There are but a number of positives that vaguely improve the standing of this department, like the improved audit outcome, but when it comes to boots on the ground service delivery the same cannot be said. There is still a number of critical vacancies in this department. We have seen an acting Director-General, DG, in this department for many years now, and every year it is in the Auditor-General of South Africa, AGSA report.

There are many committee observations that are quite worrying. Struggles with NPO funding and appeals is one such challenge, and the continuing service delivery woes that are still hampering Sassa is another. The move from South African Post Office, Sapo, to the Postbank was marred by issues that started even before the ink on the new agreement between Sassa and the Postbank had time to dry. We have now had a number of network challenges, discontinuations of systems, system

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glitches, and other oopsie daisies that have seen our Sassa beneficiaries not receiving their payments.

What is further worrying about the whole Postbank debacle is that not once was sufficient communication given to anyone. Telephone lines that had eventually started working, could not take the number of calls and also crashed, leaving beneficiaries without answers. Many of us as members were also contacted by these beneficiaries who had exhausted all avenues and could also not assist, because we also did not have the answers.

The Postbank is now making promises that the issues are sorted, but I am not holding my breath. The only question that begs to be asked is: How long will our most vulnerable suffer before this government starts acting and addressing problems in a proactive manner instead of having it fall apart first and then being reactive? South Africans deserve better. I thank you.

Mrs M E SUKERS: Hon House Chairperson, the ACDP rises in this budget debate in solidarity with ordinary South Africans who are facing the normal daily crisis of poverty. A crisis that is not improving but getting worse as our state appears

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incapable of driving the necessary societal and economic change that will make the work of the DSD less rather than more important.

This daily or ordinary crisis is, however, dwarfed by what befalls our vulnerable communities when an extraordinary crisis strikes them. Communities that I represent, both in the Western and Northern Cape, have recently been struck by floods, and on both occasions, we saw the disaster of poverty being turned into a community devastating event. The vulnerable became sick, key family members died and whole families now face devastating circumstances as a result. As I speak to you, my community is still living in a hall in the Western Cape.

In every branch of the state, we must put the family first and stop undermining the family. In every committee I serve on Health, Education and even Social Development, the state is undermining the family. We can never have enough money ... [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): Excuse me, hon member. The ICT, could you please mute hon Mary Pietersen. Sorry about that, hon member, you may continue.

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Mrs M E SUKERS: We never have enough money to replace the role of the family, and we must make the rebuilding of the family a national priority. The second strong foundation that we need to build on is community. The community is closest to problems, and we must allow and empower the community to solve them themselves. The real measure of success of the DSD is not how many of our people it helps, but how many people it impacts who no longer needs its services, and in this we are failing dismally. I thank you.

Mr A M SHAIK EMAM: Hon House Chairperson, the National Freedom Party will support the report tabled here, but above that we would like to congratulate the department on getting an unqualified audit opinion which is an improvement from the previous one. Whilst we talk about children and women particularly and the conditions under which they live, let us not forget the plight of the women and children in Gaza and other parts of Palestine, many of whom are dying of hunger and thirst because of the atrocities committed by the apartheid Zionist state of Israel to such an extent that they will not allow access to water and food through the checkpoints. These are major concerns that they face.

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Having said that I also want to say that I hear some negative comments about the Department of Social Development. Is it not the responsibility of each and every one of us to apply our minds to what is happening on the ground? The reason why I am going to this is because we recently passed a Bill on Basic Education and one of it is that children must be at school. In full view of us right here in the City of Cape Town, I can take you right now and tomorrow during school hours, hundreds of them are standing all over in street corners and not at school. So, you pass the Bill and then ignore it and do nothing about it. You don't do anything about it because you don't care about those children. You don't care about those children because they are not your class. This is basically what it is.

Why don't you get off your backsides and go there and make sure that those children are in school? That is the least that you can actually do. Don't come here and say you care, and you will do this, because you don't care. Right in front of here at the intersection when you come out of that house of yours that taxpayers and paying for and go and have a look and see exactly what is happening. You will not do it, but you will come here and criticise the others ... [Time expired.] The NFP supports this report tabled here.

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Mr M G E HENDRICKS: Hon House Chair, I hope you are not going to feel sorry for me, I have been married to a social worker for 50 years. If that was not the case, I would have been a delinquent. So, we support the report. We had a Minister of Social Development who was a fighter, I hear we have fighters today, they are nowhere near the fighters we had during the days of the liberation struggle. So, our Minister fought for our freedom and now she is fighting for the poor and vulnerable. Al Jama-ah supports the report. Thank you very much.

Ms N Q MVANA: House Chair, greetings to hon members. Chief Whip, I am very happy when I hear that other organizations and other hon members are witnessing that we have fought for this country as Social Development. Yes, there are challenges and hiccups here and there, but we are correcting each and everything that we have done wrong.

Chairperson, the ANC has long envisaged a South Africa where social justice reigns supreme, poverty is broken, and everyone’s dignity is respected. It is therefore against this background that the ANC supports the budget of the Portfolio Committee on Social Development. It is surprising for those ones that are also sitting in the committee and today they are

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just rejecting the budget. We are encouraged by the department's clean audit outcome and its efforts in implementing the findings of the Auditor-General. We also commend the consequences management measures being undertaken by the department through disciplinary actions against officials who are implicated in unethical conduct, which compromises the efforts of the department. These positive actions affirm the department's commitment towards social transformation and realizing the goals outlined in the National Development Plan and Medium-term Strategic Framework.

Chairperson, as the ANC, we support the committee's report because it outlines several recommendations such as the proposals on mechanisms of improving the social protection through more effective measures to administer social grants. These interventions are ... [Inaudible.] ... for the development of a basic income grant. But you know, it's in the pipeline. Thank you. [Time expired.]

Question put – That the report be adopted.

Motion agreed to (Economic Freedom Fighters dissenting).

Report accordingly adopted.

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The House adjourned at 18:01.

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