



The Shopsteward

The official publication of the Congress of South African Trade Unions

Volume 32.2 • COSATU News Publication • April/May 2024



Contents

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SUBSCRIPTION & DISTRIBUTION: Nthabiseng Moloji **PRINTERS:** Shereno Printers
ADVERTISING SALES: Nthabiseng Moloji **Tel:** +27 (0)10 219 1341 **Fax:** 086 481 6163
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Editor in Chief

Solly Phetoe

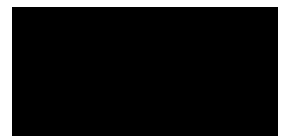




Word from the Editor

Norman Mampane

“A safe workplace means zero tolerance for sexual harassment and all forms of violence, including verbal and physical abuse.”





COSATU President Zingiswa Losi flanked by Alliance leaders, ANC President Cyril Ramaphosa and SACP General Secretary, Solly Mapaila at the Athlone Stadium, Cape Town

COSATU MAY DAY 2024 CELEBRATIONS, a resounding success!

May Day across the globe is an opportunity for workers to air their economic grievances or lead campaigns against repressive regimes. In South Africa, the Congress of South African Trade Unions led the nine rallies to

demand economic justice for workers as the country was celebrating thirty [30] years of democracy.

Workers descended at Athlone stadium in Cape Town, Western Cape to celebrate Worker's Day on May 1, with alliance

partners, progressive civil society and a large contingent of Pro-Palestine organizations joining in the celebrations, under the Theme: *"Building a strong and united COSATU in mobilizing for the ANC electoral victory."*

This was an execution of the Central Executive Committee decision taken for the province host the national event to mobilize all communities and workers to celebrate the International Worker's Day, to look back how the country has progressed

during the 30th anniversary of a democratic government in South Africa, celebrating the provision of labour rights as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and all other labour standards from the International Labour Organization enacted.

This 1st of May turnout was critical to showcase numerical advantage to support the liberation movement to win the coming National and Provincial Elections on May 29!

May 1st is an important milestone for the lives of the working class a moment to reflect on the last 30 years of freedom, assess the impact labour legislation has changed the lives of workers in the labour market and defending the gains.

May Day is the moment when workers celebrate the collective power of working people!

The 138th anniversary since May 1, first Chicago when workers down tools at the call for an 8-hour day, is still fresh across the globe in many toiling class communities. It remains a revolutionary chapter in the history of class struggle.

COSATU President Zingiswa Losi urged 'workers and their families to vote for the ANC on the national and provincial election day.'

Losi said, "This day belongs to the millions of men and women who work tirelessly to produce our food and build our houses, they are the ones we rely on for our essential services, including education, health care, safety and security.

They are the ones who

clean our streets and communities, build our roads, work underground for our mineral and industrial necessities, and they drive long distances to deliver much needed goods to far flung communities. Today we honour all these men and women, wherever they are. These are our real heroes!

May Day is born of working class struggles for decent wages, decent working and living conditions and dignity for all. We are gathered here today to demonstrate the importance of solidarity and power of unity in action."

Importance of Workers Day today

Losi said, "COSATU takes this day very seriously as an important organisational tool of struggle. True to our traditions of worker control and strong organisation as our base, we use this day to account to the working class on the gains, setbacks and challenges of our long journey and struggle.

We now host May Day events in all nine Provinces of South Africa, from across all sectors of the economy and workplaces. COSATU continues to be bold to speak the truth and not sugar-coat the naked reality that is experienced by the workers and the broader working class on a daily basis."

International solidarity with all workers of all nations!

"COSATU extends warm and fraternal greetings to fellow workers gathered and marching in different parts of the world, particularly on our own continent, Africa. Our destiny is tied to one

another by the bounds of extreme underdevelopment, poverty, diseases and hunger throughout the continent that define the common basis of our joint struggles", reiterated Losi

Understanding the political economy of the transition from apartheid – Working with the ANC to build a democratic developmental state to transform and industrialise our economy and create jobs

"The democratically elected government led by the ANC in 1994 inherited a state bankrupted by apartheid.

- Context of crisis of South African capitalism dating back from global capitalist crises of 1973/1979
- the deep and prolonged recession from 1989 to 1993, at the height of our struggle against apartheid and the global sanctions momentum.

The new democratic state had a massive task to build a better life for all especially the historically oppressed masses on the one hand, while also addressing disinvestment and capital-flight on the other hand.

The democratic state also guaranteed fundamental rights, including:

- radical changes in the labour relations regime, away from repressive Apartheid workplace regime
- new democratic labour legislation consolidated our (workers) gains, creating new conditions of work, but also new contestations and contradictions.
- as workers we had

to develop different objectives, and new strategies and tactics had to be considered, to ensure we remain relevant and adapt our radical trade union movement in the evolving context of the post-apartheid challenges.

- We must also acknowledge that the transition from Apartheid to the new democratic order has come with its own contradictions and costs, especially for the working class. We have observed the fact that the state itself is contested terrain, e.g:
 - The packaging of neoliberal reforms inevitable part of our transition.
 - But, we have also the negative effect of the neoliberal trajectory both on class terms, but also in the general erosion and hollowing of the capacity of the state to drive transformation.

That is why, as workers we should understand the strategy of capital over the three decades of democracy.

- in consolidating its class power - it has managed to establish its hegemony over the democratic state and society;
- the manner in which it has decisively influenced the current structure of the economy and the labour relations, e.g the sustained attacks on Collective Bargaining and the institutions regulating the labour market reflect the intensity of the struggle by capital to roll back our gains and even pending threat to the Minimum Wage regime

if we fail to win the upcoming elections.”

Comrades, the battle for worker control of retirement and savings funds is at the centre of our decisive struggle as workers.

- We continue to call for a strongly resourced and proactive industrial strategy, including the

build state capacity to effectively deliver on its mandate.

Strengthening our Campaign to defend Collective Bargaining and workers’ rights in all sectors of the economy – Building strong unions to defend workers

- Major gains of the democratic dispensation

our Democratic gains – Vote ANC!

“Despite numerous challenges, we take pride in celebrating the 30th anniversary of our democracy on this May Day. As workers we appreciate the strides and positive changes because we suffered the most and

defend:

- About 89% of the country’s households now have access to water, from 60% in 1994.
- About 85% of South African homes have access to electricity.
- More than 18 million vulnerable people receive social protection in terms of social grants, from only 2.5 million in 1999.
- Nearly every young person aged 15-24 years is literate, and adult literacy now stands at 85%, up from 64% in 1996.
- While still a challenge, the poverty rate declined from 71% in 1993 to 55.5% in 2020.
- The ANC government set up the largest HIV/AIDS programme in the world, with more than 5.8 million people on antiretroviral treatment.



Workers celebrating Workers Day at Curries Fountain, Durban

ANC Manifesto 2024 Six priorities

In the Manifesto, the ANC-led Alliance has committed to anchor the economic and social policies of the seventh administration towards “a developmental macroeconomic framework”, to build the developmental state.

In line with the key socioeconomic commitments of the manifesto, amongst others, this developmental macroeconomic framework means:

- A moratorium on budget-cuts and the stimulation of the economy in alignment with the economic and social priorities.

beneficiation of our mineral resources.

- We also call for pulling our economy out of the current semi-colonial relations in its trade with the global North countries in which South Africa is used as a mere source for the extraction of vital mineral resources.

The ANC’s 2024 Manifesto priorities aim at building a democratic and developmental state, reversing the stranglehold of monopoly capital and

— progressive labour laws, conditions of employment and robust labour market institutions, which are a result of years of struggle.

- The vote for the ANC is part of our struggle to defend these gains, because only the ANC has stood with us in defending these legislations during debates in the National Assembly.

COSATU calls on workers to defend

bore the worst brunt of the apartheid and its repressive employment regime.

The Alliance COSATU, SACP and SANCO with the ANC have been central to promulgate progressive gains of our democratic advances. We cannot take for granted the significance of defending and advancing towards more of these gains.”

Here are significant gains that COSATU and the alliance must



COSATU Free State May Day celebrations at Phuthaditjaba stadium, Qwaqwa

- The creation and sustaining of 2.5 million work opportunities in delivering public goods and services to communities.
- Alignment of monetary, fiscal and trade policy, along with transformation of the financial sector, to support job creation and industrialisation.
- Strengthening income support through existing social grants and use the Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grants as a mechanism towards phasing in a basic income support grant.
- Promulgate the National Health Insurance (NHI) to make quality health care affordable and available to all.
- Build a capable and developmental state, strengthen links between government at all levels and the people, rebuild and improve local government, build a professional and developmental public service based on Batho Pele principles, and strengthen cooperative governance through the District Development Model.
- Build on achievements opening access in the higher education, by strengthening NSFAS, to ensure South Africa realises NDP 2030 target of 1.6 million enrolments for universities, 2.5 million and 1 million for TVETs and CET colleges respectively.
- o Achievements –

presently, black students in universities increased from 49% in 1994 to 71% in 2021 and 60% of the university students are women.

- o From 1991, when TEFSA was established to 2020 the student population grew by nearly seven hundred percent and in 2024 the student population that is funded by NSFAS for the first time surpassed a million (1.1 million).

Vote for the ANC campaign

Comrades, this 2024 May Day coincides with the momentous seventh democratic elections on the

29th May. This is our solemn message; this campaign is both to mobilise workers towards a decisive victory of the ANC in these elections

- The ANC remains a workers' choice in defence of democracy and workers' rights.

In March, we launched the Eijah Barayi Brigades and the Violet Seboni Brigades which require all our effort and support.

- For the first time since 1994, our movement led by the African National Congress (ANC) is facing a realistic possibility of being unseated by all sorts of coalition of reactionary forces, spearheaded by DA's so-called Multi-Party Charter (MPC).

Why is our revolution facing the real threat of reversal in these elections?

We are not saying that this DA-led group has suddenly become popular amongst the masses of our people more than the ANC itself.

Our key message is that a decisive victory or a defeat of the ANC depends on what we are going to do as workers, leading to the very last day of the official campaigning period and the 29th May 2024.



Members of the National Union of Mineworkers marching at Carletonville

COSATU's President Zingiswa Losi and General Secretary Solly Phetoe

JOINED THE NUM MARCH AGAINST IMMINENT

retrenchments at Sibanye Stillwater

The National Union of Mineworkers said it will continue with protest action against Sibanye-Stillwater if the mining giant does not abandon planned layoffs. This was said during the march led by the union at Carletonville to deliver

a memorandum to the Management of Sibanye-Stillwater mine. NUM has called on the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy to come to the party to protect the interests of its citizens.

Sibanye-Stillwater issued Section 189 notice, notifying

about its plans to retrench about 4 000 mineworkers.

NUM argued that 'The retrenchment of 3 107 mineworkers and about 915 contractors is a huge number. This is brutality at its best. This evil and heartless decision will bring a bleak, dark and difficult

lives for our members and their dependents.'

Presenting the Memorandum, NUM Acting General Secretary, Mpho Phakedi said, "Sibanye-Stillwater has over the past years earned the title of worst employer amongst workers. Sibanye could

manage to pay their CEO Neal Froneman a salary of R13 336 000 and a bonus of almost double that at R13 304 000. Sibanye-Stillwater and its CEO had long demonstrated that they have no best interest of workers in his heart. The arrogance of Froneman does not only undermine mineworkers but the country in its entirety. It is on record that for the past years Sibanye-Stillwater destroyed permanent jobs of many workers and destabilised livelihoods of many families. One mineworker is able to support more than 10 family members."

"Sibanye-Stillwater has successfully destroyed such livelihoods under the watchful eyes of both the departments of Mineral Resources and energy and Employment and Labour as primary custodians of mining operations, and workers respectively. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) will not allow Sibanye-Stillwater and Froneman to run away with murder and continue to exploit workers by using the minerals that belong to the people." "Froneman is not the government, and he is not the owner of the minerals in this country."

Phakedi articulated that "We find it strange and unsettling that our own government is so quiet when this man is undermining the very core of the Freedom Charter, which proclaims that the minerals belong to the people. We will never rest until this is addressed. The NUM has noted with disgust the recent announcement by the company that there will be R140 million salary cut for its CEO. These are

some of the tactics employed by the company to further confuse and fool workers. As the NUM, we are not buying into that. In fact, as the NUM we are calling for the Sibanye-Stillwater top management and the CEO Neal Froneman to resign as they are unable to stabilise and run the mining company. The NUM is sick and tired of such retrenchments every year."

"We need transformation in the mining sector. Mineworkers and the immediate communities surrounding Sibanye-Stillwater operations are deeply trapped in poverty because of people of Froneman's calibre. Sibanye-Stillwater is not doing enough to support or promote local business development. Froneman is the major destroyer of jobs in the mining industry. He did buy the Cook operations some years ago in the gold sector and immediately placed them under care and maintenance resulting in huge job losses through retrenchments. Froneman's main objective is to punish workers and their families.

The mining companies use care and maintenance as a retrenchment tool, for the reason that retrenchments are known to be a time-consuming process compared to care and maintenance process which is effective and short. The mining companies that are placing mines under care and maintenance should engage with the DMRE to explain their reasoning and find alternative solutions. The Department must eagerly implement the 'use it or lose it' principle for mines placed

under care and maintenance for an indefinite period. DMRE must put a process in place for interested mining companies to bid for taking over the mines placed under care and maintenance to ensure optimal mining of ore deposits. The NUM has noted with disgust the recent announcement by the company that there will be R140 million salary cut for its CEO. These are some of the tactics employed by the company to further confuse and fool workers. As the NUM, we are not buying into that. In fact, as the NUM we are calling for the Sibanye-Stillwater top management and the CEO Neal Froneman to resign as they are unable to stabilise and run the mining company. The NUM is sick and tired of such retrenchments every year."

Phakedi concluded that "The NUM therefore gives Sibanye-Stillwater fourteen (14) days to respond to these demands. If Sibanye-Stillwater fails to respond to the workers demands within the fourteen days (14) period, it is expected that the next gear in a form of a programme of an intensive industrial action will be announced."

Other demands presented were:

- Sibanye-Stillwater must stop playing politics with the lives of mineworkers and their families
- If Sibanye-Stillwater are no longer interested in mining, they must leave minerals behind
- NUM rejects privatization of protection services
- The Department of Mineral Resources and Energy must intervene at Sibanye-Stillwater mine

- NUM demand adherence to mining health and safety for workers working underground to avoid fatalities
- NUM demand that employers must unlock food ban for mineworkers working underground.

Meanwhile, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)'s President Zingiswa Losi and General Secretary Solly Phetoe joined the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM)'s protest march Sibanye Stillwater at Kloof Mine.

COSATU President Zingiswa Losi said, "Sibanye Stillwater has issued Section 189 retrenchments notices threatening the jobs of 3 107 mineworkers and 915 contractors. This will be a devastating blow to those workers, their families and communities that we cannot accept. COSATU stands in solidarity with the members of the National Union of Mineworkers, who have been experiencing retrenchments every year at the hands of inhumane employers who look for any excuse to retrench workers and refuse to engage on meaningful alternatives."

The management of Sibanye Stillwater and its CEO Neal Froneman are clearly incapable of running and stabilizing the mining company. The blood, sweat and tears of miners are made a mockery of whilst the very same management are content to pay themselves exorbitant packages worth hundreds of millions whilst mine workers struggle to survive on their meagre wages."



75 - Total number of people trapped under the rubble when the building collapsed. Of that number, 7 - people have died, 29 people rescued and 39 people remain unaccounted for

Shock as multi-story construction **BUILDING COLLAPSED IN GEORGE, WESTERN CAPE**

It has been another incredibly traumatizing experience for families and rescuers on the site of the collapsed building in George in the Western Cape. The collapse occurred in the afternoon of Monday, 6 May 2024.

The number of

construction workers that have been removed from under the rubble of a building that collapsed on Monday, 6 May 2024 has risen to thirty-six [36] as at 05h33 on the 8th of May. This left thirty-nine [39] people unaccounted for at present as of the 8th of May.

Seven [7] workers have been declared deceased. Developers are notorious for using cheap labor and inferior construction products, not to mention cutting corners on adhering to minimum building standards. Community members

wanted those responsible for this catastrophic event to be held accountable, as bodies were still being stretched out.

President Cyril Ramaphosa has offered his deep condolences to the relatives and friends of five people who have died

in an incident.

The Presidency said, *“The President’s thoughts are with the families who have lost loved ones as well as the families of close to 50 people who are trapped in the rubble. President Ramaphosa wished rescue teams the best as they go about their operations and says investigations into the cause of the incident must aim to bring closure to the community and prevent a repeat of this disaster.”*

Malvern De Bruyn, COSATU Western Cape Provincial Secretary said, *“COSATU send its heartfelt condolences to the families and the colleagues of the deceased and wish the injured workers a speedy recovery.*

We pray for the safe rescue of those remaining trapped. We call on the law enforcement agencies and other authorities to thoroughly investigate this matter to ensure that justice be served. COSATU

is appealing to the owners of this company to look after the families of the deceased and injured construction workers.”

De Bryun reiterated that *“We will be engaging with the Department of Employment and Labour and the Compensation Fund for Occupational Injuries and Diseases to ensure that relief is provided to these workers and their families as required by law. The Federation demands that the owners and management of the construction company be held liable for the deaths, injuries, and loss of earnings of these workers.*

The employers must be held liable for any negligence and criminal conduct that has resulted in this horrific tragedy. Workers sell their labour and not their lives. They should not be treated like glorified slaves by greedy employers. We reiterate our call that workers unite to ensure that

employers do not put profits before the health and safety of workers.”

The South African Communist Party (SACP) in the Western Cape pledged its solidarity with the workers who are reported to have been trapped under the rubble following the collapse of a building under construction in George on Monday, 6 May 2024.

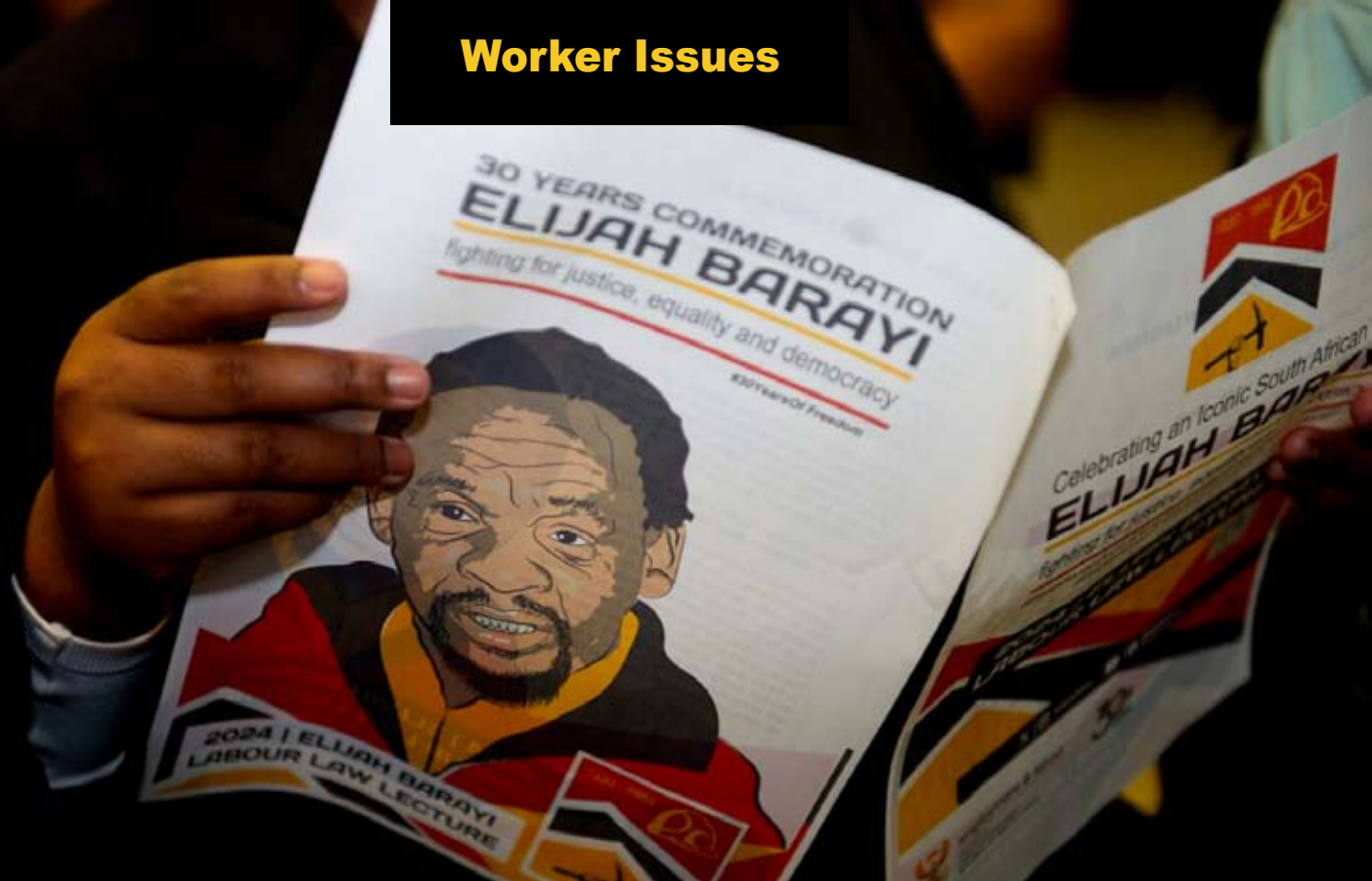
Benson Ngqentsu, SACP Western Cape Provincial Secretary alluded that *“It was imperative for emergency services from different parts of the Western Cape to assist in the rescue mission. The SACP calls on the Department of Labour and Employment to institute an independent inquiry into the cause of the collapse.*

The inquiry should focus on whether there was compliance with all applicable construction regulations, among others. The investigation must be thorough to hold accountable those

responsible for the collapse, ensure that construction workers do not experience such an incident ever again and that construction owners put the safety of the workers before all else. The SACP will monitor with keen interest the progress of the rescue mission and the investigation process.

Meanwhile, Colin Deiner, Chief Director for Disaster Management in the Western Cape said, *“the Construction Industry Development Board) where all contractors have to be registered to do building work must ensure that construction sites are secured.*

The Gift of the Givers sniffer dogs detected the scent and sound of two victims who were pulled from the rubble alive. The name of the Developer is NT NeoTrend Group leading the ICE Projects with plans submitted in December 2022 and approved in July 2023.”



Organized labour gathered at the Inaugural Elijah Barayi Memorial Lecture by President Cyril Ramaphosa, University of Johannesburg, Soweto

COSATU founding President **ELIJAH BARAYI** **REMEMBERED**

COSATU president Zingiswa Losi participated in the inaugural Elijah Barayi Lecture at the Imbizo Hall, Soweto Campus, University of Johannesburg.

The labour law lecture, was organised by the Department of Employment and Labour in collaboration with the University of Johannesburg,

focusing on the life and contribution of Elijah Barayi.

In 2023, Unisa recently conferred the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (honoris causa) posthumously on Elijah Barayi. Elijah Barayi was born on 15 June 1930 in Cradock, Eastern Cape, South Africa. He joined the ANC youth league as a

teenager and distinguished himself as an able speaker and efficient organiser. During the early 1950s, Barayi was arrested for his participation in the defiance campaign. Upon his release, Barayi worked briefly for the Department of Native Affairs but resigned on conscientious grounds as he felt it was at the forefront

of administering apartheid. As an alternative pathway, he held a variety of jobs until 1960 when he left the Eastern Cape to take up employment as a clerk at State Mines, Brakpan.

He was an Organising Secretary for the ANC and was detained during the 1960 state of emergency and held for six months. The late

Barayi spent his living years fighting for the rights of poor, exploited, and marginalised working-class miners.

He rose from humble beginnings to become a leader of society and the President of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). *“Elijah Barayi was a trade union leader who sacrificed his life in the struggle for the dawn of peace, freedom, and the building of a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic society in South Africa. He was one of the founding leaders of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and rose to become the Congress of South African Trade Union (Cosatu) President*

at its launch in 1985. He had been an activist in the Mass Democratic Movement since the 1950s. It is telling that Elijah Barayi was never recruited into the NUM. He recruited himself. He was one of the most vocal delegates at the first NUM Congress in 1982.

His contributions were very forthright. He had a manner of speaking which made everyone sit up and listen. He often started his contributions very softly and gently, but to make his point his voice would rise to a crescendo as he made a point of great revolutionary significance. At that conference it became clear to everyone that in Barayi

we had a true working-class leader, but much more than that, we had a leader who was deeply immersed in the politics of the Congress movement, its values, principles and very rich traditions.

He had been an activist in the ANC in the 1950s, having participated in the defiance campaign.” “When he was elected president of COSATU he declared in his acceptance speech “to the South African government, I say: your time is over. We do not apologise for being black. We are proud of it. As from today Mandela and all political prisoners should be released.

PW Botha you have failed in your duties to release Mandela. Then in a manner that became customary for him he departed from his script and, in a rousing and memorable political peroration, gave the government an ultimatum to repeal the pass laws within six months or face the consequences.

Comrade Barayi’s unscripted remarks calling for the repeal of pass laws within six months immediately revealed fault lines within COSATU. A number of union leaders that were more aligned to the old FOSATU were most unhappy about these remarks arguing that they were populist.”

President Cyril Ramaphosa addressing participants said, *“This lecture serves as part of a national programme celebrating Workers’ Month and seeks to establish a tradition of hosting an Elijah Barayi Lecture annually.*

The late Elijah Barayi was a former Deputy President of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the founding President of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). NUM and COSATU under his leadership played a critical role in the resistance to apartheid, the achievement of a constitutional democracy and the progressive labour laws protecting the rights of workers today. President Barayi symbolised a generation

of leaders who fought valiantly to improve the working and living conditions of conditions of millions. We welcome this progressive initiative by the Presidency and the Department of Employment and Labour to celebrate a South African working-class hero and to remind the nation of the need to continuously defend and enforce the hard-won rights of workers.

“It is an honour to be invited to speak about my comrade, mentor and friend, Elijah Barayi. It is significant that this inaugural lecture is being held during the 30th year of our freedom.

The achievement of democracy was a cause to which Elijah Barayi dedicated his life. It is a tragedy that he never got to see the dawn of

freedom break over the horizon. We lost him thirty years ago, just three months before South Africa’s first non-racial election. Yet what a great legacy he left behind. What a powerful voice that lives on. Elijah Barayi’s life was a testament to bravery and to standing firm on principle even in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds.

It takes a hero to go against the norm and to stand for what is right even when those around them remain silent or look away. Elijah Barayi was a hero of the anti-apartheid struggle. He joined the ANC Youth League as a teenager in the early 1950s and was active in the Defiance campaign. Speaking years later about his arrest for leading a march against the pass laws he said:

“I was delighted to go to jail.”

Ramaphosa said, “There would be many more jail sentences, including under the State of Emergency. After he was released, he was continuously harassed by the police, forcing him to leave his home town of Cradock. He sought refuge on the mines, first at State Mines in Brakpan, then in Carletonville on the West Rand. He was a hero and champion of mineworkers, the most oppressed and exploited class of workers throughout colonial and apartheid rule. He recruited himself into the National Union of Mineworkers that we formed in 1982 and rose from being a shaft steward to being elected vice-president of the union. Elijah Barayi, the son of a municipal worker and

a domestic worker, was a hero of South Africa's working class. At the launch of the Congress of South African Trade Unions in December 1985, he was elected as the federation's first President." "We remember the rally at Curries Fountain in Durban, where more than 10,000 people sang in unison: U-Cosatu-Sonyuka naya 'masingena enkululukweni... We remember the electrifying speech that Barayi made at the Congress." "You have six months to abolish the pass laws," he told the regime..

He demanded the release of President Nelson Mandela, that the Bantustans be abolished, that the state of emergency be lifted, and for the army to withdraw from the townships. It was, as one prominent international publication called it, a declaration of defiance.

It was this defiance that was to become a defining feature of COSATU in the years that followed. Elijah Barayi's impact extended far beyond our borders. He forged alliances with labour movements and other like-minded people around the world, garnering support for the anti-apartheid struggle and bringing global attention to the injustices being perpetrated in South Africa. From its establishment, COSATU said that the struggle of workers on the shopfloor could not be separated from the wider struggle for liberation. We said that by their very nature, industrial issues are political.

Elijah Barayi was instrumental in getting the National Union of Mineworkers to be the first COSATU union to adopt the Freedom Charter. His union activism could not be

separated from the struggle for national liberation. I have told the story many times of how he would ask all candidates interviewing for positions with NUM if they knew the Freedom Charter. If they didn't, they weren't hired. As we look back on 30 years of democracy, we can see very clearly how the relationship between workers' struggles and the fight for broader political and social change have shaped our country. We can see how workers have contributed to defining our constitutional order. The Constitution with its Bill of Rights is the bedrock of the democratic society we have been striving to build since 1994.

It is centred around the right of every South African to have their human dignity respected and protected. When the first COSATU congress demanded the right to strike, for benefits to be guaranteed to the unemployed and those threatened by retrenchment, for better occupational health and safety, and for the rights of female workers to be given particular protection, it was heralded as revolutionary.

Social dialogue is a necessary component of our democracy

Thirty years into democracy, we have several progressive labour and social protection laws, together with a robust system of collective bargaining driven by strong institutions such as Nedlac and the CCMA. The right to engage in collective bargaining is enshrined in the Constitution. It has played a crucial role in improving worker rights and secured fair compensation, reasonable working hours and safer

working environments.

The Constitution enshrines the right to fair labour practices; to form and join a trade union and participate in its activities; and the right to strike. We have the Labour Relations Act and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act to protect and advance workers' rights. We have laws to safeguard the health and safety of workers and a Compensation Fund to support workers who are injured or sick. The first COSATU Congress resolved to lead a campaign for a legally-enforced national minimum wage for all workers. Just over five years ago, after extensive engagements among social partners, we introduced the National Minimum Wage, improving the lives of over six million workers.

Tied to the national minimum wage, the Congress called for the abolition of general sales tax on essential items. As government, we continue to implement value-added tax zero rating as a pro-poor policy. In 2001, we established an Unemployment Insurance Fund, which has been a lifeline for vulnerable South Africans who are out of work. The Fund proved itself to be agile and adaptable during the COVID-19 pandemic, when it administered a relief scheme to support both workers and employers affected by the economic disruption caused by the pandemic.

The first COSATU congress called for a national programme of public works to provide jobs for the unemployed. Since 1994 we have built a number of mass public employment programmes to provide income support, skills and training for South Africans who are

out of work. These include the Expanded Public Works Programme, Community Works Programme, and most recently, the Presidential Employment Stimulus.

We have also just recently launched a new phase of the Labour Activation Programme, which is focused on creating decent and sustainable work opportunities in many sectors across the economy.

Over the past thirty years, we have used Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment, preferential procurement, the Black Industrialists Programme and worker share ownership schemes to transform patterns of ownership and control in the economy. I recently participated in a conference on the state of worker share ownership. In South Africa today, more than 500,000 workers are part-owners of the companies they work for.

Mineworkers, farmworkers, workers in manufacturing and other sectors today share in the fruits of their labour through worker ownership schemes. As a country, we have come a long way in giving effect to the rights of women workers. We passed the Employment Equity Act to redress racial and gender discrimination in the workplace and continue to progressively implement affirmative action policies that favour women. We have laws protecting women against sexual harassment in the workplace.

By law, no employer can discriminate against a woman on account of pregnancy. Women are entitled to a minimum of four months of maternity leave and can apply to the UIF for paid benefits. The

principle of equal pay for work of equal value is enshrined in law. These achievements form part of the legacy of Elijah Barayi. They need to be protected and advanced.

This is particularly important at a time when collective industrial relations are in decline in many parts of the world. Trade union membership has been going down over time, including in our own country. According to statistics from the Department of Employment and Labour, union membership fell by approximately 11 per cent last year. This is taking place at a time of greater automation, increasing casualisation of labour and more workers moving to the informal economy. Internal divisions, governance issues and the ability of unions to service and organise workers have also contributed to this decline. This is something that must be addressed with urgency. Strong trade union membership is vital to consolidate the gains of social protection, industrial relations, occupational health and safety, and workers' rights.

There some in our country who are calling for hard-won rights, like collective bargaining, to be curtailed and for the minimum wage to be scrapped. As a society committed to transformation, we cannot allow this to happen. We have a collective responsibility to build on the achievements of democracy and to work with greater vigour to overcome poverty, unemployment and inequality. Despite the progress we have made over the last 30 years, the legacy of apartheid continues to define so much of our society.

Inequality is exacerbated by high unemployment, poor economic growth, service delivery failures, corruption, crime and violence. While we have seen great advances in access to education and health care, the poor and the working class remain at a great disadvantage. Resolving these challenges requires concerted action from all sectors of society.

Building a future that promotes decent work and social justice necessitates that we deepen our collaboration as government, business, labour and civil society. In this effort, trade unions must remain at the forefront.

Labour is key to the success of our industrial policy, which aims to revitalise key industries, create and keep more jobs locally, and promote beneficiation of our vast mineral resources. The support of labour is important for our continued investment in economic and social infrastructure. Strong, organised labour is the most effective counter to the so-called construction mafias that are wreaking havoc and deterring investors.

Labour must be the driving force behind a progressive and just transition to a low-carbon, climate resilient economy and society. We must continue our collaboration as we strive to ensure that this transition is indeed just, and that it takes the rights and livelihoods of all affected workers and communities into account.

Later today, we will be signing the National Health Insurance Bill into law. The NHI will fundamentally transform the lives of millions of South Africans. It introduces the

principles of equity, solidarity and social justice into a healthcare system that has been for years characterised by high levels of inequality. We want labour to be at the forefront of popularising the NHI, of engaging with communities and employers alike on its benefits, and of partnering with government towards its implementation.

The level of organisation that was detailed in the resolutions of the first COSATU congress must be brought to bear as we work together to improve the delivery of services in our communities, especially in rural areas. As government, we remain committed to reducing the outsourcing of municipal services, and we once again call on labour to work with us to develop internal capacity to deliver quality services. While we work to overcome the injustices of the past, we are looking to the future. As technological advances and globalisation reshape the landscape of work, we need to be able to foster innovation and entrepreneurship while safeguarding workers' rights and promoting social dialogue.


We need to invest in technology, infrastructure and education to enable sustainable and inclusive economic growth and job creation. At the same time, we must strive to democratise the governance of work. In South Africa, this means strengthening and adapting labour laws, institutions and regulatory frameworks to protect workers' rights, promote fair competition and ensure social justice. We need to build a more inclusive and resilient labour market that will support a just transition, greater digitalisation

and other drivers of change.

The children born at the dawn of our democracy are today 30 years old. The democratic changes we won in 1994 and the progressive policies we have implemented since have lifted millions out of poverty and despair and improved their material condition. Yet we know that life is hard for many South Africans. Many young people are without jobs. Many families struggle to survive.

As long as the divisions in our society persist, as long as some people lead lives of quality and dignity whilst others suffer at the margins of the economy, our mission remains unfulfilled. We owe it to the memory of Elijah Barayi, to the South African people and to the generations to follow that we continue to work to overcome this inequality. We have achieved much. We have come far.

Now is the time to set our sights on even further horizons. Now is the time to intensify the struggle for economic equality and shared prosperity for all. It is fitting, as we do so, that we recall the life and the contribution of Elijah Barayi. It is fitting that we recall his courage and his dedication, his defiance and his selflessness.

As we confront challenges that may at time seem insurmountable, we are encouraged by his resolve. Let us honour the memory of giants like Elijah Barayi by renewing our commitment to building a better, stronger South Africa. As we draw inspiration from the life and times of the man we honour here today, let us deepen our resolve to advance freedom and social justice everywhere. 

NUM signed a historic FIVE-YEAR WAGE AGREEMENT with Harmony Gold

The NUM has signed a wage agreement on behalf of its members at Harmony Gold's South African operations. The agreement shall apply to and bind all employees at

artisans and officials.

The agreement is significant as it is with all unions simultaneously, the first time this had been achieved by the company in its history.

of Metalworkers of South Africa.

In the agreement, NUM has achieved, among others, the following:

1. A wage increase that ranges from 6.2% to 9.96% or average Consumer Price Index whichever is greater
2. A housing support to the value of R250 000 in the event of loss of life due to mine accident
3. A minimum severance pay of R100 000 from the third year of the agreement and also that in the event of section 189A and 189 of Labour Relations Act after the implementation date the Voluntary severance package/early retirement package will be calculated based on the employee's remuneration in year five.
4. Long service award will be paid upon employees attaining continuous service as follows. 15 years R10 000, 25 years

R15 000 and 35 years R30 000

5. ESOPS – the company presented a new ESOP [Employee Stock Ownership Plan] model for 5 years which offers employees 2% of the company value. The ESOP structure will be in place within three months of signing the agreement.
6. Paternity leave – Harmony will offer male employees 10 paid paternity leave

Our members are excited and have mandated us to sign the agreement. Our belief is that collectively as the trade unions, we can do better for our members.

The only thing that kept us going was to focus at the interests of our members, and with this deal we have signed, we believe our members are going to be proud.

The five years deal is historical in the sense that it is indeed the first of its kind in the history of the gold mining sector.



NUM members at the recent signing of a wage agreement at De Beers

Harmony's operations, and the duration of this agreement shall be for a period of five years from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2029.

The wage agreement makes provision for workers in Categories 4-8 surface and underground, miners,

Negotiations, which took three months (started in January), were without incident, were with the Coalition (comprising the NUM, UASA and Solidarity) as well as the Association of Mineworkers & Construction Union and the National Union

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The Economy

Healthcare costs have unfairly burdened the most vulnerable in South Africa -

Is the signing of the
NHI Bill
into law a
game-changer?

HEALTH
CARE

The skyrocketing expenses of private medical care have made healthcare unaffordable even for well-off South Africans. A significant portion of working people's salary is spent on health insurance, which frequently results in financial hardship on their household income.

Addressing the nation on advancing equity in healthcare provision, at a ceremony observed by MEC's from various provinces and the Minister of Health, Dr. Joe Phaahla, President Ramaphosa said, "It's just being established and will improve, with the goal of making sure everyone in South Africa can get the medical help they need, without worrying about the cost. The Bill aims to provide universal healthcare to all South Africans."

Ramaphosa explained that, "The real challenge in implementing the NHI lies not in the lack of funds, but in the misallocation of resources that currently favours the private health sector at the expense of public health needs."

"The NHI is an important instrument to tackle poverty. The rising cost of health care makes families poorer. By contrast, health care provided through the NHI frees up resources in poor families for other essential needs. The NHI will make health care in the country as a whole more affordable."

"The NHI is an opportunity to make a break with the inequality and inefficiency that has long characterised

our approach to the health of the South African people. Let us work together, in a spirit of cooperation and solidarity, to make the NHI work," concluded President Ramaphosa.

Solly Mapaila, the South African Communist Party General Secretary said, "The SACP supports the rollout of NHI in South Africa to benefit the poor. Medical care must be free and compulsory. NHI aims to provide universal health coverage to all South Africans, focusing on equity and quality."

"SACP welcomes President's assent to the National Health Insurance Bill. The signing of the National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill into law is an epoch-marking event, towards the provision of quality healthcare for all regardless of class position and income, race, gender and geographical location. This is a watershed moment towards aligning our healthcare system with the principles of equality and social solidarity. Universal quality healthcare coverage – the purpose of the NHI – is in line with the constitutional right to life.

The NHI epoch must represent an irreversible rupture with the present unequal two-tiered healthcare regime, which is underpinned by income and wealth inequalities. These racialised and gendered class inequalities are the conditions, results and levers of the accumulation of our society's wealth on a capitalistic basis.

To tackle the class inequalities in access to

quality healthcare, the NHI has a focus on redistributing healthcare resources to benefit all the people, the majority of whom are the working class and poor. This requires system-wide structural transformation and development. The SACP reiterates the importance of progressive redistribution from high incomes, above all else from the economic surplus appropriated by capitalist bosses, to deliver quality universal healthcare coverage. In alignment with the democratic aspirations of the masses, the NHI Bill underwent extensive public consultation over a decade.

Once signed into law, the monumental task will be the full implementation of the NHI, which includes the provision of robust primary healthcare. Part of this work will be the establishment of an NHI Fund, guaranteeing free, quality and comprehensive healthcare coverage for all. The SACP calls on the working class and other progressive sections of our society to unite to defend the advance to quality healthcare for all, against the reactionary elements and class forces who want to perpetuate inequality in healthcare."

Solly Phetoe, the South African Congress of Trade Unions [COSATU] alluded that, "The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) applauds President Cyril Ramaphosa's signing the long overdue National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill. The Federation is heartened that the President and the African National Congress led government and Parliament stood up

to insatiable lobbying by business to prevent today's signing of the NHI Bill. Pandering to the vested interests of private industry's lust for profits at the expense of the health of millions of ordinary South Africans would have marked a dark day in our democracy. The NHI Bill and policy mandate have been adopted by Cabinet, passed by both Houses of Parliament and received overwhelming support from thousands of workers attending countless public hearings on the NHI Bill over the past 5 years.

The Federation remains convinced that South Africa's myriad of healthcare crises require the creation of a National Health Insurance (NHI). COSATU and the overwhelming majority of workers are in support of an NHI. Society cannot afford to normalise 30 years into democracy the reality that most South Africans, in particular the working class, lack access to quality and affordable health care. This is not due to lack of resources but to their skewed distribution.

We cannot continue to place the profit margins of private industry above the needs of society. South Africa spends 8.5% of its Gross Domestic Product on healthcare. This is higher than many industrialised and peer nations. However, half of this is spent on the 16% of society fortunate enough to have medical aid. The other half is spent on public health care for the 84% dependent upon the state. As a result, we have first class but under-utilised private health care available

for 16% but charged at exorbitant prices and public health care overwhelmed with long queues, critical post vacancies, aging infrastructure and shortages and thus battling to provide basic health care for the 84% of society.

Consequently, many workers and their families are infected and dying from easily preventable and manageable diseases. Workers fortunate enough to have medical aid, battle to afford to pay the ever-increasing medical tariffs. Most workers' medical aids are depleted halfway through the year and are shamefully saddled with unaffordable co-payments. They are often forced to forego necessary but unaffordable treatment. The economy needs a healthy workforce if it is to meet its full potential.

The reality is that South Africa's public and private health care systems are broken and unsustainable. It is critical Government move with speed to resource and build a quality NHI that will guarantee quality, accessible and affordable universal health coverage for all South Africans. Internationally the equivalents of an NHI in Scandinavia and elsewhere have worked well and provide positive models for South Africa. We cannot afford to be a nation 30 years after 1994 that still grapples with the racially skewed distribution of resources and access to health care. The right to life and access to health care are inalienable constitutional rights. It is time all South Africans enjoy these rights. COSATU celebrates President Cyril Ramaphosa's



'Signing of NHI Bill is a landmark moment for our health system as we move towards Universal Health Coverage to ensure equitable access to quality healthcare for all, a historic and significant milestone for the people of South Africa.', said Presidency

assenting to this historic and progressive Bill that will change the lives of millions of destitute South Africans."

Zola Saphetha, NEHAWU General Secretary articulated that, "The National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union [NEHAWU] commends the President of the Republic, Comrade Cyril Ramaphosa, for the much anticipated and long-awaited signing of the National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill into law.

This is indeed a watershed moment that must be celebrated by all those who uphold the principles, values and injunctions of the country's Constitution. It signifies a progressive step towards government fulfilling the Constitutional obligation, more particularly, Section 27, Subsection 1, which enjoins government to ensure that everyone has access to healthcare.

The signing of the Bill into law will also set in place legislative provisions that will ultimately dismantle the highly unequal two-tiered health system. The NHI Bill is a result of over twenty-years of dedicated struggle, NEHAWU salutes all the workers, academics, doctors and progressive organisations that made many sacrifices towards the development, adoption and now ascension of the Bill.

The NHI Bill went through extensive scrutiny and debate, in NEDLAC, in the Portfolio Committee on Health, two Presidential Health Summits and through public participation processes in all nine provinces through the National Assembly and National Council of Provinces.

The current conditions facing workers' and the

poor necessitate a properly resourced healthcare system. More than half of the country's health spending takes place in the private healthcare system, which only services 16% of the population and only 9% of the African population are members of the medical aid schemes. NHI therefore seeks to transform the healthcare spending patterns in order to address the healthcare needs of 84% of the population.

It seeks to provide quality healthcare to all South Africans, regardless of their class or race and it also seeks to overhaul the persisting systematic inequalities resulting from the two-tiered system in realising Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

In pursuit of the ultimate goal of the UHC through the establishment of the NHI Fund, which shall be the sole entity to purchase medicine

and equipment as well as to reimburse the healthcare providers, this NHI legislation would enable the achievement of access to healthcare for rural communities, better and improved medical equipment in healthcare institutions, dismantling the two-tier health system, access to medical specialist and dentists for all, reduction of the cost of private healthcare and adequate staffing of healthcare institutions to shorten waiting time and increase the quality of healthcare provided.”

Mpho Mpogeng, SAEPU President said, “The South African Emergency Personnel’s Union fully supports the National Health Bill as it seeks to transform historical injustices and inequalities caused by the former apartheid state. The signing of the National Health Insurance has shown the true colours of the Democratic Alliance (DA) as a party of white privilege and exceptionalism. Democratic Alliance defines itself as being the most trusted and inclusive party but it wastes no time to protect only the whites whenever they think that they are treated unfairly.

Majority of the influencers that are opposing the Bill has shown that it is vulnerable to corrupt tendencies and cite many unfathomable but feeble reasons. The government must first improve the conditions of public hospitals to be on the same level as the private ones before they can implement the NHI.

The whites are not willing to share the health facilities with underprivileged “wretched of the earth” human being.

Some in the medical aid industry are silent about the policy that is threatening their profit margins from gorging the medical aid prices. They even threaten that the doctors will relocate to other countries if the bill is signed into law.

The normal price of giving birth at private health facilities range from R9 000 to R30 000, the current status quo is a fertile ground for profit maximisation by the private sectors. The white privilege are now whining due the signing of the NHI because they are not ready to accept equality and universalisation of health care services.

The NHI Bill seeks to provide for universal access to health care services in the country in accordance with the National Health Insurance White Paper and the constitution of South Africa. It will also create mechanisms for the equitable, effective and efficient utilisation of the fund’s resources to meet the health needs of users and prohibit unethical and unlawful practices in relation to the fund.”

Kwena Manamela, DENOSA General Secretary alluded that “The Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa (DENOSA) warmly welcomes the signing of the National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill into law by President Cyril Ramaphosa today, which marks a remarkable move away from the undesirable legacy of two unequal healthcare systems in one country. The signing of the Bill will further make way for the implementation of what will now become

Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in South Africa, where everyone will have equal access to quality healthcare based on their healthcare needs and not based on how deep their pockets are.

From a nursing service perspective, this move will add confidence and improve job satisfaction to the nursing professionals, who are the majority healthcare professionals in the healthcare system, as they will be able to provide comprehensive healthcare services to their patients without having to worry about unavailability of medication, equipment and resources, which are the areas that will be overseen by the various relevant independent governance structures and sub-committees of the NHI.

Furthermore, the signing of the NHI Bill finally fulfills the nurses’ pledge of services which, in parts, say, “The total health of my patients will be my first consideration”, and “I will not permit consideration of religion, nationality, race or social standing to intervene between my duty and my patient. “The signing of the Bill also fulfills Section 27 (1)(a) of the country’s Constitution, which says “everyone has the right to have access to healthcare services, including reproductive health care...”

Dr. Cedric Sihlangu, SAMATU General Secretary said, “The South African Medical Association Trade Union (SAMATU) enthusiastically welcomes the landmark occasion as President Cyril Ramaphosa prepares to sign the National Health Insurance (NHI)

Bill into law at the Union Buildings tomorrow. This historic step represents a monumental shift towards achieving universal health coverage and ensuring that every South African has access to quality healthcare irrespective of their socio-economic status.

This development indicates that the government is cognisant of the inequalities that exist in South Africa’s healthcare system, and is committed to reforming the system, aiming to alleviate the burden on our public health facilities while also improving the quality of healthcare services across the board. This signifies a move towards a more equitable and just health system, where the right to health is not just a privilege for those who can afford it, but a fundamental human right accessible to all.

As a union representing doctors, SAMATU has long advocated for healthcare reforms that not only benefit our members but also significantly improve patient care and access to health services. We believe that the implementation of the NHI is a critical step in addressing the disparities in our current healthcare system and ensuring a healthier future for all South Africans. We commend President Cyril Ramaphosa and the Ministry of Health for their leadership and dedication to health reform. We also acknowledge the contributions of healthcare workers who have been at the forefront of providing care under challenging circumstances.

Their valuable input and continued support will be crucial in the successful implementation of the NHI. SAMATU is committed to working alongside the government, healthcare providers, and the community to ascertain that the NHI fulfils its promise of a more inclusive and efficient healthcare system.

SAMATU further reiterates its pledge to advocate for

African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) welcomes the signing into law the National Health Insurance (NHI) bill. The signing is indeed an historic moment, and it proves, once again, the ANC-led government's commitment to improving the lives of all South African citizens and to fulfilling its constitutional obligation as proclaimed in Section 27 of the Bill of Rights which declares that everyone

full range of quality health care services whenever and wherever they need them irrespective of their socio-economic status. The NHI will see to the creation of a public health fund with adequate resources to plan and meet the healthcare needs of the entire population and this will narrow the gap between the poor and rich in terms of healthcare.

The NHI will not only

Minister of Health's call to all role players to work with government and become part of the solution and for health workers to commit and work towards ensuring that the NHI is a success. We have no doubt that the NHI will go a long way towards ensuring a healthy nation."

According to the Deputy Director General of Health, Mr. Nicholas Crisp, 'the next step from now until the time that the NHI is implemented in 2026, is to ensure that administration is running, the foundation for a functional fund is set, and the information of what the NHI intends to do is in the public domain. Phase Two will be to strengthen and further roll out the provisions of the NHI by 2030.'



The National Health Insurance [NHI] represents building blocks of the Second Phase of the more radical National Democratic Revolution - Reaction to the NHI Bill signed into law

the interests of healthcare professionals and to contribute proactively to the transformation of healthcare in South Africa. Together, we can achieve a healthcare system that meets the needs of all citizens, ensuring a healthier nation for generations to come."

Dr. Mugwena Maluleke, SADTU General Secretary explained that, "The South

has a right to have access to health care services, including reproductive health care. Health care is a basic human right and has for too long endured a system that has turned health care into a commodity where most of the population who are poor could not access quality health care.

The NHI will ensure that South African access the

benefit the unemployed and poor but the working class as well. As a union with a membership that subscribe to medical aid, a sizeable number cannot use medical aid until the end of the year as it gets exhausted before the year ends, and they must pay from their pockets.

The annual tariff increases cause a strain to their budgets, We echo the



TWO-POT RETIREMENT SYSTEM

**must address the concerns
related to lack of preservation
before retirement,**

argues COSATU Parliamentary Coordinator

On the eve of inaugurating a new parliament, President Cyril Ramaphosa enacted a law allowing emergency access to retirement funds by members. This came because of a call by the federation of workers in South Africa, Cosatu that 'Workers are highly indebted due to slow economic growth rates, the rising cost of living and having to support relatives in a society battling a 41% unemployment rate.

The current pension laws are excessively inflexible, only allowing workers access to their pension funds upon retirement, losing their job or resignation. Consequently, many workers opt to resign to cash out their entire pension funds leaving them unemployed and with no savings left.' It is argued that 'the new retirement system offers protection and dignity to those who need it the most to overcome financial stress.'

The signed Revenue Laws Amendment Bill of 2023, which establishes a "two-pot" system gives members of retirement funds access to retirement savings without having to resign or cash out entire pension funds. The amendment law introduces a "two-pot" retirement system to address the concerns related to lack of preservation before

retirement and lack of access to retirement funds by households in financial distress.

This retirement system comprises a savings and retirement component for contributions made after 1 September 2024, while historical retirement benefits will be housed in a vested component. Individuals will have access to amounts in the savings component before retirement for times of financial distress, and the amounts in the retirement component are preserved until retirement. The primary objective of the two-pot retirement system is to provide flexibility for fund members to access their retirement savings during emergencies, without necessitating resignation.

The reform introduced by the legislation strives to strike a balance between long-term security and immediate needs, recognising life's unpredictability. It permits fund members to access a portion of their savings during crises, such as those seen during the COVID-19 challenges.

These changes ensure the retirement system remains responsive to diverse financial needs, supporting both long-term financial security and immediate assistance during emergencies. Traditional retirement systems primarily focus on

long-term savings, often lacking the adaptability to address immediate financial crises.'

COSATU Parliamentary Coordinator, Matthew Parks argued strongly that, 'The Two Pot Reforms provide a progressive compromise where workers will have access to a portion of their pension funds whilst remaining employed. This will allow workers to access 10% up to R30 000 of their existing savings when the law comes into effect on 1 September 2024 and from then on once a year, access to a third of future savings. Workers will retain access to existing savings. These will enable workers to remain employed, receive the equivalent of a thirteenth cheque on 1 September and once a year going forward and have more savings when they retire.'

'COSATU has been engaging on the Two Pot Pension Reforms with Treasury and Parliament since May 2020. We are pleased that whilst we may not have achieved everything we proposed, not only have we found consensus on the key matters but legislation providing for it is before Parliament and there is agreement for implementation to happen on 1 September 2024.

The Federation is encouraged by the firm

commitment by Parliament and the African National Congress and other Members of Parliament that both Bills will be enacted into law before the May 29 elections to ensure the Two Pot Reforms come into effect on 1 September 2024. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) applauds excellent progress at Parliament with the National Council of Provinces' unanimous adoption of the Revenue Laws Amendment Bill today. The Bill is one of two critical amendment bills (the other being the Pension Funds Amendment Bill) that will enable the long sought Two Pot Pension Reforms to take place on 1 September 2024.'

'It is critical both Bills are adopted Parliament before rising in April and assented to by the President before the May 29th elections. Parliamentary passage is key to enabling the President to sign, Treasury to promulgate, SARS to adjust its tax systems and the pension funds to amend their rules and put in place the necessary education and administrative support for workers seeking this relief.'

'What workers cannot afford are any delays to the 1st of September 2024 implementation date. Workers have been waiting for this relief since 2020. We are confident we will meet all deadlines.'

South Africa has breached the 70% mark of the energy availability factor

- LOADSHEDDING

has been suspended for more than 54 consecutive days!

The Minister of Electricity, Dr. Kgoshientsho Ramokgopa visited various power stations such as Camden, Majuba, Tutuka, Kusile, Kendal, Arnot, Hendrina, and Duvha Power Stations to engage with workers to sustain the moment to restore energy security to the citizens and to the business sector to sustain economic growth.

“Eskom has put on record that what has changed at Eskom is that the utility now has a comprehensive maintenance plan that targets its worst-performing power stations. The new board discovered soon after its appointment that six power stations contributed 70% of Eskom’s unit failures,” said Eskom’s Board Chairperson,

Dr. Mteto Nyati.

Eskom management said, “The suspension of loadshedding is primarily due to the continued, sustained improvement in generation performance, owing to extensive planned maintenance during the summer period and the implementation of the Generation Operational Recovery Plan, which commenced in March 2023.

Eskom Power Station General Managers and their teams are working diligently to ensure the recovery of additional generating capacity by bringing units from unplanned outages and planned maintenance back into service as soon as possible. A total of 1 520MW of generating capacity is planned to be returned to service by

Monday, 13th May 2024. Eskom’s evening peak demand for the 12th May 2024 was 26 220MW.”

According to Dr. Kgoshientsho Ramokgopa “With today, 20th of May 2024 marking 54 days and counting without loadshedding, a significant achievement has been made.

Thanks to the dedication of the leadership, management, and staff of Eskom the Special recognition goes to the power station general managers and their teams for their tireless efforts.

We remain resolute in our commitment to maintaining this progress and will continue to work diligently until the energy crisis is fully resolved. We express appreciation

to the dedicated men and women of Eskom for their contribution to the significant improvement to generation performance.”

Progress regarding the implementation of the Energy Action Plan

Eskom’s Dan Marokane, Group Chief Executive said “The Generation Operational Recovery Plan, which commenced in March 2023, is the reason for the improvement in the reliability of the generation fleet, with its focus on accelerating and executing planned maintenance, online preventative maintenance, major plant refurbishment and life extension project. The results are increasingly now being seen in the reduction of Unplanned Capacity Loss Factor (UCLF) or unplanned maintenance.”

Reduction in unplanned outages

- The UCLF of 28.4% in the financial year to date (1 April 2024 to 16 May 2024) has significantly reduced from 35.4% recorded in the same period last year (1 April 2023 to 16 May 2023).
- This reduction serves as evidence that our generation fleet is gradually becoming more reliable.

Steady EAF improvement

- The year-to-date EAF of 60.56% has been achieved. This is a significant 8.9% improvement compared to the same period last year (1 April 2023 to 16 May 2023), where the EAF was 51.8%.
- The EAF improvement is a direct result of a 7% drop in the unplanned outages of generation units.
- Eskom notes the EAF record of 70% set on 12 May 2024, and since then, the daily EAF has been maintained between 67% and 70%.

Planned Maintenance

- The current planned maintenance of 4 334MW is consistent with our maintenance plans for this winter.

No increased usage of Open-Cycle Gas Turbines (OCGTs)

- OCGT usage is significantly lower compared to the same period for the past two

years (financial year to date 1 April 2024 to 16 May 2024).

- The OCGT load factor for 1 May to 16 May 2024 has decreased significantly to 4.76% compared to last year's figure of 22.07% over the same period.
- There has been no increased usage in the OCGTs again this week, and Eskom has not used OCGTs at all during the morning and evening peaks for 16 days in the financial year to date, from 1 April 2024 to 15 May 2024. In the same period last year, Eskom used OCGTs every day.
- From 1 April 2024 to 16 May 2024, Eskom spent R1.25 billion on OCGTs, producing 179.53 GWh. This is about 76% less than from 1 April 2023 to 16 May 2023 when R5.2 billion was spent to produce 831.9GWh.

On the other hand, five power stations were performing well. Thus, the management team devised a plan to maintain this good performance while rapidly improving the six plants whose performance was below par. This resulted in the utility conducting intensive maintenance at the six poorly performing plants to improve the reliability of their units.

Members of the public are urged to save electricity and consider these electricity saving tips:

- The first and easiest way to reduce your usage is to switch off unnecessary lights.
- Boil enough water only for the number of cups of tea or coffee you're making. Use a

the evenings.

- Think before switching on the heater – rather dress warmly; use a blanket and a hot water bottle to keep cosy. Electric space heaters can account for up to 17% of your evening peak power consumption. When using heaters, only heat the rooms that you're spending time in.
- Keep an eye out for Power



Electricity Supply Commission [Eskom] in South Africa has prioritized accelerating maintenance of power stations

hot water bottle rather than an electric blanket. Use only cold water to wash your hands, to prevent the geyser from unnecessarily turning on.

- Take advantage of sunlight to warm rooms during the day, but then close the curtains to reduce heat loss during

Alert on SABC, etv and DStv. The colour-coded alerts share the electricity supply status levels with the required switch-off actions to effectively reduce electricity demand. Please respond immediately by switching off unnecessary lights, your geyser and pool pump.

LET'S END TB NOW!

COSATU affiliated trade unions participated in the Opening ceremony of the 4-day biannual National TB conference which took place at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre, Durban.

This year's Conference Theme was, "Accelerating Progress to End TB," which was aimed to tackle the challenges faced by patients fighting against TB, evaluating the milestones attained and evaluating the opportunities in the country's National TB Plan since the establishment of the Tuberculosis programme (for

improving quality standards in the recording, reporting and monitoring of people with TB).

The Law and Human Rights Sector of the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) Civil Society Forum (CSF) led the Human Rights Awareness March on the streets of Durban from King Dinuzulu Park to the Gugu Dlamini Memorial Park.

Various community-based organizations and health institutions were invited to define better the role of community-led monitoring to enhance community involvement in TB service delivery.

A programme of successful ecosystem of community engagement took place through storytelling where TB survivors, their families, and local health workers can tell their TB stories and experiences.

One of the TB Ambassador Kgoshigadi Johanna Shapo Raphahlelo made a clarion call for all sectors of society to join hands to prevent avoidable deaths from a preventable and curable disease.

Participants called for inclusivity, equal access, end to stigma, discrimination and the need to ground the

country's response to the three epidemics on human rights principles, in line with Goals 1 and 2 of the current National Strategic Plan (NSP) for HIV, TB and STI's for the period 2023 to 2028.

Stakeholders as the Aurum Institute which is a leading healthcare organisation that has been successfully battling the joint scourge of the HIV and TB advocated for a commitment by all to assist South Africans in accelerating efforts to end TB by prioritising prevention, early detection, appropriate treatment, and retention in care provincially and nationally.



Global federations celebrate May Day across various countries

May Day celebrations at Havana, Cuba on May 1

Unions around the world took to the streets on 1 May to advance workers' rights and defend democracy on the job and in all spheres of life. The World Federation of Trade Unions [WFTU] led massive marches in many cities, arguing that 'The high cost of living and inflation are brutally undermining workers' and pensioners living standards.

The right to organize and collective bargaining and the sacred right to strike are under attack. Individual contracts, privatizations,

outsourcing, teleworking and "service leasing" are just some of the forms taken by this harsh neoliberal attack.'

Pambis Kyritsis, the General Secretary of the WFTU said, "The World Federation of Trade Unions, the militant, class-oriented voice, representing over 105 million workers who live, work, and struggle in 134 countries of the 5 continents, honors the 138th anniversary of the struggle of workers in Chicago in 1886. A struggle that constituted a lasting milestone of the working

class and a bright beacon for the struggles of today and tomorrow, a beacon of the uninterrupted class struggle for stable work with rights, social security, free public, and universal health and education, dignified life." "This year's May Day anniversary will go down in history as a bloody anniversary. Because while millions of workers around the world organize themselves, demand against the anti-people's policies of the capital, its governments and the EU, our colleagues in Palestine will be burying the dozens

of bodies murdered every day in the genocide that is carried out by Israel. Workers in every corner of the globe will not remain silent in the crime being committed.

They will turn every May Day activity into a demonstration of solidarity with the struggling Palestinian people, and of condemnation of the murderous state of Israel and its imperialist allies who in one way or another support the massacre."

"Similarly, the workers do not remain silent on every

other crime committed against the peoples, for the profits of the imperialists and the monopolies. At a time when the planet is dripping blood in various places from military interventions, the international class-oriented trade union movement, organized and decisively, is fighting for peace. We say no to imperialist plans and military conflicts.

The struggle for peace has a specific content. It means first and foremost a struggle for the dismantling of NATO and all military coalitions, a struggle to defend the right of every people to choose the path of their economic and social development without interventions, sanctions, blockades, and economic wars.

Against the double-standards policy where international law ends up being in practice the law of the powerful ones."

On the occasion of May Day 2024, the WFTU called the class and militant trade unions around the world to organize this year's campaign and activities under the slogan:

Against their Profits, We Rise Up for Our Lives!

More Massive And Militant

- For the workers' contemporary needs, against the exploitation!
- For democratic and trade union freedoms!
- In solidarity with Palestine, against imperialist wars and interventions!

"For the class-oriented Trade Union movement, for

the workers who resist, who do not compromise with oppression, discrimination and exploitation, there is only one path of dignity: the path of the struggles."

"The struggles that have taken place signal hope, show the enormous power of the organized working class, illuminate the path of perspective against capitalist exploitation."

The International Trade Union Confederation [ITUC] campaigned for May Day 2024 under the Theme: "Trade unions For Democracy."

"This came as a result from observation that democracy is contracting in every region of the world. Every year since 2018 more countries experienced net declines in democratic processes than improvements. This anti-democratic trend corresponds with global attacks on trade union rights. Over ten years the ITUC Global Rights Index has tracked the deteriorating situation. In 2023 violations of key measures reached new highs: 87% of countries violated the right to strike, while 79% violated the right to collective bargaining.

Respect for workers' rights, high union density and collective agreement coverage lead to more equitable wealth distribution and greater public trust in democratic institutions. Norway, for instance, is cited by the V-Dem Institute as a leading example of a deliberative and egalitarian democracy due to its high trade union density and collective agreement

coverage. There is no democracy without trade unions.'—that's the message of the global trade union movement this May Day.'

ITUC General Secretary Luc Triangle said: "Trade unions are the world's biggest social movement. We embody and practice democratic values daily, and it's time we reaffirmed our commitment to defending and promoting these principles globally. Democracy is not just a political ideal but a lived reality that workers are uniquely positioned to defend and enhance."

"This May Day, let's remember the integral role trade unions have played in nurturing democracy and mobilise to secure and advance democratic values for the future."

In her message to affiliates, UNI General Secretary Christy Hoffman said, "Right wing forces should not underestimate the power and determination of trade unionists to mobilize, to fight back and to win back our democracies."

Meanwhile, in Cuba, in the emblematic "José Martí" Anti-imperialist Tribune, Cubans renewed their commitment to the Cuban Revolution and Socialism. More than 200 thousand Cubans assembled at a symbolic site in the capital, the Anti-imperialist Tribune.

The Workers organized under the Workers Central Union of Cuba (Spanish: Central de Trabajadores de Cuba, CTC) said,

"This space that is being reconstructed witnessed the celebration of International Workers' Day. Workers together with Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, from the historic Anti-imperialist Tribune, and throughout the country, we celebrate International Workers' Day, a demonstration of the unity of our people against the illegal US blockade against Cuba.

The blockade is an extreme attack on a sovereign government that poses zero threat to the United States or any other country. It is opposed by the entire international community except for the US and Israel. The objective is to starve and immiserate the Cuban people to the point of desperation. When similar sanctions were imposed on Iraq it led to the deaths of 500,000 children.

The world was rightly outraged. In Cuba, things have played out differently. The socialist government is doing everything possible to protect people from the impact. As a result, while the blockade has made life extremely difficult, mass child mortality has not occurred in Cuba in the way it did in Iraq.

This is testament to the resilience and solidarity of the Cuban economy. But it also means that the blockade has not grabbed headlines, and most people know little about it. It is urgently important to push for an end to this cruel policy - especially if you have any influence within US political circles."



SACTWU participates in the IndustriALL Global Union Women Committee in Geneva

SACTWU President Susan Khumalo making a point at the IndustriALL Global Union Women Committee in Geneva

The Southern African Clothing and Textile Workers Union [SACTWU] participated in the IndustriALL Global Union Women Committee in Geneva, Switzerland to take stock of challenges encountered by workers in the workplace and in their communities.

Women leaders play an important role in our

fight for democracy and societal development. Yet in some instance, the marginalization of women in the highest decision-making platforms is thin in some countries.

Trade unionists from Australia, Brazil, Japan, South Africa, Mexico, Spain, Vietnam, Germany and Italy gathered to engage on the importance of the implementation, training and understanding

of IndustriALL's policy on gender Based Violence and femicide, misogyny and sexism.

Women from IndustriALL's affiliates gathered to strategize on the impacts of Artificial Intelligence on women, progress and future steps for the implementation IndustriALL's new policy on GBVH, misogyny and sexism, gender

equality when bargaining, strengthening young women's participation in IndustriALL activities.

Both IndustriALL's General Secretary Atle Høie and Assistant General Secretary Christina Olivier argued that "Gender inequality remains a challenge, women workers continue to face discrimination and unequal power relations

and more needs to be done to address the persistent gender gaps.”

IndustriALL Women Committee has urged countries ratifying International Labour Organization [ILO] Convention 190, to extend parental leave and new pay equity legislation.

“Despite this great progress, gender equality remains a challenge, women workers continue to face discrimination and unequal power relations and more needs to be done to address the persistent gender gaps.”

The Committee applauded the developments in Australia wherein a new legislation has been realized on extended Paid Parental Leave (PPL) for families which means that parental leave will increase from 20 weeks to 26 weeks.

And also in Brazil, a new legislation guaranteeing equal pay for men and women has set out measures to promote and implement diversity and inclusion programmes in the workplace. It also requires companies with 100 or more employees to provide transparent half-yearly reports on pay and remuneration criteria.

The women’s committee concluded that:

- A gender transformative approach is necessary. Together with the gender

equality task force, the women’s committee will develop policies and guidelines ensuring the inclusion of women.

- All policies must be gender transformative. When it comes to AI, IndustriALL and affiliates need to be part of debates and work on regulations and policies prohibiting abuse that will further disadvantage women.
- Trade unions should influence the development of AI and ensure that the technology is used to narrow gender equality gaps and other forms of discrimination.
- Trade unions must include gender clauses in agreements to close gender gaps, ensuring that every agreement has at least one equality objective, high fines to employers who fail to act when it comes to sexual harassment and paid leave for GBVH victims.
- Trade unions must focus on menapausal education for the workforce and ensure small adjustments can ensure women’s inclusion, like opening windows, flexibility in shifts, allowing women more breaks, and that existing health and safety legislation could assist with these adjustments, like breathable Personal Protective Equipment [PPE].
- Trade unions must continue to discuss and strategize on issues that

affect young workers in the workplace.

This meeting came after global federations commemorated the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), celebrated on 17 May, which was an opportunity for the trade union movement across the globe to (re) affirm their commitment to solidarity with LGBTI+ people and communities increasingly under siege.

Assistant General Secretary Christina Olivier reiterated that “Solidarity is an antidote to a world beset by conflict and inequality. Therefore, it is critical for us to unite, resist and challenge employers and governments while building strong movements to achieve social and economic justice for all. We are strongest and most effective when standing together regardless of any differences we might have. The global anti-apartheid movement, for example, transcended borders and race to end a racist regime.

Tellingly, South Africa’s constitution, adopted after apartheid, was the first in the world to explicitly safeguard the rights of LGBTI+ people. The fight for LGBTI+ equality has been led by many brave leaders, sharing our trade union and progressive values. In many countries, trade unions continue to be a prominent part of the

struggle, often making gains in collective bargaining which influences policy and legislative change.

When LGBTI+ workers organised to confront homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in the world of work and society, many trade unions joined the call for protection from discrimination and equal treatment. Our underlying ethic of solidarity required us to stand with workers facing exclusion, discrimination, harassment and violence.

Solidarity remains both the driving force and the bedrock of our movement, guiding us toward a future of equality, justice and freedom for all. In contrast, powerful forces seek to divide workers and vilify LGBTI+ people as a distraction from issues like corruption, inequality and failed neoliberal policies. They often target low-income communities, weaponising their anxieties caused by economic inequalities and falsely framing the cultural interest of “elites” as values of ordinary people. This divisive rhetoric is trafficked through social media and undisclosed financial contributions.”

“We stand with our LGBTI+ family. At IndustriALL, we believe in a world where no one faces hate or discrimination at work. Let’s support each other, raise our voices, and fight. Together, we ensure no comrade is left behind,” declared the delegates.



Alliance pledges solidarity with the people
**Palestine and
other nations**
facing repressive regimes

Communities around Athlone defied the morning rain in Cape Town to participate in the solidarity march with the people of Palestine

Hundreds of supports came out to demand an end to the genocidal actions led by the Israeli apartheid regime in the Middle East. COSATU Central Executive Committee members, the leaders of the Alliance partners, the SACP, ANC, SANCO and progressive civil society

organization arrived at the Athlone Police Station to participate in the peaceful march to the Athlone Stadium in Cape Town.

Marchers led by drum majorettes chanted, *“Free Free Palestine, from the river to the sea, Palestine shall be free.”* “No to genocide, and yes to a ceasefire and negotiations

to end the Occupation.” The Solidarity march coincided with the launch of the Palestinian Solidarity Week and the envisaged commemorative events of Nakba penciled every year on the 15th of May.

Participants demanded an end to the occupation, full

liberation, and the right of return for all Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank, and around the world to their original lands and Nakba relates to ‘the genocide and ethnic cleansing of indigenous Palestinians from historic Palestinian lands which began months before the settler colony declared

independence in May 1948. During the NAKBA of 1948, Zionist occupation forces and settler militias brutally murdered over 15,000 Palestinians and expelled 750,000+ Palestinians from their homes. The Zionist state was established on what had been "British-ruled Palestine" and displaced Palestinians were forced to flee their original homes; many of whom wound up in the Gaza Strip."

The Zionist project destroyed 70% of (over 530) Palestinian towns and villages and stole 78% of Palestinian land during the NAKBA of 1948.

For more than 76 years, displaced Palestinians have demanded a "right of return," a position the US backed Zionist entity rejects. In Gaza today, the families of originally displaced Palestinians of 1948 have, again, been displaced in the ongoing genocide.

The death toll in Gaza reached about 19 000

Palestinians killed over a period of just more than two months. Of these, more than 8 000 are children, more than 6 200 are women and 678 are elderly.

Over the same period more than 51 000 have been injured and at least 7 780 are missing, and more than 8 000 are thought to be buried under the rubbles of bombed buildings and structure. More than 1 930 000 (85% of all Gazans) have been displaced. 1 680 families have been bombed and 63 000 (61%) residential units destroyed.

Hospitals, schools, churches and mosques, United Nations (UN) facilities, sewage pump stations, water wells, agricultural land, bakeries, Government buildings and public facilities have been bombed. What is worse is that even ambulances are being bombed.

135 UN staff have been killed and 26 injured; 300 medical personnel have been killed, 236 injured

and 38 arrested. 192 journalists have been killed, 80 are injured and three are missing. Palestinians are deliberately starved by blockading supplies of food, and patients are left to die because of lack of medical supplies which are also blocked.

These acts of the Israelis are clearly not just acts of terrorism but crimes against humanity in terms of international law, and those who are responsible, including those who support this genocide must be brought to book through the international criminal court (ICC).

COSATU President Zingiswa Losi said "COSATU its extends warm and fraternal greetings to fellow workers gathered and marching in different parts of the world, particularly on our own continent, Africa. Our destiny is tied to one another by the bounds of extreme underdevelopment, poverty, diseases, and

hunger throughout the continent that define the common basis of our joint struggles."

SACP General Secretary, Solly Mapaila reiterated that, "We reiterate our steadfast internationalist solidarity with the people of Palestine, who know that they are not alone in their suffering, resistance and struggle. In the east, west, north, and south of this globe, peace-loving people are more united than ever in solidarity with the Palestinians.

We all demand an immediate ceasefire and an end to the ongoing crimes and genocide against the Palestinian people. We reiterate our call for an end to the criminal blockade against Cuba. We express our support for the people of Swaziland struggling for democracy and the people of Western Sahara struggling for self-determination and against occupation by Morocco."

COSATU and its affiliates declared To vote for the ANC at the Siyanqoba Rally!



**Solly Mapaila, SACP General Secretary and COSATU President Zingiswa Losi
upbeat about ANC electoral victory at the polls**

The members and supporters of the African National Congress [ANC] descended in the wee hours of the 25th of May 2024 to participate in the final push rally known commonly as Siyanqoba rally on the campaign trail of the liberation party.

All ANC volunteers came to conclude the hard

campaigning work which was characterised by long warroom sessions, door to door visit, mini rallies, visits to resting places of the stalwarts of the movement such as Chief Albert Luthuli, OR Tambo and Chris Hani.

The final rally was held at the FNB Stadium which was full to its rafters as Alliance

leaders canvassed for the overwhelming victory of the ANC.

The election campaign was endorsed by many public figures such as the former president Thabo Mbeki, Kgalema Motlanthe, football icon Doctor Khumalo, actresses Mara Louw, Lilian Dube and traditional leaders in the country.

A sunny day which started with various traditional performers like Thebe, Gatsheni, Ihhasi Lemihlophe, Lerumo la Setshaba, Oskido, Dj Mahoota, Dj Siyanda, Khuzani and artists such as Boom Shaka, Hotstix Mabuse and Makhadzi saw the excited members and supporters declaring to vote the ANC on their

three ballots. Majority of citizens agreed that nearly 30 years after democracy, South Africa is a better place, with a vibrant and resilient democracy. The leaders of the ANC in Gauteng thanked all ANC supporters, staff and volunteers for making sure that Siyanqoba rally was a success.

Ramaphosa said, *“Indeed it is the final stretch of our election campaign, we now leave the decision to the people of South Africa. We’ve reached the hearts and souls of our nation. We do believe they have internalised our message and they will be able to take a decision.”*

establishment of a National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide. This statutory body will coordinate and provide strategic leadership to the fight against gender based violence and femicide.”

“The new laws will help better protect women at risk of domestic abuse, impose harsher sentences

ANC on the 29th of May.

COSATU President Zingiswa Losi leading a delegation of affiliated unions said, *“The Congress of South African Trade Unions and the entire leadership of not only the Federation but all of our Affiliates have been crisscrossing the length and breadth of Gauteng to not only ensure workers fill FNB Stadium on Saturday but more importantly that we will the voting stations at 7am on Wednesday, 29 May 2024 in defence of workers’ hard-won rights.”*

COSATU has been meeting with and engaging workers from taxi ranks in Mamelodi to factories in Sedibeng, from the mines of Carletonville to the farms of Krugersdorp.”

Losi alluded that “Workers are clear. They are excited to declare their support at the Siyanqoba Rally in their numbers. Affiliates have unleashed one of the most extensive canvassing and blitzing, workplace and community meetings, religious gatherings and public engagements programmes in living memory.”

Workers are clear in their support for the ANC and come election day, the ANC will be returned to office with an outright majority. The groundswell of support for the ANC, in defence of the rights of workers and to extend the many gains we have won



Workers participating at the ANC Siyanqoba Rally at FNB Stadium

ANC President Cyril Ramaphosa excited by the jubilant members said, *“We are working towards a decisive mandate to continue the transformation of our country, to create work and opportunity, to end poverty and hunger, and to ensure that all South Africans can live in peace and safety.”*

Commenting on the significance of the rally,

I have been clear, and listened to our people. A majority of them are going to be voting for the ANC because we have a clear message, and a clear plan on where we want to take South Africa. So, the people of SA will vote in favour of that plan on the 29th May.” *“Vote ANC, let’s do more together.”*

Ramaphosa said, “I have signed into law an Act that facilitates the

on perpetrators and make it harder for people arrested for violence against women to get bail.”

Alliance partners, the South African Communist Party, the Congress of South African Trade Unions and the South African National Civic Organization declared their support and encouraging their members and their families to vote for the

since 1994 is humbling. Workers are heartened by the real progress South Africa is making under the leadership of the President of the ANC and the incoming President of the 7th Administration, Cyril Ramaphosa to renew the ANC, tackle corruption, end loadshedding, remove obstacles to growing the economy, slash unemployment, protect the rights of workers and provide relief to the poor and unemployed. The ANC will be returned to office.”

Losi called on all South Africans, to come out in their numbers, both to exercise their democratic right, and to VOTE ANC.

The vanguard party leader, Solly Mapaila alluded that, “The SACP calls on our people to vote for the ANC in the upcoming elections, on 29 May 2024. We say this for the following reasons, amongst others:

The ANC, along with the SACP and the Cosatu-led trade union movement, has actively worked hard to achieve, establish, protect, and promote democracy in South Africa. We have made significant improvements in

the lives of South Africans, particularly the workers and poor, by providing essential goods and services such as housing, electricity, clean water, education, healthcare, and social grants. We have also championed a progressive constitution, which is against discrimination and upholds workers’ rights.

The ANC is committed to addressing the problem of unemployment, especially among young people. The ANC has adopted a plan to create and sustain 2.5 million work opportunities through public employment programmes over the next five years.

The ANC aims to prioritise local manufacturing, raise investment levels in various industries, support small businesses and co-operatives, and focus on intensifying skills development to build a people’s economy, reduce inequality and tackle poverty.

The ANC has implemented policies to uplift the poor and marginalised communities. These policies include social grants, free basic

services, affordable and free housing programmes, the national minimum wage and Unemployment Insurance Fund benefits.

By voting for the ANC, workers will ensure the continuation and expansion of the pro-poor policies. The ANC plans to introduce a basic income grant, which is an important step towards a universal basic income grant that the working class has been fighting for. This grant will provide income support to the unemployed and vulnerable workers.

The ANC has prioritised the expansion of education and skills development. It has expanded access to basic and higher education and aims to achieve universal early childhood education. Already we have reached near-universal education attendance by children aged five and six.

The ANC has also planned to open new universities and colleges in the next five years and invest in education and training to equip the working class with the necessary skills for sustainable employment and collective worker

ownership in the form of co-operatives.

The ANC has been at the forefront of the struggle for accessible healthcare for all. It has made significant progress in providing free healthcare to pregnant women, and children under five years, combatting HIV/AIDS and COVID-19, improving healthcare facilities in rural areas and townships, and increasing life expectancy. The ANC’s plans include implementing the National Health Insurance as law to ensure quality healthcare for all, regardless of their income status.”

Meanwhile, the Independent Electoral Commission declared its readiness to manage national and provincial elections and declare the results free, fair and credible.

“Voters will receive three ballots: National, Regional, and Provincial. If you’re voting outside your registered province, you’ll only vote on the National Ballot. Remember to vote where you are registered; one ballot, one. It’s your democracy, own it!

SOUTH AFRICA CITIZENS DECIDE about their parliamentary representatives

16 248 027 million of voters participated in what many are calling the most crucial election since the end of apartheid in 1994, with 70 political parties contesting the elections, 11 independent candidates and 52 national contestants. According to the Independent Electoral Commission [IEC] “in total, there were over 14 903 candidates vying for 887 seats in the National and Provincial Legislatures.”

Pollsters had been predicting that the ruling ANC might lose their parliamentary majority after 30 years of dominance. The final results were eagerly awaited, as they will determine the future political landscape of the country.

Working people face a deep crisis with stagnant wages, declining living standards, spiralling poverty and crumbling public services. Meanwhile, profits rise and the rich get richer. Our democratic rights and civil liberties are under attack. Workers had resolved to support the African National Congress in the 2024 National and Provincial Elections in defense of the gains since 1994 democratic breakthrough.

Political parties were weighing their options on who to be in coalition with as the 14-day deadline to form a government looms. This after the ANC failed to get an outright majority in the elections. COSATU parliamentary coordinator Matthew Parks said ‘the federation is disappointed with the 40% votes achieved by the ANC in the elections. Parks said ‘they were rooting for the ANC to achieve 51% needed to govern alone.’ He said ‘they have full confidence in ANC president Cyril Ramaphosa as the party’s leader.’



An elder person brought to vote at Thulamahashe, Ward 31 voting station in Mpumalanga

IEC declares election results at Midrand

The IEC Chief Electoral Officer, Sy Mamabolo said, “the provinces with the most approved special votes for both home visits and voting station visits were Gauteng (335 4980), KwaZulu Natal (320 010), Eastern Cape (286 059), Limpopo (159 800), Western Cape (137 558), North West (132 627), Mpumalanga (126 112), Free State (86 908), and Northern Cape (83 504).”

“The Commission is pleased to share that a record 160 organisations with 5000 observers domestically and from around the world will be observing South Africa’s 2024 general elections. About 15 of these observer organisations are international and include the African Union, The Carter Centre Democracy Program, and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.”

“202 500 voting officials discharged the responsibility of administering the electoral process in the voting stations.”

The IEC concluded that “The Electoral Commission extends its gratitude to South Africans who registered for and cast special votes at 22 626 voting stations and home visits. 937 144 voters had

been processed. This figure is much higher than was the case in the previous elections.” The national voter turnout stood at 58.64%.

IEC declared the 2024 national and Provincial Election results of 23 292

position at 16.99%] and in the Western Cape [second position at 19.55%].

ANC Secretary-General Fikile Mbalula said, “The African National Congress (ANC) commends the people of South Africans for once again demonstrating the strength and vibrancy

congratulates all South Africans who contributed to the successful holding of our 7th democratic elections. We applaud the tireless efforts of the staff of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), the South African Police Service (SAPS),

Political Party	National seats	Regional seats	Total
ANC [40.18%]	73	86	159
DA [21.81%]	42	45	87
MK [14.58%]	31	27	58
EFF [9.52%]	17	22	39
IFP [3.85%]	8	9	17
PA [2.06%]	5	4	9
VF PLUS [1.36%]	4	2	6
ACTIONSA [1.2%]	4	2	6
ACDP [0.6%]	3	0	3
UDM [0.49%]	2	1	3
ATM [0.4%]	2	0	2
ALJAMA [0.24%]	2	0	2
BOSA [0.41%]	2	0	2
CCC [0.23%]	1	1	2
RISE [0.42%]	1	1	2
GOOD [0.18%]	1	0	1
PAC [0.23%]	1	0	1
UAT [0.22%]	1	0	1
Total	200	200	400

voting districts as follows, with 100% total voting districts counted and verified:

ANC got outright majority in Eastern Cape [62.16%], Free State [51.87%], Mpumalanga [51.15%], Limpopo [73.30%] and North West [57.73%].

ANC Northern Cape [49.34%] and Gauteng [34.76%] got below 50%

The party lost in KwaZulu-Natal [third

of our democracy. The ANC is committed to the formation of a government that reflects the will of the people, that is stable and that is able to govern effectively.”

COSATU welcomed the election results as announced by the IEC.

Solly Phetoe, COSATU General Secretary said, “The Congress of South African Trade Unions

the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), Home Affairs, the media fraternity and countless other workers who ensured South African maintained its internationally renowned reputation for holding free and fair elections.”

“The nation is indebted for your service. COSATU is humbled by the faith millions of voters have once again placed in

our dear ally, the African National Congress (ANC), which whilst not achieving an outright majority has emerged as the largest party nationally, with an outright majority in 6 provinces, as the leading party in the Northern Cape, and as the second and third largest parties in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

Whilst we campaigned for an outright majority for the ANC and hoped to avoid the instability that often accompanies coalition governments, we accept the results as the true reflection of the will of the people. The fact that the ANC has once again emerged as the largest political party across the nation and has been given a clear mandate to form government, is a testimony to its historical and leadership role in society. It is confirmation that ordinary South Africans have entrusted it to continue upon its transformation mandate and to deliver a better for all, in particular for working-class communities."

"COSATU congratulates the ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP) as well as our Affiliates on a well-run campaign that overcame great odds. We thank millions of workers, shop stewards and organisers who tirelessly crisscrossed the nation mobilising millions of workers to turn out in their numbers in support of the ANC.

We are grateful for their efforts and humbled by the confidence of workers and their families. We reject with

contempt the nonsensical attacks on the IEC and the legitimacy of the elections by some desperate politicians. It is clear to all sober persons that the elections were free and fair."

"COSATU joins millions of ordinary South Africans in defence of our hard-won constitutional democracy. We will not allow anyone to threaten it.

Any threats to sow violence and instigate criminal activities must be dealt with decisively and with the full force of the law by the SAPS, SANDF and State Security Agency. No space must be given to any political vandals who seek to plunge the nation into violence or anarchy. We will not allow a repeat of the July 2021 criminal violence.

Law enforcement must be vigilant and ruthless. Those who have grievances with the running of various voting stations have legal channels to pursue these. Equally the IEC must reflect on stations which experienced challenges with long queues, offline scanners etc. and do better in future. Consideration must be given to extending voting times in future and mobilising more voters to vote during the special voting days to ease the pressures on election day."

"COSATU will be tabling a petition to the incoming Administration and Parliament to declare future election days as non-trading public holidays where only essential workplaces may open to ensure all workers are afforded their constitutional right to vote.

We cannot condone the continued violation of thousands of workers' right to vote by delinquent employers. We must be concerned as a nation by declining voter turnout levels, in particular amongst the youth. Equally we should be worried by the number of political parties mobilising on the basis of racial, ethnic and religious identity. We ignore these perils at the risk of the nation's stability. Africa is littered with the consequences of politicians who dabbled in ethnic mobilisation leaving thousands in body bags.

Now that the elections have concluded, COSATU will be engaging with our Affiliates, as well as our allies, the ANC and the SACP on their principles that must guide the formation of the 7th administration. The incoming government's mandate must be anchored upon the ANC's elections manifesto, the defence of our constitutional democracy and the rule of law, respecting the labour rights of workers and providing relief to the poor, growing the economy and creating jobs, tackling crime and corruption, building a capacitated developmental state, overcoming our legacies of poverty and inequality.

These principles are sacrosanct and cannot be compromised. We are confident that we will comply with the constitutional timeframes for the election and inauguration of the President and the appointment of the 7th administration. We do not doubt that the

incoming government will be led by the President of the African National Congress, Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa.

The results provide a sobering reminder for the ANC and the Alliance to continue on the path of renewal, of cleansing the nation of the cancer of corruption, of slashing unemployment and improving the lives of ordinary South Africans.

We dare not ignore the drop-in support for the ANC at the ballot box and the message voters have sent to the ANC. They want and correctly expect us to do better.

We must not fail them. COSATU looks forward to working with the incoming 7th administration led by President Ramaphosa and the ANC to deliver that better life for all that South Africa deserves. We will continue to work with Members of Parliament to hold the executive accountable and ensure the state fulfils its electoral mandate."

Meanwhile, at Gallagher Convention Centre, twenty-five [25] political parties sent their legal representatives to prevent the IEC from announcing the election results today. Among these parties were the ACC, ACP, ACT, ACDP, SUN, COPE, UDM, XILUVA, AADP, PA, CIASA, PMC, AHC, AMC, ARA, UAT, AM4C, APC, AL-JAMAH, SARA, MK, UIM, SARKO, ATM, and OHM.

They demand that the IEC address alleged irregularities before making any official announcements. However, the IEC went ahead to declare the results.



SACCAWU celebrates the life and times **COMRADE SNOWY FRANS NKOSI**

Comrade Snowy remembered as a dedicated Combatant of the Congress Movement, a Proletariat Revolutionary, a shrewd Union Negotiator and Worker's Educator and a devoted Trade Unionist to the End!

It's almost three years since the shocking passing on of one of the most gifted trade unionist, a brave worker leader, a shrewd union negotiator, an all-rounded Congress Movement Organizer and former uMkhonto we Sizwe Combatant, Comrade Frans Snowy Nkosi.

Hundreds of jubilant members of the South African [SACCAWU] gathered at the Parktonian hotel in Braamfontein to celebrate the life and times of the revered Worker's Advocate Nkosi.

The passing of Comrade Snowy was an eye-watering moment for members of

SACCAWU, who he served for twenty-four a day and ensured that their interests came first in the retail, hospitality and catering sector.

This was displayed during the week of his passing, with workers putting flowers at his family house and parading in a guard of honour during his funeral, waving flags of his beloved union of choice, SACCAWU.

It was nerve-wrecking to observe former MK combatants coming in great numbers from Meadowlands in Soweto to pay their last respects.

Comrade Snowy fought hard to reshaping the economy into one that works for the benefit of everyone—not just the wealthy. Comrade Snowy's name will be engraved amongst the worker leaders who nurtured the country's history of militant trade unions since the formation of COSATU in 1985 that united workers across race, gender and nationality.

Comrade Snowy rejected a view by some who believed that corporate bosses gave workers decent wages, benefits, and safer working conditions out of the goodness of their hearts. He totally believed in class

struggle to fight for economic emancipation. And he chose SACCAWU as that vehicle when he came back from exile. During his worker education session, he argued that 'We form unions in our workplaces because we know we have far more power together than we do as individuals.'

What is true for workers in one workplace is true for workers across all workplaces. When unions organize together across industries and countries, our power is exponentially amplified. The fact is: without workers, the world stops running.'

Comrade Snowy passed on during the atrocious

moment in South Africa when the COVID-19 pandemic struck the whole world and send a great panic in the economy, with workers losing jobs and their loved ones. At the time of his passing on Comrade Nkosi was leading SACCAWU as a key representative of labour at various institutions.

Comrade Snowy joined SACCAWU as a young worker and rose through the ranks, first as a shopsteward, a worker leader and an office bearer in the WITS Region.

the late comrade Frans Snowy Nkosi, who became a paid-up member after joining Pick n Pay Northgate in 1992 as a casual and rose up within the union structures. He became a shopsteward in 1995. Comrade Snowy was elected a Regional Secretary of WITS Region and later a Chairperson. He has served as a Deputy Chairperson of SACCAWU Pick n Pay Council wherein the represented the membership.

Comrade Snowy joined the union as a former MK who was trained outside the borders of South Africa and transitioned to become a reliable trade unionist, a shopsteward and a distinguished trade union leader. He was born in Soweto in 1973 and attended schooling at Phuti Lower Primary and later attended at NkaThuto Higher Primary. He matriculated at Forte Secondary School and thereafter registered at WITS University where he studied LLB Law.

Comrade Snowy served with various comrades such as Phillip Nkosi, Jerry Mokgadi, Koko Motaung, Dumisane Mavuso, Elton van

der Westhuizen (Eltido Tete) and May Maliga.

Alliance leaders at the inaugural Frans Nkosi Memorial Lecture described him as a 'selfless worker representative, a workers educator, a seasoned chairperson and a singer of note' during constitutional meetings in the WITS Region.

Delivering the memorial lecture, SACP Central Committee member, a former SACCAWU Regional Organizer and currently the Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Comrade Buti Manamela said *"Comrade Frans Nkosi taught me all about trade unionism when i was still fresh from tertiary education institution and exposed me to case handling as an organizer, an advocate for workers in the retail sector."*

I shared an office with Comrade Amon and I had to learn faster in their guidance to defend workers at the shopfloor level. We were exposed to industrious trade unionists such as Mamma Emma Mashinini, Alina Rantsoloase, Bones Skulu, Dumisane Dakile, Louise Thipe, Mduduzi Mbongwe, Duma Nkosi, Amos Mothapo, Luc Ramatlhodi, Cyril Dibakwane, Mike Tau, Alloise Gumede, and countless others."

"Comrade Nkosi believed that workers when organized, united and strong have the power to topple capitalists by rejecting exploitation at the point of production. Cde Frans Snowy Nkosi cautioned that workers should not fall in a trap of just accepting voluntary retrenchment as it does not

change living conditions of workers but deepen poverty within the working class families."

"Comrade Snowy was a fountain of working class political education and ideological training. A revolutionary mandarin capable of driving the developmental agenda at the higher echelons of working class."
"Comrade Snowy was never selfish with information."

"His longevity in the union helped him amass tangible organizational skills which helped him to lead the working class graciously, with such impeccable tenacity. Comrade Snowy will forever be recognized for his revolutionary collegiality until his death!"

"We thank the wife of Comrade Nkosi, Mme Lorraine and the family for allowing us to participate in this memorial lecture to celebrate his services to the union, to remember him and more importantly to find closure as he was buried during the brutal time of COVID-19 pandemic regulations which barred many of us to bury our loved ones in dignity and in the African traditions."

"In his memory, as members of SACCAWU and part of the Alliance as we will be participating in the 2024 national elections on May 29, let us remember all what he stood for, fought against and sacrificed his youthfulness in exile for, by voting for the African National Congress with an overwhelming majority."

The memorial lecture was also addressed by COSATU

1st Deputy President Mike Shingange, African National Congress Johannesburg Region Chairperson, Dada Morera, SACCAWU President.

Mike Shingange said "In memory of Comrade Snowy, SACCAWU and its members must ensure that the workers unite to fight against privatization in South Africa, to organize against casualization in this sector and fight against exploitation of labour by bosses. We salute Comrade Frans for having led with precision in difficult times of the union and we shall never forget him."

SACCAWU President Patrick Hailani acknowledged all the members of the union who honoured the invite to celebrate trade unionists who served the trade union movement with such distinction for many years.

Comrade Snowy will be remembered as a dedicated Combatant of the Congress Movement, a Proletariat Revolutionary, a shrewd Union Negotiator and Worker's Educator and a devoted Trade Unionist to the End!

May your soul rest in peace! Lest we forget! Lala Kahle Frans Snowy Nkosi! Lala Kahle Mkhonto!

N d l a n g a m a n d l a , Mphazima, Mntungwa, Mawandla kaNdlala, Nina baseMandlovini, Mlotshwa, Siwela!

Nkosi! Ndlangamandla! Nkonyane yenkosi! Wena okaMphazimakaLanga, Wena okaMlotswa kangakanani nasentendeni yesandla uyanela!



Road freight sector agrees **ON SALARY INCREMENT**

The ANC Secretary-General, Comrade Fikile Mbalula, addressed the SAMWU Volunteer Brigade Launch, in Newtown, Johannesburg

Transport contributes to its national task as an economic and social enabler, therefore guaranteeing that the logistics system is seamless and cost affordable. The heavily weighted Road Freight sub-sector, which has grown notably in recent years and currently accounts for 83.6% of all freight payload in South Africa, recovered in April, the second consecutive positive monthly growth rate following a downward trend that lasted almost a year.

According to the Department of Transport '...efforts towards effective economic recovery and getting people to work, has not only meant we improve the freight transport system, but equally that we embark on a massive infrastructure building programme. This included building a new and alternatively modernising rail infrastructure needed to accommodate today's very urgent demands. The

Department believed in advocating and championing for a world class freight logistics system on the continent that can be globally competitive with regard to investment and development of technology. This intervention is very critical to save and preserve the much-needed jobs in various sectors of the economy such as mining, agriculture.'

Employers in recent years have struggled with issues surrounding ongoing violence against truckers which is impacting the industry and country's economy.

The South African Transport and Allied Workers Union [SATAWU] has appreciated that the transport industry is a critical contributor to South Africa's competitiveness in global markets. However, working conditions of workers have worsened as a result of non-adherence to labour standards by employers.

SATAWU General Secretary, Jack Mazibuko said, "Workers within the road freight sector were concerned about the rising costs of living and tabled demands for salary increment for the two [2] years. Employees represented by the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union [SATAWU] engaged with the Road Freight and Logistics sector employers until a wage agreement of 7% salary increment across the board was penned down in the first year and a 6% salary increment is due for the second year."

"Employment of undocumented migrants is still a challenge in this sector and the union called for a halt to the continued exploitation of these workers."

"SATAWU calls on the Department of Home Affairs, Department of Labour and Employment, Department of Transport, Border Management Authority

and other relevant law enforcement agencies to play their role to eradicate this scourge. All companies which are not compliant must be exposed. The union will continue to fight for decent work agenda, expose exploitation in various workplaces and also campaign against inequalities," said Mazibuko.

"We are on course to improve the conditions of workers at Transnet and Prasa and across the transport sector, of security, cleaning and other vulnerable workers against some of the most abusive conditions and exploitative employers.

Other priorities for the union is for government to recapacitate ports, secure rail infrastructure and curb cable theft, including its defence of State Owned Enterprises and the progressive role of the state and against privatisation." concluded Mazibuko.



Members of POPCRU demands nationalization of

OF TRAFFIC IN SOUTH AFRICA AT GAUTENG PROVINCIAL CONGRESS

POPCRU delegates at the Gauteng Provincial Congress

This Congress was convened under the Theme: “Building a Sustainable Organisation in Defence of Collective Bargaining.” Key debates in the plenary centred around the dire economic situation has resulted to the current crisis of deepening unemployment, inequality and poverty that confronts millions of communities.

Delegates argued that ‘South Africa remains the most unequal society in the world.’ Fresh debates related to the Gauteng premier Panyaza Lesufi’s party, the ANC, which lost its grip on the province’s majority vote, as it had garnered just 36.49% of the vote from 53% in the previous election.

The union leaders argued that ‘POPCRU must convene post-National

Elections platforms to make an assessment of the outcomes of the elections and the state of the National Democratic Revolution [NDR], with a view to work towards a concrete analysis to guide their review and strengthening of their strategic perspective and political programme.’

Commenting on current political developments after the national and provincial elections around looming coalition amongst political parties and/or government of national unity, Thulani Ngwenya, POPCRU President said, “workers are opposed to any coalition with the Democratic Alliance since they represent publicly all policies, we stand for such as the National Health Insurance [NHI], for example.”

“The workers’ voice will

not be silenced. As the ANC forms a new coalition government, POPCRU demands that workers’ rights and interests come first. No to neoliberal policies that entrench poverty and inequality and no to attacks on labor laws and protections. The working class and poor must be at the center of the coalition. We will be watchdogs, fighting for our rights and refusing to submit. The ANC stands at a crossroads! They must choose the right path and stand with workers.”

Newly elected office bearers were:

- Provincial Chairperson: Tinti Lusenga
- Provincial Deputy Chairperson: Mavela Mathe
- Provincial Secretary: Lerata Motsiri
- Provincial Deputy

Secretary: Nomthandazo Makaya, and

- Provincial Treasurer: Rashi Mankoe.

POPCRU President Thulani Ngwenya has extended his congratulations to the new leadership, recognizing the challenging tasks which lies ahead as they work towards the implementation of the resolutions set forth at the previous national congress.

Gauteng has set a sound tone with the commencement of POPCRU’s 10th National Congresses aimed to take stock of the state of the organisation, to reflect on the course of the National Democratic Revolution and the international context in which it is taking place, and to strengthen the union in the criminal justice cluster.



SADTU mourns the passing on of

TEN TEACHERS AT THE SENWABARWANA BRANCH

The MEC Ramakhanya said 'Limpopo Department of Basic Education pledges solidarity and support with the bereaved families at the memorial service at Senwabarwana.'

Members of the South African Democratic Teachers Union in Limpopo mourned the passing on of ten teachers, who perished in a fatal accident along the R521 road next to Enkelbosch farm on their way to work on the 28th of May 2024. The accident involved a truck and a Quantum taxi they were travelling in to work. Amongst the dead were the truck driver, an Eskom worker and also the taxi driver.

The cause of the accident was still under police investigation; however, it was reported that a misty morning hugely contributed to sudden crash. According to the Department of Transport and Community Safety 'a Hyundai Heavy motor vehicle, collided head-on with an oncoming Toyota Minibus. It was confirmed that 13 people have perished on the scene, - two drivers and eleven passengers from a

Toyota Minibus. Lack of clear visibility has been attributed as the possible cause of the accident, as it was reportedly misty, during the time of the accident.' The MEC Florence Radzilani engaged the bereaved families, who came to the scene, and she relayed messages of condolences on behalf of the Provincial Government. She has called on all motorists to take extra precautions as they travel, especially during early hours of the morning.

Their names were Ms. Nkuna M.J, Mr. Kgakoa C.M.F, Ms. Mpyana A.N, Ms. Mpyana P.N, Ms. Semanya K.S, Ms. Selepe M.D, Ms. Mashabane M.L, Ms Tsiri K.A, Ms. Phihlela M.R and Mr. Tefo K.J. To honour the Teachers, SADTU Limpopo organized a Provincial memorial service at Senwabarwana Sports ground to celebrate their life and times

servicing the rural communities in the Capricorn District. The memorial service was addressed by the Deputy Minister of Basic Education Hon Dr. Reginah Mhaule who delivered a eulogy on behalf of the employer.

"My heart goes out to all families who have lost loved ones in this incident. Amid our mourning, we must once again be mindful of our individual and shared responsibility to take care of ourselves and those with whom we share our roads. Incidents of this kind incur heartache for those closest to the deceased, the loss of household income and the impact of losing members of our families and communities in whose skills and development the nation has invested.

We must pay attention to road and weather conditions but most importantly, we must

respect human life and make safety our way of life. While government has reached out to the affected families, we must all work together to the best of our ability to prevent such tragedy from recurring."

Dr. Mhaule said, "In solemn remembrance, we pay tribute to the ten dedicated teachers who tragically lost their lives in the Limpopo, Senwabarwana village taxi accident. May their memory inspire us to continue their noble work."

The memorial service was attended by the MEC of Education in Limpopo, Mavhungu Lerule Ramakhanya, SADTU Limpopo Provincial Chairperson Ester Mokoele, councillors, SANTACO Limpopo chairperson, Lesiba Elias Ngoepe, taxi associations and the community at large.

May their souls rest in peace!

COSATU affiliated trade unions in the health-care sector gathered in various institutions to celebrate

INTERNATIONAL NURSE'S DAY

Nurses participating in a candle-lit ceremony at Vosloorus, Gauteng on 12 May 2024

In the global health and care sector, the nursing workforce occupies a critical role in efforts to realise universal health care and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with almost 59% of the entire head count.

Across the country union leaders and other social partners raised issues related to fair working conditions, proper compensation, and professional development opportunities for all nurses.

The National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union [NEHAWU] hosted an International Nurses Day celebration at Thelle Mogoerane Regional Hospital in Vosloorus, Ekurhuleni on the 10th May under the theme

"NHI now to free nurses of the psychosocial traumas of the two tier healthcare system".

NEHAWU President Mike Shingange said "the aim of the celebration is to recognise and appreciate the critical role of nurses as the backbone of the healthcare system and the important role they play in promoting health and wellbeing of our people. Equally, the celebrations must focus on the role of nurses as primary caregivers in the roll-out of the National Health Insurance [NHI] at the critical point of medical care and the transformation of the nursing fraternity.

"The national union recognised the immense value you bring to the public

service."

Others Speakers were the Minister of Health, Dr Joe Phaahla, South African Nursing Council, Gauteng Department of Health MEC, Nomantu Ralehoko and the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council [PSCBC].

Nurses and midwives are vital to ensure strong health systems, healthy communities and healthy economies!

The Democratic Nursing Organization of South Africa [DENOSA] gathered at Siyabuswa in Mpumalanga in which healthcare workers commenced the commemorative event with a march led by drum majorettes entertaining the participants under the Theme: "OUR

NURSES. OUR FUTURE. The Economic Power of Care."

DENOSA President, Simon Hlungwani, called for justice for the nursing profession in the country, in both the number of nurses that gets produced each year and the skills levels for the nursing cadres.

He was addressing the International Nurses Day national event that was held at the Hope for Africa Christian Church in Siyabuswa, Mpumalanga, on Friday 10 May 2024.

Hlungwani alluded that "The International Council of Nurses (ICN) has expressed a concern over what it calls a quick-fix approach by many

countries who, faced with the challenge of gross nurses shortage, opt to shorten the years of study for nurses as a way to fast-track the production...thus prioritising quantity over quality."

Meanwhile, the global Federation, the Public Service International said, "nurses across the world commemorates the International Nurses Day despite failure by their governments to cater for their needs."

PSI alluded that "governments have failed to make necessary investments and policy choices that would ensure the physical, mental and social wellbeing of nurses. This has debilitating effects on the nursing workforce and equally undermines the possibility of safeguarding a healthy and better future for humankind. This situation is unacceptable. But we can change it, with collective and persistent action.

There is a global shortage of about 6 million nurses. 89% of these are in low- and middle-income countries. The nursing workforce is understaffed, leaving the available nurses overworked. This leads to high rates of burnout and makes the nursing profession unattractive to young people.

In the places with the highest shortages of nurses, we still find so many nurses unemployed, and most nurses take home pay cannot take them home. Several nursing affiliates of PSI have experienced government repression for advocating for

their members' concerns.

Governments failed to consider the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health and wellbeing of nurses.

A significant number of the nurses in developed countries with aging populations are migrants from countries in dire need of nurses. In today's world, at least one out of every eight nurses practices in a country other than the one where they were born or trained to become nurses. Several of them, who migrated through recruitment agencies, face super-exploitation and demoralising conditions.

Nurses across the world continue to face violence in the workplace. Many are caring for people in conflict zones, at great risks to their own lives. Yet this is hardly appreciated by governments and other decision-makers.

For how long will this continue?

During the COVID-19 pandemic, nurses were on the frontline of the global response. Governments urged us to clap for them and other health workers, but fail to take concrete action, making the loud applaud now sound hollow.

Governments failed to consider the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health and wellbeing of nurses, many of whom were traumatised by the experience described as being at a war front in some countries, at the peak of

the pandemic.

Governments have not walked their talk on commitments made to invest in nursing to ensure adequate numbers of nurses, enjoying decent work. These commitments include the

numbers of well-trained and well-paid nurses; labour and trade union rights for nurses' unions; zero tolerance for violence in the health sector; insist that governments and insurgents respect that nurses and other health workers



Members of DENOSA celebrating the International Nurses Day at Siyabuswa

recommendations of the United Nations High-Level Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth (UN-COMHEEG), on which PSI served as the global voice organised health and care workers.

Before the COVID-19 outbreak, the World Health Assembly had declared 2020 as the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, in honour and appreciation of the work of the nursing workforce. But every day is a day for caring for others for nurses. It is about time we get decision-makers to ensure that nurses are cared for.

Let us with one voice demand investment in nursing to ensure adequate

are not targets; ensure that when nurses migration take place, they are on fair and ethical grounds."

World Health Organization on the other hand articulated that "there are 29 million nurses worldwide. Nurses play a critical role in healthcare, delivering essential primary, community, and specialized care."

"Today, we celebrate their dedication and impact", said Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization.

WHO estimates that the world needs 4.5 million more nurses by 2030 to keep up!



Benson Ngqentsu, the SACP Western Cape Provincial Secretary campaigning in Worcester for the ANC electoral victory!

DA's call for flexibility in the **LABOUR REGIME IS AN INSULT** to the Workers

The Democratic Alliance's call for flexibility in the labour regime can be best characterised as an insult to the majority black South African workers. The DA's election manifesto pays no regard to the history of over centuries and decades of suffering of black workers through capitalist exploitation and national oppression.

The DA's flexible labour regime policy would—if, the DA was to be successfully elected to power on 29 May 2024—reverse thirty years of workers gains and bring back extreme suffering through exploitation and oppression.

Essentially, the DA's flexibility labour regime policy seeks to achieve three interrelated objectives: the curtailment of the power of the trade union movement; the institutionalisation of temporary work across all

sectors of the economy; and the repealing of those sections of the Labour Relations Act crucial for workers' protection so that private profits can be maximized.

In essence, the workers gains that would be rolled back, if a DA government was to be elected, include key amongst other things the South Africa's Constitution and the Labour Relations Act which provides protection of the rights of all workers—the right to form and join a trade union; the right to collective bargaining; the right to strike—and the removal of the provisions of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act such as paid maternity leave, parental and adoption leave, paid overtime; the ending of the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Fund; and crucially cancelling the statutory National Minimum Wage that protects workers across

economic sectors, including farm and domestic workers, from gross exploitation. The DA's policy manifesto explicitly states its intention to halve the Unemployment Insurance Fund from 1 per cent to 0.5 per cent and do away with the national minimum wage.

Against this background – and although the choices for South African working people are limited—workers must use the elections On 24th May this year to defend their hard-won gains by voting the African National Congress back to power.

Should the DA and its related political forces ascend to power, workers will lose many social benefits and basic rights such as Unemployment Insurance Fund benefits, minimum wage, maternity leave for working women, and the right to form and join

a trade union and the right to collective bargaining.

Certainly, the current conditions of foreign nationals, who are used as cheap labour in many sectors of South Africa's economy such as farms, security, construction and hospitality industry will apply to all workers across sectors of our economy.

At these elections an overwhelming vote from workers for the ANC and rejecting the DA plans will be an act of self-defense of our interests and the gains we have made which must not be given away to the grid capitalist bosses.

Benson Ngqentsu is the SACP's Western Cape Provincial Secretary and student of labour studies from University of Cape Town [UCT] and Rhodes.

“Go Well, Go Shell”

Are we going to witness job shedding at Shell Service Champion outlets?

Some argue that this [divestment] may worsen joblessness in South Africa!



Shell garage at Chris Hani Road, Orlando (Opposite Power Park), Soweto

The competing petroleum group, Shell, has outlined its plans to exit its South African downstream business, which includes over 600 service stations. In the wake of that announcement, which has dented South Africa’s appeal as an investment destination.

Shell confirmed this month that it is selling its shareholding in Shell Downstream South Africa, which includes a network of 600 gas stations across the country, following a review of its business across regions and markets.

Many economists and

analysts argued that South Africa must view this development as an opportunity to local companies to ‘support the growth and development of the petrochemicals sector through our increased investments into skills development and training to fill the gap in the market left another oil

or energy major.’ Noting the panic from the South African public, Shell released a notice on the 11th of May 2024 which read as follows, ‘Shell has decided to sell its shareholding in Shell Downstream South Africa [Pty] Ltd [SDSA] and the move is intended transaction to sell its

shares. Our service stations will be open for business and will continue serving you [public] with the highest standards. Our V+ rewards loyalty programme is still available for your benefit and dedicated to serving you [customers] with excellence.'

'Your ongoing support and trust in Shell is appreciated,' concluded Shell SA Workers made comments

on social media platforms, declaring their uneasiness. Some employees said, 'As for us workers, we having sleepless nights thinking about what will happen with our future.'

The citizens were worried for a moment thinking about 'the implications of such a huge brand leaving the South African shores and the negative impact it would have made on the economy

and all other prospective international investors.'

In other sectors, many argue that government must consider 'offering potential investors an opportunity to provide crude oil to South Africa at a discounted price. If the government, pursues the affordably priced oil for efficient domestic refining into finished oil by-products, such as petrol and diesel, which are crucial

inputs in production and transportation, the action will help in price reduction and assist our country in tackling the rising cost of living.'

The big question is whether our local South African companies will be supported to seize such an opportunity, or will it be left to international oil and energy majors such as Vitol to step in?

COSATU has assembled various views on this matter from CHETA CEO and SACP National Spokesperson which are tabled here to provide more clarity on the move and to spark a public debate:

Shell's exit from SA is not a loss, it's an opportunity

By Yershen Pillay

The recent announcement by Shell that it will be divesting from its downstream operations in South Africa has been turned into a political football to score cheap political points by some in society. The sensationalism surrounding Shell's exit is associated with the upcoming national elections. However, a more comprehensive analysis paints a picture of a company implementing its global strategy, regardless of what the issues may be in the South African context.

It's important to highlight the facts. This is not the first time that an oil major has taken a decision to divest from some of its key business operations. Similar decisions were taken by Chevron in 2018, including Engen and Puma. Why was the same level of attention not given to these companies over similar decisions made in the past? Perhaps the context was not favourable for any political party to do so. That said, we cannot ignore the fact that such decisions by oil and gas companies are not new or unique in the chemical industries.

The decision taken by Shell to divest from its downstream business operations is aligned to its 2024 Energy Transition Strategy. Shell has openly communicated its strategy to reduce carbon emissions

Shell's divestment stance contradicts role during apartheid

By Alex Mashilo

Shell has announced its divestment from South Africa. A vexing question about its intention to divest from downstream investment in South Africa is how the British oil and gas multinational corporation found it profitable to operate in South Africa for 92 years during the era of racist and sexist capitalist oppression and merciless exploitation of the majority from 1902 to 1994.

When the news initially surfaced last week, the focus was on Shell's reported intention to divest from Shell Downstream South Africa and "exit" the country after 120 years since 1902. This gave rise to many vexing questions.

Shell operated in South Africa during the era of the Cape, Natal, Transvaal and Orange River racist, oppressive colonial regimes. The British oil and gas multinational corporation persisted and even expanded its operations following the consolidation of the four into the racially oppressive British colonial dominion, the Union of South Africa, in 1910.

British imperialist-controlled capital and the white capitalists, as the Communist International found out in 1928, were equally interested in the merciless capitalist exploitation of the oppressed black majority. The oppressors continued the colonial expropriation of the black majority and deprived

and focus on its more profitable upstream businesses. In the actual strategy document, Shell Chairperson Sir Andrew Mackenzie states, “We aim to grow our public charging network for electric vehicles and remain one of the world’s largest blenders and distributors of biofuels. As the energy transition progresses, we expect to sell more low-carbon products and solutions, and less oil products including petrol and diesel.”

Furthermore, it is important to consider that Shell has taken similar decisions in other countries and not just South Africa. This includes countries such as Singapore and Malaysia. Shell has sold its 61-year-old refinery in Singapore, announced plans to sell its 950 service stations in Malaysia, and the company recently announced its plans to sell its onshore subsidiary in Nigeria. These decisions are more aligned to Shell’s 2024 Energy Transition Strategy than they are to any of the other factors being highlighted in the mainstream media.

What does this mean for us in South Africa?

It means that we have been presented with a massive opportunity.

Why is this an opportunity and how can we seize this opportunity?

First, the decision by Shell may present an opportunity for substantive transformation and local economic development rather than a loss of foreign investment. The petroleum sub-sector in the chemical industries remains largely untransformed. Many of the transformation initiatives have led to BBBEE companies becoming “post-box” type companies without any involvement in actual oil and gas production or petroleum operations. Shell’s exit from its downstream operations presents an opportunity for increasing transformation in the sector. The gap in the market will be filled by another oil or energy major. The question is whether our local South African companies will be supported to seize such an opportunity or will it be left to international oil and energy majors such as Vitol to step in.

The second opportunity lies in the potential for new jobs to be created. Jobs will not be lost. In fact, as we have seen with Astron Energy after Chevron exited South Africa in 2018, it is highly likely that most jobs will be sustained. Shell has actually been “job-shedding” since 2019 with employment across its three businesses in South Africa declining from 1 423 to 1 062 employees in the country. A new business with a new strategy could turn this tide towards more positive jobs figures.

The third opportunity lies in SMME and skills development. The takeover of Shell’s downstream businesses could present an opportunity for new venture creation and local skills development which is much needed in

them of human rights, access to essential services and independence. Shell continued to invest and expand its presence in South Africa even after the transformation and intensification of the racist oppressive colonial regime into the apartheid system in 1948. The British oil and gas multinational corporation continued, maintaining its presence in South Africa even amid the sanctions imposed by the UN against the apartheid regime after a call by the oppressed for the sanctions. Similarly, the Chamber of Mines played a significant role in shaping the successive colonial and apartheid regimes by advocating legislative proposals to maximise profits through forced and then continuously reproduced proletarianisation and exploitation of the oppressed – as did other sectors of capital that engaged in similar strategies.

The capitalist stakeholders contributed to erecting the racialised and gendered structure of what became the underpinnings of South Africa’s principal economic, social and other development problems, the legacy of which endures to this day. Most, if not all, of the capitalist forces which were complicit in and benefited from colonialism and apartheid have not accounted for their role. For example, they have not appeared before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and have not offered any reparations from the wealth they appropriated and accumulated through profits during the colonial-apartheid era.

Ironically, most, if not all, of the capitalist forces, calling themselves the private sector, have recently come out to blame the post-apartheid, democratically elected government for the principal problems, inclusive of the legacy of the problems South Africa faces today. They advocate for the solution to be that they run the country. A vexing question about Shell’s intention to divest from downstream investment in South Africa is how the British oil and gas multinational corporation found it profitable to operate in South Africa for 92 years during the era of racist and sexist capitalist oppression and merciless exploitation of the majority from 1902 to 1994, compared to the mere 30 years of the country’s democratic dispensation characterised by the development of equal rights for all.

When the news regarding its intention to divest emerged, the dominant narrative in the media reports that carried the story was that Shell’s intention to exit South Africa followed a dispute with its BEE partner. The BEE partner was not named. The root cause and nature of the dispute were not unpacked. The reader was left with the impression that Shell’s intended exit was a form of strike action against the BEE policy, which was expanded in 2003 to develop broad-based black economic empowerment

Thebe Investment Company, probably the BEE partner referred to in the initial stories, as follow-up news confirms, has come out. This week it has denied the narrative that Shell’s intended exit from South Africa originated from the dispute it has with the British multinational oil and

the petroleum sub-sector. This is not to suggest that Shell has not been contributing to SMME or local skills development. Shell contributes significantly to skills levies being the 11th largest contributor in the chemical industries. What it does present is an opportunity for a more rigorous focus on SMME and skills development through a more innovative strategy.

There was no need to justify why South Africa remains a desirable investment destination. The government of Singapore did not attempt to explain why Singapore remains a desirable investment destination when Shell recently decided to sell its 61-year-old refinery in the country. The Malaysian government did not bother explaining why Malaysia is still good for business after Shell announced its plans to divest from 950 service stations throughout the South East Asian country. Similarly, the South African government should interpret Shell's exit from its downstream operations as an opportunity rather than a loss.

The Chemical Industries SETA, CHIETA, will continue to support the growth and development of the petrochemicals sector through our increased investments into skills development and training. Shell's exit presents three opportunities. First, an opportunity for new job creation that benefits local citizens. Second, an opportunity for substantive transformation through local beneficiation.

Third, an opportunity for increasing the scale, scope, and speed of SMME and skills development. The question is whether we can seize these three opportunities for the benefit of local South Africans.

By Yershen Pillay, CEO of Chemical Industries Education & Training Authority(CHIETA)

gas corporation. In coming out, Thebe Investment Company said Shell communicated its intention to it and that the intention has nothing to do with their relationship or dispute. Their dispute concerns the valuation of Thebe Investment Company's shares acquired in Shell Downstream South Africa in 2002. The dispute arose after Thebe Investment Company decided to withdraw from the Shell Downstream South Africa and sell back the shares to Shell.

On the one hand, Thebe Investment Company asserts that its valuation of the shares was determined through a pre-agreed formula and an independent valuation expert adhering to international standards. On the other hand, some news stories suggest Shell is contending that Thebe Investment Company's shares are worthless. In coming out this week [May 12, 2024], Thebe Investment Company brought the public's attention to an arbitration process to resolve the dispute.

Whatever the outcomes, it appears the dispute is underpinned by downstream oil refining capacity that has been rendered redundant and, as opposed to during the colonial-apartheid era, Shell pursuing divestment. Shell boasts about 600 forecourts across South Africa. In collaboration with BP's southern African regional unit, Shell possesses the largest refinery in South Africa – Sapref in Durban. However, this 180,000 barrel-a-day refinery ceased productive operations before a sale in 2022. Instead of being cared for and maintained, the refinery was subsequently damaged by floods. Furthermore, as the transition to a low-carbon future progresses, new regulations necessitate refineries to adhere to low-sulphur fuel specifications. This requires productive capacity recapitalisation and upgrading, as opposed to import-driven divestment.

In its manifesto for the elections scheduled for May 29, the ANC, after extensive consultation with its alliance partners, including the SACP and Cosatu, has pledged to prioritise the rebuilding of the country's oil refining capacity and further expanding it by constructing new facilities. This is critical as part of the wider energy mix policy and ensuring energy security of supply.

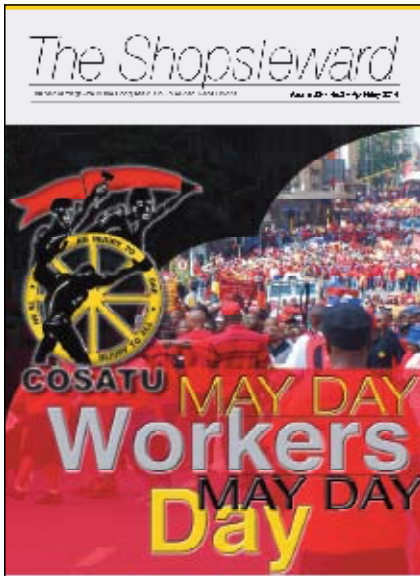
The SACP has engaged with authorities in Venezuela, who have extended an offer to provide crude oil to South Africa at a discounted price. If the government, as advocated by the SACP, pursues the affordably priced oil for efficient domestic refining into finished oil by-products, such as petrol and diesel, which are crucial inputs in production and transportation, the action will help in price reduction and assist our country in tackling the rising cost of living.

Alex Mashilo is the spokesperson for the South African Communist Party

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