**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (VIRTUAL)**

**THURSDAY, 2 MARCH 2023**

***PROCEEDINGS OF MINIPLENARY SESSION – NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CHAMBER***

Members of the mini-plenary session met on the virtual platform 14:00.

House Chairperson Mr C T Frolick took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayer or meditation.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon members, I would like to remind you that the virtual miniplenary is deemed to be in the precinct of Parliament and constitutes a meeting of the National Assembly for debating purposes only. In addition to the Rules of virtual sittings, the Rules of the National Assembly including the Rules of debate apply.

Members enjoy the same powers and privileges that apply in a sitting of the National Assembly. Members should equally note that anything said in the virtual platform is deemed to have been said to the House and maybe ruled upon.

All members who have logged in shall be considered to be present and are requested to mute their microphones and only unmute when they are recognised to speak. The microphones are very sensitive and will pick up noise which might disturb the attention of other members.

When recognised to speak, please, unmute your microphone and where the connectivity permits, connect your video. Members may make use of the icon on the bar at the bottom of their screens which has an option that allows the member to put up his or her to raise points of order.

The secretary will assist in alert me in this regard. When using the virtual system, members are urged to refrain or desist from unnecessary points of order.

Lastly, I wish to remind you that we are meeting in a miniplenary session and therefore any decisions will be taken in a full plenary session of the National Assembly. The first item on the Order Paper is a motion in the name of the hon Shaik Emam. I now recognise the hon Shaik Emam.

# SOUTH AFRICAN INVOLVEMENT IN ISRAELIS-PALESTINIANS CONFLICT

(Draft Resolution)

Mr A M SHAIK EMAM moved a motion without notice, as written on the Order Paper, as follows:

That the House—

1. notes the abuse, harassment, intimidation, rape and murder of Palestinian people by Israel;
2. respects the rights of Palestinian people who have been dispossessed of their land and property;
3. urges Israel to comply with all international agreements entered into regarding this dispute; and
4. calls upon the South African government to downgrade the South African Embassy in Israeli to a liaison office until such time Israel stops its hostility against the Palestinian people.

Hon House Chair, thank you for giving me this opportunity. Let me start off by the quote from our former head of government,

our icon, Madiba Nelson Mandela who once proclaimed, and I quote:

Our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians.

Today, we are presented with an opportunity to assist in the realisation of that dream – that freedom. The NFP therefore hereby move to introduce a draft resolution to downgrade South Africa’s embassy in Israel.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Shaik Emam, please, disconnect your video because your connectivity is very bad. Thank you.

Mr A M SHAIK EMAM: I was quoting from our former icon, the honourable Nelson Mandela who once proclaimed, and I quote:

Our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians.

Today, we are presented with that opportunity to assist in the realisation of that freedom. The NFP therefore hereby move to introduce this draft resolution. This draft resolution

resolves to downgrade the South African embassy in Israel to a liaison office until such time Israel stops all hostilities against the Palestinian people and respect their rights to exist and comply with all international agreements entered into.

Hon Chairperson, just last week, Israel troops killed at least

11 Palestinians and wounded dozens more during the raid in the occupied West Bank. Hon colleagues, we cannot afford to do nothing while the Palestinians are being subjected to the same kind of oppression and atrocities that we experienced under the apartheid regime. We cannot allow ourselves to forget the struggles and sacrifices of our own people, many of whom occupied these august House who fought and die for our freedom and equality. We cannot let history repeat itself in any form.

This resolution is a call to action to demand accountability from Israel. It is a courageous move that will demonstrate our commitment as a country to justice, human rights and freedom. By passing this resolution we will send a powerful message in the world that South Africa remains a beacon of hope and a shining example of what is possible when we come together in pursuit of a more just and equitable world. Let us seize this moment with courage and conviction knowing that our actions

today will have a profound impact in the lives of countless individuals who are counting on us to speak suit to power.

Hon Chairperson, Palestinians have been forcibly moved out of their homes and off the land to make way for illegal settlements. This, my esteemed colleagues, is a reminiscent of the forced removals in Sophiatown and District Six.

Palestinians, including millions of refugees living in exile, have been prevented from returning to their homes and land.

They have been subjected to systematic and severe deprivation of their fundamental human rights. Palestinians, especially those in the Gaza Strip, have been denied their rights to freedom of movement and residents have been subjected to murder, torture and unlawful imprisonment.

Like so many of our current and former colleagues here in this august House, Palestinians are being persecuted because of their opposition to apartheid. Too often we are told that the term apartheid has been unfairly applied to Israel. We are told that it is an anti-Semitic to criticise Israel. We have the Harvard researcher and daughter of the holocaust survivor, Sara Roy, who said, and I quote:

As a people, we have been unable to link the creation of Israel with the displacement of the Palestinians. We have been unwilling to see, let alone remember, that finding our place meant the loss of theirs.

History is clear, the state of Israel was built with the displacement, murder and maiming of the Palestinians. To maintain the grip on the power they instituted apartheid practices to control and manage the Palestinians. The institution of apartheid by the state of Israel contravened international laws and is a violation of the human rights of the Palestinians.

The former UN special rapporteurs, professor of law at the Princeton University, Richard Falk, reported at the UN Human Rights Council that Israel is guilty of racial discrimination, apartheid and torture in its systemic oppression of the Palestinians. This view has been corroborated by an array of other UN officials and academics including John Dugard, Falk’s predecessor in the post-UN special rapporteurs. He stated that the charge of apartheid applies to Israel, concluding that Israel’s practices in the West Bank are not only reminiscence of and in some cases worse than apartheid as are existing in South Africa, but in breach of the legal prohibition of

apartheid. These are not mere allegations or rumours, but facts presented by expects. We cannot simply ignore them because they don’t fit with our view of the world.

Hon Chairperson, we understand that downgrading our embassy in Israel will have consequence. However, we cannot allow fear or intimidation to dictate our actions when it comes to defending basic human rights and dignity. Downgrading the relation with the apartheid South Africa places immense pressure on the apartheid demon contributing to its downfall. Many will argue that downgrading in Israel impair our ability to act neutral mediation. Esteem colleagues, let us be clear, neutrality is not an option in the face of oppression. Remaining silent in the face of an egregious human rights abuse is not neutrality, but is complicity. Our continued diplomatic relationship with Israel suggests that we condone other actions. The sentiment was best articulate by our beloved archbishop Desmond Tutu - may his soul rest in peace - who said, if you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.

Hon Chairperson, unfortunately, the lack of action against the state of Israel has embroiled them over the years. We have witnessed the killings of journalists, civilians and

activists. Hon colleagues, it is estimated that from 1948 to 2022, 31 450 Palestinians have died at the hands of apartheid Israel.

We have to do all we can to end all these systemic violences and persecutions of the Palestinians, and we have to resist the temptations to reduce the Palestinians to the full liberation. We must use all diplomatic channels at our disposal to make our voice heard and bring about change.

The NFP therefore urges all Members of Parliament to support this resolution and stand with us in the pursuit of justice, equality and freedom. Let us put aside our political differences and unite in taking a meaningful stand against the apartheid practices of Israel. Let us be on the right side of history. Let us honour the legacy of Nelson Mandela and all those who fought for freedom and justice. Let us send a message to the world that South Africa will not be passive or neutral about oppression and human rights violations anywhere. Let us create a true society where all can live freely. Thank you, Chairperson.

Mr S O R MAHUMAPELO: Hon House Chairperson and the collective of the collectives of different members sitting in the House here today, let me start with a quote:

Revolutionary leadership is not for the fainthearted, the flamboyant, or the fly-by-night, the easily flattered, the easily satisfied, or the easily intimidated, the seekers after excitement or popularity or martyrdom.

These are the words of Grace Lee Boggs in a book called

*Revolution and Evolution in the Twentieth Century.*

Chairperson and hon members, we fully support the decision to recall South Africa’s ambassadors to the state of Israel. This is informed by the ANC’s resolution and our response to atrocities committed by apartheid Israel on the Palestinian people.

On 25 March 2019 the United States officially recognised Jerusalem as the capital city of Israel. The final status of Jerusalem has always been one of the most difficult and sensitive question in the Israel and Palestine conflict. It was argued that a unilateral decision will break both

international consensus and prejudge an issue that was supposed to be left to negotiations.

As South Africa, and indeed as the African National Congress, we have aligned ourselves with the international community and continue to see East Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state.

In 1980 the United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution condemning Israel’s annexation of East Jerusalem and declared it a violation of international law. Indeed, these acts of Israel impunity continue to sound the death knell of any peace process. As lovers of freedom and of justice we stand with the Palestinian people in their quest for self-determination, but also in their resistance against the deprivation of their human rights and the denial of their dignity by apartheid Israel.

Unashamedly, we associate ourselves with the sentiments expressed by Michael Lynk a Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Palestine territories occupied since 1967. In his March 2022 reported to the Human Rights Council he lamented the fact that “With the eyes of the

international community wide open, Israel has imposed upon Palestinians an apartheid reality in a post-apartheid world.”

With our experience of apartheid as South Africa we have observed with utter disgust and disbelief how Palestinians suffer the same treatment we went through as the majority of black people in this country. We cannot but notice and agree with the Special Rapporteur and the Human Right Watch in concluding that the political system of entrenched rule in occupied Palestinian territories satisfy the prevailing evidentiary standard for the existence of apartheid. An institutionalised regime of systematic racial oppression and discrimination has been established. This system of alien rule had been established with the intent to maintain the domination of one racial national ethnic over another, and the imposition of this system of institutionalisation discrimination with the intent of permanent domination had been built upon the regular practice of inhumane acts by apartheid Israel. He highly concluded that this is indeed apartheid.

Just like in South Africa in the past, apartheid laws are approved by the Israeli Knesset such as the Nationality Law, the Citizenship Law, the Anti-Terrorism Law, the Planning and

Building Law, in addition to the Settlement Law constituting a discriminatory legal system. The Israeli opposition to the establishment of the state of Palestine and rejecting any political negotiations, and which constituted the apartheid regime. This is a crime against humanity as stipulated in the International Humanitarian Law as well as the Rome Statute and the International Convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination.

Since the occupation, Israel’s apartheid regime has been evident in its practices such as land grabs and settlement establishment with illegal demographics and strategic fragmentation of the territory. The occupying powers continue to enjoy impunity with a concerning lack of accountability on its persistence of human rights violation in the occupied Palestinian territories. Israel has flagrantly violated its obligations under International Law depriving the Palestinian people from enjoying their inalienable rights, including the right of self-determination and the right of return.

Israel is committing ... [Inaudible.] ... apartheid in Palestine territories, and this apartheid regime must be dismantled through all means that are democratic and legal. It is the duty of the international community to bring this

deplorable situation to an end. The Palestinian people have the right to an independent free sovereign state established as per 1967 boarders and with East Jerusalem as its capital.

We have observed that the occupying powers of human rights violations have continued, namely, house demolitions and attempts to expel people from various areas. There is continuous targeting of Palestinian civilians and children ... [Inaudible.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Mahumapelo, may I request you to switch off your video because you are no longer audible. Please switch off your video.

Mr S O R MAHUMAPELO: [Inaudible.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Mahumapelo, will you please switch off your video. May I also make a request to other members who will participate to do the same? You do not need to switch on your video because of the poor network connectivity. Hon Mahumapelo, are you back now?

Mr S O R MAHUMAPELO: [Inaudible.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Mahumapelo, you are no longer audible, we cannot hear you.

Mr S O R MAHUMAPELO: Am I audible ... [Inaudible.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): You are not audible. Okay, what we will do hon members, I will check on where the member is audible in his speech ... [Interjections.]

Mr S O R MAHUMAPELO: Am I audible now, House Chair?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): You are now audible. Please proceed.

Mr S O R MAHUMAPELO: Yes, I am here, I can hear you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Thank you. Please proceed now.

Mr S O R MAHUMAPELO: Am I audible?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Yes, you can proceed.

Mr S O R MAHUMAPELO: I don’t know now what the problem is because I can clearly hear you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): We can hear you now, hon member.

Mr S O R MAHUMAPELO: Am I now audible?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Yes, you are audible.

Mr S O R MAHUMAPELO: We have observed that the occupying powers human rights ... [Inaudible.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Mahumapelo, we have now completely lost you.

Mr S O R MAHUMAPELO: We have observed that the occupying powers ... [Inaudible.] ... continued in various areas ... [Inaudible.] ... Okay, Chair, I can hear you, but it is fine you can proceed with the next speaker.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Thank you, hon Mahumapelo. Hon members, I really beg for your patience because due to the ongoing load shedding it is difficult to

maintain a connection in certain areas. So we are very mindful of that. You are more than welcome to leave your video off so that at least we can hear your input in the debate.

Mr M CHETTY: Good afternoon, Chairperson, I wish to start this debate with a famous quote by American civil rights activist Dolores Huerta:

When you have a conflict that means that there are truths that have to be addressed on each side of the conflict. And to resolve that, you have to get people on both sides of the conflict involved so that they can dialogue.

The conflict between Israel and Palestine has been going on for longer than most of us have lived. Why is it that amongst millions of people in the world with all the leadership that exists this conflict has not ceased?

The answer lies in the hidden agendas and political intentions of many countries and many politicians. When you pick sides in the conflict as a bystander, you only fuel the conflict and perpetuate the differences even further.

There are some amongst us and some leaders in the world, who stand to benefit from this conflict. War and conflict is big business and has huge political currency and benefit. Many use the conflict to further their political interests and gain popularity amongst their supporters and potential supporters, but in reality, many of them have made no contribution whatsoever to building unity.

This debate is yet another opportunity for us to pick a side instead of choosing a path of unity. We will never contribute to unity when we attack and criticise one over the other. It merely serves to reinforce the deep-seated hatred that has been perpetuated for decades.

If the world wants to bring about meaningful change and unity amongst Israelis and Palestinians, they must promote peaceful dialogue and a genuine willingness to respect the freedoms of all people in both Israel and Palestine. They will not achieve this by promoting divisions and domination by one over the other.

Our country has walked this path before. We made the choice between war and peace. Our historical leaders have had the courage to promote dialogue and find a lasting solution to

peace given our history and it was the wisdom of the father of our nation, the late Tata Nelson Mandela who said, “negotiation and discussion are the greatest weapons we have for promoting peace and development.” If we can do this, so too can Israel and Palestine. Downgrading an embassy will add no value whatsoever to the ongoing conflict. It will only serve to reinforce the divisions. Our position, as the DA, is very clear and it is also the position of this very South African government and the United Nations and has not changed. We want to see a return ... [Interjections.] ...

Mr M A TSEKI: Can I ... [Inaudible.] ... a question to the hon

... [Interjections.] ...

Mr M CHETTY: ... to political dialogue and world leaders must play a meaningful role in promoting this dialogue to bring lasting peace ... [Interjections.] ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Chetty! Hon Chetty! There is a request from a member on the platform who wants to ask you a question. Can you take a question?

Mr M CHETTY: Not here, Chair, my time is limited.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Please proceed, hon Chetty.

Mr M CHETTY: ... and freedom to the people of Israel and Palestine. We support the two-state solution that will promote unity and peace amongst both Israelis and Palestinians. We cannot and will never condone any form of human rights violations regardless of who is the perpetrator, and regardless of how many times we will say this, our political opponents will create their narrative, not for the benefit of the people of Israel or Palestine but to fuel their political aspirations here in South Africa.

The solution to the conflict does not lie in which side can succeed in dominating the other, it lies in the respect for human rights and freedoms of all. This is exactly what the late Tata Nelson Mandela meant when he said, “You will achieve more in this world through acts of mercy than you will through acts of retribution.” Why then should any one of us, contribute to a campaign for the dominance of one over the other? We all should condemn any form of violence and human rights violations regardless of who is responsible for it.

We should also be on the side of peace not picking one side over the other. All this does is import the conflict amongst ourselves and this promotes further divisions. When you behave like a leader and promote dialogue, you will bring people together and promote unity. A leader will be proposing measures, like a meeting held earlier this week at the Red Sea Port of Aqaba in Jordan between top Israeli and Palestinian officials with the intention of halting the surge of violence, but when you behave like a politician seeking support for your small fledgling party, you will move motions in this House that add no value to lasting peace and stability for either the people of Israel or Palestine. I thank you.

Ms T P MSANE: Chairperson, our position on Israel is simple, that entity is an apartheid state forced upon the people of Palestine by the west. Since the establishment of that state, millions of Palestinian people, including women and children, have been dispossessed of their land and evicted from their homes, and thousands have been murdered by the racist and colonial regime.

South Africa knows better than most how devastating settler violence is. We equally know the importance of international solidarity in fighting against a racist and rogue regime. It

is for this reason that we as the EFF have been calling for the complete closure of South Africa's embassy in Israel on every platform we've had.

Numerous submissions have been made to the Minister in the Committee of International Relations and Co-operation, in debates made in this very House, and the response has been the very same all the time. The ANC is indecisive. They are unable to provide to the persecuted people of Palestine the same solidarity the rest of the progressive world offered to us while we were subjected to the same violence. The public announcements about downgrading our diplomatic ties with Israel have been very hollow and not followed by any concrete steps towards cutting diplomatic ties with Israel. The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961 was meant to facilitate, “the development of friendly relations,” through a uniform set of practices and principles. Israel has an embassy on our soil, and we also have an embassy in Israel, on top of stolen Palestinian land. The presence. Our diplomatic mission in Israel is a legitimation of the violence against Palestinian women and children.

It means that South Africa and Israel share friendly relations through uniform principles and practices. What principles and

practices could South Africa be sharing with an apartheid state under a black government post-apartheid? This debate is long exhausted. There is no political will in the South African government. Israel is going against all international laws and treaties that prohibit and explicitly criminalise apartheid, and yet we embrace them and we treat them as our friends on our shores. Let it not be an excuse that the embassy equally assists Palestinians. If that is so, let the embassy be accredited and situated in a location that does not persecute the people of Palestine.

The Department of International Relations and Co-operation is in a process of shutting down missions, but let me tell you, Israel is not one of them. The ANC is indecisive and is scared of the backlash from those who prop up the violence in Palestine. Israel continues to conduct daily raids in the West Bank with more than 9 000 Palestinians being injured, 29 kills of which seven are children, and that is in January 2023 alone. Israel enjoys the packing of the US which, mind you, holds the voting powers in the UN Security Council.

So, therefore, this makes it more difficult for the UN to be objective. The people of Palestine, like the people of South Africa during apartheid, can only rely on international

solidarity to isolate the apartheid state of Israel from trade and any other forms of relations, but South Africa continues to trade with the apartheid state of Israel with exports to Israel being more than $357 million, this is now in November 2022, and that is in diamonds. So in simple terms, this means the current government will never downgrade, let alone close the Israel embassy in South Africa.

That means that our talks that we stand with the people of Palestine will only remain a talk shop because South Africa will always prioritise profits over humanity and the lives of the people of Palestine. Chair, we are in support of the draft resolution. I thank you.

Mr M HLENGWA: House Chairperson, this debate brought to this House on the downgrading of South African Embassy in Israel is at the very least disingenuous. It is nothing short of regressive diplomacy. The first initiative to downgrade the relations with Israel had appeared in the resolution of the ANC Conference in 2017. The text of the resolution called for the downgrade of the South African Embassy to liaison office. Following the passing of this resolution, the then Department of International Relations and Cooperation Minister, hon Sisulu in 2019, announced that South Africa is not going to

send a new Ambassador to Tel Aviv as part of the downgrade. Therefore, the relations have been already downgraded.

Downgrading of relations or downgrading the embassy is a fluid concept. There is no clear definition of these terms. It can include reducing the number of diplomats at the embassy, recall of the Ambassador and up to closing the embassy and even severing the ties. Each of these steps constitute a downgrade of relations. It is another means for sloganeering? Instead of being genuinely invested in the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians and using all diplomatic channels and resources available to bring together the two sides, it seeks to downgrade the embassy. The result of such a downgrade will only make diplomatic channels harder to access. It will affect not only the South African Jewish community but sectors of both the Christian and Muslim communities. We as South Africa are a nation founded by negotiations, and a global model of a peaceful transition and ours is to multiply this around the world. The proposed motion today sees South Africa walk away from the negotiation table.

South Africa should be showing its commitment to peace and negotiations by pursuing a two state solution. The IFP stands by its conviction that the right of Israel’s existence and

self-determination must be protected under international law. Equally so, the independence and self-determination of the Palestinian people. The IFP has always maintained that a negotiated two state solution, consistent with the 1967 borders, is the only way to effectively address and advance the peace process in the Middle East. The hallmark of South Africa’s diplomatic transition was negotiation, coming to the negotiating table and having those difficult conversations have been the solution. How will walking away from the table help?

The downgrading of the embassy will not help the Palestinians. It will lead to us having little to no influence in the region as Israel gains more allies and moves toward normalising relations with many of its neighbouring states. It would not be wise for us to pursue regressive diplomacy at a time when Israel is working towards normalising relations in the region. The Abraham Accords of 2020 between Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco have not only set a path towards the normalisation of relations but have resulted in economic and cultural exchange taking place.

The downgrading of the South African Embassy in Israel will not inspire confidence in South Africa but rather places South

Africa in an awkward position where it can no longer be trusted as an honest broker of peace, especially as a member state in both the United Nations and the African Union. As the IFP, we maintain our position and call for calm, restraint and peaceful action within the prescripts of international law by both Israel and Palestine.

While logistics are the last step in considering this matter, it is worth noting that as of right now the South African diplomats accredited to the Palestinian authority are also accredited to Israel. This accreditation enables immunities and privileges that are granted by the Israeli government, which includes the accommodation in Israel, travel between Israel and the Palestinian territories, be it to the West Bank or Gaza Strip, easy access to airports and border crossings.

Obviously, closing the South African Embassy in Israel will also affect the relations with the Palestinian authority and potentially require the diplomats working in the Palestinian authority to relocate to Ramallah.

The IFP accordingly urges the government to reconsider this position regarding the downgrading of our diplomatic ties between South Africa and Israel. Thank you, Chair. [Time expired.]

Dr C P MULDER: House Chairperson, colleagues, this motion is brought to the House this afternoon by the hon member Shaik Emam, and he followed his motion with a speech in which he made very strong attack on Israel and the state of Israel. He was then followed by the ANC’s spokesperson, as well as the spokesperson from the EFF.

Now, I was wondering if the hon Shaik Emam has ever visited the state of Israel. I was wondering if he visited the West Bank, if he has been to Ramallah. If he has been to Gaza Strip. If he has been to Israel and see for himself to see what Israel is all about. The attacks that he launched on the state of Israel are all the clichés that we have become used to.

Now, the tragedy is that Israel bashing, and these kind of attacks on Israel are so yesterday. They are so out of line with what is happening in the international community, and that’s a tragedy also in terms of our own foreign policy and the discussions that we are having with regard to Israel. With this kind of approach, South Africa has relegated ourselves in terms of foreign policy to the absolute periphery of what is happening internationally with regard to the state of Israel, because If the hon Shaik Emam is familiar with what is

happening in the state of Israel, he would be aware that there are Palestinians in the Israel Defence Force. He would be aware that there are Palestinians elected to the Parliament of Israel. He would be aware of the Abraham Accords. The Abraham Accords we refer to.

A number of Muslim states have moved beyond this debate. They have normal diplomatic relations now with the state of Israel. We are not going to assist Israel, and what we must perhaps understand and realise is the following: Israel does not need South Africa. We need Israel, and if you don’t know that, you haven’t done your homework. Israel is at the forefront of technological development in the world. They can assist this country tomorrow in terms of our water problems, and our infrastructure problems. But by pushing this ideological agenda, we are making ourselves completely irrelevant. And you know what, there are a number of fellow African states who are not that stupid.

Let me give you a list. The following African countries and there are more, have normal diplomatic ties with the state of Israel to their absolute benefit: Angola, Cameroon, Chad, Congo Kinshasa, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Zambia, and there are more. Our honest

appeal is that South Africa should wake up. That we should understand what is happening internationally. International community has moved beyond this debate and Israel and the Palestinian world as well.

If we really want to assist the people of Palestine, then we should play a role to convince them that they must also understand and move beyond their approach of just prying to be victim and then the world is going to assist them. We have moved beyond that. Let us assist the Palestinian people to come to the table. To put on the table and negotiate and then we can find a solution in the best interest of all the people in the middle East. South Africa should move forward and understand that the current debate is so yesterday. Thank you, Chairperson.

Mr N L S KWANKWA: Chair, sorry, I was struggling with my gadget a bit. The UDM supports the call for the downgrading of the South African Embassy in Israel, until such time Israel respects the human rights of Palestinians. As a country that has a history and is regarded globally as proponents of human rights, we have to undertake whatever diplomatic measures we can. And, use whatever diplomatic measures are available at our disposal to make sure that countries such as Israel

undertake significant steps to ensure the respect of human rights and the dignity of Palestinians.

We have seen in the global media the death toll of the Israelites or Palestinians who have been killed by Palestinian soldiers. The demolishment of the homes and the displacements of hundreds of people in Palestine, should awake a sense of sympathy from all of us as human rights defenders. The people of Palestine continue on a daily basis to live in fear, hopelessness, and they are desperate like all of us to live dignified and decent lives. As human rights promoters, we have a responsibility to act against any human rights violation in order to restore equality and freedom.

We seem to have forgotten that some of the factors that led to the unravelling of apartheid in this country was the imposition of international sanctions, and the role that was played by other countries in the world in support of our fight against apartheid. We need now to do the same thing and return the favour to some of the countries who are still facing apartheid in the 21st century.

Therefore, downgrading our embassy from Israel will put pressure and emphasise our disapproval of the status quo in

Palestine. We should also try to work with all multi-lateral institutions and ensure that multi-lateral institutions work towards ensuring that the rights of people of Palestine are respected and their dignity is promoted on a daily basis. The current oppressions of Palestinians show that human rights around the world are being rolled back. Thank you, Chair.

Ms B SWARTS: Thank you very much, hon House Chair. Hon members, we are participation in this debate with the intension of highlighting the plight of the Palestinian people and the continued aggression of Israel. The situation in the occupied Palestinian territory remains volatile with escalated tensions continuing to manifest.

Recently, Tor Wennesland, Special Co-ordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, reported that settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory as well as violence against civilians have continued. Wennesland further said that in the Wesbank 29 Palestinians were killed by Israeli security forces, while Israeli settlers and civilians perpetrated 128 attacks against Palestinians, resulting in one death.

In Gaza, 49 Palestinians were killed while one Israeli civilian and one Israeli security forces personnel were

killed. The current conditions stand hugely exasperated by sustained and escalated Israeli aggression coupled with military activity, the disrespecting of holy sites, increased promotions of the annexation, especially after the 3 January 2023 statement by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in which he declared to and I quote:

Advance and develop settlement in all parts of Israel — In the Galilee, the Negev Desert, the Golan Heights and Judea and Samaria [West Bank.]

This concerning statement in many respects signal the end of pursuance of the two state solution by the Government of Israel. The escalating situation also includes continued demolitions, displacements, and ... [Inaudible.] ... activity directed at Palestinians entrenching Israeli presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, OPTs, particularly in the West Bank.

These developments illustrate the lack of any meaningful effort or process directed at achieving peace, military activity, search and arrest operations, killings, field executions, torturous techniques, movement restrictions, collective punishment ... [Inaudible.] ... to entire

communities and towns settlements enterprises. And the confiscation or seizing of Palestinians owned structured homes, demolition and displacement, settler violence pressure on civil society and humanitarian respondents, do not only define daily Palestinian experience, but continue to intensify and expand.

Recently, we noted that the United States Secretary of State Mr Antony Blinken was in the Middle East in February, and we have not seen any breakthrough in reducing tensions between Israelis and Palestinians, following his visit. We also note Mr Antony Blinken’s repeat of the US Government’s long standing aspirations for a two state solution in which Palestinians get their own country. An idea that is openly rejected by far right speakers in Israel’s newly installed government.

The visit by Mr Blinken follows on the heel of the visit by the US President Joe Biden in 2022. However, despite these visits, the situation has not changed for the better to ensure the reduction of the tensions and ensure the rights of the Palestinian people are respected.

As the ANC, we continue to strongly oppose the discontinued regard for the prevailing and long standing internationally accepted concepts, particularly regarding the circumvention of final stated issues, such as the borders, the status of Jerusalem, and the rights of return of refugees.

The ANC supports all efforts aimed at the establishment of a viable continuance of Palestinian states existing side by side in peace with Israel, within internationally recognized borders based on those 04 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital in line with all relevant UN resolutions, international law and internationally agreed parameters.

In this regard, Palestine will seek a UN Security Council resolution to protect the two state solution which the ANC supports. The normalization of Arab-Israeli relations will also potentially contribute to increased regional stability.

We conclude by reiterating what our government said in condemnation of the tensions in the Middle East that the South African Government strongly condemns the unjust attacks on civilians by Israel in Gaza and Jerusalem. The continued escalation of attacks by Israel on Palestinian in Gaza is totally unjust, and shameful. Particularly in targeting of the

most vulnerable section of the Palestinian community, children, women and the elderly.

South Africa also urges Israel to stop all planned evictions of Palestinian families in the Sheikh Jarrar area. Disturbing images of Israel’s ongoing attacks on Palestinians... [Inaudible.] ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Swarts!

Ms B SWARTS ... which violates UN resolutions for the intervention to have the Israel Government’s conduct investigated and referred to the International Criminal Court, ICC, for crimes against humanity. I thank you, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Thank you, hon member. There was just towards the end of your speech, just a break in the communication. But thank you for completing your speech in time. The next speaker is from the PAC.

Mr M NYHONTSO: Chair, we are not speaking but we support the resolution. Thank you.

Mr W M THRING: Thank you, hon House Chairperson. The ACDP would like to remind this House and South Africans at large that all political parties are guided by their worldview. Some are driven by a liberal secular humanistic worldview and others a social communistic atheist worldview.

I wish to make it very clear that the ACDP is guided by a biblical worldview and underscoring this view is the recognition of our Judeo-Christian historical background. It bears repeating that our Messiah Christ Jesus was born a Jew and while those who have different worldviews from ours draw their inspiration from books of authors like Karl Marx, Stalin and Mao Zedong and Charles Darwin. We would in the ACDP draw our inspiration and guidance from our holy book, the bible.

It is this book which compels us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem in accordance with Psalm 122 verse 6, and for the descendants of Abraham to pray for the descendants of Abraham, the patriarch of Israel, according to Genesis 12 verse 3.

As the ACDP, we can do no other. We believe that the efforts to downgrade the South African Embassy in Israel will have a deeply negative impact on the South African Christian community, who make up a large portion of pilgrims to the Holy

Land. Israel bashing appears to be involved... [Interjections.] ...

An HON MEMBER: You must bring Johannesburg in the bible as well.

Mr W M THRING: ... while it reveals the hypocrisy of those bashers who remain silent on the genocide. Over one million... [Interjections.] ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Thring, can you just halt and pause there? There is a member who continuously without being recognized just switches on his mic, and continue speaking while the other speaker is on the floor.

There’s rules to debate and engagement. Please observe those rules. Otherwise, I will have no option but to ask you to leave the platform. Thank you very much. Please continue hon Thring.

Mr W M THRING: Hon House Chair, Israel bashing appears to be invoked, but it reveals also the hypocrisy of those bashers who remain silent on the genocide of some one million Muslims in Xinjiang in China. They remain silent when Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, ISIS, extremists beheaded Christians. They

remain silent when hundreds of thousands if not millions of Christians in Mozambique, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Sudan and Mali have had their homes and churches burned to the ground. Their women raped, men murdered and children abducted by religious fundamentalist.

South Africa has a moral and a constitutional obligation to support a negotiated solution in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to distance itself from a radicalized position on Israel. Which position simply undermines any hope of a negotiated process and peaceful outcome.

A downgrade would not be of any benefit to the Palestinian people. It would entirely remove South Africa’s ability and authority to play a mediator role in a future peace effort between Israelis and the Palestinians. A mediator must by definition, have relations with both parties in the room otherwise it cannot be a mediator. The ACDP will not support this call for a downgrade of the SA Embassy in Israel. I thank you.

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: Thank you very much, hon House Chair. It cannot be, that the former Mayor of the City of Johannesburg proclaims that she stands with Israel. The DA is not impasse

of this city. The country has not only been downgraded, but it has closed down the Palestinian Embassy, that is why you can be a Member of Parliament. The DA’s position in relation to Palestine is unhumanitarian. The DA has picked a side and promotes this unity.

More Christians, than the people of other religions are haalbaar [feasible] occupationally and demographically speaking, and the Bible does not support the occupation. With regards to hon Shaik Emam, we would like to congratulate the NFP. Helen Suzman was also a one-woman party, and the DA should take an example from the NFP.

Hon House Chair, I reiterate Al Jama-Ah’s call for the South African government to carry out its undertaking to assist the liberation movement in Palestine with defensive weapons. The sanctions in all forms, like the ANC says, the diplomatic sports and cultural activities, were imposed on the apartheid South Africa, and it has brought down the evil system of apartheid.

The Palestinians deserves nothing less from South Africa. They are a nation suffering under occupation. They were our allies and supported us in the struggle against occupation and

oppression. I was in Libya when the plan was hatched by the Palestinians to send weapons to South Africa. Hon House Chair, we therefore support this motion by the NFP, and congratulate Shaik Emam for bringing it to the attention of the hon Members of Parliament. Thank you very much.

Mr L MPHITHI: Thank you, hon House Chair. There are very few discussions that considers how South Africa’s foreign policy prioritised human rights, given the ANC’s close relations with states such as Cuba and Libya during its long liberation struggle. While much has been written regarding the inconsistencies of South Africa’s commitment to a human rights-centred foreign policy, not enough attention has been dedicated to understanding where this policy choice came from. Additionally, how the origins of this policy shaped South Africa.

It is now that we must look back and be reminded of why we must value peace over war, why we must value dialogue over anger, and most importantly, why we need cool heads around the table. Now, let me take my ANC colleagues back to the establishment of the first working group on foreign policy, which included members such as Peter Vale, Rob Davies, Alan

Hirsch, Gary van Staden, Aziz and Essop Pahad and former President, Thabo Mbeki.

They produced a document titled, Foreign Policy in a New Democratic South Africa, which was published in the build-up to the first democratic elections. The culmination of this work was a new moralistic, international foreign policy vision for South Africa. It argued that the ANC could use this new era in international relations by focusing on human rights. It expressed the belief that South Africa should become a beacon for, a champion of, the international crusade for the values of peace.

The document also set out the principles that would guide foreign policy in the future. A preoccupation with human rights, a belief in global solidarity, that justice and democracy should be the basis in international relations, a desire for international peace and the importance of Africa. It was clear then as it is now, that we must stand on the side diplomacy, on the side of peacekeeping where it’s not about grandstanding but more about solutions that value every life, every society and its sovereignty.

I am sure that, many colleagues who have followed our country’s foreign policy will know that, one of the most defining documents pre-1994, was an article titled South Africa’s future foreign policy, published in late 1993 under the former President, Nelson Mandela. It set out in detail what the country’s foreign relations under an ANC-led government would entail. The main points that were widely publicised were the six pillars which are the following:

The primacy of law, the primacy of the promotion of democracy, justice, peace for international community and the importance of Africa. Former President, Nelson Mandela, argued that, a human rights-based approach to South Africa’s future foreign policy, will be the light that guides it in foreign affairs.

Hon House Chair, what I expected to hear today is, practical and pragmatic ways of engagement with this issue, that reminds the world of perils that South Africa has travelled and has overcome.

Though South Africa’s position in Africa and the world has waned, though it is no longer the largest economy in Africa, though it fails to exert meaningful influence beyond the Southern African Development Community, SADC, I had hoped we would once again remember what this democracy means to all of

us, and how it was attained, through conciliation, through dialogue, through constructive measures that finally broke at peace.

I have hoped to hear about tackling land restitution of human rights violations. People are being killed each and every day, and here we are, discussing showy and punitive measures that only add fuel to the fire.

Now, when we get to the substance of this draft resolution, the argument being advanced here, is not one that places cool heads around the table, or one that is principled or value- based ... [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Mphithi, hon member, would you please just switch off your video, your connection is not very good, and we are losing your speech. You may continue.

Mr L MPHITHI: Thank you, hon House Chair. When we get to the substance of this draft resolution, the argument being advanced here, is not one that places cool heads around the table, or one that is principled or value-based. It is an argument that fails to advance what was imagined the very same

ANC we hear here today. It is an argument that prioritises cosmetic changes, instead of changes which will impact positively on the Palestinian people and the Israeli people.

Like the ostrich in the sun, the ANC government is intent to acting out ideological and factional motivations, much to the detriment of its own people and its position in the world. Hon Chair, the government of South Africa must not pick winners or losers. We must hold the line of the rule of law, the primacy of human rights and peace. The government must play a role it envisioned all those years ago.

Like one of peaceful mediation of conflict and peaceful

coexistence, one of a two-state solution and an end to

violence and return to dialogue by both sides to ensure peaceful resolution of the conflict. I thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Deputy Minister, you are not audible. We cannot hear you. Hon Deputy Minister, are you back on the platform? Hon members, the hon Deputy Minister is not audible. May I request one of the ANC Whips who are on the platform to make contact with the hon Deputy Minister so that he can get a better connection from wherever

he is? In the meantime, I am going to ask the hon Shaik Emam to continue.

Mr A M SHAIK EMAM: House Chair, first of all, allow me to thank the ANC for your stance in this particular matter, and yes, you're correct, this is also a resolution of the ANC in 2017 in your conference and indeed, your stance on human rights, taking into consideration what we have been through in South Africa goes a long way and I think we appreciate that.

Thank you very much to Al-Jama-ah, yes indeed you are correct, nowhere in the Bible does it say you must go out there and violate the rights of other people and take what is not rightfully yours.

Thank you very much again to the UDM, thank you for your stance. I think it is quite clear that you have the interest of the people at large. and we appreciate that. Thank you very much also to the AIC, but let me remind the DA. I think you are very short-sighted or you have a lapse in memory. Are you forgetting that there have been many international agreements that were entered into that Israel did not comply with? So it's not a decision or a stance that we are taking today that we got up last night and decided to take?

No, it is not. I think you are forgetting that. Very importantly, can you tell us from your perspective and the DA, have you ever condemned the atrocities that are being committed? And yet, let's talk about the Russia-Ukraine War, you are taking sides there, and you're talking about not taking sides. Nobody here is taking sides. We have the interest of humanity at large and the Palestinians there is no doubt about it, as rightfully alluded to by the EFF, that Israel is a rogue state. They are living on stolen, occupied land.

As for the ACDP, let me tell you, yes indeed you’re opportunistic. You have found a vacuum in the political arena of South Africa. So you are doing exactly what the colonialists did by using religion throughout the world to divide us, but you are forgetting if you go to the history of humankind that we all belong to one extended family. So you will always use religion to divide us. So we are not surprised at your conduct. I think what is very important here is that South Africa needs to take a stand. A stand that, yes indeed we know what apartheid is, we know we've experienced it. Let us not forget, Israel was one of those countries that colluded with the likes of the Afrikaner apartheid government here trying to break the sanctions in this country.

So we are not surprised that even the Freedom Front will come with the attitude, but we've noticed something, over a period, the IFP, Freedom Front, DA and ACDP, I think if you go back into the history books and look at when it comes to matters that are of importance to be discussed in Parliament, how they all follow suit in terms of the pattern in which they vote. So I'm not surprised that all of them don't care about humanity

... but their interests are funded of course by these institutions. Thank you. [Time expired.]

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: Hon House Chair, I have a point of order. I smell a rat that those who stand with Israel are sabotaging our broadcast and that's why the Deputy Minister can't speak. I think this should be investigated.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): No! Hon member! Hon member, I think you are smelling a dead rat. There's no interference from outside sources. We have a problem generally in the country with load shielding and that is influencing the connectivity that we are having. I'm quite sure that that is the problem that we are also experiencing this afternoon. Now I want to ... [Interjections.] ...

Mr M NYHONTSO: What if he is right, Chair? What if he is right? What if he is right, Chair?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon member from the PAC, you had an opportunity to make a speech and you refused to do so, now you want to make a speech. It's not necessary to do so. Your time has gone. It has passed I want to recognise the hon Deputy Minister of International Relations and Co- operation. The hon Deputy Minister?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-

OPERATION (Mr A Botes): Yes, Chairperson. I just want to find out: Am I am audible now?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Yes, you are now audible, hon Deputy Minister.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-

OPERATION (Mr A Botes): Thank you very much, Chairperson. I just want to ... [Inaudible.] ... my contribution on the fact that we are in March month. March month in South Africa is characterised as the epoch when we must ordinarily heighten our expression and our consciousness on human rights and also try to be a cost multiplier in relation to constructing a

shared national identity, in particular, regarding ... [Inaudible.] ...

I want to obviously state what is our foreign policy position as it relates to the situation between Palestine and Israel. Hon House Chair, South Africa has been unwavering in support towards all efforts aimed at the establishment of a viable Palestinian state existing side by side in peace with the state of Israel within internationally recognised for ... [Inaudible.] ... 04 June 1967, within Jerusalem as its capital. In line with all relevant United Nations, UN, resolutions international law and internationally agreed parameters. Additionally, a viable and sustainable peace plan for the Middle East must ensure that Palestine sovereignty territorial integrity and economic viability is guaranteed with sovereign equality between Palestine and Israel.

Given the dynamics with the increasing fragility of the Middle East peace process and as both external and internal pressures being applied to the historical Palestine statehood agenda coupled with the fact that there are ongoing threats by the government of Israel to annex large part of the West Bank, the government of South Africa continues to assess the level of political engagement required to render practical support to

the course of the Palestinian people. We, therefore, concur with the Report of the UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese, which stated that:

For over 55 years, the Israeli military occupation has prevented the realisation of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, violating each component of that right and willfully pursuing the “de-Palestinianisation of the occupied territory ...

The United Nations Special Rapporteur’s Report further detail the persistent violence, racism and prejudice that Palestine people face on a daily basis. We see daily, hon Chair, including now during February 2023 raids in Nablus and the persistent violence by the illegal settlers on the indigenous people of Palestine. It is regrettable that the state of Israel continues to violate international law including the UN Charter and Security Council resolutions with impunity. The security and political situation in the West Bank are very volatile and there are daily reports of killings of civilians young and old by the Israeli forces.

We have seen in the recent years the Cities of Nablus and the neighboring ... [Inaudible.] ... burning points for

confrontation between Israeli military forces and Palestine residents in the West Bank. This could be attributed to many factors but the most significant being the emergence of military ... [Interjections.] ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): ... hon Deputy Minister, there is a point of order. I see the hand of the hon Mulder. Hon Mulder.

Dr C P MULDER: Chairperson, my apology for disturbing the Deputy Minister. It is not a point of order. I would just like to inquire if the Deputy Minister would be prepared to take a question?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Deputy Minister, are you prepared to take a question?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-

OPERATION (Mr A Botes): I can come and address the caucus of the FFPlus on another occasion ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): ... hon Deputy Minister, so, you are not prepared to take a question?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-

OPERATION (Mr A Botes): ... not at this stage, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Please, proceed.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-

OPERATION (Mr A Botes): What South Africa’s government stands for is the issue of peaceful diplomacy. We wish to ... [Inaudible.] ... that peace is still possible albeit it less

... [Inaudible.] ... every day that it passes. We, therefore, call on the UN Security Council and the international community to take immediate sustained and collective action grounded in international law. We need to highlight the impunity enjoyed by Israel that constantly violates the law and the collective punishment endured by the Palestine people. Entitled to its protection, demonstrates that Israel has absolutely no regard for anyone and or the rules of the international law.

We are encouraged, hon House Chair, by the fact that on 30 December 2022, the United Nations General Assembly, UNGA, adopted the resolution entitled: Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestine territory including East Jerusalem ... Containing a

request to the International Court of Justice, ICJ, for an advisory opinion relating to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory. On 06 January 2023, we have seen the Israeli Security Cabinet approved a series of measures against the Palestinian authority, including the transfer of approximately US$39 million ... [Inaudible.] ... health tax revenue that Israel collects on behalf of the Palestine authority to the families of Israelis killed in the Palestine attacks.

This is a serious concern, hon House Chair, because it impacts adversely on the Palestine ... [Inaudible.] ... this very precarious financial situation. As a custodian of foreign policy and interstate relations, Department of International Relations and Co-operation, Dirco, was required to give effect to the resolution taken at the governing party’s 54th National Conference in December 2017, whereby we were directed to downgrade the SA embassy in Israel to liaison office. The downgrade was informed to give effect to the practical expression of support to the oppressed people of Palestine, the government’s concern at ongoing violation of the right of the Palestine people to self-determination and the refusal of the government of Israel to enter into any meaningful negotiations.

This resolution was also guided by sentiment that given the continued intransigence and belligerency of the government of Israel that the relationship with South Africa and that government could not be typified as being business as usual. To give effect to this decision, the government of South Africa recalled its ambassador to Israel in May 2018. Our mission is currently headed by ... [Inaudible.] ... The Palestine narratives evokes experience of our own history of racial segregation and oppression. As oppressed people, we have experienced firsthand the effects of racial inequality and discrimination and we are well aware of the long term impact and consequence of racial and other forms of discrimination.

We wish to affirm that the only way to achieve peace and stability in the Middle East is through reaching a lasting peace between the Palestinians and Israelis themselves and restore all legitimate rights of the Palestine people in accordance with the two-state solution including referencing the Madrid Principles, the Arab Peace Plan and the Quartet Peace Plan amongst others. Israelis continued the pronouncement about the annexation of large parts of the West Bank and the building of additional settlements further undermines the prospects of peace and are glaring examples of

violations of international law. Since 1967, for over half a century Israel has systematically constructed over 180 settlements and outposts on land seized from the Palestinian people.

Over 700 000 Israelis are living in settlements built from the ruins of demolished and destroyed Palestine property. Since the adoption of the first UN Security Council Resolution on the situation of Palestine, Resolution 42 of March 1948, only

70 years ago and all other subsequent resolutions has failed to ensure that these resolutions are implemented or any concrete action are taken to address the blatant violations of this resolution. We would like to remind the House of the UN Security Council adoption unanimously of Resolution 2334 on the 23 December 20 ... [Inaudible.] ... It clearly states: We reaffirm the established by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including its Jerusalem has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and the major obstacle to the achievement of the two-state solution and adjust lasting and comprehensive peace process.

There can be absolutely no ambiguity around this resolution. We have a moral obligation to contribute and support the

Palestine people through this. On 21 August 2022, South Africa and Palestine has launched a strategic dialogue between our two countries and galvanizing support for the Palestinian course on the African Continent, as well as in the international arena. With regard to the recent developments at the African Union, AU, we support the suspension of Israelis observer status at the AU. It is clear that the unjust actions committed by Israel offend the ... [Inaudible.] ... of the Charter of the AU, which Africa continues to believe that as long as Israel is not willing to negotiate a peace plan, it cannot have the privilege to sit as an observer in the AU Assembly. As I conclude, hon Chair ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): ... hon Deputy Minister.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO- OPERATION (Mr A Botes): Yes.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Your time has expired.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-

OPERATION (Mr A Botes): Thank you very much.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Thank you. Hon members, that concludes the debate on this topic. The next topic will start at 15:30. The debate on that topic will start at 15:30, that is 03:30pm on the same platform. We just suspend the proceedings until 15:30, that is 03:30pm. Thank you very much.

Business suspended at 15:18 and resumed at 15:30.

# UPGRADING INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS TO CREATE INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE HUMAN SETTLEMENTS IN CITIES

(SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION (Mr T MALATJI):

Mr T MALATJI: House Chairperson, because of connectivity we are all requested that we must keep our cameras off. Hon House Chairperson, the ANC-led government is making strides to dismantle colonialism apartheid spatial planning by upgrading informal settlement to building inclusive and sustainable cities, the historical evolution of South Africa and spatial landscapes.

Hon House Chairperson, the history of black people in the cities, is the history of people without security of tenure.

There’s a patroller of colonial and apartheid laws that prohibited the settlement of black people in the cities and towns, such as the Group Areas Act and the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act, amongst others which were enforced with the state violence.

The mushrooming of informal settlement is not a phenomenon of a new disposition but it’s a legacy of colonialism and apartheid. Our government decided early or not to follow what the apartheid government has done to remove informal settlement but instead to upgrade informal settlement to a functioning and liveable communities. Towards the realisation of the 2030 National Development Plan vision of the transformation of the human settlement in the country.

Hon House Chairperson, the government is upgrading the informal human settlement programme response to the observation made in the National Development Plan. Which states that:

The separation between social groups and long distance between jobs and houses and poor public services is a root in poverty and inequality. The location affects the

communities, local economies, labour market, infrastructure networks.

The National Development Plan, NDP, further notes:

The physical and social environment in which we are born and grew up in, is one of the important ... [Inaudible.] ... of every person’s wellbeing and life chances.

Hon House Chairperson, informal settlement communities like Imizamo Yethu and others around the country where as the results ... [Inaudible.] ... of those communities, to live closer to their places of work.

You will find that the majority of residents of the community, work as domestic workers and gardeners for rich families living opposite informal settlement like Hout Bay.

Our government upgrading of human settlement ensures that people are not allocated from where they have ... [Inaudible.]

... their communities but rather improve the living condition of those communities through the provision of basic services such as electricity, water and sanitation and refuse collection.

In addition, the Informal Settlement Programme, UISP, ensures that other services such as educational, recreational and economic activities are provided by the democratic state. Our people now have every right to live in such environment nearer to the sea and access to other ... [Inaudible.] ... facilities. The Hout Bay area is no longer primarily reserved for white people and the wealthy.

The upgrading of informal settlements programme guarantees sustainable livelihood and security for the tenure of the informal settlement communities. The impact of urban migration and lack of sufficient human settlement and for the poor and lower income workers.

Hon House Chairperson, cities in Africa and Asia had experienced the strongest growth rates, with an average of annual growth that are exceeding 6%. According to the United Nations 2008 Wealth City Data Booklet:

The impact of the people moving from rural to urban regions, in the search for better economic experts, build a sustainable strains of government’s ability to provide housing for those migrants.

Communities and participation is the central to the informal settlement upgrade process. Affirming the injection of the Freedom Charter and the people shall govern, as it says that “The people shall govern”.

Hon House Chairperson, the ANC has a long history of promoting public participation in the democratic government and decision making. The injection of the people shall govern and finding expression in the Freedom Charter and our democratic government has put in place a legal framework, promoting citizen involvement in the face of our democracy.

Community involvement in the upgrading of informal settlements is one of the UISP’ guiding principles. And the sizeable portion of funding is made available for initial stage of the upgrading processes.

Our community involvement focuses on a meaningful community participation, in deciding the needs and the destiny of the communities. There’s a ... [Inaudible.] ... of participation, we create inclusive and sustainable communities by involving the community.

The social challenges such as crime, improving of safety. Hon House Chairperson, central issues like poverty, alcoholism and drug addictions are prevalent in the new informal settlements and contribute to criminality. Because they are inaccessible, the police patrol in informal settlement – they can’t access those areas, because they were designed not be accessible.

By upgrading informal settlement after consulting the affected people, allowing government services like police patrol, ambulances to reach the affected areas.

In some informal settlements like Kennedy Road Informal Settlement in eThekwini Metro Municipality, the government in partnership with community-based organizations and other stakeholders had managed through the UISP to conduct basic road access and footpaths ... [Inaudible.] ... related to storm water control and installation of electricity meter boxes, on a prepaid basis for household in the human settlement.

The UISP, as an integrated and holistic approach to community development of informal settlement. Hon House Chairperson, human settlement is more than providing communities with decent housing, initial services. Our government is dedicated

to give our citizen equity shelter by the Department of Human Settlement but mostly efficiently, transportation system, education, recreational systems and employment opportunities.

This emphasizes that the upgrading of informal settlement has placed our government that the sector and department and the local government must work together.

Our government has a chance to build inclusive, sustainable cities but undo the spatial legacy of the colonialization of an apartheid. And by upgrading the informal settlements, we shall act as the ANC public representative, to guarantee that the ANC government implements the UISP and further more truly, that no money is returned to the fiscal. At the same time our people lack equity shelter and no one is left behind.

We say that everyone has a right to shelter and everyone must be protected and a right to security. Thank you very much.

Dr N V KHUMALO: House Chairperson, greetings to all fellow members of Parliament and citizens. In 2020 House Chairperson, it was estimated that almost 67% of people in South Africa lived in urban areas, and almost five million in informal

settlement. An estimated 43% of people do not have access to clean water in the country.

Yet the quarter four performance report presented in May last year revealed that the department failed to reach its target regarding the number of informal settlements upgraded to phase

3 of the Upgrading of the Informal Settlement Programme, UISP, across the country.

Business as usual for a government with very little to no tangible efforts for their many promises. Well written policies and plans House Chairperson, mean nothing without implementation. Just a reminder, housing provision is a human right in our country.

Amongst the biggest issues faced by people living in informal settlements are health and sanitation, education, security and the insufficient access to water, never mind running water.

And with Cholera rearing its ugly head in Gauteng with six confirmed cases, including one death, there’s no telling the devastation it might cause in informal settlements.

Seemingly as a rule, there are usually very few if any resources available to residents of informal settlements in as

far as sanitation and hygiene are concerned. And the upgrading of such settlements does not appear to be the priority it should be in this country.

To put salt to the wound House Chairperson, the minimal funds that are budgeted for upgrading informal settlements in

ANC-run municipalities are not used and instead reallocated to other provinces, often run by the DA as those municipalities get things done.

While the DA-run municipalities certainly make the most of the extra funding, there seems to be little accountability on other municipalities’ failure to fulfil their constitutional mandate ... [Inaudible.]

The few water sources and government provided facilities in existing informal settlements are often ill maintained. The reality House Chairperson, is that those that reside in informal settlements have been left behind.

All this while informal settlements continue to grow due to population growth, rural urban migration, lack of affordable housing options and the access thereof, a non performing government, particularly in policy, planning and urban

management, economic vulnerability, continued marginalization of our people, natural disasters and climate change as well as other things.

The journey to countering the negative aspects of informal settlements will require government to acknowledge the challenges residents face as well as actively including them in wider city systems.

It will require government to take leadership and provide enabling environments to develop and implement appropriate policies to bring about the necessary change.

Government needs to connect key stakeholders, harness local knowledge, enact policies and plans and manage incremental infrastructure development. There needs to be more competent and non-corrupt leaders in the department, leaders who are passionate about implementation, leaders who will not shift blame of non-performance to municipalities, leaders that will be on the ground where services are being offered and actively support and get involved where necessary to ensure that the vulnerable are serviced. Not the kind of leaders that will simply leave citizens to suffer for non-performing spheres of government.

Whose job is it to fight for those living in informal settlement if not the national Department of Human Settlements?

While one can acknowledge attempts to make some gains in granting eligible beneficiaries a variety of state subsidized housing options; however, the gains have masked various systematic challenges that continue to compromise the enjoyment of the right of access to adequate housing - this by the way House Chairperson, is according to a report submitted to the United Nations, UN.

The report further concluded that the policy responses are riddled with problems of ineffective planning and implementation, which results in informal settlements being characterized by poverty and inequality.

Effective implementation of decisions made by the judiciary to protect the rights of informal settlement dwellers remains a huge challenge too.

There is no doubt that South Africa cannot look to the

non-performing, non-caring and looting ANC for a better life.

Citizens must not allow themselves to continue to be held hostage to inhuman conditions of living brought to them by the ANC-led government ... [Inaudible.] ... with one that will serve them and ensure an equal society with equal opportunities for everyone. I thank you, House Chair.

Mr M A TSEKI: Greetings Chairperson. The ANC government is committed to providing adequate housing to all South Africans, particularly the working class and the poor who constitute the majority in our country. We made this commitment to the congress of the people in 1955 in the Freedom Charter document.

When we declared that there shall be houses, security and comfort, slums shall be demolished and new suburbs shall be built with transportation, roads, lighting, play fields, crèches and social centres, that is what we defined as human settlements.

Chair, let me switch off the camera.

The lived experiences of Africans before 1994 is one which they were oppressed, discriminated against and forcefully removed from their homes. Chair, that is why we call Israel an

apartheid state. Because of our live experiences, our government has adopted and ensue to upgrading policy for the informal settlements where they live.

The District Development Model, DDM, is a method of crowdfunding involved in various social partners in resolving the budgetary constraints faced by local municipalities throughout the country.

Chairperson, our government has decided to use the new strategy, the District Development Model after acknowledging a lack of collaboration and coordination between government departments and local municipalities. The District Development Model has the potential to resolve this silo mentality that has plagued our government in recent years and the ANC is firmly in favour of its implementation.

The DDM proposes a system that will guarantee the adoption of one budget and one plan by each district and metropolitan municipality in order to address the social challenges of inequality that lead to poverty and unemployment as well as the development of our communities.

The DDM is an opportunity or mechanism to combine all the budgets of sectoral departments and municipalities into a single plan of action. Chair, as you would remember that this year is a year of action by the ANC.

The increasing effectiveness and efficiency of municipalities, use the municipality infrastructure grants. The Minister of Finance, hon Godongwana in his Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement, MTBPS, in October 2022, raised a chronic underspending regarding the allocated infrastructure budget by sector departments and local municipalities.

The average residents of our communities are denied access to essential services such as water and electricity and as a result, sanitation services suffer the most when local government and sector departments fail to spend their allocated budgets.

Also, the economy will not expand if the government does not spend the money it has been allocated. The reports indicate that part of the spoor spending on allocated grants by both provincial departments and local municipalities is due to lack of financial and technical capabilities and capacity in those affected departments and municipalities.

Once again, the National Treasury has reported that many of our local municipalities are in financial distress and therefore the National Treasury has allocated additional funds to support service delivery stabilising municipalities in distress and developing longer run plans to improve their capabilities.

Therefore, the DDM mechanism provides the opportunity for sharing financial and technical skills among three spheres of government. Provision and availability of fundamental services like water and electricity, refuse collection etc. through the allocation of informal settlement upgrading partnership.

Hon Chairperson, the ANC government is dedicated to improving the lives of our people who reside in informal settlements.

Human Settlement Development Grant and the Urban Settlement Development Grant are two new conditional grants that the Sixth Administration created during the 2019/20 financial year.

Funds from both awards will be ring-fenced for the improvement of informal settlements. This reflects the level of commitment from government by the people showing to upgrade informal settlements around the country.

We further commend the National Treasury for not reducing the allocation to the Department of Human Settlements, instead there was an overall increase of 6% higher than the previous financial year. The allocation to the Department of Human Settlements relates to the conditional grants to provinces and municipalities such as Human Settlement Development Grant, the Informal Settlement Upgrading Partnership Grant and the Urban Settlement Development Grant.

Further, we wish to acknowledge the National Treasury’s commitment over the three-year Medium-term Expenditure Framework between 2022/25. It is targeted to assist provinces and municipalities with town planning and township establishment processes in order to formalise an estimate of 900 informal settlements. That is the commitment by the ANC.

By upgrading 180 000 sites that are connected to municipality infrastructure, this commitment is made through the National Upgrading Support Programme. Delays in the completion of the town planning in township establishment processes have been one of the major obstacle for the underspending of conditional grants allocated to provinces and municipalities. In order to address these issues that provinces and municipalities are facing, the DDM approach is in particular essential.

Hon Chairperson, the National Development Plan, NDP, transformed the housing policy into human settlements policy to indicate a holistic approach taken by government in the development of communities.

The NDP 2030 states that the public funding should therefore be directed towards the development of public infrastructure and public spaces that would significantly improve the quality of life of the poor communities who cannot afford private amenities.

The holistic approach by the District Development Model requires that all spheres of government work together to ensure that the provision of services is coordinated and integrated. When the Department of Human Settlements builds houses for people, other social amenities should be provided simultaneously such as education, health, transportation recreational and economic infrastructure. Thus we define human settlements.

The DDM compliments the current intergovernmental structures. The local government had long complained that the provincial and national government undermine its power by failing to

consult with it and failing to include sector departments in municipality integrated development plan.

We sometimes attribute community protests with local government failure to provide basic services to local communities. We fail to recognise that some of the responsibility in providing basic services such as school infrastructure and safety security are not local government’s competence but provincial and national government which are some of the demands of protesting communities.

We believe that by adopting and implementing this District Development Model, the national and provincial government will be brought closer to local community transparency and accountability. A committed ANC government.

Chairperson, lastly, there are three interrelated specific outcomes of upgrading informal settlements which are ensuring its spatial transformation, providing adequate housing and improved quality environment and ensuring the security of tenure for informal settlements. Upgrading informal settlements takes an incremental approach from phase 1 to phase 3.

Just to remind members that, in our Medium-Term Framework 2019/24, our government committed to upgrading at least 1 500 informal settlements to phase 3. Chairperson, phase 3 means that those informal settlements are liveable, they are re- blocked, there are services that are provided and the next step is to build a structure meaning services are provided already.

With regard to progress, the Department of Human Settlements and the local municipalities have upgraded 610 informal settlements during 2021/22 financial year utilising the informal settlement plan from phase 1 through to phase 3 as a performance measure.

Chairperson, if I still have some minutes remaining, may you please allocate them to the next ANC member to commit for the actions that we have as the people’s government.

*Xitsonga:*

Hi khensile swinene, Mutshamaxitulo.

*Sesotho:*

Pula!

*IsiXhosa*:

Nksz M MAKESINI (Intetho-Nzibulo): Ndiyabulela, Sihlalo, ngethuba ondipha lona.

*English*:

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the resilience and the patience of the millions of South Africans who are homeless, who called shacks their homes, because of the inability of the post-1994 new-apartheid regime to honour their promises.

We would also like to pay tribute to the memories of hundreds of activists who have been killed by the new-apartheid regime for protesting for the rights of those who live in an informal settlement. Particularly, we pay tribute to the memories of the leaders of *Abahlali baseMjondolo* who have been murdered in 2022. These are: Lindokuhle Mnguni, the leader was gunned down in Cato Manor, in KwaZulu-Natal, last year; Nokuthula Mabaso who was also shot inside her house in May 2022; and Ayanda Ngila who was assassinated at EKhenana Informal Settlement in March 2022.

These leaders and many more were killed by the government of the day for daring to affirm that the people who live in

informal settlements are human beings too, and they must enjoy the same rights as all South Africans. However, because we live in a country where homelessness, poverty ... [Interjections.]

Mr B A RADEBE: Chairperson, point of order!

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: Chair, there is no point of order! It is her maiden speech, Chairperson!

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): Wait, hon Mkhaliphi! I am chairing. What is a point of order, hon member?

Mr B A RADEBE: Thank you, Chairperson. The member on the on the platform is making a maiden speech. However, when working a maiden speech, she cannot be offensive in her speech, just like saying the current government has killed people. It is not right. She cannot be offensive, otherwise we would be rough on her! Thank you. [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): Hon member, I would have commented at the end of the speech about that. Can you continue, hon member, with your debate?

Ms M MAKESINI: ... because we live in a country where homelessness, poverty and human living condition have been normalised for the black people.

Chairperson according to 2022 statistics, there are over 3 200 informal settlements in this country housing about 1,3 million households and almost 5 million people live in informal settlements in the country of major metropolitan cities like Cape Town, Johannesburg, EThekwini, Buffalo City, Nelson Mandela Bay and Mangaung. In Cape Town and in Johannesburg, one-in-five people live in informal settlements. This is a problem of landless, as much as it is a problem of joblessness.

The framing of this debate failed to capture the essence of the problem and we will break it down: In Duncanville Village just outside the East London, in Buffalo City Metro, about

21 000 households pack up in a piece of land that could only accommodate just 4 000 RDP houses; Kenneth Road in EThekwini, KwaZulu-Natal, has over 6 000 households just 10 hectares of piece of land.

The same pattern applies in many other places in the country. Millions of black people are stuck like sardines in rat-feted

and fleece-ridden shacks in that their living conditions are not acceptable. They live like this because there is no land in which they can have respectable homes.

These informal settlements can never be upgraded. They are incapable and here because the land is not enough.

What needs to be done by all space of government is to make land available for human settlements across the country, so that the government can build homes where people themselves are able to build their own houses. This can only be done through the progressive and targeted program of taking land from the minority that is owned by them to make it available for human settlements. It can be done through building internal capacity in municipality themselves, by having state- owned construction companies to build housing and to reduce cost of, instead of putting constructive projects on tender, We need to abolish these tenders.

*Sesotho*:

Re tjholo ka 2013!

*English*:

In the immediate, we must rezone residential areas to have minimum standards for human settlements, whose ultimate aim is to eradicate the checks, to ensure that these have basic provisions such as road, water, electricity, sanitation, sport and recreational facilities. This means that we must deliberately attempt to declutter these areas, to make way for human living conditions.

*Sesotho*:

E seng maemong ana ao batho re ba fumanang ba le ho ona!

Lastly, this is not possible under the government of Ntate Ramaphosa who is so scared to take the land from the whites to build for the black people. That is why we call all people of South Africa, on 20 March 2023, to come and join us, especially those who stay in the informal settlement, who need land. They must join us. Otherwise, that day will be the day of the solution for all South Africans. I thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): Hon members, it is always not easy to dictate how a person is going to come up with a debate or how the person is going to debate, but we always encourage members not to go on an offensive, especially on a on a maiden speech. I am sure that will be taken into

consideration by parties as they welcome members into our new fold or on the new fold. Thank you very much

Princess S A BUTHELEZI: Hon Chairperson, informal settlements have not been historically addressed in South Africa’s housing policy, with the focus previously centred on moving people to large-scale RDP housing projects. These projects are generally developed in remote locations, which do very little to speak to the historic spatial divide we face in South Africa.

For a long time, informal settlements have been considered to be temporary. However, we are seeing an important shift - towards improving, and not removing. It is clear that these settlements are not going to just disappear. The important task of channelling funds in the right ways in order to upgrade vast informal settlements, is one the government must take on with commitment and pragmatism.

Presently, residents in informal settlements face a myriad of social, economic and political factors that shape their built environment and have negative impacts on their health and well-being. To bring about real change, it is imperative to move beyond research and ideas to take tangible actions.

This should be done through the upgrading of service management. A lack of basic services has resulted in inhumane living conditions. Garbage removal should be prioritised and informal settlements should be the last place in which it gets neglected. Adequate sewage removal infrastructure is essential and should be improved.

Basic infrastructure, such as a paved road, goes a long way in upgrading the urban fabric of informal settlements. This has a great sociological effect on the way people perceive their community and their safety in public spaces. A basic infrastructure item such as a tree and a water tap becomes a gathering place for people and a space where children play.

The informal settlements are here to stay. Pushing structures which are built due a lack of understanding or absent zoning, must give way to collaboration between officials, town planners and community members, to work with what is already built. With the help of qualified professionals, we must begin to reimagine streetscapes in informal settlements. With fewer boundary lines and a move towards a townhouse typology, which is more appropriate for high density areas, accessibility and function in these spaces can be greatly improved.

Research found that 60% of township micro enterprises operate from residential properties. Land constraints and zoning continue to choke the microeconomics and livelihoods within these communities. Historically residents of these areas were not allowed to run businesses, essentially strangling entrepreneurship. This should not only be stopped but reversed by creating an enabling environment for regulated trade.

To make these settlements more sustainable, one must consider how money circulates within them. Currently, the most common scenario is that people leave their settlement to go work.

They return with income, but that income quickly leaves again with purchases that are made at large retail stores. The money, thus, enters and exits the settlement without ever circulating within it. Circulation within it is what would grow a micro economy. Land-use opportunities that encourage money to flow within the community before it exits the community must be implemented.

Finally, the private sector must be encouraged to participate in the housing crisis, and the channels for this to happen must be made easier. Housing fabricated off site can radically reduce the rate and cost at which housing can be provided. The need to upgrade informal settlements brings with it the

potential of real innovation, for people to come up with new building methods that challenge the status quo, and that can provide solid dignified housing at an affordable rate.

One's living environment ... [Time expired.] Thank you.

*Afrikaans*:

Mnr P MEY: Voorsitter, op die oomblik is daar ongeveer

5 miljoen shack-bewoners [hut]in Suid-Afrika. Die omstandighede is haglik, maar dit groei steeds. Die opgradering van bestaande informele nedersettings in Suid- Afrika is byna ’n onmoontlike taak, maar dit kan wel in die toekoms gebeur, as die regte prosedure gevolg word. Baie van die besette gebiede is nog nie eens as ’n residensiële gebiede geoormerk nie, en dan is dit vol plakkers.

Die staat en munisipaliteite is nie daartoe in staat om onwettige informele nedersettings te verhoed of te beheer nie. In 2019 het ek vir die Minister van Menslike Nedersettings gesê dat daar nie gesê moet word dat daar nie grond beskikbaar is nie. Daar is baie grond. Die vorige spreker is verkeerd om te sê dat daar nie genoeg grond is nie.

Ek het haar gewys dat daar duisende der duisende hektaar grond om die metros in Suid-Afrika lê, maar hierdie grond is landbougrond en dit moet ontkoppel word tot residensiële eiendom. Ek het by regsgeleerdes uitgevind en hulle het my gesê dat dit tot ses jaar kan neem, maar met wetgewing kan ons dit wel verhaas.

Die Minister het twee maande later aangekondig dat daar 14 000 hektaar grond om die metros beskikbaar is, maar niks het gebeur nie. Indien wel, teen ’n slakkepas. Wat is die grootste rede vir die groeiende informele nedersettings? Ons verwys altyd daarna as bevolkingsaanwas, maar dit is verblywend om te sê dat die bevolkingsaanwas die afgelope paar jaar afgeneem het.

Tweedens is dit die instroming van onwettige persone uit Afrika. Die onwettige burgers is ook een van die oorsake van hoë misdaad in Suid-Afrika. Die grootste probleem in Suid- Afrika is dat hierdie informele gebiede onwettig beset word en dat die munisipaliteite dit eenvoudig net toelaat.

In die meeste gevalle beset hulle gebiede waar dit moeilik is om dienste te verskaf soos water, elektrisiteit en die kostes is dan ook baie hoog. Ons het nou ook ’n geval daar tussen

Despatch en Port Elizabeth, waar hulle byvoorbeeld teen ’n rand gaan plak het. Die kostes is geweldig hoog.

Hulle dreig dan die munisipaliteite, paaie word gebrand, mense word van hul werk weggehou en dit lei tot groot ekonomiese agteruitgang. Baie kan nie eens op baie dae by hulle werk kom nie. Die polisie is magteloos, want hulle kan niks doen nie.

Kyk mens na gebiede soos die Wes-Kaap dan is dit onmoontlik om vir al daardie plakkers op die N2 van hophuise te voorsien, omdat dit by die dag groei. Wat is die oplossing?

Eerstens, moet stadsbeplanners weet waar grond beskikbaar is, om die ou formele nedersettings te vestig, dan moet erwe uitgesit word en die basiese dienste aangelê word. Daar moet ook baie streng teen die informele nedersetters opgetree word, indien hulle ander grond onwettig beset. Ons sal streng reëls moet toepas.

Indien daar vroegtydig grond geëien en ontwikkel word, kan die munisipaliteite toesien dat slegs een shack [hut] op ’n erf geplaas word en die gebied waar die hophuis gebou moet word, moet oopgelaat word, sodat bouwerk kan voortgaan, sonder om die shack-bewoner te steur. Die proses is in die tagtigerjare

suksesvol op Kwanibushle op Uitenhage toegepas en dit is as uiters suksesvol beskou.

Ons sit met groot probleme in Suid-Afrika. As mens dink aan die arme mense in hierdie land, is die afstand van hul werke af een van die grootste probleme. Ons het die afgelope jaar en drie maande ’n probleem – Prasa wat tussen Uitenhage, Despatch en Port Elizabeth moet ry se kaartjies is enkel, R9 en dubbel, R18. Die trein is nie meer beskikbaar nie. Hulle sê dat daar nie lokomotiewe is nie. Wat is die gevolg? Die arme mense moet met taxis ry wat R60 ’n dag is. Dit is ontmoontlik, as mens byvoorbeeld na mieliemeel kyk, wat afgelope tyd met 33% op is.

Ek wil afsluit. Ek wil net vir u sê dat ons hierdie probleme kan oplos, maar dan sal ons harder aan werkloosheid moet werk. ’n Ander ding is dat industriële gebiede nader aan die nedersettings geskuif moet word. Baie dankie.

Ms M R SEMENYA: Hon House Chairperson, hon members, the disastrous effect that cyclone Freddy, which is rapidly approaching, will have on our nation is something that we anticipate, as the nation. As we debate in this august House, we recognise the detrimental effects of the recent floods of the Eastern Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal residents. Communities

residing in the formal settlements with well-built homes and those living in informal settlements were also severely impacted by the recent floods.

To develop inclusive and sustainable human settlements, not just to upgrade the informal settlements, but also to ensure that all human settlement addresses apartheid spacial planning and are climate-change resilient, our caring government, the ANC, must move quickly on this plans and strategies. To ensure that no one is left behind, the government’s plan should also consider the settlements that is currently in place.

South Africa is a signatory to the UN Sustainable development goals. The 11th SDG focusses on making cities and human settlement more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Climate-change related factors such as the rising sea levels, droughts, floods, water borne diseases, and temperature- related morbidity in urban settings have a huge negative impact on the African continent and our country. Similarly, water supply and irrigation reservoir failures in seasonal river attachments could lead to unhealthy urban conditions and a lack of food.

Individuals residing in our nation’s informal settlements would be the most affected by climate change. Although there are currently no ... [Inaudible.] ... health hazards in this informal settlement, temperature fluctuation that affect the dispersal of diseases ... [Inaudible.] ... like mosquitos make this population more exposed to water-borne illnesses. The threat posed by the house fly’s rapid reproduction, particularly in unhygienic conditions could include ... [Inaudible.] ... disease.

The government must accelerate the upgrading processes to ensure that the environment in in informal settlements is suitable for habitation.

During the execution of the second edition of environmental implementation plan, the Department of Human Settlements commission and environmental study on the environmental impact of human settlement development initiatives, impacts on human settlement project on the environmental occur across all environmental component of air, water, land and biodiversity, the reports concludes reads three crucial recommendations were given in the study for the department to take into account.

One, the department should integrate information about sustainable human settlement development in the policies, plans and programme it is still developing. This information should consider both ... occupation, places and the effects that different stages of development have on the environment.

Two, policies, plans and programmes should not be repeated or include expert form to reference documents that contain requirements or specifications for sustainable development and environmental compliance, because doing so, could create confusion about which impact or development standard specifications are required and which are not.

Regarding the effect of human settlement development, which is number three, on the environmental policies and programmes should be refer to the environmental implementation plan.

Our duty, as the members of the Portfolio Committee on Human Settlement, is to see tht the national Department of Human Settlements implements the recommendations I just mentioned, for upcoming housing projects, including upgrading informal settlements to comply with this recommendation.

By their virtue and nature, informal settlements utilise coal and wood to make fire for cooking and lighting. This is true, not just for South Africa, but for other countries as well.

Insufficient sanitisation systems contaminates the air we breathe in, in addition to the water we drink. One of the problems facing the informal settlements is waste management. If this problem is not addressed, the land contamination and the possibility and the new emerging and the re-emerging infectious illnesses would result. All of these actions help the increased green house’s gas emanations, which in turn causes climate change.

We have all seen first-hand the devastation caused by climate change in our country, by the floods in the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape, particularly KwaZulu-Natal province. Many informal settlements are constructed on a flood plate. Extreme weather evens could not be endured by the building material used to build the homes. The vulnerability of informal settlements through climate-related incidents has increased due to poor special planning and disproportionate amount of that population has experienced displacement.

Ours is to ensure that government, in the upgrading of informal settlements, prioritise the use of low carbon and environmental friendly technology to ensure that the impact of the building processes does not further increase the amount of carbon emanations that will be emitted as a result of developing infrastructure. Radical public awareness on the effects of climate change needs to be taken in the country and it most likely not be solely focused on informal settlement but rather throughout the general population.

Further, our democratic government must act swiftly to alleviate the land shortage for the human settlement to stop the growth of squatter communities in place like ... [Inaudible.] ... and inhabitant setting. The democratic government can expropriate land of human settlement under section 93 of the Housing Act. It is about time that government exercise the provision of the Housing Act to curb land invasion by communities through the provision of service sites for housing.

When President Ramaphosa declared government’s vision of building three smart cities in his state of the nation address in 2020, some of you ridiculed the idea, while others mocked

it, however, the devastating impact of climate change has recently forced you to consider the idea of smart cities.

For those who do not understand the concept of smart cities, it is used to describe a technologically enhanced metropolitan environment that uses a variety of electrical devices and centres to collect specific data. In turn, data from inhabitant devices building assets are used to monitor and manage various activities such as the traffic and transportation systems, power plant utilities, water supplies network, waste and other community services.

We applaud our government for creating and implementing the framework for South Africa’s ... [Inaudible.] ... led by the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs. We urge all the sector departments, including those in charge of human settlements, public works and infrastructure, water and sanitation to apply the framework’s guiding principles when carrying out their own internal plans.

The Department of Science and technology and Innovation has been hard at work, developing new technologies that would contribute to mitigation against the effects of climate change. This is done in collaboration with the Department of

Human Settlement. The Department of Science, and Innovation has significantly contributed to how green technologies can be used within the human settlement sector.

The Green village concept, where the new human settlement would be built based on the off grid green village model. The green village mode ensures that all material and technology used in constructing new human settlements or upgrading existing informal settlement are environmentally friendly and recyclable. Using the recyclable technology and material has the potential both local population, employment prospects, improving the living conditions in informal settlement to make sure that this new technology are long-term sustainable and the project has community ownership. The community needs to be involved. Let us make the public participation a reality in South Africa. I thank you.

Ms E L POWELL: Chairperson, we cannot come before this House and honestly debate the creation of sustainable human settlements without addressing the issue of illegal land grabs, which have now become a crisis. The absence of brave leadership is the avoidance of tough conversations. It’s easier to look the other way rather than deal with a challenge

that has now become an emergency, crippling towns and cities the length and breadth of our nation.

And as with all of our country’s most pressing issues, the ANC have yet again buried their heads in the sand, shifting blame for what is essentially their failure to act and their failure to remedy outdated laws and to provide adequate resources to municipalities. Once again, it is the men and women that rely most heavily on government services who feel the greatest impact of the ANC’s inaction.

The ANC wants to come to this House and talk about dignity, but in provinces where they govern like the Free State - service stands are handed out to beneficiaries without basic infrastructure connections like water pipes and electricity networks. On Jachtkraal in Delareyville in the North West, more than 1000 illegal occupants live on agricultural land with no electricity, water, sanitation or nearby schools. No development can take place until the outstanding land restitution case is resolved – which the ANC is simply ignoring. This situation has abounded for 23 years, while our Ministers are asleep on the job.

In eThekweni, one of the main reasons the city had no suitable land on which to construct temporary residential units, TRUs, for flood victims is because Cabinet has been sitting on more than 14 000 ha of available land for close to a decade that they have still not fully released for housing development. In the Western Cape, R355 million had to be spent last year to prevent illegal land invasions. This year, R136 million has so far been spent on security at development sites in the province, but this is still not enough.

In Siyahlala in Dunoon, railway tracks have been removed to make way for land invaders, and each time the local authority have identified suitable land to relocate the occupiers, and this land has been invaded too. Both Metrorail and Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa, Prasa, are unable to operate trains – the cheapest form of transport available in South Africa - because illegal land invasions make it impossible.

And what was the ANC run Prasa’s solution to this? It was to employ ex uMkhonto weSizwe military veterans - in other words, cadres, in an attempt to protect the rail service.

Despite Prasa’s so called solution, damage done to rail infrastructure in Cape Town is reported to amount to more than

R4 billion. Despite being well aware of the realities, representatives of small parties also like to come before this House and dog whistle. But its these small parties who act behind the scenes to destabilise this country at every possible turn for their own selfish objectives.

Let’s take Good as an example. In Grabouw in the Western Cape, the Minister for Public Works, Patricia De Lille, who is leader of the Good party, allowed for a co-ordinated land invasion to take place on prime forestry plantation. This co- ordinated invasion destroyed the potential for thousands of jobs in the forestry sector and forced Minister Barbara Creecy to render the land unusable. Local leaders from de Lille’s own Good party admitted in media reports that they actively encouraged and helped people to invade the land, which later led to Good winning just enough votes to form a coalition of corruption with the Patriotic Alliance in that municipality.

Just imagine how many land invasions could have been avoided during the state of disaster if the national Department of Human Settlements had actually spent the money that was available to help evictees. Despite R377 million having been allocated to ... [Interjections.] It took the department ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): Hon Powell, please hold. What is the point of order, hon member?

Mr B A RADEBE: No Chairperson, I have raised my hand a long time ago using the gadget. I see that you couldn’t see that neh?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): I didn’t see it, hon member.

Mr B A RADEBE: So, the member casts aspersions on the character of the Minister of Public Works when she said that she co-ordinated land invasion. She knows very well that if she is about to make such allegations, she must bring it through a substantive motion. Thank you, Chair. [Interjections.] It’s Rule 86.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): Thank you, hon member. I am sure the member has been made aware of that. That is not allowed - that is unparliamentary, hon member. Could you please withdraw that?

Ms E L POWELL: Chairperson, it is interesting to see the ANC defending Good. I think that tells the people of this country

everything we need to know about this ... [Interjections.] I withdraw, may I continue ... [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): Thank you, hon Powell.

Ms E L POWELL: Thank you, Chairperson. Despite R377 million having been allocated to rental relief, it took the department more than a year to finalise the policy and two years later, only R2 million of this had been spent. During this same period, land invasions spiralled out of control with

69 000 new informal structures put up in Cape Town alone.

This numbers are so because South Africans are now voting with their feet and heading to the Western Cape in higher numbers that ever before, as the rest of South Africa collapses.

They’re coming to this province because they know this is where the jobs are. One hundred and sixty-seven thousand of the 169 thousand jobs created in South Africa in the last quarter came from the DA-run Western Cape.

We as leaders have a legal duty to find solutions to the crisis of land invasions, so that law abiding South Africans who have been patiently waiting on the housing list for

decades are able to finally access their opportunities. We need economic development, rapid state land release and sensible legislation to finally end illegal invasions and create dignified human settlements.

These are just some of the reasons why the DA that has now gazetted a Private Members’ Amendment Bill that will see Parliament finally being compelled to find a solution to this crisis for the benefit of our poorest citizens. Thank you.

Mr T MALATJI: Chairperson, I will start by forgiving the hon new comer from the EFF because she was not here when her political party voted against the land to go to the hands of our people. May her political party, the EFF, vote with the DA so that the land must remain in the hands of the few. I will also forgive her because she might not be aware that a lot of illegal invasions in this country, which is mainly invaded and occupied by illegal foreigners mobilised by the EFF who ultimately at the end, end up being affected by disasters because most of them have built in areas where they are not supposed to build and they become victims to serious disasters that are faced with.

Now, I will forgive those people. But also, just to remind the hon Powell that the reason we have crisis is because our people are occupying areas they are not supposed to occupy like at the railway lines and other areas that she has mentioned. What I heard from her speech is that she was mainly protecting white privilege. She only speaks about farms that benefits the monitory and areas that are not benefiting the majority. They occupy that land because they have nowhere to say because majority of their land was stolen by those that she is protecting, and they have nowhere to go. They are stripped of their dignity. Now, to restore her dignity she must come back again and vote with the ANC so that we take back the land and be able to give our people proper human settlements so that their dignity is restored.

I want to agree with the FF Plus and mobilise them so that they know that it is very important that they mobilise their voters who own the land around the metros to release the land for human settlements’ use. They must not keep the land for themselves and their friends because they know that they stole that land. They are not supposed to have that land – that land is supposed to be in the hands of the majority who are the ones who are suffering and have lost their dignity because of those places.

All of these opposition parties who come here and make noise, it is very important that we expose them that they fully participate in the process of violating the dignity of our people. Now, if you go to areas like Khayelitsha, Langa and many other human settlements across the country, the living conditions in those areas I realise, requires us to be innovative and have solution to improve the lives of our people. The government has indeed developed the programme which responds to the varying conditions of informal settlements. The ... [Inaudible.] ... development for the Department of Human Settlements, then the housing department, is precisely to ensure that government provides various basic services and land tenure rights which are critical for security and comfort for our citizens.

Various countries such as Rwanda focuses on land tenure as a key aspect of ensuring that citizens develop their own houses as this has been identified as a key implementer for the people to build their homes. In Brazil, favela upgrading does not involve the construction of top housing structures because the government expects residents to build their own. The underlying government assumption is that once the households have some degree of security of tenure, they are more likely to invest in their own money, however in the small

constructions. Even through such obstacles, the programme has reached approximately 2,5 billion families with an investment of a total of US$2 billion, making it one of the largest international informal upgrading programmes.

It is very important that we also be reminded that as much as the leader of the EFF goes around and name informal settlements under his name, he does not even stay in those informal settlements when there are disasters. He will be there in Sandton eating sushis and running around with cigarette smugglers.

The land restitution programme is a critical pillar in addressing the spiral informal settlement and the department must appropriate the land for human settlements purposes and the Public Works will continue to release the land for decent human settlements. Government should accelerate the distribution of services and site for urban areas. We are opposed to the anarchy of land grabs which neglects due processes, putting citizens under undeveloped areas. The ANC government developed a programme to ensure that we improve the living conditions of those informal settlements.

It is a fact that many informal settlements across the country have been upgraded with the prevention of ... [Inaudible.] ... as an example and water and the development of roads and sanitation facilities. The way some ... [Inaudible.] ... to those with access to services for a migrant worker from a rural area who stays in the informal settlement for better life in the city. The intervention by the department improves the lives of the poor, unemployed and low-income earners in South Africa who cannot afford decent houses.

Our government also provides social housing projects for the poor and we should not take it for granted. By the way, the Freedom Charter proclaim that in the future, the democratic state will ensure that there are houses, comfort and security. The upgrading of informal settlements through the Upgrading of Informal Settlement Programme, UISP, is to implement the existing housing delivery programme such as the Breaking New Ground mass housing programme and the rental and the housing programme.

The upgrading of informal settlement programme is a very progressive government policy that needs to be strengthened to continue to improve the living conditions of informal settlements. The ANC does not speak, the ANC implements. It is

the ANC that has developed more townships than any other. It is the ANC that has that has placed our people next to economic activities while the past apartheid government has moved them far away from activities so that they could continue to exploit them and they come on the second day for labour.

The ANC brings them closer to cities; they bring them closer to beaches; they bring them closer to all of these areas. It is the ANC that does not place illegal migrants into houses. It is the ANC that says everyone who come into this country must apply and must prove that they are the citizens of this country. It is against other small parties called the EFF who have continuously made sure that they collapse the infrastructure of our country - the same political party mobilising a shutdown of a country that is trying to protect, create jobs and reserve its private sector and the economy. It is the ANC that would protect those jobs against an organisation of anarchy called the EFF who wants to make sure that it places our people to remain unplaced so that anarchy prevails and illegal migrants come into the country. They continue to do crime and continue to invade land and they continue to even be a problem for the education and health system. But the ANC comes with solutions and the solutions ...

[Interjections.] ... to implement while we are still waiting to implement the upgrading of the informal settlements as a temporary relief for our people to be liberated. Thank you very much.

The mini plenary rose at 16:36.