



The Petition to Eradicate Pit Latrines In South African Public Schools

5000+ signatures calling on the Minister of Education to #EradicatePitLatrines and protect the human rights of children in South African rural schools.



I am Yongama Zigebe the United Democratic Movement (UDM) Secretary General, a Nguvu Changeleader and Human Rights Activist who joined politics because I want to see the human rights of our people being recognised and protected.

Not so long ago I visited my younger cousin's rural school in the Eastern Cape and I was appalled by what I saw. Education has become life-threatening for learners in South African rural schools. Beyond that it has become a human rights violation. It was saddening to see 30 years into our democracy, children and teachers relieving themselves in the death traps that are pit latrines or even worse resorting to open defecation.



Eradication of these horrendous death traps would be in line with the South African Constitution which guarantees the right to life, dignity, safety, health, proper sanitation and conducive environment to education.

The Polokwane High Court’s ruling on 17 September 2021 called for the eradication of pit toilets across South Africa and not just in Limpopo. Judge Gerrit Muller said that “the replacement of pit toilets is a national emergency and must be treated accordingly” and expressed his disappointment at the lack of urgency to dealing with this issue.

Regardless of this the DBE still drags its feet at the expense of human life.



I have started this petition through Change.org platform to safeguard and promote the rights and well-being of children in rural schools who would normally not have a voice and no one to stand up for them.

With more than 5000 people having signed already, we are of the firm view that the people have spoken in numbers. And that the clarion call that was made years ago should be listened to by the government.

It has been 9 years since little Michael Komape and 5 years since Lumka Mthethwa died a horrific death after falling into a pit latrine toilet and drowning in a public school in Limpopo and Eastern Cape respectively.

Yet the Department of Basic Education has moved at a devastatingly slow pace in eradicating pit latrine toilets in public schools, infringing heavily on the right to life, human dignity and basic education.

In March 2023, we watched in horror as yet another four-year-old girl was found dead in a school pit toilet in the Eastern Cape province.

We are here to find out what the DBE has done since then.





In 2018, President Ramaphosa and the Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga made a rosey presentation about how millions of rands have been raised and claimed to be “paying a dividend of democracy through education infrastructure”.

What happened to the money?

Why are we still discussing eradication of pit latrines?

Since 2018 how many pit latrines has the DBE demolished and replaced with proper toilets?



On 28 February 2023, the DispatchLive reported that the Eastern Cape province forfeited R100 million of the Education Infrastructure Grant meant for public school infrastructure. The money was simply not spent by the end of the last financial year while the state of school infrastructure in the Eastern Cape is devastating.

Of the over 5000 schools in the Eastern Cape, over 1000 of those schools still use pit latrine toilets,

SO WHY WAS THE MONEY NOT SPENT ON ERADICATING THEM?



The Department of Basic Education has committed to eradicating pit latrine toilets in public schools by 2025.

In March 2023, Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga shared that the department has identified 3,398 schools countrywide with pit latrine toilets.

For the 2025 commitment, we hardly have 15 months left. There are more than 3000 schools that still have illegal pit latrines that need to be demolished and replaced.

We need to know what progress has been made since March 2023.



Honourable Minister Angie Motshekga

We Demand:

Reports on budget allocations for eradication of pit latrines.

Reports on progress to goal from March 2023 to November 2023, what has been done?

We demand quarterly progress to goal reports from each affected province in the lead up to **YOUR 2025 deadline.**

Eradication of all pit latrines in public school nationwide by November 2024 (1 year from now).

Thank you



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