**DEBATE ON BUDGET VOTE 33 ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS**

1. Chairperson, firstly, we would like to send our deepest condolences to the family, friends, and comrades of Nokuthula Mabaso, a leader of Abahlali Basemjondolo movement who was assassinated in eKhenana Informal Settlement in Cato Manor, eThekwini last week.
2. The death of Nokuthula follows that of Ayanda Ngili, another leader of the same movement of people staying in informal settlements.
3. The assassination of these leaders of the homeless, who are fighting to affirm the rights of all to a home, is serious indication of just how far the ruling elite are prepared to go in order to eliminate all voices of those speaking on behalf of the poor.
4. In their honour, we demand that the government must stop harassing people living in informal settlements. The eviction and destruction of people’s homes must stop. This state sponsored hatred on poor people staying in informal settlements must be stop forthwith. It is not a crime to be poor, being poor must not be a death sentence in this country.
5. We also take this opportunity to reiterate our support for the thousands of people who were left homeless by the flooding that took place in KwaZulu Natal and in the Eastern Cape.
6. We condemn the slow to non-existent pace of rebuilding people’s homes in these two provinces, a demonstration of this government’s complete disregard for the wellbeing of our people even during times of natural disasters.
7. The EFF rejects budget vote 33. We do so because it is a gross underestimation of the amount of money needed to ensure that the country stands a reasonable chance of fighting against homelessness.
8. Even though there is a R1 billion increase in the budget compared to the 2021/22 budget, this increase is a drop in the ocean when seen in the context of the challenges faced by the homeless in the country.
9. In the Western Cape alone, there are almost 400 000 people who are on the housing waiting list. Many of these people have resorted to building informal houses for themselves even in areas not suitable for human habitation. They do this because they are desperate and have nowhere else to go.
10. We are here as the EFF to speak on behalf of the excluded millions, of those who have been on the housing waiting lists for all their lives, with no hope of ever owning a home of their own. We speak on behalf of the over 1 million farm workers and farm dwellers who have been evicted from farms they called homes between 1994 and today.
11. We speak on behalf of the residents of Airport City in East London, whose houses were demolished by the government of that province on the basis that they were built on land that belonged to the government.
12. If government fails to build homes for people, why are you then criminalizing those who build homes for themselves?
13. With the proven incapacity of the State to fulfil this basic human right to a home, is it not advisable therefore to free available land and ensure that those who can build houses for themselves are allowed to do so?
14. The delivery of homes to the poor is not the only problem faced by this department.
15. You have also made it extremely difficult for emerging black contractors to enter the space and get contracts from government to build houses.
16. The construction space is dominated by established white owned companies, with companies such as Power Construction monopolizing almost all construction projects in the country.
17. It is for this reason that we call for the establishment of a State Construction company, so as to dramatically reduce the costs of building houses for our people and stop the unfair enrichment of white owned companies at our people’s expense.
18. We also want legislative reforms in the financing of housing in this country. The vast majority of black people with access to jobs are unable to service their home loans because of the rising interest rates.
19. It makes no sense that people who buy houses are made to pay more than double the selling price for periods up to 30 years, half of which is purely for paying interests.
20. The EFF rejects this budget vote