



FIGHT INEQUALITY ALLIANCE:

A CALL FOR COMMUNITIES TO TAKE BACK POWER!

8 July 2020

The state is failing us!

It has been over 100 days since the South African government imposed one of the most extreme lockdowns in the world to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic. The state's response has deepened the health crisis into a social crisis of epic proportions. It has implemented conditions that make survival for working-class communities near impossible. It has gone further to deepen the crisis by producing a supplementary budget that makes [huge cuts](#) in areas that are important for the survival of poor and working-class people.

The state has even failed in delivering on the weak commitments made by the president over the past 100 days. The money that the government allocated to its Covid-19 response has, largely, not even [materialised](#). Where it has materialised, it has not been used properly. Allocations to social grants, relief grants, wage support, job creation, food, essential social services, school readiness and even health have been an insult to our communities.

Beyond that, our communities have been militarised with at least 11 people murdered by the state; the informal economy which is essential to our survival has been devastated; violent evictions have left many homeless; millions of working-class people have been forced into unemployment or precarious work; gender-based violence has worsened and women have had to bear a disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work; millions of families are going to bed hungry every night and we are not adequately prepared to respond socially, economically and psychologically as the Covid-19 infections are expected to peak with between 30,000 and 60,000 possible deaths.

We are not in this together!

The president has tried to mask his government's inadequacies by telling us that we are all in this fight together. We have never been in this together. We are deeply divided along class, race, and gender lines. Even the government's analysis of our society is a failure.

This approach is also an attempt to depoliticise this crisis. It reduces it to a mere health crisis that requires charity solutions, without any perspective on the underlying structural problems that worsen the impact of the pandemic.

What the pandemic and the state's response have done is to lay bare the deep class division in this country, which is a division between the economic elite and ordinary people. It is 26 years of compromises that has seen the government and the ruling class abandoning the working-class. It is the state's neo-liberal project that has commodified essential services and left the working-class defenceless against such crises.

Take back Power!

Let us be clear: there are workable solutions. Under the shadow of Covid-19 civil society has made short- and long-term proposals for [social security for all](#), [food sovereignty](#), a [just opening of schools](#), [ending the unemployment and climate crisis](#), [securing social services](#), [ending evictions](#), a [state-led humanitarian public-health strategy](#) and [financing such solutions](#).



The problem is that this government is trapped in the logic of neo-liberalism. These solutions would require a break from a business-as-usual strategy – a path that defies their logic of profit before people.

Therefore: communities must take back Power now!

As communities, we must organise ourselves while maintaining social distancing and safety precautions. We must build and enhance street and block committees, we must cement community-solidarity bonds that have been wrecked by neo-liberalism, and we must reject attempts to depoliticise this crisis. We must recognise and respond to this crisis as a social and political crisis – and reject the government's neo-liberal project. We must, also, reject increasing gender-based violence, patriarchy, and all forms of oppression within our communities.

The [campaign](#) by the Bishop Lavis Action Community, the Covid-19 Working Class Campaign, the Assembly of the Unemployed and others calling on communities to organise themselves and boycott all schools until they are safe shows that this is possible. They show that the decision by the government to reopen schools despite rejections from community movements and labour has highlighted the state's abandonment of the working class and that it is the working class that must take control of the response to the crisis.

We call on all communities to:

- Run popular education campaigns that empower community members, especially women, to respond to the pandemic. *For educational materials, send a WhatsApp message to 0679063672.*
- Build care-structures that consider that women take on the biggest burden of this crisis. *For a toolkit on gender-sensitive organising during the pandemic send a WhatsApp message to 0679063672.*
- Take control of the resources in the community. Use existing soup kitchens and community organisations, use vacant land to grow food, use unused buildings for safe popular education sessions and build a network of dedicated organisers.
- Organise community assemblies so that this struggle is democratised. EVERYONE must be involved! *For a toolkit on safely organising under lockdown, send a WhatsApp message to 0679063672.*
- Boycott schools! Heed the call for a national stayaway from schools until it is safe, by making links with parent, teacher, and learner committees.
- Use this crisis to organise community members and enhance community struggles for land, water, food sovereignty, public housing, public health, social services, and basic income.

The time is up for compromises and failed systems! Our struggle now is to take control of this crisis and to reimagine and fight for a new world.

Issued by the Fight Inequality Alliance South Africa

For more information call or send a WhatsApp message to 0679063672

This statement is endorsed by:

- 360 Degrees Environmental Organisation (GP)
- Africa Reclaimers Organisation (GP)
- Amavinkivonkho Organisation (GP)
- Apsara Primary Cooperative (GP)
- Assembly of the Unemployed (National)
- Bishop Lavis Action Community (WC)
- Bonteheuwel Development Forum (WC)
- Botshabelo Unemployed Movement (FS)



- Cooperative and Policy Alternative Centre (GP)
- Eastern Cape Water Caucus (EC)
- Gauteng Housing Crisis Committee (GP)
- Housing Assembly (WC)
- Ithuba Lethu Recycling Movement (GP)
- Land Access Movement of South Africa (National)
- Lokgabeng Development Desk (NC)
- Makause Community Development Forum (GP)
- Marikana Unemployment Forum (NW)
- Marikana Youth Development Organisation (NW)
- Marikana Youth Movement (NW)
- Middelburg Employable People's Structure (MP)
- Middelburg Environmental Justice Network (MP)
- Mmaditlhokwa Task Team (NW)
- Nosizwe Funda Educational and Community Development Centre (EC)
- One Voice for All Hawkers (GP)
- One Voice for Lehae Traders (GP)
- Rehoboth Ministry (GP)
- Sekhukhune Environmental Justice Network (LP)
- Social Justice Coalition (WC)
- South African Mining Affected Communities (National)
- South African Green Revolutionary Council (MP)
- South African Spaza and Tuckshops Association (GP)
- South African Traders Alliance (GP)
- Themblilile Crisis Committee (GP)
- Ubuntu Advice Centre (MP)
- Unemployed People's Movement (EC)
- Unemployed United Front (MP)
- Waterberg Women Advocacy Organization (LP)
- Women of The Kraal (GP)
- Women Together in Development (LP)
- Young Urban and Rural Self-Empowerment (GP)

To add your movement's or community's name send a WhatsApp message to 0679063672