



South African Communist Party

Statement on the 105th anniversary of the South African Communist Party and the launch of the 2026 Local Government Election Manifesto, 16 August 2026

Build people's power where we live, for the right to work, water, land, electricity, roads and safety for all!

Comrades, fellow South Africans, workers and poor people of our country, the working class.

Today we mark 105 years of the South African Communist Party (SACP), founded in Cape Town on 30 July to 1 August 1921 as the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), the first and the largest Marxist-Leninist party on the African continent. We celebrate by launching our 2026 Local Government Election Manifesto, declaring an independent path in electoral politics.

This is not simply an anniversary celebration. It is a moment of remembrance but also of political determination, of a new era in our class struggle. We celebrate 105 years of unbroken militant revolutionary working struggle for national liberation, people's power and socialism. But also, 105 years of communist organisation and frontline sacrifice in the liberation struggle. We do so by recommitting ourselves to the working-class struggles that gave birth to our Party. These struggles continue to define its purpose: the mother of all struggles, the struggle to end all forms of human exploitation, oppression, inequality and the transfer of wealth, economic and social power to the people to build a prosperous, non-sexist, non-racial, democratic and socialist South Africa. That struggle is called socialism.

From its earliest years, the Communist Party fought to unite workers across racial divisions and played a pioneering role in advancing non-racialism and organising workers. It became an important force in building the liberation movement, the progressive trade union movement and the liberation Alliance pursuing the revolution to end British colonialism and imperialism as well as pursuing the struggle against national oppression and ending racism. Its objective was to create a non-racial society and fight capitalist exploitation and control of our economy for imperial purposes, end class exploitation and create a classless society – an equal society – and fight against patriarchal power relations and gender oppression and create a non-sexist society, the totality of national liberation. We simplify this as the revolutionary tools of race, class, gender and anti-imperial struggles. It quickly rooted itself among black workers. By the late 1920s, most of its members were African. It pioneered the call for black majority rule.

The CPSA was the first organisation to be banned by the apartheid regime in April 1950. In anticipation of the banning order, it dissolved itself but did not surrender. It

continued its work with a three-person Central Committee and Political Bureau led by the General Secretary Moses Kotane with Walter Sisulu and Michael Hermel. This committee was mandated to take all decisions in the best interest of the working class and to task reliable comrades and reorganise.

The Party then reconstituted itself underground in 1953 as the South African Communist Party – the SACP.

In 1961, together with the ANC, the SACP launched uMkhonto we Sizwe. Through exile, underground work, imprisonment and death, the Party remained unbroken. It produced leaders of the calibre of Moses Kotane, JB Marks, Yusuf Dadoo, Joe Slovo, Moses Mabhida, John Nkadimeng, Ahmed Kathrada, Govan Mbeki, Josie Mpama, Josie Palmer, Dan Tloome, Mama Nomaka Epainette Mbeki, Ruth First, Lilian Ngoyi, and the martyrs of our collective struggle, the symbol of centuries of the collective pain of our people, and the martyr of our struggle Martin Thembisile 'Christopher' Hani, whose cowardly assassination by the right-wing forces finally gave us April 27, 1994, as a day to vote for the government of our choice. That is the Party whose birthday we mark today. A Party that never abandoned the working class. A Party that still carries the responsibility to organise the working class as a class for itself.

This is also Women's Month

Women carry the heaviest burden when there is no water, when food runs short, when streets are dark and unsafe, and when care work is treated as invisible.

Any municipality that does not place women at the centre of planning, safety, service delivery and leadership is failing the working class.

Our manifesto demands safer public spaces, action against gender-based violence and femicide, recognition of care work – unpaid labour of women – and the full leadership of women in every structure of people's power.

We also mark the centenary of Comrade Fidel Castro Ruz

Born on 13 August 1926, Fidel devoted his life to the liberation of the Cuban people, defeating and removing the US-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista. He led the construction of socialism and the worldwide struggle against colonialism, imperialism, racism and capitalist exploitation.

We remember the Cuban internationalists who sacrificed their lives for the freedom of Africa. Their internationalism in Africa, especially through *Operation Carlotta* in Angola, remains unparalleled in internationalism.

Over 35,000 Cuban soldiers fought alongside their comrades of the People's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola (FAPLA) and SWAPLA counterparts in the South of Angola, and MK combatants held the fort and continued the fight in the Northern Front of Angola.

Operation Carlotta was named after an African slave who led a slave revolt against the Spanish colonisers in Cuba. After the suppression of the revolt, she was captured with her comrades and dismembered by horses as a punishment. Her final victory was led by Cuban Internationalist forces when they defended the Angolan independence. Their epic victory at Cuito Cuanavale against the apartheid forces and UNITA contributed immensely to the independence of Namibia, the release of Nelson Mandela and the formal end of apartheid. Their blood forms part of the foundation of our 1994 democratic breakthrough.

On the centenary of Fidel Castro, we demand the immediate and unconditional end of the illegal US blockade against Cuba and its aggressive measures and threats.

Long live the revolutionary legacy of Comrade Fidel!

We measure ourselves today against Chris Hani

Chris Hani taught us that socialism begins with the questions people face every day. Who has water? Who has work? Who has food? Who has a safe home? Who owns, who controls, who decides, and who benefits?

He rejected careerism, corruption and empty promises. He led by example. When we say, "Do it for Chris Hani," we accept a standard. Every candidate we deploy and every councillor we elect will be judged by the Chris Hani standard: selfless service to the people.

We are contesting the local government elections independently because the working class is not represented in government; it has lost its voice in government. We seek working-class representation. We are contesting because we believe we can fix the collapsing municipalities and rebuild them for their purpose. The working class has been patient long enough for unfulfilled promises. Because the conditions Hani named remain the daily reality of millions. Because there can be no more hesitation. We are not here to add politicians to councils. We are here to build people's power where we live, for the right to work, access to clean running water, access to land, to food and to safe communities.

Workers spend a large share of their wages just travelling to work. Women carry the heaviest load when the taps are dry. Young people face mass unemployment. Communities wait for water tankers. The majority of villages have no proper roads. Tenders are awarded, and the work is not done. Councillors disappear after elections. This is not the democracy our people fought for. This is not what Chris Hani died for. Now the GNU has become a front for monopoly capital.

Our manifesto answers with concrete demands

Reliable water is the first condition of dignity. We will end water tankers and dry taps. We will fight for fair, pro-poor tariffs for water and electricity, protect lifeline services, and stop punitive disconnections. Eskom must remain in public hands.

We fully support the National Union of Mineworkers' court action against the government over privatisation of Eskom in the name of unbundling. Electricity is a

public good, not a source of private profit. When tariffs crush working-class households, it is our people who sit in darkness. Eskom must remain a public entity, and electricity must serve the people as a whole, not just the rich.

We will fight for the proper maintenance of roads in townships and villages. Municipal roads are essential public infrastructure, not an afterthought. Most of the land ownership is the product of dispossession. It must be restored to the people. Public land must be put to work for homes, food production and support for co-operatives. The bucket system is a humiliation and must be eradicated. We will fight for municipal decent work plans, recognition of informal workers, and affordable public transport under public and community control. We reject tenderisation as a system. Our starting point is public provision and insourcing. Public money must meet public needs and not be used for patronage and blackmail.

SACP councillors will report regularly to the ward, account to the Party, and face recall if they betray the people. A seat in council is a post of struggle and service, not a business opportunity. These are not promises for after the elections. The People's Red Caravan has already been in communities, confronting water failures, food insecurity and idle land. That is the method of Hani: go to the people, stay with them, organise with them, work with them and help them as they resolve their daily challenges and problems.

The People's Red Caravan is the SACP programme of building people's power from below to end poverty and for community self-reliance

The People's Red Caravan takes the national and provincial leaders of the SACP into communities to organise alongside working-class and poor people, not as a charity dispensing handouts, but to mobilise collective action around the immediate necessities of life. Its interventions have included community food production and processing, household food production, establishing and strengthening co-operatives, community stores, health and clinic improvements, educational and cultural activities, community safety initiatives and practical work to improve local facilities and infrastructure, building community parks, grading roads and creating basic sports facilities like soccer and netball pitches.

We can cite different interventions by the People's Red Caravan in different communities and provinces where we have launched it.

For example, in Gladstone, Free State Province, the People's Red Caravan has supported crop production, household food production, egg and honey production, agro-processing, local aggregation, and a communally owned co-operative store. These interventions help communities build self-reliance, solidarity and collective productive capacity, demonstrating that people are not passive recipients of services or voters in patronage politics to be mobilised during elections but can organise and act as agents of their own transformation.

Self-reliance, however, must never become a substitute for the struggle for structural change or an excuse for the state to abandon its responsibilities. We organise people to do what they can, collectively, while organising them to demand what the government must do. The People's Red Caravan therefore connects practical

interventions with struggles for land, water, electricity, decent work, food security, functioning public services and developmental investment. Its success must be measured not only by what is built or produced during an activation programme but also by the organisation, consciousness, productive capacity and continuing struggles left behind.

The People's Red Caravan must keep moving, deepening and expanding, turning practical action into lasting organisation and organisation into working-class power.

As our manifesto makes clear, the gains we seek are not gifts delivered from above but gains won through organisation, struggle and democratic people's power.

We say to the working class: organise as a class for yourself. Build power where you live. Contest power in your own name. Join the ward assemblies. Build the street committees. Defend public services.

SACP contributions to our liberation struggle and South Africa today

Communists made a major contribution to the Alliance, the Congress of the People and the Freedom Charter, to the armed struggle and to the broader struggle that brought apartheid to an end. Today, South Africa is counted amongst the richest in natural and mineral resources, yet about 23 million people, representing close to 37.9 per cent of the population, live below the lower-bound poverty line. Official figures show that a whopping 43 per cent of the potential working population is unemployed, afflicted by poverty and high inequality, which is the highest in the world, whilst 10 per cent of the population is controlling about 85 to 86 per cent of the country's wealth. Going deeper into the details, you find that colonialism of a special type (apartheid) has played a major part in putting at the deep end the suffering of the black majority, Africans in particular – and generally the working class.

The Communist Party became the first political organisation in South Africa to adopt the struggles' aims and objectives of replacing the system of colonial subordination, domination and exploitation and the transformation of the country into an independent republic under democratic majority rule with equal rights for people of all races.

But the banning had its implications and consequences, including imprisonment, including the notorious detention without trial, and the killing of our members and leaders. Despite that, it could not ban the Communist Party's ideals or extinguish its revolutionary commitment. Communists went underground and continued the struggle through what became Congress Alliance partners in the 1950s.

The Communist Party persisted beyond the Congress Alliance until and after the hard-won victory over the apartheid regime in 1994. Our history is therefore not merely a history of an organisation. It is an indispensable part of the history of South Africa's long struggle for an end to colonial rule, for the achievement of liberation, democracy, non-racialism, non-sexism, workers' rights, economic and social justice, and the bit of social emancipation and freedom we enjoy.

We now need true independence, including complete economic and national sovereignty.

The 1994 democratic breakthrough was a historic and profound achievement of the people of South Africa. The achievement of one-person-one-vote, regardless of race or gender, was a victory won through immense sacrifice and struggle.

But political democracy cannot be the end of history.

The question before us is what kind of economic and social order will give real meaning to the freedoms we have enshrined in the Bill of Rights.

All these were achieved by struggle, the National Democratic Revolution (NDR), but now captured by neo-liberalists who imposed a capitalist agenda with its incapacity for the thoroughgoing transformation required of a country that suffered almost 300 years of colonialism, degradation, exploitation by imperialism, apartheid segregation and ridicule of its people and culture. Capitalism remains insufficient to rescue the underdevelopment of South Africa today.

The NDR has stalled and needs rejuvenation

The NDR is stuck. It is in a state of interregnum and has stalled because of a unilateral choice for a neo-liberal economic trajectory, where effort does not yield expected outcomes because of primitive accumulation and profit interests have replaced serving the people. This has led us into the current crisis we found ourselves in today: stagnant economic development, spiralling poverty, increasing unemployment and inequalities. All these have created an environment that requires a new approach that is dynamic, innovative and suitable for responding to our new realities.

The SACP believes that there must be a complete overhaul of the economic policy of our country. Our political economic outlook and development policy should recognise the fundamental need to undo damage caused by many years of colonial and apartheid rule. To continue following both colonial and apartheid economic trajectories, with isolated small tinkering to soothe the working class and broader historically disadvantaged communities will not take us anywhere. The most it can do is increase societal destabilisation of the majority while the 10 per cent of our population continue to hold control and ownership of the economy at the expense of the working class and broader majority of the people. In simpler terms, the African people have been abandoned by their government now controlled by capital.

The question is who owns, controls, decides and benefits

Marxism teaches us to look beneath appearances and ask what lies beneath the surface of society. How can a country with enormous productive capacity have millions of people without work? That has food in abundance while people go hungry? How can land lie idle while families struggle for homes? How can water be scarce for poor communities while private interests profit from water provision? And electricity becomes increasingly unaffordable while productive capacity is weakened? Public money flows into the corrupt tender system while municipal

workers lack the tools, equipment and resources to maintain infrastructure? Why does wealth accumulate in the hands of a few while poverty remains entrenched among millions?

These are questions of class inequality and power relations in South Africa.

Capitalism places production and the allocation of wealth under the domination of private accumulation. What society needs is too often subordinated to what is profitable. Labour is treated as a source of cost to be reduced rather than as an asset that produces wealth. Public assets become opportunities for private accumulation. Essential services become markets. Public institutions become vulnerable to private interests.

This is why the SACP speaks of socialism not as a distant abstraction but as a practical struggle over the conditions of everyday life. Today, we reaffirm the strategic guidance to action: “Socialism is the future; build it now!” We reaffirm, this time in elections, contesting both directly and independently, the inseparable connection between the NDR and socialism.

For us, socialism begins with the elementary question of sustaining human life, nutritious food, decent clothing, a home, healthcare, education, water, electricity, safety and the right to work. But it goes deeper and asks, “Who owns?” “Who controls?” “Who decides?” “Who benefits?”

Yes, we are concerned about failing, deteriorating and collapsing provision of public services and goods, which we are contesting the elections to reverse. But more, we are concerned about the “how” part and the fundamental class questions of who, in that process, as in production generally, owns, controls, decides and benefits.

Our manifesto therefore says plainly: what belongs to the people must work for the people. Public money must meet public need. Public land must serve homes, food, work and community life. Municipal workers must have the tools, equipment, resources and overall capacity to provide public goods and services. Communities must have real power over the decisions that shape their lives.

The economic crisis we face is a class choice

South Africa has made important advances since 1994. But some of these gains have come under severe pressure. Some have been eroded by governance and administrative decay, corruption, state capture, weak institutional capacity as a result of all that and neo-liberal policies, choices that have failed to transform the structure of our economy and bring down unemployment, poverty, inequality and uneven development.

Since the unilateral adoption of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy by government in 1996, the SACP has consistently argued for the reconfiguration of the Alliance so that it can function optimally and impactfully and determine policy direction and content through democratic consultation and consensus-seeking, exercise collective leadership of the NDR and ensure collective accountability to the Alliance and broader society.

For 28 years we have sought this reconfiguration. It has not been achieved.

We have done so because the NDR cannot advance through fragmented policymaking, nor can its historic objectives be achieved if the forces of our broader democratic movement do not collectively exercise leadership. Neither can the national democratic revolution, needless to mention, nor the economic and ownership-by-the-people-as-a-whole goals of the Freedom Charter be achieved through neo-liberal policies.

The crisis before working-class South Africans has deepened. Unemployment has remained at crisis levels, with the expanded unemployment rate now affecting approximately 13 million active and discouraged work seekers. Poverty remains entrenched. Inequality remains extraordinarily high.

Industrial capacity has been weakened, factories have been closing and workers have been retrenched. The share of manufacturing in overall national output and employment has fallen significantly. Deindustrialisation continues.

Infrastructure has deteriorated. Roads have developed potholes. In many rural areas, communities still lack graded roads, let alone paved access roads. Rail infrastructure has been vandalised. In many areas, it has been rendered dysfunctional. Traffic lights and other public infrastructure are increasingly destroyed or left dysfunctional. In too many communities, basic services and goods have become unreliable and even unavailable.

At the same time, crime has become a daily threat to working-class and rural communities. Drug dealing destroys lives and futures. Stock theft attacks livelihoods. Extortion networks invade and capture the community economy, especially construction projects. Housebreaking, robbery, hijacking, rape and other sexual assaults and forms of gender-based violence, including femicide, and other crimes impose a heavy burden on women, families and communities. Organised criminal and mafia networks have even penetrated and, in some instances, captured parts of law enforcement. We have ticked the many boxes to qualify the characterisation of a mafia state. We must be frank about these challenges and failures.

The answer is a people's economy, not a captured state driving the private wealth accumulation agenda through the GNU programme of Vulindlela

Operation Vulindlela is not a class-neutral programme of administrative or economic reform but an expression of a changing balance of class forces within the state in favour of capital and deepening neo-liberalism and austerity measures on public services. It is why right-wing, anti-Freedom Charter, neo-liberal parties and their sponsoring networks of capital support and even accuse the government of not having done enough to implement its liberalisation and deregulation measures more forcefully.

The growing influence of big private business interests over the strategic direction of government policy has meant that the needs and demands of dominant sections of capital increasingly find their way into the highest levels of state economic decision-

making, while working-class influence is eroded and marginalised. This is why the fundamental question about Vulindlela is, whose interests are its measures, called structural reforms, aimed to benefit with economic participation, ownership and wealth accumulation in class terms? What is presented as neutral economic “modernisation” is, in substance, a capitalist class project to reorganise the state so that it both increasingly facilitates and simultaneously becomes a field of private wealth accumulation.

Vulindlela is consequently opening the way for greater penetration of the ruling class and private wealth accumulation using the state to acquire, capture and control strategic public assets, SOEs, infrastructure and network industries. The SACP has correctly characterised this as a new form of privatisation and state capture. The state need not formally sell every public asset for privatisation to occur. Privatisation has expanded to include deregulation and liberalisation of electricity, rail, ports, water and other strategic sectors in favour of private wealth-accumulation interests. It involves constraining the expansion and recapitalisation of state-owned enterprises and creating profitable spaces in segments that previously belonged to the state for private wealth-accumulation interests to enter and exploit. This is the class content of Vulindlela. It is a sell-out programme for the masses of this country, and it gives back the economy of the country to the full control of the ruling class – monopoly capital.

The fight for national liberation was the fight for the control of the economy. The working class fought a lengthy, brutal and bloody war and sacrificed limbs and all to be betrayed in this form. The people thought the democratic state would stand for their interests.

The state increasingly bears the costs, including those of monopoly-finance capital’s wealth-accumulation strategies such as blended finance, and absorbs the risks. The result is a profound reconfiguration of the role of the state, from building and expanding public productive capacity to creating the conditions for private wealth accumulation. This agenda runs counter to the Freedom Charter, which clearly states that “...monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole” and that “All other industry and trade shall be controlled to assist the wellbeing of the people”.

We are told that the government has no money, that the state is inefficient and that private capital must therefore be brought in to “unlock” infrastructure and growth. But this is not an economic law. It is a class project, a deliberate class choice. Instead of using public resources to strengthen Eskom, Transnet, the ports, water infrastructure, telecommunications and the public economy at large, ensuring that it grows and diversifies, the state is increasingly being steered to make room for private wealth accumulation and profit-making interests in industries that, if the Freedom Charter were upheld, must belong to the people as a whole.

We oppose agendas that transfer economic power from the public to private wealth-accumulation interests while presenting this transfer as the interests of the nation and for national unity, that it is for the people as a whole and development for all, whilst it is given to a clique of white businessmen, who give small shares to few black people. The working class requires a capable developmental state with the

capacity to produce, build, maintain, plan and serve the people directly, especially the neglected African people, the supposed victors of the 1994 democratic elections.

Public infrastructure, with monopoly industries belonging to the people, as the Freedom Charter declares, must serve industrialisation, skills development, the right to work for all and the needs of the people, of whom the working class is the majority.

The strategic direction of the economy cannot be determined by the boardrooms of big business and then implemented through the highest echelons of government.

“The people must govern” means precisely that the commanding heights of the economy must be brought under democratic public ownership and the democratic majority, working-class influence, rather than opened as new frontiers for private wealth-accumulation interests.

Both within and beyond the elections, the working class must do everything in its power to unite, defend and advance the growth and diversification of the public economy as part and parcel of the broader programme to build a people’s economy at all levels, including through local economic development and the role of municipalities.

The SACP remains committed to the Alliance and to the national democratic revolution

Our criticism is directed at policies, practices, failures and class forces that obstruct transformation.

There was no reason why proposals for changes in policy direction, consensus-seeking consultation, collective leadership and collective accountability should not have been considered. The working class and its organisations cannot be expected indefinitely to accept the consequences of decisions over which it has little or no collective influence.

A new electoral front to advance the NDR in the new era

For the first time since the historic democratic breakthrough of 1994, the SACP is contesting elections directly and independently under its own name. This is an important step. It is not a substitute for Alliance reconfiguration. It is not a withdrawal from the national democratic revolution. It is not a departure from the broader struggle for socialism. It is a necessary contribution to all three.

The SACP will now not only exercise its hard-won democratic right to vote but also stand for election. We are doing so because the working class needs to move beyond a class in itself to become a class for itself, a class with its own political voice, its own programme and its own candidates in elections and other processes and to fix the collapsing municipalities.

For too long, electoral politics has often presented working-class people with choices without sufficiently presenting the working-class programme. Especially the absence

of scientific socialist politics and alternatives, inseparable from its connection with the national democratic revolution, has disadvantaged the working class in electoral contests.

The absence of a visible socialist electoral struggle creates political space for other forces, needless to mention the whole series of right-wing and anti-Freedom Charter neo-liberal forces, to present their interests as if they were the interests of society as a whole. We are not leaving that space uncontested. Our electoral intervention is therefore a new front in the struggle.

We are taking the struggle for people's power (socialism) into the council chamber, into communities and into the electoral arena, while continuing the struggle in workplaces, trade unions, civil society and every other arena in which class forces confront one another. A vote for the SACP is not a vote to become a spectator and mere critic and commentator of politics. It is a vote to organise and impact decision-making for the working class for basic needs.

Build people's power where we live

Our manifesto puts people first, particularly the workers and poor who constitute the majority of our society. People want to realise their right to work in practice.

People want water that flows. They want electricity they can afford. People want proper roads in rural areas. They want roads without potholes in both rural and urban areas. People want reliable refuse removal, functioning sanitation and properly maintained public facilities. They want decent healthcare. They want safe streets. They want their children to have a guaranteed better future and want them to go to school in a free and conducive environment.

People want land for homes and food. They want municipalities that answer to them. And they want to know what happens to every rand of public money. These are not unreasonable demands. They are elementary requirements of a dignified life.

The SACP manifesto therefore advances six interconnected priorities

First: Reliable public services, preventative maintenance and prompt repairs.

We reject the idea that failures in the provision of public services must lead to privatisation. These failures are, among other factors, a result of privatisation, outsourcing, corruption and other neo-liberal policies. We will rebuild public capacity, employ and equip municipal workers and bring essential work back into public provision wherever feasible.

Second: The right to work, decent work and sustainable livelihoods. Every person who is willing and able to work must have access to decent, productive and socially useful work. Work must provide dignity and livelihood, not precarious survival.

Municipalities must use public employment, in-sourcing, land, infrastructure, apprenticeships, experiential training, internships, co-operatives and municipal public enterprises to expand decent work.

Third: Land, homes and food for social need, not private profit.

Land must serve human needs: life.

Public land must be released for housing, food production, cooperatives and community facilities. Hunger in a country capable of producing abundant food is a political failure. Land cannot be treated as a commodity when our people need it to live. Private ownership must not stand above public interest. Where land is required to meet the needs of the people, including in the metros and cities, the state must have the power to acquire it, including through expropriation in the public interest.

We must use municipal power to dismantle apartheid spatial planning, not reproduce it under new conditions.

The Constitution itself does not place private property above the public interest. Section 25 expressly provides that no provision of the section may impede the state from taking legislative and other measures to achieve equitable access to land, water and other natural resources. The Constitution therefore provides a basis for, and does not prohibit, transformative measures to address the profound inequalities in land ownership and access created by colonialism and apartheid.

We must transform land ownership and redistribute land to redress the historical and continuing consequences of racial and gender discrimination. This struggle must reach every municipality and include support for productive land use in any sector of the economy to fight unemployment, poverty and inequality.

It cannot be right for a municipality, as the Cape Metro has done, to sell well-located public land to private owners while working-class families remain excluded from land, pushed to the margins of our cities and towns, and cramped in squatter camps. This must stop in every municipality across South Africa. Public land must not be converted into private wealth while our people are denied spatial justice. That is why we must reject, with the contempt it deserves, the call for the actual privatisation of municipalities by some parties.

Fourth: Safe, caring and healthy communities.

Safety cannot be reduced to slogans. We need functioning public services, accountable policing, organised communities, youth development, safe public spaces and effective action against criminal syndicates, drug dealing, stock theft, extortion, infrastructure vandalism and looting and other crimes.

Fifth: Municipalities free from tender corruption and capture.

We say without hesitation that the corrupt tender system must be scrapped. Every rand must be traceable. Every contract must be accountable. Public provision and in-sourcing must be the norm or the new normal where municipalities have the capacity to do the work.

When public money goes to the corrupt tender networks and mafias while municipal workers lack tools, equipment and resources, and young people lack work, wealth is transferred from the people to the few. That is not development. It is class accumulation through public resources. It is a kind of legalised crime.

Sixth, councillors who answer to the people and people who have a real say

Democracy cannot mean voting once every five years and then disappearing from political life. This is not what the Freedom Charter meant when it declared, "The People Shall Govern!"

The people's government cannot be reduced to periodic elections in which people choose representatives and are then expected to withdraw from public life while decisions are made without them. Nor can the people's government be reduced to governance through tenders and consultants, through capitalist entrepreneurs and consultants who increasingly become substitutes for the state's own capacity, expertise and democratic accountability.

"The People Shall Govern" means that the people must have a meaningful and organised say in the decisions that affect their lives. It means democratic participation must continue between elections. Workers and communities must participate in determining priorities, shaping plans, allocating resources, monitoring implementation and holding public representatives and officials accountable.

We cannot claim that the people govern when communities are consulted only after decisions have already been made or cannot be changed in what is called "consultation". When public representatives do not seek mandates and do not report back to the people or when consultants, entrepreneurs and their foreign-controlled establishments are brought in to make decisions that properly belong to democratically accountable public institutions.

The SACP understands people's power as organised people's power. It is not a government on behalf of the people without the people. It is a government with and for the people and accountable to the people. This is what we mean when we say, "The people shall govern".

For the working class, democracy must not end at the workplace gate or at the ballot box. Democracy must increasingly be connected to economic democracy, to democratic control over land, means of production, public resources, the wealth produced, its distribution, and the institutions through which society reproduces itself.

We want ward assemblies, democratic participatory budgeting, community oversight, active worker organisation and councillors who seek mandates and report back regularly, disclose their interests and remain accountable to the people. A council seat must be a post of struggle and service, not a career or a business opportunity.

This is a socialist programme in practice

Some will ask, is this really socialism? Yes. Because socialism means extending democratic power over the conditions of life. Socialism means that public ownership

must have a public purpose. It means building collective rather than narrow individual solutions. Socialism means public ownership and provision, community control and participatory democracy, collective worker ownership, co-operatives and real people's power in decision-making processes and in economic production. It means putting production at the service of human need. Socialism means building the power of the working class and doing away with the power of private monopolies over human needs. It means building the organised capacity of the working class to become a class for itself, conscious of its interests and capable of acting upon them.

We are aware that a municipality cannot build socialism by itself. But every municipality can contribute to the class struggle. Every budget makes choices. Every land allocation makes choices. Every decision makes choices. These choices are political and class choices. They always lean to a class; the workers and the poor belong to the working class. Now that political power in South Africa has been returned to the ruling class, which is monopoly capital, the working class must wake up and smell the coffee and vote for itself as a class.

Our councillors must always be guided by working-class interests and always question: Towards whom does public power lean? Towards private accumulation or social need? Towards tender parasites or public capacity? Towards the few or the many? Towards passive citizenship or organised people's power?

We choose the working class. We choose the people. We choose to defend the NDR and deepen the path to socialism.

A new chapter has been opened for the working class in South Africa

The SACP is 105 years old. We carry forward the legacy of generations of communists who fought when the odds were overwhelmingly against them. They organised workers when capitalism, racially articulated and through patriarchy, sought to divide them. They fought apartheid when repression was brutal. They went underground when the Communist Party was banned. They helped build the liberation movement, the trade union movement and the advance to a democratic South Africa.

While we have lost others to death, through natural attrition, martyrdom and other circumstances, others remain among us, living side by side with the generations that followed them.

We honour them and that history not by looking backwards but by making history ourselves, advancing forward, taking our cue from the best of their revolutionary and democratic practices.

Today we launch this manifesto as a working-class platform for a new stage of struggle in the new era. We are not promising miracles. We stand for organisation, revolutionary discipline, honest public service and struggle. We are saying to workers and the poor, organise as a class. Organise in the workplace. Organise in the community. Organise in the ward. Organise around the right to work for all, water, electricity, roads, land, food, housing, healthcare, safety and public services.

Build people's power where you live. Take public institutions back from tenderisation, corruption, capture and private profiteering. Build the capacity of the local state to serve society. Build a people's economy. Strengthen the organised working class. Advance the NDR in the new era and deepen the struggle for socialism.

Elections and the ballot are but one front of the broader political struggle. These are not the whole of the class struggle. Our candidates must be organisers, educators and servants of the people.

Our councillors must remain accountable. Our communities must remain organised.

And the Communist Party must remain a Marxist-Leninist working-class Party, rooted among the people and guided by the obtaining material conditions of the people: scientific socialism. The capitalist system tells us that what is profitable must come first. We say people must always come first before profit. We stand for public need as second to none. We build working-class power and solidarity. We say organise and struggle now because the poor cannot postpone hunger or thirst and endure sickness any longer.

After 105 years, the Communist Party remains committed to the revolutionary proposition that another South Africa is possible and necessary. A South Africa where the wealth created by working people serves society. A South Africa where no person who wants to work is condemned to unemployment. A South Africa where no child goes hungry while land lies idle. A South Africa where water flows, electricity works, roads are maintained, schooling is available for all for free and healthcare is accessible and free. A South Africa where public power belongs to the people. A South Africa advancing from political democracy towards social and economic emancipation.

That is the road to socialism. That is the meaning of this manifesto. That is the task before us. This is the SACP 2026 Local Government Election Manifesto.

Build people's power where we live, for the right to work, land, food, roads and safety

This is our contract. This is our programme. This is our weapon. Take it. Organise with it. Defend it. Vote for it. The working class must speak in its own name. The working class must fight in its own name. The working class must win in its own name and not be tricked by representatives of the ruling class chanting revolutionary slogans.

VOTE SACP ON 4 NOVEMBER 2026!

Forward to people's power!

Socialism is the future: build it now!

Down with Capitalism!

Forward to Socialism!

--

ISSUED BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY
FOUNDED IN 1921 AS THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA.
Media, Communications & Information Department | MCID

Mhlele Nkomo Acting National Spokesperson
+27(0) 84 219 3801

FOR INTERVIEW ARRANGEMENTS, MEDIA LIAISON & CIRCULATION SERVICES
Pius Vilakati
Communications & Acting Media Liaison Officer
Mobile: +27 81353 3383

OFFICE & OTHER CONTACT DETAILS
Office: +2711 339 3621/2
Website: www.sacp.org.za
Facebook Page: South African Communist Party
Twitter: SACP1921

WELCOME TO THE SACP DONATION PAGE: <https://donate.sacp.org.za/>. PLEASE MAKE A CLEAN
DONATION.