



AhmedKathrada
F o u n d a t i o n
Deepening Non-Racialism

Media statement on the Conference for the Future of South Africa

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Representatives from more than 25 civil society organisations have begun preparations for a new initiative to unite the people of South Africa against corruption, state capture and the abuse of power by Jacob Zuma's government.

We are meeting here today to begin preparations for the first stage in this process: a conference to be held on 18 July under the title of the **Conference for the Future of South Africa**.

We expect close to 1 000 delegates to attend, representing every sector of society: the youth, women, labour, business, faith-based groups and activist organisations such as the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation, Save South Africa, Section27, OUTA, and many others.

Today's meeting is a preparatory gathering, called by the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation and Save South Africa, and is focusing on what we need to put in place to ensure maximum participation in the conference, and to ensure we see united action around issues of common concern.

These issues are clear to all of us who are here today: the South Africa we are living in is not the one that liberation movements fought for. It is not the South Africa, full of promise, that we began shaping after the 1994 elections. It is not the South Africa envisaged in our Constitution.

The South Africa we live in today is not a dream - it is a nightmare. And we intend to stop that nightmare by ending state capture and looting, restoring respect for our Constitution, and beginning to rebuild South Africa.

We aim to do that by uniting all South Africans around a Declaration - to be discussed and adopted at the Conference for the Future of South Africa - and a programme of action that will galvanise all sectors of society in united action, in a broad front, to push back against the abuse of power and the destruction of the state.

It is clear to all of us here today that our country is being robbed of its future by a clique of criminals, who have no respect for our democracy and the institutions that serve to safeguard that democracy.

This is compounded by the fact that the Hawks and the NPA -- institutions that are supposed to protect our democracy and prosecute those who are committing these crimes -- have been captured, and rendered ineffective.

The poor suffer the most in this situation. Poverty and unemployment are on the increase, and social crimes are on the increase. Money intended to improve living conditions is being siphoned off by crooks, trapping people in poverty for the rest of their lives.

We have to stand united to address this, and the Conference for the Future of South Africa is an important part of this process.

We will be spending considerable time today developing a programme of action, to be discussed in more detail at the conference, that will intensify pressure on President Jacob Zuma and his cronies, and which will look at immediate steps to halt state capture and put power back in the hands of the people.

As an immediate step, we will be discussing a national shutdown for 7 August, the day before parliament debates the Motion of No Confidence, and calling upon all Members of Parliament to vote according to their conscience in the Motion of No Confidence in President Zuma -- whether the ballot is open or secret.

We are also calling on all parties to publicly affirm the principle that the first duty of MPs is to the Constitution and the principle that MPs should always act according to their conscience where there emerges a conflict between their duty to the party and their duty to the country;

Alongside this, we are discussing the development of an “integrity package”, which is essentially a set of minimum demands to stop state

capture in its tracks. These include corrective measures to ensure the integrity of the state is not corroded further, and will look at state-owned companies, appointments in the criminal justice cluster, greater transparency around political party funding and a legal strategy to put the crooks - whether they are in government, in business, or in families close to the President - behind bars.

It's important to point out that our conference will be held on Nelson Mandela's birthday, as we believe we have a contract with Madiba to safeguard and nourish our democracy for present and future generations.

We are increasingly seeing a common purpose in ensuring this happens, and invite all South Africans to participate in our conference - either in person, or through their organisations - to ensure we are able to unite to demonstrate that we, the people of South Africa, have a higher morality than these greedy criminals.

The Constitution of South Africa gives people power and rights. Now is the time for the people to use this power, peacefully but with determination, without fear and definitely without favour, to restore hope and to return our country to a path of non-racialism, equality and social justice.

In conclusion: one of the issues we are focusing on today is the threats and attacks against those who are championing the rights and responsibilities we enjoy under the Constitution. These include our own civil society activists, who have been attacked by both the ANC Youth League and Black First Land First in recent weeks.

We believe journalists have a crucial role to play in exposing state capture and the many violations of our sovereignty that we are experiencing.

We would like to put on record that we support the journalists who have played such an important role in exposing the rot that has become the trademark of the Zuma administration, and we condemn attacks or threats against journalists and other media workers. We will be discussing a formal declaration of support, and pledging our solidarity, later today.

We invited a number of journalists and media organisations to attend our discussions today, and welcome the participation of the Institute for

the Advancement of Journalism, Roi Africa and the Media Review Network. In addition, we have received a message of support from some of the journalists singled out for harassment from Black First Land First. They are currently in court arguing for an interdict against the BLF, but are going to join us later so we can express our solidarity.

We have also received a statement of support from the South African National Editors' Forum, which says as follows:

The SA National Editors' Forum (SANEF) appreciates the initiatives by the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation, Save South Africa, OUTA and other civil society organisations who sympathise with and support members of the media who continue to oppose corruption, state capture and other social issues.

Your press conference and tribute to media freedom comes at a times when SANEF and its members will be attending proceedings at the South Gauteng High Court, which makes it difficult for our members to attend today's event. We feel our own court interdict against Black First Land First and its leader, Andile Mngxitama, ties in well with the intentions of today's conference on the future of South Africa.

We wish to express our sincere appreciation to civil society movements for promoting active citizenry in acknowledging the role and responsibility of the media.

We have also received a message of support from media veteran Don Mattera, who sends his best wishes and support for the organisers of this conference.

Finally, we would also like to observe a moment's silence for Suna Venter, the SABC journalist who died under such tragic circumstances, and who is being remembered at a memorial service today. We pass our condolences to her family and friends.

Thank you.