

ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY AGAINST STATE CAPTURE

SIPHO M PITYANA, CONVENOR OF SAVE SOUTH AFRICA

Compatriots, good morning.

Welcome to the first ever People's Assembly Against State Capture!

This is truly an historic day.

We, the people, stand united in the diversity that defines our great nation to say: **the rich inheritance of our democratic country is not for sale. And neither will we allow it to be outsourced to people I see as latter day mafia style crooks and thieves, no matter how friendly they are with the President.**

We stand here, only a few kilometers from **Freedom Park**, a memorial to some of the many who sacrificed their lives to set us free. Only a few meters away is Pretoria Central, where Solomon Mahlangu, like many of his comrades, was hanged for daring to fight the tyranny of Apartheid.

Less than a 10 minute drive from here, on the grounds of the Union Buildings, Nelson Mandela proclaimed us a free nation a little over 22 years ago. And twenty years ago – on the adoption of our Constitution – Thabo Mbeki delivered his seminal *I am an African* address. In it, he proclaimed South Africa a nation united in diversity. He assured its people of their inalienable right to determine the affairs of this great nation.

We are all Africans, and together we share a deep love of our country. And that is why we are here. We are here to demand our right to be governed **only** by those leaders that we elected.

Mr. President, hear us clearly: When you outsource any element of that sacred, public duty to govern, and you pass it on to an unelected clique for financial gain, then you must know that you have sold us out as a nation. You have done nothing less than mortgage our hard-won right to self-determination.

We are here to tell you that we will never accept that.

We are here to say that we are no longer prepared to tolerate a handful of people manipulating the organs of the state to steal our right to freedom of expression, or so that they can share the spoils with their cronies and their families.

We are not prepared to put up with state capture any longer!

Unlike you, we are not comfortable with the Capture of Our State, and this is why we must echo the word of our beloved Chief Albert Luthuli and ask that you Let Our People Go.

Compatriots, you need fear no longer. Together, we are strong and formidable enough to defeat these forces of state capture and corruption. As you sit in this

People's Assembly Against State Capture, I urge you to look around you. You are not alone in your outrage, or in feeling that enough is enough.

Alongside you are unemployed people and professionals, activists and public servants, students and academics. There are labour and business leaders, struggle stalwarts and a wide array of faith-based groups. Standing shoulder-to-shoulder with you are civil society formations, political party representatives and many others. And the list will continue to grow.

Thousands of ordinary South Africans are joining this protest across the country today as part of this great **campaign**. **Each of you have come together with one purpose: To rescue the state from the sovereign piracy that we witness daily.**

You have come here to Save South Africa, and we salute and commend all of you.

But equally, I ask that you steel yourself for this campaign. The journey is likely to be a long and tough one. We have started this journey, and we know there is **no going back**.

On Monday we all heard Shaun Abrahams say what any thinking South African has known all along – which is that the case against Pravin Gordahn, Oupa Magashule and Ivan Pillay was a sham.

Through the course of that rambling press conference, our highest-ranked prosecutor made clear that the NPA – with help from other state organs – did its level best to sabotage the career of three loyal public servants who have devoted their lives to serving the people of this country.

It may be that the crusade to discredit our Finance Minister was a prelude to removing him. But why? Perhaps so that they could open the door of the Treasury get their hands on South Africa's money. Fellow South Africans, when they achieve that ultimate goal of state capture, it's game over for our country.

But we also saw something else at that shameful NPA press conference. We saw them – the forces that would drive our country to bankruptcy – backing down. They backed down because they thrive on apathy, and this time we did not give them that luxury.

This time, we didn't give them the space and cover or darkness that they normally rely on to do their work. This time we – you, you and you. All of you here, and millions more besides -- stood up.

This time we came together and made our voices heard. This time civil society, business, political parties and private citizens stood up and said "No More." And your collective voice was simply too big for anyone to ignore.

That, friends....is an immensely powerful thing.

But they will be back to try this again – make no mistake. They are greedy, they are

powerful, they are motivated and they are incredibly well resourced. So whilst we don't dare rest for a second, we should recognize that we have achieved something great, and that together we are a powerful force. And we should realise that the decision to drop those bogus charges was not the end of our struggle, but only the beginning. And as the fight against pillage and theft of our country's resources gains momentum we – the people – will become stronger and stronger. That you can count on.

And as we look back at the wreckage that Shaun Abrahams and his cohorts have left behind, what is very clear to all of us is that the wrong people were being harassed by the NPA.

The people who should be on trial are the kingpins of state capture, the champions of corruption – the hoodlums who conspire in Saxonwold, Dubai, Russia and other places to plot how they can capture the Treasury, capture the state, and how they can make more and more money out of looting the national purse.

What they are doing is subverting the democratic state. They are undermining our Constitution, and undermining our sovereignty as a nation. They are the real crooks – and they are the ones who should be in the dock.

We all know who those people are. There is more than enough information in the public domain already. Week after week we see new details of their handiwork. Their grubby little fingers are everywhere.

It is clear – from the little we know – that there is more than enough information in the former Public Protector's report on state capture to indicate who the architects of state capture are, who the handlers are, and who is being handled.

We read how the dirty – but very lucrative -- work of State Capture has allegedly been facilitated by certain people at places such as Trillian Capital, Eskom, Transnet and Denel among others. We see how your friends are allowed to run riot at the SAA and SABC, with no threat of censure.

So do we even need to ask ourselves why some are prepared to fight tooth and nail to stop the Public Protector's report from seeing the light of day?

We must remember that the roots of capture are deeply embedded in our state organs. There are many involved in this enterprise – including those who know about this thievery and blatant corruption, but fail to take a stand. Those who, by doing nothing, are effectively condoning the wrong that is state capture. They are increasingly realising that they are on the wrong side of history – and that their silence makes them complicit.

But mobilising opposite them is growing line of people who realize that what is going on is wrong. We salute them wherever they are. Senior or junior, big or small. Know that we count on you, and that this battle can never be won without you taking the risks you do, in order to protect the integrity of our government.

They include Jackson Mthembu, chief whip of the African National Congress.

Cabinet ministers such as Aaron Motsoaledi, Joe Phaahla and Derek Hanekom. They include the whistleblowers who have played such a crucial role in exposing what we know against state capture, and taken a courageous stand against state looting, the abuse of state resources, and the perversion of the law. They include our firebrand free press, which is the toast of the free world and the pride of our nation. You are too many to mention, but we thank you.

They include the Deputy Finance Minister, Minister Mcebisi Jonas, former GCIS director-general Themba Maseko, former MP Vytjie Mentor, former SARS advisor Yolisa Pikie and former SARS spokesperson Adrian Lackay.

Among these heroes are SARS deputy director Vlok Symington and SARS attorney David Makapela, who refused to become accomplices in the NPA's attempts to concoct a case against Pravin Gordhan. There are many more that I have omitted.

Compatriots, please allow me to single out Minister Pravin Gordhan. Your humility and commitment to public service knows no bounds. Having done a very good job in your first term in treasury, you were pushed aside and you stayed on. Last year you were received back with great reluctance as an unwelcome returnee. You've been through a torrid attack on your person and integrity, which could not have been easy on your family. And yet you persevered, showing no sign of stress or strain, to do what's best for our country. Your love for our country is exemplary. You are a true patriot, a beacon of service with integrity, a hero in the struggle against graft and state capture. A dagger constantly hangs over you that you may lose your position, but even the instinct of self-preservation is not enough to stop you from serving with honour and integrity. We are proud of you.

To you and all of those with the courage to take a stand and to speak out, **we want you to know that you are not alone. We admire and respect you, and we stand with you.**

In memory of my proud years in the public service, I urge those who remain in service to stand up and speak out against the real **Rogue Unit** that exists in government.

And to those who are still **sitting on the fence**, those who have the formal power to bring about change – whether they are members of the ANC, members of the NEC or members of parliament – we say: get off the fence.

Take a stand against corruption and looting. Take a stand against state capture! Follow the courageous example of **NEHAWU** who yesterday called on the President to resign in the interest of the country. Take a stand in support of our Constitution, and rescue the state! There is not time to waste.

I'm reminded of the words of Martin Luther King, another great freedom fighter, a man who risked everything to bring about change in the face of overwhelming odds. Addressing the masses before him in a famous Civil Rights march on Washington, the good reverend said:

"We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the

fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there "is" such a thing as being too late. This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action."

Those words were as true then, in Washington, as they are for us here today. We cannot afford to say, "it's too late".

Fellow South Africans, the future of our beautiful country is too important to allow state capture to continue. It is not just about the ratings agencies, or the elections, or about internal power struggles in the ANC.

It is about our future. A future where corruption is not tolerated, where state coffers are protected from looting, where dodgy tenders are outlawed. It is about a future where there is accountability and transparency ... A South Africa where public office is regarded as a civic duty, where leaders are responsive to the needs of the people, and direct all their energies towards building a better tomorrow for everybody -- not just themselves.

It is about a future where we are able to focus, as a nation, on the challenges of poverty and inequality, and we don't have to spend all our time worrying about who is stealing from the national purse.

As the Save South Africa campaign, we are very clear about what needs to be done. We need to build on the momentum of today, and increase civic pressure on those at the top.

We need more People's Assemblies, more demonstrations of public outrage. We must do all of these peacefully, respectfully, with tolerance and respect for the law. Nobody should break the law and intimidate others in the name of the Save South Africa Campaign. **Our cause is good enough to win the day on merit.**

We need to consistently demand ethical leadership, respect for the rule of law, and respect for the Constitution from our leaders. And if our leaders are not prepared to do so, they must get out of the way. They must go, and quickly, and take their place in the dustbin of history.

In the short term, we have to sustain our court battles and use our Constitution to protect and promote democracy.

We have to make sure the former Public Protector's report on State Capture is made public, and its recommendations are implemented – to the very highest levels of government.

We have to ensure that decent and honest prosecutors, and other public servants, have our full-throated support as they step up their fight against corruption.

We have to pursue those who make up the real "Rogue Unit" in SARS, the NPA, the Hawks and other government agencies. They must be investigated, pursued and subject to the rule of law, and without any delays.

And we must increase the pressure on state-owned entities – particularly SABC, SAA, Denel, Transnet and Eskom -- as the reported facilitators of state corruption, waste and mismanagement.

We need you, the people gathered here today, to go back to your homes, your places of work and worship, and to organise more people. Tell them about today. Tell them what we have achieved. Tell them we need their help to make sure we succeed. As a united people, we can do this. We can stop this fraud that is being perpetrated on our country and our people, and make sure that the money that has been directed towards corruption is directed, instead, towards funding education, building decent clinics and hospitals, providing proper homes, and giving security and comfort to those on the margins of society.

We can get the economy on the right track, attract foreign direct investment and create more jobs for our people. We can stop the policy uncertainty, and the political uncertainty, if we speak with one voice in defence of the Constitution and in the promotion of leadership that respects the Constitution and all it stands for.

Together, we can restore the values of our Constitution, and restore the dignity of our people.

Integrity must rise, and it will!

Let me, finally, address myself to the President – the man some people call Number One, but others call Number 783. For those of you who may have forgotten, 783 is the number of corruption and fraud counts the President still has to face one day. And that day is coming closer.

I know some of you may feel uncomfortable about what I am about to say, but it has to be said.

Mr President: when you sit down to watch the news on TV tonight, or when Minister Mahlobo shows you the footage of this "People's Assembly", please think deeply about what you are seeing. Whether you are watching us on TV in your palace at Nkandla, or in the beachfront villa in Durban allegedly paid for you by Ray Moodley, or in the Gupta compound in Saxonwold, just remember one thing:

What you are seeing here today, and in similar protests in Cape Town and other parts of the country, is the emergence of a counter-veiling force of people who are no longer prepared to put up with your antics, and your leadership. They have had enough. And they are no longer prepared to keep quiet.

The people here today object, in the strongest possible terms, to the way you have abdicated responsibility for the real issues requiring leadership and governance in South Africa: such as addressing poverty, creating jobs, stimulating the economy and ensuring that our country realises its democratic potential.

South Africans are tired of having a captured leader.

They are tired of state looting, under your direction. They have had enough of our cronies, whether they are in organs of the state or in private business.

They are tired of a leader who is handled by people who have no respect for our sovereignty, our democracy, and our Constitution.

We, the people, have found our voices, and our common ground. And we will not rest.

Compatriots...

Let us join hands as South Africans, and people who call South Africa their home

Let us join hands together this morning and say:

Save South Africa!

Save South Africa from state capture!

Save South Africa from corruption and looting!

Save South Africa from captured state owned companies!

Save South Africa from captured state entities like the NPA, SARS and the Hawks!

Save South Africa!