



South African Communist Party

Circular to all members, cadres, and structures

23 April 2026

**DEFEND THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE PARTY,
UPHOLD REVOLUTIONARY DISCIPLINE,
ADVANCE THE STRUGGLE FOR WORKING-CLASS REPRESENTATION**

The South African Communist Party (SACP) has never had a problem with the ANC contesting elections in its own right. The SACP has never regarded the ANC as an enemy for contesting elections in its own right. The SACP has never disciplined or threatened any of its members for participation in building, voting for and campaigning for the ANC. In fact, as the history of the past 30 years of our hard-won universal adult suffrage since 1994 shows, the SACP has not only embraced the ANC contesting elections in its own right but has also supported the ANC's electoral contests – to the extent of the SACP even reserving its own right to contest elections directly in favour of voting for and campaigning for more votes beyond ours for the ANC within the framework of the Alliance.

In the golden rules of justice and solidarity, the principles of consistency are as crucial as in mathematics. The moment you expect one side to do what you demonstrably are not prepared to do yourself, or to sustain forever what you have never done in a single moment of history, you must recognise that you are being unfair, with far-reaching implications.

Today, the SACP addresses all its members, leaders and structures at a moment of major political consequence for the future of the Party, the Alliance, the revolutionary working-class struggle for socialism and, more broadly, our nation at large.

The ANC NEC leadership has now moved beyond tactical disagreement on the SACP's decision to contest the 2026 local government elections independently. Through its internal speaking notes and related directives, the ANC has sought to turn a tactical difference into an administrative and disciplinary ultimatum directed at communists inside the ANC. The ANC demands declarations from members of the SACP and threatens action against those it believes are acting for the Party's campaign, while insisting there should be no witch-hunts.

This is not a minor procedural adjustment. It is regrettably a serious anti-communist political move with far-reaching implications, which also changes the character of the ANC as we know it. It amounts to an attempt to reinterpret the Alliance and dual membership in narrow electoral and one-sided compliance terms. It seeks to reduce a historic strategic relationship, forged in a bitter struggle for national liberation with shared blood, sacrifice and shared battles, into a one-sided demand for subordination and permanent support from an ally while never considering

reciprocating the same support for a single moment or, literally, a single second of time measurement. This is, in substance, the essence of the “ultimatum” to communists in the ANC.

The Party rejects this approach with the contempt it deserves.

We reject it not because we reject discipline. On the contrary, ours is a Party of iron discipline. We reject it because no genuine alliance can be sustained on the basis of coercion by one partner exercising its independence but coercing another against exercising its own independence. We reject it because the strategic Alliance has never meant the liquidation of the Communist Party into the ANC. We reject it because dual membership was never meant to abolish the SACP's right to think, organise, campaign and lead struggles and develop tactics on any question as an independent party of the working class. And we reject it because the problems now confronting the national democratic forces did not arise because the SACP chose to contest elections. They arose from political deviations on the liberation agenda and radical economic changes required to make liberation tangible and meaningful to the masses; prevarication on the common ownership of the land and the wealth beneath it; a deeper crisis in the movement, characterised by mass disillusionment and declining voter turnout; neoliberal drift by the government; control of the economy and economics of our country by monopoly capital and foreign forces, including the Harvard group; corruption and patronage; factionalism; and the marginalisation of working-class solutions in major policy questions. These are agreed upon in the common Alliance manifesto.

No amount of administrative enforcement can resolve a political crisis whose roots lie in the lived reality of the people.

THE PARTY'S POSITION REMAINS CLEAR

The SACP, therefore, reaffirms clearly and without ambiguity that our decision to contest the 2026 local government elections directly under our own banner shall continue. We will implement it without fear.

The SACP is a Party of experience that survived a ban under the Suppression of Communism Act imposed by the apartheid regime in 1950. No aspect of such a ban, or anything similar, however it is branded under our hard-won democratic dispensation, can succeed in instilling fear in the SACP. Our decision to contest the forthcoming elections directly was not taken lightly, emotionally or adventurously. It arose from a sober assessment of the crisis facing local government, including, among others, the weakening hold of the liberation movement over working-class communities and the need to rebuild a direct, independent and accountable political presence of the working class in the terrain of governance and public representation.

Our independent contestation is not a retreat from the struggle for Alliance reconfiguration. It is part of that struggle. It is not a retreat from the National Democratic Revolution. It is a struggle over its class direction, its organisational content and its future.

The ANC leadership has been saying it respects the SACP's right to take its own decisions, but, in what is a negation of that respect, they have also been saying they disagree with our decision to stand for elections in our own right. In the same breath, the ANC goes on an intimidation tirade against its members, reflecting its intention to censure the communists regarding their right to take part in SACP activities: a communist party that has resolved to go into elections in its own name. Respect cannot coexist with an ultimatum with a contradictory demand. Commitment to the Alliance cannot coexist with the administrative targeting of Communists. A declaration that there will be “no witch-hunts” rings hollow when accompanied by instructions designed to isolate and mischievously monitor and discipline SACP members.

The SACP also reminds all cadres and all honest democrats that the Communist contribution to electoral outcomes in the democratic period is a matter of political record. Across successive elections, it was the organised working class, mobilised through SACP structures, trade unions, community formations and the broader mass democratic movement, which helped sustain the Alliance vote and deliver governing mandates.

Even the 2024 outcome, with all its difficulties and setbacks, did not fall from the sky and was not produced by any Alliance partner campaigning and voting alone in isolation. It rested in significant measure on the loyalty, sacrifices and mobilisation of workers, the poor and communities shaped and organised over decades by Communist and allied activism. To seek to privatise the outcome of the elections and now marginalise the SACP and target its cadres through administrative enforcement is not only a breach of Alliance principles. It is a direct affront to the very forces that helped build, defend and repeatedly renew the electoral base of the movement.

Our votes counted, and our campaign for more votes beyond our own votes mattered. Everybody in deployment, including the President, is there because our votes and campaigning for more votes beyond ours, combined with the votes and campaigning by members and structures of other Alliance partners and, therefore, the entire Alliance within its framework. You cannot enjoy the outcomes of these joint efforts while seeking to isolate others who contributed directly through their votes and campaigning. If you do so, the betrayal will be laying the seed of new contradictions, more especially while you are working hand-in-glove with parties that campaigned not just against you but to bring you down. The course of history will reveal more about this, and, as we have never been, we will not be spectators.

THE LINE OF MARCH

The SACP calls on all members to understand the gravity of the moment but also to reject panic, confusion and demoralisation. This is not the time for retreat. It is not the time for individual improvisation. It is not the time for public emotionalism. It is the time for disciplined collective conduct.

The line of march is clear.

Every SACP member must remain calm, organised and politically focused. No disciplined comrade must act individually under pressure or improvisation. No comrade must submit to intimidation and ultimatums, make unilateral declarations, tender resignations, or take strategic decisions affecting SACP membership and responsibilities without consultation with the Party. The SACP will not accede to ultimatums from another organisation. Matters arising from this ANC manoeuvre must be handled collectively, politically and through SACP structures. We equally understand if some members decide to remain with the ANC, and we will respect that.

All SACP members who are also ANC members must continue to conduct themselves with dignity, discipline and revolutionary ethics. We will not answer provocation with provocation. We will not descend into abuse, mudslinging or anti-ANC rhetoric. Our struggle is not against ordinary ANC members, many of whom remain our comrades in the broader liberation movement and among the motive forces. Our struggle is against things such as neoliberal policies and a political line that seeks to weaken the independent role of the Party and diminish working-class influence in the movement.

No SACP member must accept isolation. SACP branches, districts and provinces must urgently identify comrades who are directly affected, especially those serving in ANC structures, those deployed in government, those employed in ANC or public offices, and those exposed to direct pressure because of their Party responsibilities. These comrades must be placed under organised

political care. They must receive guidance, protection and collective support. The SACP will not abandon its cadres to fend for themselves.

The SACP must intensify, not retreat from, its independent political and electoral work and continue the fight against neo-liberalism, corruption and government decay. The answer to intimidation is not paralysis. It is organisation. Every branch must strengthen local campaigning, mass contact, voter engagement, political education, community struggles, workplace mobilisation and public communication around the SACP local government programme. Every district and province must ensure that the SACP is independently visible in communities not only as an electoral force but also as the organised voice of working-class grievances, working-class demands, working-class solutions and working-class hope.

All structures of the SACP will defend the historic principle of dual membership which, for over 30 years, since 1994, we have used to campaign for the ANC within the Alliance framework. Now is the time to assert our independence in elections and both vote for and campaign for the SACP. Dual membership is not a favour granted by one organisation to another. It is a political practice rooted in the history of our liberation struggle, in the strategic alliance between national liberation and socialism, and in the need for all of us to work inside broad mass formations while retaining our independence. To reinterpret the Alliance or dual membership as an arrangement valid only when the SACP is electorally subordinate is to empty it of all its historical mission or political meaning, respectively.

The SACP will continue to engage Alliance partners firmly and fraternally on an equal basis. We do not seek an unnecessary rupture at branch, district, provincial or national level. We remain committed to principled engagement and to the long-term necessity of Alliance reconfiguration on the basis of mutual respect, strategic clarity and the independence of each constituent formation. But we will not purchase superficial peace at the price of surrendering the SACP's political role and independence.

THE PROPER CONTEXT

This development must also be placed in its proper context. The ANC speakers' notes attempt to present the SACP's independent electoral contestation as the main danger facing the movement, drawing on by-election results and provincial experience compiled from a one-sided view to justify a hard line. But the deeper danger lies elsewhere. The greatest threat is not that Communists are contesting. The threat to our Alliance and the NDR is the capture by monopoly capital of the state and some leading members. Therefore, capital remains the strategic enemy of our revolution, not the SACP and its decision to contest elections. Also, the continuing erosion of confidence among the working class and poor, the withdrawal of millions from electoral politics, and the inability of local government in many areas to respond to people's basic needs must be attended to. If this reality is not confronted honestly, then using discipline as an instrument is suppression aimed at Communists and will solve nothing.

The SACP therefore says to its members: do not be distracted by the noise. Focus on the political substance. The working class needs an SACP that can act with courage, clarity and organisation. The people need an SACP that will not disappear into the administrative subordination of another formation, including an ally. The moment demands firmness, not hesitation.

IMMEDIATE TASKS FOR ALL STRUCTURES

Accordingly, the SACP directs the following immediate tasks.

- All provincial, district and branch structures must convene urgent meetings to discuss this development and report through SACP channels on the situation in their areas. To this end, the Secretariat will deploy Central Committee members to districts.
- Every structure must compile, within the shortest possible time, a clear assessment of comrades who may be affected by the ANC directive and the type of support they require.
- Provincial and district leaderships must establish reporting lines so that any incident of pressure, exclusion, intimidation or threatened disciplinary action is immediately communicated upward and collectively handled.
- Political education on dual membership, Party independence, Alliance reconfiguration and the local government electoral position must be intensified without delay.
- Our public representatives, organisers and local leaders must deepen their work among communities and workplaces and explain, with patience and confidence, why the SACP is contesting and what it stands for in local government.

There must be no factional behaviour, no opportunism and no attempts to exploit this conjuncture for personal or local score-settling. Any comrade who uses this moment to pursue petty agendas acts against SACP discipline. This is a moment for unity, maturity and revolutionary seriousness.

A DIRECT WORD TO OUR CADRES

To all Communists in the ANC, the SACP says this:

“Stand firm. You are not alone. You are not being asked to choose between discipline and principle. You are being called upon to uphold both, under the leadership of the SACP, in a difficult and changing conjuncture. Consult the SACP, and the Party will give you guidance. The SACP has a line from which it will do so. Report to the SACP. Act with the SACP. Do not allow yourself to be isolated, panicked or manoeuvred into individual responses to a collective political question.”

To all SACP members, whether or not they are ANC members, the message is equally clear:

“Strengthen the SACP both to pursue the immediate objectives and long-term goals of our struggle. The SACP has no interests of its own apart from those of the working class as a revolutionary movement. Build the branches. Deepen the campaign. Organise the workers and the poor. Advance the socialist perspective. Defend the dignity and independence of the Communist Party. This is the road we have chosen. It is not subordination. It is the correct road to end all forms of human exploitation, not collaboration with it.”

The SACP will not be intimidated out of its historic mission.

The SACP will not abandon its cadres.

The SACP will not surrender its independence.

Forward to people’s power!

Forward to the reconfiguration of the Alliance on principled terms!

Forward to Communist leadership in the struggle for transformation and socialism!

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Media, Communications & Information Department | MCID

Mbulelo Mandlana, Head of Media, Communications and Information
+27(0) 81 556 1903

FOR INTERVIEW ARRANGEMENTS, MEDIA LIAISON & CIRCULATION SERVICES

Pius Vilakati
Communications & Acting Media Liaison Officer
Mobile: +27 81 35 333 83

OFFICE & OTHER CONTACT DETAILS

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

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