

# AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS



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02 JULY 2026

## STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, CDE FIKILE MBALULA, FOLLOWING THE EVENTS OF 30 JUNE

The African National Congress (ANC) convened a media briefing to reflect on the events of 30 June 2026, provide the movement's assessment of recent national developments, clarify the ANC's position on a range of matters of public interest, and outline the organisation's programme of action as the country advances towards the 2026 Local Government Elections.

### ON THE THIRTIETH OF JUNE, THE COUNTRY STOOD FIRM

The African National Congress expresses deep gratitude to South Africans. They called for a shutdown. South Africa did not shut down. Our children went to school. Our workers went to work. Our buses, our taxis and our trains ran. Our clinics and our shops stayed open. The economy kept its feet, and we foresee no grave job losses from the action. For this we thank the overwhelming majority of South Africans, who refused to be conscripted into anarchy and we thank the men and women of the South African Police Service, the Border Management Authority and our security services, who stood their ground with professionalism and restraint. Where there was violence, intimidation and looting, the law took its course, and it will continue to do so.

We have said it before and we say it again: the enforcement of immigration law is the work of the democratic State, and of the State alone. No mob, no march and no self-appointed commander may take that power into their own hands. The ANC salutes the calm and the courage of ordinary South Africans, of every origin, who chose peace over the petrol bomb.

But enforcement alone will never resolve what is, in truth, a continental question. No single country, acting on its own, can answer a movement of people that the whole of Africa is living through. Our continent carries the largest stock of intra-African migration in the world relative to its population, approximately 40.5 million African migrants, some 21 million of whom remain on the continent, and around 35 million displaced persons of concern.

The forces beneath these numbers are known to us all; the economic asymmetry between our economies; conflict, from the war in Sudan to the standing crises of the Sahel, the Horn and the eastern Democratic

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Republic of the Congo; the shocks of a changing climate, of which Cyclones Idai and Freddy were the cruelest reminders; and a youth population that will soon be the single largest contributor to the world's working-age growth. South Africa itself, on the 2022 Census, is home to some 3.95 million foreign-born residents, 6.5 per cent of our people, with all the pressure that places upon our clinics, our schools and our services. It is for this reason that the Office of the Secretary General has prepared a Continental Compact on Migration in Africa, and the ANC urges our deployees in government to take it up and to place it before the African Union as the foundation for a lasting African answer.

The Compact asks African States, acting together through the African Union and supported by the United Nations, to move from a fragmented and reactive posture to a coherent framework of binding commitments: closing the gaps in our legal architecture through universal accession to the refugee, migrant-worker and statelessness conventions and the coming into force of the 2018 African Union Free Movement Protocol; building the operational machinery the continent has long lacked, from an African refugee responsibility-allocation mechanism to a continental migration data platform and an orderly prisoner-repatriation protocol.

We call on establishment of a continental burden- and responsibility-sharing fund, so that receiving States no longer carry the weight alone; addressing the drivers at source by accelerating the African Continental Free Trade Area, reinforcing our peace and security architecture, financing climate adaptation, and turning our demographic dividend into opportunity at home; and disciplining the language and political conduct around migration in the spirit of the Durban Declaration.

The ANC urges government to place this Compact on the agenda of the African Union's Mid-Year Coordination Meeting at El Alamein. It is not an instrument of exclusion, nor a retreat from the African inheritance of generosity to those in flight; it is a structural offering, rooted in Ubuntu and in the solidarity of the Frontline States that once sheltered our own, a movement from accusation to understanding, from blame to shared responsibility, from crisis to compact.

## **SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT — TWO DECADES OF ACTION ON IMMIGRATION**

A lie is circulating in our politics; that the ANC government has done nothing about undocumented immigration. The opportunists repeat it; too many swallow it. Today we place the facts on the table, and we let the people judge for themselves.

The numbers do not lie, the democratic State has legally deported hundreds of thousands of people who had no lawful right to remain in the Republic. Between January 2012 and December 2016 alone, some 370,000 people were deported, nearly nine in ten of them our neighbours from Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Lesotho. And the pace has quickened, not slackened: from 39,000 removals in 2023/24 to 51,000 in 2024/25, a thirty per cent rise, and again to 57,000 in 2025/26, with tens of thousands more this year at our ports of entry and in our communities. This is not the record of a government that has done nothing. It is the record of a State that enforces its laws, year in, year out, firmly and lawfully.

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This is not new, and it is not small. At its peak, in 2007, the democratic State legally deported some 312,700 people in a single year — the highest on record. And the work continues at our frontiers today: in a single festive season the Border Management Authority intercepted more than fifty thousand people at our ports and borderline, and attempted unlawful crossings have since fallen sharply. This is a State that acts, and has acted, for two decades.

When the courts stayed our hand is the part the opportunists never tell you. Time and again, when this government has moved to enforce immigration law, it has been dragged to court, not to make it deport, but to stop it. When the government moved to end the Zimbabwe Exemption Permit dispensation, the Helen Suzman Foundation took the Minister of Home Affairs to court, and in June 2023 the High Court in Pretoria set that decision aside as unlawful, shielding some 178,000 Zimbabwean permit-holders from removal, a ruling the government then lost on appeal.

The Scalabrini Centre, Lawyers for Human Rights and others have, over many years, repeatedly and successfully approached our courts to constrain removals and to protect the rights of migrants and asylum-seekers. This is the truth the slogan hides: the ANC government has often been doing so much on immigration that the courts themselves have had to rein it in. You cannot, in the same breath, sue the government for deporting and then accuse it of doing nothing.

Let the record be specific. The courts ordered us to reopen the Cape Town Refugee Reception Office. In Ruta and in Abore, they barred the removal of those who wished to seek asylum. In Lawyers for Human Rights, the Constitutional Court struck down parts of our own detention regime. Time and again, the brake on enforcement came not from a want of will on the part of this government, but from the Bench.

And let us remember who built the shield. When the ANC brought the Border Management Authority to Parliament, the very agency that today hardens our borders, it was opposed by the Democratic Alliance and delayed by others in that House. It is an easy thing to shout about borders on a march. It is another thing entirely to vote to secure them. The ANC did the work; others stood in the way, and now pretend otherwise. And we are not standing still.

There is now a Bill before Parliament that will make the first safe country the proper jurisdiction in which to seek asylum, so that a person fleeing genuine persecution claims protection at the first safe border they reach, and not after crossing a dozen peaceful countries to arrive at ours. Let us be plain about what this is, and what it is not. It is not a closing of our doors: non-refoulement remains, and the genuinely persecuted will always find refuge in South Africa. It is the closing of a loophole, the abuse of our asylum system by those who are not refugees at all. It brings us into line with the settled practice of nations the world over, and it answers in law the very grievance that the mob answers with the petrol bomb. That is the difference between the ANC and the demagogue. We bring reform, not riot.



## **A WORD ON POLITICAL OPPORTUNISM, THE EFF AND THE RESTAURANT RAIDS**

The ANC must now turn to the conduct of certain political parties, because in this, parties are not bystanders. Seeds sown in the soil of our people's frustration can grow into something deadly, and history remembers who sowed them. Let us jog the public memory, because they will deny it. In January 2022, the Economic Freedom Fighters and their leader, Mr Julius Malema, marched into restaurants, beginning at the Mall of Africa, to 'inspect' how many South Africans and how many foreigners were employed, demanding a sixty-fourty quota of locals to migrants. At one establishment the owner was pressured until a staffing split was announced.

The Department of Employment and Labour condemned these unlawful, self-appointed inspections at the time. That theatre, the party posing as the enforcer, hauling the foreign worker into the spotlight, helped to normalise the very targeting of the vulnerable that we now see on our streets. Today the same party wishes to wrap itself in the flag of pan-Africanism. The record says otherwise. You cannot light the match in 2022 and profess shock at the fire in 2026.

## **THE MK PARTY AND THE DEMAGOGUERY FROM NKANDLA**

We must speak equally frankly about the uMkhonto weSizwe Party. On the evidence before the public, this formation has positioned itself as an agent provocateur on the immigration question, fanning the mobilisation around 30 June and giving license to those who would set our communities alight. The people of South Africa saw with their own eyes and heard with their own ears some of the most shocking demagogic utterances emanating from the Nkandla coterie.

And here the ANC must register a particular shame. Among those now screaming loudest against a weak, poor and defenceless immigrant community are men and women who themselves, in the darkest years of our struggle, found shelter and sanctuary in the Frontline States, in Mozambique, in Angola, in Zambia, in Tanzania, in Lesotho and beyond. Those countries buried our cadres when the apartheid raiders came. To have eaten the bread of African solidarity, and now to turn upon the African neighbour, is a betrayal of the very struggle that made our freedom possible.

Let us be clear, and let no one twist our words; we do not condone unlawful immigration, and we do not pretend that the anxieties of our people are not real. But we will not answer hardship with cruelty, and we will not preach order while promoting anarchy. That is not who we are. We are the children of Nelson Mandela, Albertina Sisulu, Winnie Mandela, Joe Slovo, Langalibalele Dube and Charlotte Maxeke and of those who still walk our streets, like Sophie de Bruyn. We are a people imbued with Ubuntu.



## ON COMRADE DINA PULE

The ANC wishes to address, directly and candidly, the appointment of Cde Dina Pule to the National Executive as Minister of Social Development, and we commend the President for his decision to appoint this capable and knowledgeable Comrade.

We do not dismiss the concern this appointment has stirred, and we understand where it comes from. Ours is a movement in the midst of renewal, of its values, its ethical standing and the trust of the people, and in such a moment South Africans are right to hold their leaders to the highest bar. We hear that call, and we take it seriously. To answer it honestly, we must speak not only of a sanction served, but of the work of correction that has been done, and that continues.

The people of South Africa do not hand down life sentences, least of all where there has been accountability, redress and correction. Cde Pule faced a process more than a decade ago; she was sanctioned by that process; and she accepted the consequences; she stepped aside before we even made it policy. She did not want to be defined by a mistake in the time, she went back to the ground and worked to uplift thousands upon thousands away from the limelight.

That is what accountability looks like. But our movement, and our nation, believe in redemption and in the capacity of a human being to be rebuilt and to rebuild. In the years since, Cde Pule earned back the confidence of her peers through the most democratic tests our movement offers: she was elected by her comrades to the National Executive Committee, she was entrusted with senior responsibility in the Women's League, and she was returned to Parliament by the people through the ballot. A person who has answered for a mistake, served the sanction, and rebuilt trust through the free choice of her peers and the electorate is not to be condemned in perpetuity. The ANC stands fully behind the person of Cde Dina Pule, behind her ability, and behind the President's prerogative to constitute his executive.

That work has been real, and it has been humbling. Cde Pule underwent internal ethics counselling within the movement; she consulted with our Veterans, whose wisdom and moral authority the ANC holds dear; and she engaged in deep and honest introspection about the harm that was done and the trust that had to be rebuilt. In that same spirit, she will seek a session with the Integrity Committee of the ANC, to place herself before that body and to receive its further counsel. Cde Pule does not take this second chance lightly. She knows, better than most, that it carries a heavy price and a heavy responsibility for the ANC in this very period of renewal; the renewal of our values, our ethical standing and the trust of the people. She carries that weight consciously, and she is determined to honour it in her service.

## THE EASTERN CAPE: WHERE THE MATTER STANDS TODAY

On the Eastern Cape, here is where the matter stands today. Following the judgment of the High Court in Makhanda on 18 June 2026, which set aside the appointment of our Provincial Task Team, the ANC has filed

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an application for leave to appeal the whole judgment to the Full Court, alternatively the Supreme Court of Appeal.

In addition, we have also brought an application under section 18(2) of the Superior Courts Act, seeking to suspend the operation and execution of that order pending the outcome of the appeal. Our firm position, on the advice of senior counsel, is that the order is final in its effect and is therefore already suspended by operation of law upon the filing of our appeal; the section 18(2) application is brought in the alternative, should the court hold the order to be interim.

We do this because it cannot be just that the affairs of a province of millions are thrown into limbo by a judgment that a higher court may well overturn. We hold the judiciary in the highest regard, and it is precisely because we respect the courts that we exercise every right the law affords us. The ANC's commitment is unshaken: the Eastern Cape will be whole, united and ready to contest the local government elections. We remain pained by this ill-conceived decision of the High Court.

#### **THE SECTION 89 PARLIAMENTARY PROCESSES MATTER**

On the Section 89 matter now before Parliament, so that the public is not misled by those who would dramatise an ordinary constitutional process. The ANC's posture on the Section 89 Matter is one of procedural neutrality: the process is proceeding in an orderly manner under the binding Constitutional Court judgment, with the Committee's draft Terms of Reference open for party submissions until Friday 10 July, and the work of Parliament continues, it must not be rushed but deliberated carefully. The ANC will participate, if at all, only as amicus curiae, confined to parliamentary process and sequencing, because our duty is to defend the integrity of a constitutional process, not to argue any party's merits.

On the Terms of Reference, the ANC will not support the admissibility of untested hearsay: an inquiry of this gravity demands evidence under oath, properly tested, perjury on those who will think parliament is a playground to mislead or tell plain lies must also be applied. The question before parliament is whether the president committed high crimes and high misdemeanors and did so alive to it, knowingly. That is what parliament is to test but first, is the Panel Report itself a bona fide instrument, did it find correctly that high crimes and high misdemeanors occurred on the part of the president. What we know is that the Public Protector has said no, the SARB has said not so.

Then, should parliament proceed now or wait till September court case? We think it is wise and economical to wait because September court gives parliament itself finality and a foundation. That is it.

#### **A NATION OF WINNERS; BAFANA BAFANA**



Now, to something that lifted every South African heart. Our beloved Bafana Bafana have written their names into history, advancing; for the first time ever; into the last 32 of the FIFA World Cup. We hail them. They are a bunch of winners, and they carry the pride of a nation.

But we ask South Africans to see in this something deeper than a football result. Life is made of ebbs and flows, of falls and of rising again. This is a step in the right direction, and it should be read as one. As Madiba taught us: “Do not judge me by my successes, but by how many times I fell down and got back up again.” That is the spirit of our players, and it is the spirit of our people. We rise. We always rise. Our boys come home with their heads high; and hope, like courage, is contagious.

### **THE CONSCIENCE OF THE WORLD, THE POLITICS OF THE FIFA TOURNAMENT**

And yet the ANC would not be true to its conscience, or to the internationalism that runs in the blood of this movement, if we celebrated the sport and said nothing of the setting. This World Cup is hosted, in the main, by a nation that in this very year launched military action in the Gulf that placed an entire region and the global economy in jeopardy and cost human lives, and that same power continues to shield and to enable the dehumanising onslaught against the people of Gaza and of Lebanon.

We noted, too, with deep disquiet, reports that a vetted and respected international match official from Somalia was subjected to racial profiling and turned away. And through all of this, the governing bodies of world football proceeded as though none of it were happening, as though these were matters of no consequence, unfolding somewhere off the field of play. This is an indictment against the conscience of the world.

We must ask ourselves the hard question, and we must ask it honestly: ought we to have participated at all, under these circumstances? Perhaps future generations will judge us harshly. For the ANC's part, we hold to a principle that has never bent: we cannot negotiate away crimes against humanity, and we cannot dance at the party while fellow human beings are treated as though they were less than human. We raise our voice not to diminish our players, whom we celebrate, but because silence in the face of injustice is itself a choice — and it is not ours.

### **OUR ELECTION CAMPAIGN; CANDIDATES OF QUALITY, CONTESTING EVERYWHERE**

Finally, to the work that consumes this movement: the road to 4 November. Our campaign is advancing with energy and with discipline. We are engaged in a wide and rigorous candidate-selection process; one in which our National Officials and members of the National Executive Committee are personally sitting in interviews across the country, searching, ward by ward and municipality by municipality, for the most capable, credible and committed comrades to carry the ANC's name onto the ballot. We are contesting every municipality in this country, seriously and to win.

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Let us single out one front. In the Western Cape, and in Cape Town in particular, the indications reaching us are that the governing party there may be heading for a far weaker result than its bluster suggests. Our task is to take the fight deep into the belly of that province, to deploy credible, capable candidates who can give the people of the Cape a real alternative. That work is well under way, and we are receiving outstanding nominees from the ground up. The ANC is on the move.

## CONCLUSION

South Africa, we have come through a difficult week with our republic intact and our constitutional order standing. We will always enforce the law, firmly, humanely and without fear. We will never surrender our streets to the mob, nor our conscience to the demagogue. And we will keep our eyes fixed on the future our people deserve.

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