



UMSEBENZI

ONLINE

INTERNATIONAL WORKING WOMEN'S DAY

spotlighting work and human rights



PEOPLE'S RED CARAVAN CLOCKS SUCCESSES

MUNICIPALITIES NEED MAJOR CHANGE OF DIRECTION

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EDITORIAL

Women, war and the work of building power



Protest against gender-based violence in Pretoria. Archive photo.

On 4 March 2026, Comrade Mosiuoa “Terror” Lekota died. On 7 March, the SACP stood outside the US consulate in Sandton to condemn the assassination of Iran’s supreme leader and the murder of 175 people, mainly school girls, by US bombs. On 8 March, working-class women gathered in Thembisile Hani, in Bloemfontein, in Soweto—not to celebrate, but to struggle. In Ganspan, the spinach cooperative harvested another month’s yield. In five provinces, 1,689 birds laid over a thousand eggs a day.

This is Volume 25 No. 5 of Umsebenzi Online. It arrives at a moment when the world is burning and the SACP is building—simultaneously, necessarily, without contradiction.

International Working Women’s Day is the heartbeat of this edition.

But let us be clear from the outset, as Comrade Joyce Moloi-Moropa insists in her powerful address from Mpumalanga: the 8th of March is not a celebration. It is a day of struggle. Its roots are in Russian women workers who helped bring down the Tsar. Its content is revolutionary. To reduce it to greeting cards and corporate statements is to erase the legacy of the women who took to the streets and picket lines. It is the task of this publication to refuse that erasure at every turn.

Reproductive rights in focus

The SACP’s theme for this commemoration—“**Taking women’s reproductive rights forward**”—is not a slogan. It is a programme. Cde Moloi-Moropa grounds it precisely: reproductive rights mean moving from recognition on paper to realisation in everyday life, for every woman, especially the most

marginalised. They mean contraception, abortion access, maternal care, freedom from coercion. And crucially, they mean economic justice—safe maternity protection, childcare, the right to combine work and family without penalty. Reproductive rights cannot be separated from the class struggle. They never could.

Comrade Reneva Fourie reports from a global gathering of trade unionists across 43 countries, serving as a powerful reminder that the struggle of working women is international. The message from that gathering is the same message from every article in this edition: women are not passive victims of imperialism and capitalism. They are protagonists of organised resistance, the backbone of revolutionary movements across history and today.

Comrade Thulile Kumalo captures Nehawu's voice from Bloemfontein: without an end to imperialist wars, without a break with the war economy, without social justice, there can be no real gender equality. Women represent over 70% of the world's poor. They earn less, do more unpaid work, and are first to be destroyed when bombs fall and sanctions bite. **The connection between gender-based violence as a national emergency and the broader logic of capitalist patriarchy is not rhetorical but a lived reality of the working class.**

In Soweto, on the eve of Women's Day, the SACP's Linda Jabane District convened a Women's Conference that put flesh on these bones. The water crisis, environmental activist Ferrial Adams reminded delegates, is a gender issue. When communities lack water, it is women who bear the burden, children who stay home, and women again who must organise in the vacuum left by the bourgeois state. The majority of working-class women toil in the informal sector, unorganised and exploited. The conference ended with a clear mandate: plant the seeds of solidarity, activate, conscientise, and rise.

The People's Red Caravan report in this edition shifts the register from declaration to demonstration. Five activations completed. Five communities changed. From Motlhabe in the North West to

Hlokozi in KwaZulu-Natal, the PRC is not a moment but a movement. The Ganspan cooperative harvests monthly. The poultry programme produces 32,700 eggs a month across five provinces. This is socialism being built, step by step, cooperative by cooperative, harvest by harvest. It is proof that communities do not have to wait on government or capital to survive and to thrive.

Comrade Khwezi Mabasa's analysis of local fiscal policy may be the most technical piece in this edition, but its significance is direct: the 2026 local government elections are approaching, and the SACP contests them as an independent force. Mabasa's argument—that municipalities must move beyond service delivery towards active local economic development, diversified revenue, demand-led growth, and decent work—is the policy architecture of that electoral campaign. Price controls to lower household costs. Public procurement linked to job creation. Municipal entities re-oriented toward human development. This is what it looks like to govern for the working class.

And then there is Iran. The SACP's International Solidarity piece does not mince its words. The assassination of Khamenei, the bombing of a school and the murder of school children, the death toll exceeding a thousand civilians are not mere accidents of war. They are the logic of imperialism: use military force to protect geopolitical and economic interests, regardless of international law, regardless of human life. The SACP stood at the US consulate in Sandton on 7 March to say: not in our name. Never in our name.

We close this edition with a farewell to Comrade Terror Lekota, written by Cde Khaya Magaxa with the kind of honest warmth that only genuine comrades can offer. Terror was principled, courageous, mischievous, funny, and formidable. He made mistakes—Magaxa says so plainly. But he had the courage of his convictions, and in a movement besieged by those who destroy from within, that counts for a great deal. Hamba kahle, qabane.

This edition of Umsebenzi is the voice of a working class that is fighting on every front at once—against imperialism, against patriarchy, against the

privatisation of basic services, against the poverty wages of capitalism, against the erasure of its own revolutionary history. It is a working class that is also building: cooperatives, conferences, electoral campaigns, communities of solidarity.

The struggle and the construction are not sepa-

rate. They are the same movement. They are us. A grounding of our vision: Socialism is the Future, Build it Now!

Forward to Women's Liberation! Forward to Socialism! Amandla Awethu!

INTERNATIONAL WORKING WOMEN'S DAY

Advancing women's reproductive rights



SACP National Treasurer, Cde Joyce Moloi-Moropa speaking at the Party's International Working Women's Day Commemoration in Thembisile Hani Local Municipality, Mpumalanga, 8 March.

- **Marking 70 years of South African women's courage:** This year commemorates the iconic 1956 march of 20,000 women who united across race and class to defy unjust pass laws.
- **Linking economic and gender justice:** The SACP connects reproductive rights to broader economic empowerment, advocating for maternity protection, childcare, and fair working conditions for women.
- **Building global solidarity:** The article calls on working-class women and men worldwide to unite in internationalist solidarity, fighting together for peace, equality, and freedom from exploitation.

JOYCE MOLOI-MOROPA

There is great significance in calling this day International Working Women's Day as opposed to International Women's Day.

This distinction is important to us as communists because the Russian women workers' struggles against the tsarist regime became one of the key elements that led to the success of the Russian Revolution. The day has its revolutionary content from the Soviet struggles and the Russian Revolution in particular.

The 8th of March is not a celebration, but a day of struggle. The party stands alongside working women around the world who resist capitalist exploitation, patriarchal oppression and the violence of imperialism. The theme for the SACP in these years' commemoration is "Taking women's reproductive rights forward".

"Taking forward women's reproductive rights"

IWWD – SACP struggle highlights

- **Championing reproductive rights:** The SACP actively advances women's rights to make free, informed decisions about their bodies, with real access to healthcare, contraception, and maternal services for all women.
- **Honouring women's revolutionary legacy:** The article celebrates women as powerful drivers of social transformation, from bread marches to anti-colonial struggles and union building.

means actively advancing and deepening women’s ability to make free, informed and safe decisions about their bodies, sexuality and reproduction and ensuring that social, legal and health-care systems support and protect those decisions. In practice, it is about moving from recognising reproductive rights on paper to realising them in everyday life for all women, especially the most marginalised.

Reproductive rights include the right to contraception, abortion, fertility services, comprehensive sexual education and quality prenatal and maternal care as well as the right to be free from coercion, violence and discrimination in these areas.

“Taking them forward” means strengthening laws, policies, and budgets and services so that these rights are accessible, affordable and non-stigmatised for women across classes, races, ages, and locations.

In the context of working-class economic struggles, taking forward reproductive rights also means linking them to economic justice: for exam-

the Palestinian people, which brutally affects women and children, and the continuing imperialist aggression against Venezuela, consisting of criminal sanctions, blackmail and attempts at destabilisation.

Today, we reflect on a world in crisis. Across the

“In the context of working-class economic struggles, taking forward reproductive rights also means linking them to economic justice...”

globe, patterns of domination, conflict and resistance continue to unfold. Wars, economic coercion and political interference are symptoms of deeper systemic inequality.

Powers that once claimed to uphold rules now disregard them, while the poorest, workers and especially women bear the heaviest burdens.



Reproductive rights include the right to contraception, abortion, fertility services, comprehensive sexual education and quality prenatal and maternal care. The right to reproductive healthcare is made explicit in the South African Constitution.

ple, safe maternity protection, childcare and policies that enable women to combine work, family and bodily autonomy without being penalised.

The SACP denounces the ongoing genocide against

Reclaiming the revolutionary character of women is essential. Women have always driven social transformation. They organised bread marches, joined anticolonial struggles and built unions and community movements. Through a collective struggle the balance of forces shifts and change becomes possible.

Here in South Africa, our struggle was a direct front in the global fight against imperialism. This year we celebrate 70 years since the iconic women’s march on 9 August 1956, when 20,000 women of all races and classes united to defy pass laws, showing that women’s resistance is central to national liberation.

The SACP has always understood that the liberation of our people was tied to the liberation of all oppressed people, and women within its ranks led with courage.

Again, we do know as the SACP that there are immediate tasks just before us within the African Continent that are not to be ignored and not yet achieved, such as the ongoing repression of the democratic forces in Swaziland.

We know for a fact that if a situation of repression continues in Swaziland. Women always remain largely on the receiving end and bear the brunt of this oppression. We need to work closely with the emerging Communist Party of Swaziland.

While assisting the entire nation to free itself, we need to strengthen the gender mobilisation programme and assist Swazis' to mobilise their women to liberate themselves from the oppressive situation.

While the gender struggle unfolds, we must recognise that we live in an increasingly militarised world with the attendant war economy.

In the contexts of war and occupation, women and children constitute the majority of civilian victims: bombing, forced displacement, hunger and lack of care affect women in particular. In Palestine, thousands of women have been killed, injured or deprived of access to essential care.

Economic sanctions, such as those imposed on Venezuela, directly affect working women, reducing access to food, medicine, healthcare and social rights.

Working-class women suffer starvation wages, precarious work, imposed care burdens, systemic discrimination and increasing violence.

On this International Working Women's Day the SACP calls on working-class women and men to:

- **strengthen the struggle against imperialism and its wars**
- **oppose sanctions, occupations and capitalist exploitation**
- **defend jobs, wages, rights and public services**
- **build internationalist solidarity among peoples**
- **fight for a world free from exploitation, oppression and violence**
- **taking forward women's reproductive rights**

Without peace and social justice, there can be no gender equality.

Cde Joyce Moloji-Moropa is the SACP National Treasurer.

**Extracts from a speech delivered by Cde Moloji-Moropa at the International Working Women's Day Commemoration in Thembisile Hani Local Municipality, Mpumalanga, 8 March.*

"Women have always driven social transformation."

INTERNATIONAL WORKING WOMEN'S DAY

Women leaders around the world salute Women's Day 2026



The roots of International Working Women's Day, 8 March, lie firmly within the labour movement, born from the collective action of working women fighting against capitalist exploitation, war and oppression.

RENEVA FOURIE

On the afternoon of 6 March, I was honoured to do an input on behalf of the Chris Hani Institute at a significant online gathering of trade unionists and trade union think tanks from across the globe to celebrate International Working Women's Day.

Organised jointly by the WFTU Women's Commission and the International Workers Institute (IWI), the event, titled "From history to today's struggle: working women against war and repression", sought to strip away the commercial veneer and reassert the true, radical history of International Working Women's Day.

The central message of the engagement was clear:

8 March is not a symbolic anniversary or an institutional celebration. Its roots lie firmly within the labour movement, born from the collective action of working women fighting against capitalist exploitation, war and oppression.

The speakers argued that to reduce it to a day of greeting cards or corporate platitudes is to erase the legacy of the women who took to the streets and picket lines.

The discussion highlighted how the contemporary crises of imperialist wars, the increasing militarisation of society, and the suppression of struggles disproportionately impact working-class women.

Their experience of oppression is multi-layered, felt acutely in the workplace, within families, in

A BRIEF HISTORY

International *Working Women's Day* & Its Working-Class Roots



- **1908 — The spark.** Some 15,000 women marched through New York City demanding shorter working hours, better pay, and the right to vote — a pivotal moment that ignited the movement.
- **1910 — An international call.** Socialist leader Clara Zetkin proposed at the International Socialist Women's Conference that an annual Women's Day be observed worldwide, rooted in labour rights and equality.
- **1911 — First international observance.** Austria, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland held the inaugural International Women's Day on 19 March, drawing over one million participants to rallies and marches.
- **1917 — Revolution's catalyst.** Women workers in Petrograd striking for "bread and peace" on 8 March helped ignite the Russian Revolution — cementing that date as the permanent day of observance.
- **1975 — United Nations recognition.** The UN officially began marking 8 March as International Women's Day, broadening global awareness and encouraging governments worldwide to adopt it.
- **Reclaiming the "Working" in Women's Day.** The original movement was explicitly about *working* women — factory workers, garment workers, domestic labourers — and many advocates rightly celebrate a return to that framing.
- **Why the name matters.** "International Working Women's Day" honours the labour movement's central role in women's rights, ensuring the day speaks for all women — especially those whose struggles are economic, not only social.
- **A living, expanding legacy.** From equal pay and safe conditions to reproductive rights and global solidarity, the day continues to evolve — with its working-class roots serving as a powerful, unifying reminder of where it all began.

MARCH 8

EVERY YEAR · WORLDWIDE

territories torn apart by conflict and amidst the turmoil of forced migration.

However, the more than 120 participants from over 43 countries consistently rejected the notion that women are merely passive victims of these forces. Instead, the narrative celebrated their role as protagonists of organised resistance. From the women workers who bravely opposed the First World War to those who formed the backbone of revolutionary movements and anti-fascist resistance, history is replete with examples.

This legacy continues today in the fight against war, occupation, repression, and exploitation. The core lesson drawn from history is that peace is impossible without social justice, and true emancipation cannot be achieved without class struggle.

Key contributions framed this historical continuity. Cynthia Della Porta, a member of the WFTU Secretariat and responsible for the Women's Committee as well as an IWI Executive Member, delivered a crucial keynote address.

She was followed by 23 interventions from participants around the world, all of which underscored the pioneer role of working women, both in history and in present-day conflicts.

The debate served to strengthen the internationalist bonds of working women organised within the WFTU, denouncing the role of capitalism and imperialism in perpetuating war.

In her closing remarks, Alexandra Liberi of the International Workers Institute drew the discussion to a powerful conclusion. She evoked the words of Che Guevara, reminding the audience of the imperative to place no trust in imperialism or Zionism.

To advance the cause of the working class and secure the liberation of women, she echoed his call for "two, three, many Vietnams" to defeat these oppressive forces.

The event concluded as a successful reaffirmation of the class-based significance of 8 March, sending a clear message of solidarity and a renewed commitment to the internationalist struggle against war and repression.

Cde Reneva Fourie is a member of the SACP Central Committee and Politburo.

INTERNATIONAL WORKING WOMEN'S DAY

Celebrating the strength and leadership of women



8 March is not only a celebration of the strength, resilience and contributions of women in communities, workplaces and leadership, but also a call to action for society to intensify the struggle for gender equality and justice.

MANDLA TIBANE

The SACP successfully honoured and celebrated International Working Women's Day, 8 March in Mpumalanga, through a commemoration that recognised the critical role played by women in society.

The commemoration served not only as a celebration of the strength, resilience and contributions of women in communities, workplaces and leadership, but also as a call to action for society to intensify the struggle for gender equality and justice.

It reaffirmed the commitment to continue advocating for progressive policies and programmes that uplift women, protect their rights, and create sustainable opportunities for their full development.

The gathering also reflected on the global challenges facing women, particularly the struggles of women in countries such as Venezuela, Palestine and Iran, where many continue to raise their voices against oppression, the violations of human rights and ongoing wars.

Mpumalanga therefore joins the international community in honouring the courage, leadership

and determination of women everywhere, while acknowledging that the struggle for the full social, political and economic emancipation of women continues.

As the world commemorates International Working Women's Day, societies are reminded that the journey toward equality is far from complete and requires the collective effort of governments, civil society, communities and individuals.

The event also reflects the enduring legacy of women who have historically led struggles for justice and freedom, inspiring present and future generations to continue advancing the cause of equality and dignity for all.

The Mpumalanga gathering, therefore, stands as both a celebration and a renewed pledge to

strengthen solidarity among women and progressive forces in society.

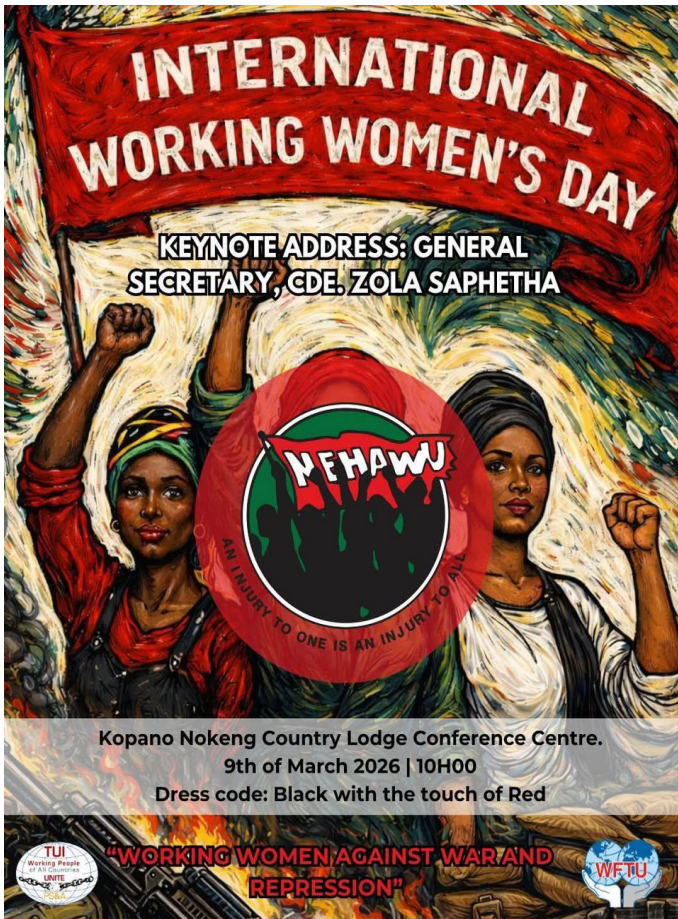
It calls on all sectors to actively support initiatives that combat gender-based violence, expand economic opportunities, and ensure that women occupy their rightful place in leadership and decision-making.

In this spirit, the province remains committed to building a just, inclusive and democratic society in which the rights, safety and empowerment of women are fully realised, and where every woman and girl can live with dignity, freedom and equal opportunity.

Cde Mandla Tibane is the first Deputy Provincial Secretary in the Mpumalanga Province.

INTERNATIONAL WORKING WOMEN'S DAY

Working women against war and repression



Nehawu defines the scourge of gender-based violence as a core workplace and patriarchal issue tied to the capitalist exploitation of women workers.

THULILE KUMALO

The National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (Nehawu) commemorated International Working Women's Day in Bloemfontein, Free State, on 9 March.

International Working Women's Day is rooted in the fires of working-class resistance, when women stood against exploitation, poverty and war. It was built by those who understood that their liberation was inseparable from the liberation of humanity itself.

The General Secretary of Nehawu, Cde Zola Saphetha, in his keynote message, emphasised the working-class roots of International Working Women's Day and called for a proletarian revolution to end both wage labour and domestic slavery.

This is because women's oppression is general oppression. It is intertwined with capitalist exploitation – along with imperialist subjugation of nations.

Imperialist wars

"Today, imperialism shows its most ferocious face through wars, occupations, economic sanctions and the plundering of peoples," said Cde Zola.

"Nehawu denounces the ongoing genocide against the Palestinian people, which brutally affects women and children, and the continuing imperialist aggression against Venezuela, consisting of criminal sanctions, blackmail and attempts at destabilisation."

He said that wars and sanctions are instruments of domination that destroy entire societies and affect working-class women first and foremost.

"Without an end to imperialist wars, without a break with the war economy and without social justice, there can be no real gender equality."

Women represent over 70% of the world's poor; they earn on average about 20% less than men and are concentrated in the most precarious and least

protected sectors. More than 60% of unpaid work, which is essential for social reproduction, falls on women, guaranteeing huge profits for capital and savings for states.

“The war economy enriches the arms industry and large monopolies, while millions of women are pushed into poverty, unemployment and precariousness,” continued Cde Zola. “Military spending is increasing everywhere, while public health, education, welfare and labour rights are being dismantled.”

“Gender-based violence is a core workplace and patriarchal issue tied to the capitalist exploitation of women workers”

The history of war and occupation shows that women and children constitute the majority of civilian victims: bombing, forced displacement, hunger and lack of care affect women in particular.

In Palestine, thousands of women have been killed, injured or deprived of access to essential care. Economic sanctions, such as those imposed on Venezuela, directly affect working women the most, reducing access to food, medicine, health-care and social rights.

GBV is a national emergency

Nehawu defines the scourge of gender-based violence as a core workplace and patriarchal issue tied to the capitalist exploitation of women workers. To fight against GBV, Nehawu has demanded workplace GBV forums, declaring GBV as a national emergency, and extending activism beyond 16 Days campaigns, among other demands.

Aware of the illegal acts of aggression by imperialist forces, Nehawu calls on working-class women and men to:

- strengthen the struggle against imperialism and its wars
- oppose sanctions, occupations and capitalist exploitation
- defend jobs, wages, rights and public services
- build internationalist solidarity among peoples
- fight for a world free from exploitation, oppression and violence

These efforts tie into Nehawu’s gender policies, emphasising non-sexist workplaces with equal rights and protections—aligning with your expertise in union gender policy development.

“Without an end to imperialist wars, without a break with the war economy and without social justice, there can be no real gender equality,” concluded Cde Zola.

The event was also graced by the presence of the Premier of Free State Province, Maqueen Letsoha-Mathae. She emphasised the importance of solidarity among global women workers facing unequal pay, sexual harassment, denied parental rights, and patriarchal power structures.

She also linked these issues to capitalist oppression, calling for worker unity to prioritise genuine gender struggles over elitist views.

Cde Thulile Kumalo is the National Gender Coordinator for the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union. She writes in her personal capacity.

INTERNATIONAL WORKING WOMEN'S DAY

**SACP Women's Conference -
women plant the seeds of
solidarity for socialist victory**



The proletarian women of South Africa are the backbone of society, and it is time to rise and claim their rightful place in the struggle for a socialist future. Photo Tenanile Mngomezulu

Women shoulder the heaviest burdens in society

- **Social reproduction**
Women continue to perform mostly unpaid domestic and caregiving work, which reduces their chances of getting paid work
- **Childcare**
A lack of affordable and accessible childcare services is one of the biggest barriers to women getting jobs.
- **Cultural expectations**
Traditional gender roles, especially in rural areas, limit women's opportunities outside the household.

• **Education**

Higher education levels are strongly linked to increased participation in the workforce. But women from poor households face limited access to education.

• **Marriage & fertility**

Women with children or who are married often face additional constraints, as they are expected to prioritise family duties over work.

Source NRF

**HLENGIWE NKONYANE AND
TENANILE MNGOMEZULU**

The SACP in Linda Jabane District, gathered in Soweto township of Gauteng Province, on the eve of International Working Women’s Day, to ignite the flames of revolutionary eagerness within the hearts of the proletarian women in the City of Johannesburg.

The SACP, Linda Jabane District, had convened this impactful Women’s Conference on 7 March to rally the working-class women and chart the course towards a proletarian women socialist victory.

True to the beliefs of communist discipline, this conference was meticulously organised, drawing in working-class women of all ages, enthusiastic to participate in a transformative dialogue. These women, the backbone of our society, have long endured the socio-economic insecurities of unemployment, poverty, and gender-based violence that plague the capitalist system.

Alongside our comrades in the district were progressive organisations in solidarity, including the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union, the ANC Women’s League, the South African National Civic Organisation, the Domestic Workers Union, and the WaterCan foundation.

Water crisis – women shoulder the burden

The conference came together to expose the socio-economic realities that oppress working-class women in the district. The water crisis, which is a symptom of the bourgeois state’s neglect, has placed an undue burden on the women of Johannesburg, forcing them to organise and function within the failures of basic service delivery.

As the environmental justice activist, Ferrial Adams, articulately, “water security is a gender issue, for when communities lack this essential resource, it is the women who must shoulder the burden.”

Adams also elaborated, “the closure of schools and the sanitation crisis disproportionately affect

females in the main, notably hygiene of the conditions that they are subjected to in the school environment when there is no water, hits the female the hardest.”

Adams also highlighted that even the right to be in school gets violated, as no schooling can take place when there is no water. This then burdens the women as they must organise themselves to operate in this failure of basic service delivery. The women therefore take over the responsibilities of the children who must stay at home due to school closures.

Comrade Zanele Matebula, a labour and organising activist, reminded the conference that women are the engine of the revolution, the power that keeps the struggle alive. She traced the history of International Working Women’s Day, which is rooted in historical shop-floor battles, and was further elevated by the internationalist socialist women’s movement.

“Now, as we commemorate the 70th year of this dedicated day”, said Matebula, “we must take stock of our victories and continue to fight for the rights of the working-class women.”

“The water crisis, a symptom of the bourgeois state’s neglect, has placed an undue burden on the women”

Exploitation nexus

Her words resonated deeply, for it is known that the majority of working-class women toil in the informal sector and are unorganised and exploited. She emphasised that we must activate and conscientise these women, for they are the heart of the revolution.

Matebula added called upon activists to highlight the double exploitation women face, in the workplace and in the unrecognised labour of the house-

holds. This is the oppression of women under capitalism and patriarchy, a burden that activists must collectively shoulder.

A clarion call was made that the time has come to plant the seeds of social solidarity. Women must unite, look out for one another, and organise to achieve their rightful demands. For it is through this unity and collective action that the fight for working-class women liberation can be won.

Action programme

The commissions that followed this conference have laid the groundwork for a pragmatic programme of action, addressing the socio-economic insecurities faced by working-class women. This programme will be rolled out across the district, a testament to the ownership and agency of the women in attendance.

The conference ended with a spark of renewed determination the proletarian revolutionary passion ignited. The proletarian women of South Africa are

“The majority of working-class women toil in the informal sector and are unorganised and exploited”

the backbone of society, and it is time to rise and claim their rightful place in the struggle for a socialist future.

The chant of “High moral! High Discipline” was not just a slogan of the day; it was alive and in action. Comrades left the conference revived and ready for action.

Hlengiwe Nkonyane is an activist of the SACP in Gauteng.

Tenanile Mngomezulu is an activist in the SACP Linda Jabane District.

PEOPLE’S RED CARAVAN

Five successful activations prove community power



SACP General Secretary Solly Mapaila (centre) with community activists at the People’s Red Caravan activation, held in Ixopo, KZN, in February.

People’s Red Caravan – What’s it all about?

- The SACP’s People’s Red Caravan (PRC) has completed five community activations since its June 2025 launch
- SACP leaders live and work with residents for a week to tackle local challenges, including food security, safety, and infrastructure
- The Ganspan Village Agricultural Cooperative holds monthly spinach harvests as an ongoing result of the programme
- Poultry projects across five provinces now produce over 32,700 eggs per month, fighting hunger and generating income
- The PRC aims to build self-reliant communities through cooperatives — rejecting dependence on government handouts or business

TINYIKO NTINI

The SACP’s flagship People’s Red Caravan (PRC) initiative shows that when communities take charge of their own development, solid results follow.

To date, we have successfully completed five PRC activations. Each one leaves a trail of sustainable projects and empowered communities in its wake.

Launched on 6 June 2025 at Motlhabe Village in the North West, the People’s Red Caravan is a nationwide programme aimed at deepening the Party’s ties with ordinary people at the grassroots level.

Following the Motlhabe PRC, the Caravan has now made its mark in Mpumalanga, Eastern Cape, Limpopo, and KwaZulu-Natal. We plan to reach every province.

What is the PRC?

The aims of the People’s Red Caravan are rooted in self-empowerment and self-reliance. It explicitly rejects the notion of communities being passively dependent on government handouts.

Instead, the PRC is a hands-on process where SACP leaders and members live and work alongside residents for a week, collectively addressing local challenges.

The focus areas include establishing food security and local food production, improving community safety, revitalising community-based productive activities, and fixing essential infrastructure like water and roads. It is a practical demonstration of what building socialism from the ground up looks like.

Concrete results

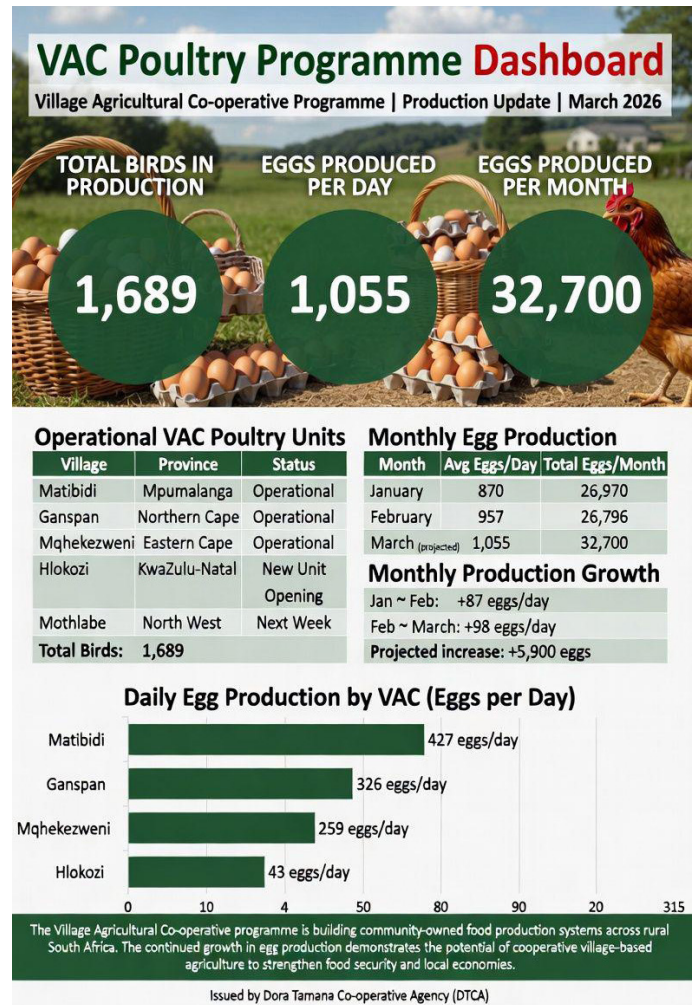
The People’s Red Caravan comprises concrete action with concrete results.

The Ganspan model: While the Caravan’s week-long activation plants the seeds, the process is continuous. The results are now blooming in communities long after the Caravan has moved on. A prime example is the ongoing work in the Ganspan Village Agricultural Cooperative.

“The PRC is proving that a different world is possible.”

On Thursday, 5 March, the Ganspan Village Agricultural Cooperative – Crop Production Cluster – carried out its monthly spinach harvest. This was not a one-off event, but a routine operation fulfilling the latest supply orders while continuing to strengthen local food production.

This ongoing work shows how community-driven agriculture can support livelihoods, promote food security, and build a sustainable local economy.



Food security: tally of egg production under the People’s Red Caravan Village Agricultural Cooperative Programme

Every harvest represents dedication, cooperation, and the power of communities working together to become more self-reliant. This is contributing significantly to developing the community economy and promoting sustainability.

Poultry programme: The numbers speak for themselves. The poultry element of our Village Agricultural Cooperative Programme now has a total of 1,689 birds across existing Caravans. They produce a total of 1,055 eggs a day and an astounding 32,700 eggs per month.

This consistent supply of protein is a direct line of defence against hunger and a source of income for

the community, proving that small-scale, collective agriculture is a viable economic driver.

A movement, not a moment

The success of the PRC is not measured in speeches, but in these tangible outcomes. From fixing a dilapidated bridge in Motlhabe to renovating a clinic, to regular harvests in Ganspan, and now, daily egg production in five provinces. The initiative is proving that a different world is possible.

The PRC demonstrates that communities do not need to wait on government or business to address the challenges of poverty and hunger. In fact, it is in the interest of capitalist-oriented business to keep our people poor and unemployed.

The PRC, instead, encourages communities to take power into their own hands and establish cooperatives such as food gardens, recycling, and poultry projects.

Socialism is the future, and the work being done in communities today shows that it can be built step by step, through practical programmes that place people, cooperation and sustainability at the centre of development.

Cde Tinyiko Ntini is a member of the SACP Central Committee and the National Organiser.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT

Fiscal policy must support a new local economic development model



*Municipalities must provide decent work opportunities and absorb atypical workers into direct state employment.
Photo: Ihsaan Haffejee, GroundUp*

What's the issue?

- South Africa needs a new local economic development model that tackles poor service delivery and uneven spatial development.
- Municipalities must diversify their revenue base beyond rates and taxes, including by using SOEs for income generation.
- Local fiscal policy should support industrial diversification, helping communities move away from dependence on one or two dominant sectors toward low-carbon and digital

economies.

- Demand-led growth — through public procurement linked to job creation, price controls to lower household costs and decent work creation — must be a core pillar of municipal strategy.
- Municipal development should be seen as more than just service delivery; it must actively drive human development.

KHWEZI MABASA

We need to get beyond the idea of service delivery and create dynamic and active channels for local economic development.

The main policy debates about local government correctly highlight the challenges in public goods and services provision. Community protests and the upcoming local government elections have shifted the focus towards equitable access to water, energy, food, social infrastructure and concerns about heightened crime within municipalities.

This makes sense because local government is at the coalface of residents’ experiences in the country’s cooperative governance framework. Most residents, policy stakeholders, government officials and researchers present improved public service provision as the panacea for municipal governance faultlines.

This proposition is salient and deserves more attention in fiscal policy-making. But it does not resolve the underlying structural causes underpinning the socio-economic challenges within municipalities. South Africa needs a new local economic development model that addresses poor public service delivery and long-standing uneven spatial development patterns simultaneously. This model should focus on the following strategic fiscal policy choices.

More policy methods needed

Firstly, it is essential to diversify the revenue base within local municipalities, which is overly dependent on rates and taxes as primary revenue sources. The fiscal policy framework needs to provide local government officials with additional policy instruments for generating income.

Researched literature and stakeholder inputs

point to some useful proposals for augmenting the revenue base at the local level. For example, reorienting the functions of state-owned municipal enterprises and development agencies towards revenue generation policy priorities. The governance oversight and policy impact monitoring systems over these municipal entities are not adequate.

In addition, the performance outcomes of these institutions need to be connected with socio-economic imperatives such as employment creation, skills development, technological upgrading and lowering household living costs.

Secondly, municipal fiscal policy interventions need to complement localised industrial diversification plans. Too many municipalities in the country rely on one or two dominant sectors for attaining socio-economic development goals.

This is not sustainable, especially in policy context characterised by regular business closures and un-

even spatial investment patterns. The reports, as well as experiences, from former mining-dependent communities highlight this point in several ways. Fiscal policy choices within municipalities should facilitate the transition towards more diversi-

fied economic structures, which include emerging sectors using low-carbon and digital technologies.

Diversify local development

This requires government coordination to ensure that these fiscal allocations are supported by industrial, social development and public infrastructure programmes. The documented evidence from successful industrial and special economic zones interventions provides a basis for this government-wide approach in diversifying local development.

Thirdly, local economic development policy stakeholders and policymakers should dedicate equal

“Too many municipalities in the country rely on one or two dominant sectors for attaining socio-economic development goals.”

attention to demand-led growth. Public procurement, decent work creation and administered prices are crucial pillars in this strategy. A good starting point is linking public procurement with socio-economic targets such as job creation, building local value chains and improving access to public goods.

“Price controls can be used to lower household and business costs within local government.”

This necessitates balancing price competitiveness with the above-mentioned developmental imperatives. Municipal budget committees need to review administered pricing thresholds to assess their impacts on local economic development.

The rigid cost-recovery model has impeded broader economic development imperatives. For example, price controls can be used to lower household and business costs within local government.

Expand employment

In addition, municipalities can support demand by creating decent work opportunities and absorbing atypical workers into direct state employment. This is essential for using wages and increased income to drive demand in the municipality.

The aim is to pick sectors that have higher labour absorption rates and ensure that employment expansion meets prescribed decent work standards. And this labour market strategy must consider both formal and informal work as well as intersectional demographics (age and gender).

The interventions explained above illuminate that local economic development in South Africa can be approached differently, with the aim of producing improved human development outcomes. The dominant view that reduces municipal development functions to service delivery should be transcended.

Dr Khwezi Mabasa is an activist and Wits Lecturer.

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Stop the imperialist attack on Iran



The US murdered over 175 people, mainly young girls, in a cruise missile attack on Shajareh Tayyebbeh school in Min-ab, Iran, on 28 February. Photo: Mehr News Agency

The ongoing war on Iran by US and Israel is unprovoked and a violation of international law. It is a continuation of the imperialistic policy of the US against the people of Iran.

The conflict already poses a serious threat to regional and international peace and security, with far-reaching humanitarian, diplomatic and economic consequences.

Justice and peace-loving people across the world have come out to condemn the new imperialist attack by the US and Israel against Iran. The violation undermines the UN Charter and every concept of international law. The US's only interest is to use its military strength to promote its geopolitical and economic interests in the region.

Mass anti-war protest

The South African Communist Party (SACP) voiced its fierce outrage at the murderous actions of the Trump-Netanyahu axis of evil by joining a mass protest outside the US consulate in Sandton on 7 March.

From the platform, SACP International Secretary Cde Ben Martins delivered a condemnation of the barbaric killing of the school children and assassination of the leader of Iran, Khamenei, as a heinous act. He declared that the killers had not merely struck down the head of a sovereign state but had martyred a revered spiritual leader in the sacred month of Ramadan.

He further declared: “The aggression by the US and the Zionist entity represents a flagrant and dangerous violation of international law. It tramples on Article 2(4) of the UN Charter which prohibits the threat and use of force. The Islamic Republic of Iran possesses an inherent and lawful right to self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter.

“The aggression by the US and the Zionist entity represents a flagrant and dangerous violation of international law.”

“We issue a direct call to the United Nations Security Council and all member states to immediately fulfil their duty to preserve international peace and security. We further mobilise all freedom-loving citizens of the world to demonstrate their unwavering solidarity with the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and to take all practical action necessary to make their voices heard against this tyranny.”

Background – the struggle for self-determination

The Islamic Republic of Iran spans West Asia with borders including Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan and Pakistan plus coastlines on the Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea.

The choice by some countries in the region to resist Western hegemony and champion the Palestinian right to self-determination, with Iran as the strongest voice, created tensions with apartheid Israel and imperialist US regimes.

Israel depends on its strong army and support

from the US. It sees Iran as a serious threat to its imperialist expansion. Israel has killed a least 72,100 people in Gaza and 1,058 in the West Bank over the past two years alone – in addition to hundreds of thousands killed over the past close to eight decades of occupation in Palestine. It has bombed homes, hospitals and schools, stopped food and aid from getting in.

Iran has spoken out strongly in defence of the Palestinian people. Iran called Israel’s actions crimes against humanity and even genocide.

Furthermore, West Asia has a lot of oil, and oil brings money, but it also brings problems. Powerful countries from outside the region want control and influence there because of oil.

In 1951, a new Iranian leader named Mohammad Mossadegh came to power through a democratic process and nationalised Iran’s oil for the benefit of the Iranian people. In August 1953, the US imposed the Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi following its coup against the democratic government.

This led to heavy repression in the country.

Under US control, Iran became the key exporter of oil to apartheid South Africa.

But Ayatollah Khomeini, who led the 1979 Islamic Revolution pledged his support to all peoples fighting for self-determination. He put an immediate end to trade with apartheid South Africa and gave full support to the people of Palestine.

Iraq invaded Iran in September 1980 due to border disputes and fears of revolutionary export. The conflict killed up to a

million people on both sides, and involved chemical weapons by Iraq.

Mass protests erupted in December 2025 over economic woes in Iran. The US used the protests as one of its reasons to invade Iran, dropping bombs





SACP International Secretary Cde Ben Martins, right, pictured here at the protest with CC member Mabuse Mpe, condemned the barbaric killing of the school children and assassination of the leader of Iran, Khamenei.

“Iran has spoken out strongly in defence of the Palestinian people. Iran called Israel’s actions crimes against humanity and even genocide.”

on a school and murdering 175 people, including 168 children. By the second week of March, the death toll exceeded a thousand civilians including some 200 children.

Lebogang Pule is the National Committee member of YCLSA and Popcru International Relations officer. She writes in her own capacity.

HAMBA KAHLE

Tribute to Comrade Terror Lekota



Mosiuoa Gerard Patrick "Terror" Lekota.

**Mosiuoa Gerard Patrick "Terror" Lekota
13 August 1948 - 4 March 2026**

- Imprisoned on Robben Island (1974–1982) alongside Nelson Mandela for his anti-apartheid activism
- Key defendant in the landmark Delmas Treason Trial (1985–1988); later became a leader of the United Democratic Front
- Premier of the Free State (1994–1996) and Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces (1997–1999)
- Appointed Minister of Defence under President Thabo Mbeki (1999–2008)
- Co-founded the Congress of the People (COPE) following a split from the ANC in 2008
- with deadened hearts

KHAYA MAGAXA

My sincere condolences to the family, friends and comrades of Cde "Terror" Lekota, our former African National Congress (ANC) National Chairperson, a former member of the ANC NEC and veteran of our liberation struggle.

Cde Terror dedicated a better part of his life to the struggle against colonialism of a special type (apartheid) and faced the wrath of the National Party regime.

He was expelled from university, a key defendant in what was called the Delmas Treason Trial and served not just one but two terms on Robben Island. When he was released from Robben Island, he led a victorious campaign against Cricket South

Africa to be isolated by the International Cricket Council, and continued with his activism within United Democratic Front structures.

There was no dull moment in his entire life until the 1994 democratic breakthrough.

After the unbanning, he was elected to the ANC National Executive Council and later served as minister in the new democratic government.

Cde Terror's nickname replaced his real name because of his strong, hard character. He had a capacity to tackle anyone in his way when he put his point across. He was a typical nationalist within our movement whose major objective was to remove the white minority regime from political office. I never heard him apply class analysis to advance his argument. I

I liked him a lot, even when he left to lead a break-away party called the Congress of the People (Cope), I still had a soft spot for him.

Dauntless courage

He was a principled man and had the courage of his convictions. When Cope had only two people in parliament, Cde Terror would be like ten people alone. He was a one-man army. When he spoke, our benches would be shaken. When he went on a broadside against Jacob Zuma, one would think he hated the man wholeheartedly with a passion, but wait until you hear him attacking Cde Cyril Ramaphosa.

He had a solid command of the English language and good choice of English words. He had a very good sense of humour and was extremely mischievous, like any township man. To me, he remained one of the best comrades and leaders our movement ever produced.

Yes, Cde Terror committed some mistakes by taking his differences with Zuma too far, and I forgave him for that because he was not a left-oriented leader.

Honestly, I never picked up anything suggesting he knew he had made any mistake by forming Cope. He strongly believed he did the right thing.

To me, he is better than those who actively seek to kill our movement from within, remaining part of our leadership collective, while doing imperialist manoeuvres. To me, those are the most dangerous – just like askaris in the command centre of armed forces.

May his soul rest in perfect peace.

Hamba kahle qabane!

Cde Khaya Magaxa is an SACP Central Committee member.

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