



April 2023 Voice of the South African Communist Party

# Umsebenzi

**RECONFIGURE  
THE ALLIANCE!**

**ENSURE A  
RADICAL NDR!**



**Build a powerful  
socialist movement  
of workers  
and the poor!**

SACP CC

# Reconfigure the Alliance! Build a powerful socialist movement of workers & the poor!

*The SACP issued the following statement from its recent Augmented Central Committee meeting*

The SACP held its annual Augmented Central Committee meeting over the weekend of 31 March to 2 April in Braamfontein, Johannesburg. The meeting included expanded representation from SACP provinces and districts, and from the Young Communist League of South Africa.

The CC was convened to finalise the outstanding task of the Central Committee given by the resolution from the SACP 15th National Congress on State and Popular Power and Electoral Considerations.

The meeting was preceded by intensive and robust discussions by the provincial and district structures of the SACP over the last two weeks. An assessment of the developments in the country and the world was presented by the General Secretary, Comrade Solly Mapaila, followed by a Central Committee discussion paper titled The state, popular and electoral considerations: contesting elections, more effectively, with or without a reconfigured Alliance.

### **The decision on the SACP and elections**

The SACP Augmented Central Committee welcomed and accepted the general thrust of the its internal discussion document. The meeting agreed to contest elections with an effective and reconfigured Alliance as our preferred modality as our posture toward the 2024 elections and beyond.

By reconfiguration, we mean a common Alliance commitment to defend and advance the National Democratic Revolution, based on the vision of the Freedom Charter. We will also engage Alliance partners for a consensus on:

- A common analysis of the socio-economic conditions facing the working-class and poor, followed by a common socio-economic approach programme; and manifesto development and its joint implementation by an adequately inclusive Alliance leadership in Parliament, provincial legislatures, Cabinet, provincial executive councils, municipal councils, and mayoral committees.

- The conduct of Alliance candidates based on common Alliance discipline during the campaign, as well as Alliance public representatives and office bearers afterwards.

- Provisions enabling elected SACP representatives to articulate independent perspectives in Parliament, provincial legislatures, and municipal councils within the framework of a reconfigured alliance.

- The accountability of elected Alliance representatives, as well as of SACP members to the Party, just as ANC members are expected to be accountable to the ANC, and our people

- A common approach and binding democratic consensus-seeking consultation to coalitions when it becomes necessary to seek coalition partners post-elections based on the election outcome.

This is the position of the SACP as we approach the 2024 elections or any by-election. The meeting also agreed

that should a satisfactory reconfigured Alliance not materialise, the SACP will move towards a popular left front as an electoral modality. Furthermore, on a case-by-case basis, the lower structures of the Party will make motivations for the Party to stand independently for the by-elections.

Building a left popular front remains essential, even for purposes not related to contesting elections, for building a powerful socialist movement of workers and the poor on the ground as well as defending and ensuring that our NDR takes the socialist direction.

In the next few weeks and months, our position on contesting elections will be the focus of our engagements within the Alliance, with the ANC and Cosatu, and by extension to mass youth, women, civic and religious organisations. We will also engage our communities and the broader organised working class.

### **The persistant crises of capitalism in our country**

The CC met in the context of deepening crises of the system of capitalism in this country and the world.

The crises of capitalism in our country have been made possible by the neoliberal restructuring of the economy, the failure to discipline capital, as well as privatisation and the corporatisation of state-owned enterprises.

We have seen the rising cost-of-living crisis hitting workers and the poor hard. The recent increases of the electricity tariffs by NERSA and the repo rate by the South African Reserve Bank leading to interest rates hikes have further increased the cost of living of the working-class.

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**In the coming weeks our position on elections will be the focus of engagements with the ANC & Cosatu**



**Little progress: since the collapse of the Jagersfontein mine slimes dam last September, and despite the declaration of a state of emergency, Jagersfontein remains in crisis**

### **Reserve Bank's decision on the interest rate**

The Augmented Central Committee is deeply concerned about the South African Reserve Bank (SARB) Monetary Policy Committee's decision to increase the repo rate once again by 50 basis points (bp) in response to rising inflation levels.

While the significance of price stability as derived from the SARB's mandate is not disputed, it is important to note that the mandate also dictates that price stability should be maintained "in the interest of balanced and sustainable economic growth". Therefore, this decision, which comes on the back of a decline in economic growth in the fourth quarter of 2022, as reported by Stats SA, and rising unemployment, can hardly be considered balanced or sustainable and underscores the SARB's narrow focus on inflation in total disregard of the need to consider economic growth and employment in its monetary policy decisions.

This punitive decision against the working-class and the poor is unlikely to resolve inflation in South Africa. The un-

derlying cause of inflation is not demand driven and is induced by conditions beyond our control, like the imperialist aggression against Russia through its proxy war in Ukraine. By the SARB's own admission, current inflation in SA is of a supply-side nature, so-called cost-push inflation.

The current rise in prices is caused by the crisis of capitalist profitability. The immediate cause includes rising oil prices, supply-side constraints, load shedding, potential non-competitive behaviour in food supply chains and other industries, exchange rate depreciation and other supply-side factors rooted in diminished capitalist profitability.

Despite the fact that since the SARB started hiking rates towards the end of 2021, the repo rate increased nine times

– by a cumulative 425 basis points. But inflation remained at around the 7% level – averaging 6.9% in 2022 with the latest increase to 7% in February 2023. This may indicate the ineffectiveness of monetary policy to deal with the supply side or cost-push inflation.

On the demand side, raising interest rates are a blow to the already constrained working-class, middle class and different sections of the business sector, especially SMMEs. This will further depress the already low consumer spending and thus negatively impact aggregate demand. On the supply side, rising interest rates increase the cost of production as producers face higher borrowing costs.

The decision to raise interest rates under the current circumstances is likely to make inflation worse while further depressing economic growth. This is a recipe for "stagflation". Thus, the monetary policy path that the SARB is pursuing will most likely reduce inflation by engineering a depression that will have a devastating impact on the country's economy.

**A stubbornly high  
inflation rate shows the  
ineffectiveness of the repo  
rate as anti-inflationary tool**

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As South Africans, we must urgently have an open and inclusive debate about the mandate of the SARB. We need to categorically determine and reach a mutual understanding of what the role of the SARB regarding economic growth (and thus employment) is.

It must be recognised that there are many other factors affecting and driving inflation that are beyond the practical control of any central bank. Addressing these factors will reduce the need to use a blunt instrument (repo rate) to deal with inflation.

### Monetary and fiscal policy

These crises cannot be solved by an austerity-driven fiscal policy. Neither can these crises be resolved by monetary policy that narrowly targets inflation at the expense of balanced economic growth. They will require macro-economic policies that contribute to economic growth, the transformation of economic ownership, and industrial structure through industrialisation which also takes advantage of green industrialisation to contribute to creating a low-carbon economy.

Dealing with the current situation will require the government to decisively address our inadequate rail infrastructure, ageing road networks, and congestion on our roads, all of which increase the cost of living and production and negatively impact inflation trends.

### The immediate challenge of load shedding and the energy crisis

The SACP welcomes the introduction of the National State of Disaster which is already showing positive signs of reducing and eventually ending load-shedding. We also welcome the exemption of critical infrastructure such as hospitals and water facilities from load-shedding.

While the Minister of Electricity must be supported in his responsibilities to deal with the electricity crisis, the SACP reiterates its stance that this crisis must not be used as a ploy to privatise Eskom, which can only hinder access to electricity to most South Africans.

On the contrary, the SACP argues for building Eskom as a publicly-owned enterprise, as part of the general programme for industrialisation, energy security and a just energy transition—thereby contributing to energy security, job creation, and structural transformation of the economy.

The SACP is concerned with the state's inability to respond effectively to disasters that affect the lives and liveli-



**Brazilian president Lulu da Silva: due in SA for the August Brics summit**

hoods of our people through their direct and indirect impacts in places such as KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape and North-West.

The collapse of the mining slime dam in Jagersfontein in September 2022 wrecked the livelihoods of communities, with loss of life, destruction of hundreds of homes and loss of livestock.

Nearly seven months after the disaster, there has been very little progress despite the declaration of a state of emergency, which should have given powers to the state authority, enabled by the Disaster Act. The SACP condemns the arrogance of the mining bosses who refuse to offer fair pay and compensation to communities affected and calls on the government to step up its role to address the desperate situation.

### New imperialist wars

The SACP, along with communists the world over, has always called for an end to all wars and for peace in the world. Capitalism is fuelled by the profit logic. It does not want peace as it has proven to be more profitable for the industrial-military complex to exacerbate wars.

**With communists the world over, the SACP calls for an end to all wars and for global peace**

Workers, the poor and the vulnerable suffer the most in any war.

Recently, US-led Western imperialism has become even more arrogant, aggressive and greedy. This is leading to more conflicts around the world. Imperialists claim to support freedom and democracy, but they are constantly breaking international law or applying it selectively. They isolate and impose sanctions on those who resist their attempts to control the world, and even grossly impose their ideas as universal ideas and values of the entire world.

But increasingly these attempts are being resisted. The imperialist unipolar world is becoming a multipolar world through the struggles of the working people across the world, including in imperialist capitals, and by various states asserting their sovereignty and international order based on international law.

The SACP welcomes the call made by the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, President Xi Jinping, for a Global Civilisation Initiative. The initiative calls for respect for the diversity of civilisations, upholding the common values of humanity in pursuing peace, development, equity, justice, democracy, and freedom, and promoting robust international people-to-people exchanges and cooperation. To this extent, the SACP will soon hold a high-level bilateral engagement with the Communist Party of China.

### Brics Summit

The SACP welcomes the coming Brics Summit which will be hosted by South Africa from 14 to 22 August 2023.

The Brics countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) have a combined 26.7% of the world's land surface, a total population of about 3.21-billion (41.5% of the global population), and a combined GDP of US\$26.6-trillion (26.2% of the gross world product).

The existence of Brics challenges the US and European-dominated unipolar world order. The SACP looks forward to the presence of leaders such as Presidents Xi Jinping, Lula da Silva, and Vladimir Putin.

The SACP, together with other progressive organisations, will organise public events and programmes in support of progressive ideas at the summit.

We will build people-to-people relationships and show solidarity with the countries building a new inclusive world order based on cooperation, multilateralism and respect for each other's sovereignty.

### ICC arrest warrant for President Vladimir Putin: down with judicial imperialism

The SACP rejects the arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) based in The Hague, Netherlands.

The arrest warrant, based on frivolous charges, comes on the eve of an important proposal for peace in Ukraine by President Xi Jinping during his state visit to Russia and the Brics Summit due to be hosted by South Africa.

The ICC was established to try individuals charged with the gravest crimes of concern to the international community: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and the crime of aggression.

The imperialist powers continue to manipulate this multi-lateral institution and use it for judicial imperialism. Despite many calls, and ample evidence, the ICC has consistently refused to charge the likes of Netanyahu, Bush, Clinton, Blair and Obama, who have destroyed countries and killed scores of thousands of people in Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and Yugoslavia, with the continued occupation of other countries territories like in Syria, Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, of the Korean peninsula.

The SACP calls on the South African government to ensure that President Putin can attend the Brics Summit and that he is afforded safe passage. The SACP also calls on the government to act with speed in withdrawing from the ICC and in repealing the Implementation of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court Act 27 of 2002.

### Africa – Cuba Solidarity Conference

The SACP supports the convening of an Africa-Cuba Solidarity Conference later this year. This is an important initiative to bring progressive forces from across the African Continent together in united action in solidarity with the people of Cuba, a country that has given so much to the world and received little in return; a country that remains the torch-bearer of the future of humanity, as they resist imperialism and endure tremendous hardship due to a crippling and unjust economic blockade imposed by the US for over 60 years.

**Western Sahara:** The SACP notes new aggressive military actions from Morocco into Western Sahara, further building a dividing (apartheid) wall of over 2000 km.

We reaffirm our unflinching solidarity with the people of Western Sahara and Polisario Front and further express our

gratitude to the people and government of Algeria for the continued principled support of the Saharawi people and their just struggle for national independence.

We call on the African Union and the United Nations to speed up the process toward the self-determination of the Saharawi people. We also applaud the important political position of the South African government on their solidarity with the Western Sahara.

**Swaziland:** The SACP condemns the continued reign of terror against the people of Swaziland by a ruthless monarchy determined to resist a democratic transition at all costs. Of particular concern is the use of South African-based mercenaries to assassinate political opponents of the regime.

We condemn the brutal assassination of Advocate Thulani Maseko, the Chairperson of the Multiparty Stakeholder Forum negotiating the transitional con-

ditions with SADC and the Swaziland government.

The SACP calls upon the South African government, SADC, and all progressive forces to show solidarity and provide appropriate support to the democratic forces in Swaziland.

The SACP wishes the Communist Party of Swaziland a successful 5th National Congress to be held on 6-9 April 2023.

### Way forward

In the next few weeks and months, the SACP will work towards repositioning our liberation movement to turn the corner and accelerate the transformation of the material living conditions of the people. We need to immediately cushion the working-class and South Africans against the hyperinflation associated with high food prices, higher energy costs and thus increasing the cost of living for the working-class and the poor. ★

## Umsebenzi Editorial Collective

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## Want to join SACP debates?

Report on what's happening in your branch, your district, your province? We're starting the first of a series of six-month writing courses for SACP members soon.

The courses are fully virtual – so we'll cover participants' basic data costs. Each course involves a monthly workshop plus a few hours' work a week and regular interaction with the trainers.

eMail Umsebenzi's deputy editor Cde Buti Manamela at [butimanamela@gmail.com](mailto:butimanamela@gmail.com). Include:

- Your name, contact details – email and phone number – and Telegram Messenger or WhatsApp numbers, if they're different
- Your SACP or YCLSA branch details.
- A brief note 100-250 words on why you want to take the course.

Classes are small – 10 to 12 comrades – so don't be discouraged if you don't make it on to the first course.



President Nelson Mandela, watched by current president Cyril Ramaphosa, signs South Africa's first democratic constitution – opening the way to a society that protects basic political, socio-economic and civil rights

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

# Socio-economic rights failed by market-led policy diktat

*We need to refocus economic development to address human need and welfare as core policy targets, writes Khwezi Mabasa*



South Africans commemorate Human Rights Day annually by drawing attention to its historical and political significance. Sixty nine people were killed by the police on 21 March 1960 while demonstrating against the unjust pass laws. The massacre highlighted the apartheid state's brutality and intensified the need for using armed resistance in challenging it.

The formal adoption of a democratic Constitution by Parliament in 1996 signalled a shift towards a society that protects basic political, socio-economic and civil liberties. Former president Thabo Mbeki, who delivered his lauded "I am

an African" speech on this occasion, stated that the Constitution "recognises the fact that the dignity of the individual is both an objective which society must pursue and is a goal which cannot be separated from the material well-being of that individual".

He was alluding to the importance of addressing political and socio-economic injustices simultaneously. Democratic consolidation and the substantive realisation of human rights necessitates democratising politics, the economy and other social institutions. South Africans' lived experiences and researched policy evidence shows this human rights vision has not been fully achieved.

The country is ranked highly in sev-

eral international comparative indexes on democracy and civil liberties, such as Freedom House and the Ibrahim Index of African Governance, yet it performs poorly in essential socio-economic and human development indicators. High levels of socio-economic exclusion, poverty, inequality and uneven spatial development characterise post-1994 South Africa. Unequal race, gender and class power relations underpin this exclusionary socio-economic structure, which often produces conflict in what the writer Karl von Holdt describes as a violent democracy.

Many residents believe the human rights celebrated annually have not addressed historical injustices or improved

their livelihoods significantly. In other words, systemic race, class and gender inequalities in the economic structure undermine the consolidation of democracy in South Africa. Economic and social policy shortcomings limit efforts to democratise the country's economy to address past and present socio-economic injustices.

These policy choices, based on the prescriptions of dominant international financial institutions, continue to fail South Africans. The policy directives prioritise market-led development models that elevate labour market flexibility, lessening financial exchange controls, privatising public goods and decreasing welfare support as core measures for sustained economic development.

The directives coerce governments in less developed countries to adopt rigid macro-economic targets, which focus narrowly on debt containment, attracting private investment and inflation targeting. We need alternative human rights-centred economic and social policy frameworks, highlighting the following points for transitioning beyond a market-led democracy.

We need broader concepts of labour and livelihood development that do not confine society to wage-led industrial labour as the only solution to the employment crisis. South Africa's economy has historically been run by big corporates operating in different private sector markets and a public sector at different governance levels.

Society's thinking about jobs and livelihoods is confined to formal wage labour or economic participation in these institutions. However, there are innovative ideas emerging about diverse policy strategies for addressing South Africa's socio-economic crisis which provide more policy options for increasing decent work and supporting community-led livelihood strategies.

These proposals factor in the effects of the nascent low-carbon and digital technologies.

In addition, there is a call for more emphasis on the care economy and its relation to expanding social security systems. Social redistribution and transfer interventions are positioned as enablers of multiple livelihood options rather than non-productive expenditure line items.

Secondly, the country's labour and industrial relations regimes should protect the rights of all workers in the economy. Strengthening labour rights,

institutional oversight and adapting laws to structural labour market changes are important for achieving this goal. Several industrial relations conflict case studies and continued worker exploitation illustrate that human rights violations are still prevalent in labour markets.

Race, gender, class and national inequalities determine the form and patterns of exploitation. And there are sectors, such as domestic work, retail, construction and hospitality, where labour-related human rights violations are rife.

Furthermore, economy-wide labour market restructuring, anchored on emerging technologies or lean business models, has deepened this trend in most cases. Technology and industrial upgrading are presented as benign product market and business operation changes by large corporates. The proponents promote the efficiency, profit and production cost gains associated with these technological innovations. But the technologies are equally used to undermine labour rights, collective bargaining and to lower labour costs exponentially. This is alarming because labour market disparities are the main driver of socio-economic inequalities.

Third, there is a need to draw from the policy literature about relevant economic experiments that diverge from market-led policy prescriptions. Alternatives such as the solidarity economy, eco-socialism, circular economy and social economy are instructive. These development models challenge market primacy, concentrated ownership patterns, ecological destruction and labour exploitation.

The alternatives encourage us to think about economic development beyond the confines of growth that is measured using market or financial indicators, such as gross domestic product and rating agency assessments. All these models place human development indicators, equal access to public goods and broader non-market social returns at the centre of economic development.

In summary, human well-being, universal human rights, socio-economic inclusion and social redress must become central economic policy targets in South Africa. ★

*Cde Mabasa is the economic and social policy lead at Friedrich Ebert Stiftung South Africa and a part-time sociology lecturer at the University of Pretoria. His work focuses on labour studies, political economy and racial capitalism.*

# Hamba kahle Cde Che



**C**de Chris Matlhako, former SACP 2nd Deputy General Secretary and Secretary for International Relations in the Central Committee, sadly passed away on 20 April, at age 59.

Cde Matlhako became politically active while he was at school in 1985 and was expelled. He went to another school – where he continued his political activities. He was active in the UDF and was detained several times. He became active in the SACP and ANC and was elected as SACP Deputy General Secretary in 2014 and was re-elected to the Central Committee in 2022. He was buried on 30 April.

A full tribute will be carried in the May issue of *Umsebenzi*. ★

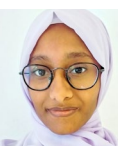


Load shedding has forced the closure of hundreds of factories – robbing the working class of thousands of jobs

## LOAD SHEDDING

# Inconvenient for the rich, disastrous for workers and poor

*Load shedding is shredding the livelihoods and security of workers, the poor and the vulnerable, writes Exlira Giose*



While South Africa is a beautiful country, rich in resources, it finds itself plagued with a multitude of problems. At the top of that list currently, is everyone's most hated, "load shedding". We do not have enough energy capacity for everyone's needs. Or so we're told.

Much has been written on the impact of load shedding on business, but there's been little interest in investigating the impact on working class and poor communities, who use public facilities that usually don't have the luxury of generators.

Let's start with the elderly. Many old-age homes have facilities where electricity is essential to the comfort, security and safety of our parents and grandparents. Residents who suffer from illnesses such as dementia are at huge risk when there is no electricity for security cameras to monitor patients. Care staff require

electricity for preparing food, and the switch over from using electrical appliances to non-electrical appliances will be difficult for members of vulnerable communities, as they are already underfunded. This adds another expense, in addition to the possible dangers of fires breaking out due to using gas appliances. Elderly residents require constant care, including clean clothes, and this can prove difficult if we cannot use electric washing machines that are for washing heaps of laundry. Care homes have medical equipment needed for residents that require electricity, so when the power goes off it poses a great risk to the lives of residents.

An even greater threat to the lives of the elderly and frail would be in situations where they need to be rushed to the hospital for urgent medical attention when traffic lights in affected areas are not working. Medicines are at risk of deteriorating because they cannot be

kept at the right temperature. Delays in operations due to surgeons needing equipment that use electricity and temperature-regulated tools that may be needed in performing operations. This poses a great threat to the terminally ill and elderly South Africans.

Load shedding also is antagonistic toward students. With Covid-19, most students were forced to acquire computers to assist with the transition to online learning. One of the basic requirements of online learning is the use of computers and access to wireless internet. These devices need to be charged. If we have load shedding for two-to-four hours twice or three times a day, students are unable to study, which will affect their academic performance, as this is a time in which minimal or no productivity can take place at home. This is like having to study in the dark by candlelight or use of cellphone torch (with its limited battery supply).

Load shedding also has an impact on the informal business sector. According to the Quarterly Informal Economy Survey conducted by World Economics<sup>1</sup>, the informal sector in South Africa accounted for 28,8% of the economy in 2022. The majority of those in the informal sector come from rural areas or townships.

Informal businesses that use electricity as an integral part of their operations have probably suffered the most. Businesses such as food stalls that rely on electricity have had to close their doors during load shedding. The income lost during these unproductive hours undermines their ability to meet their non-negotiable expenses like rent, water, rates and production materials. This is an especially a scary reality for a country where the informal sector contributes largely to employment, while we are just recovering from the Covid-19 crisis. This reality is a nightmare to vulnerable residents.

The impact of load shedding is even worse for workers. Companies who struggle to keep profit margins either close their doors or retrench workers. In South Africa, with unemployment rates at 50% among the working age population and almost 70% among the youth, this worsens the crisis of unemployment and poverty.

This surge in unemployment will lead to the incapacity of retrenched workers to pay for basic needs, increasing their reliance on the government and decreasing demand or spending power - which in turn will have an effect on the income of other businesses - possibly leading to more retrenchments and more business shut downs, amongst other horrible effects for the economy at large. This also has a destructive psychological effect.

This is just a glimpse of the impact of load shedding on working class communities and sectors. There is a need for more research on this. Be that as it may, we need to fight for solutions to this problem, lest we are ready to lose the provision of this essential service wholly to the big private sector. ★

***Cde Giose studies and tutors economics at UWC, volunteers as a project manager for the non-profit Community Worx and is on the YCLSA National Committee.***

#### Endnote

1. <https://www.worlddeconomics.com/Information/What-We-Do/>



## LOAD SHEDDING

# Load shedding's impact on working class communities

*The impact of load shedding on working class communities offers a strong argument for the continued use of coal and the rapid development of renewable energy generation, argues Yershen Pillay*



A recent visit to a group of 10 small businesses and cooperatives in Tembisa exposed the high impact of load shedding on working class communities. Sabelwa and her sisters operate a local Smart Food Cart cooperative which sells fast food to local clientele in Tembisa. On average, the enterprise makes about R500 a day. It's not just one cooperative that is being sustained, but the 12 livelihoods that the enterprise supports. Sabelwa has five kids and each of her sisters have two kids each. The enterprise provides for necessities such as food, water, clothing and shelter.

The biggest challenge facing this local enterprise is load shedding and the lack of internet connectivity. The Smart Food Cart programme was rolled out to local SMMES and cooperatives by the Chemicals Seta (Chieta) and has thus far created new jobs and supported a number of SMMES and cooperatives in Tembisa. The feedback from owners such as Sabelwa is that load shedding affects their costs and sustainability. For these local enterprises, buying in bulk is a necessity to keep costs as low as possible. For example, they buy meat in bulk which is then stored in a refrigerator. During long hours without electricity, the meat is spoilt, and enterprises are forced to dis-

pose of large quantities as waste.

For this reason, Sabelwa and others are forced to buy refrigerated goods daily, which costs much more and leaves them with less disposable income after sales. The problem is compounded by poor internet connectivity due to cell phone towers being regularly dysfunctional due to load shedding. Being a Smart Food programme, these small businesses and cooperatives are dependent on regular access to internet connectivity to use social media and platforms such as WhatsApp for information sharing and new opportunities. Although the programme provides a device and free data, they are unable to use these resources due to minimal or no internet connectivity for hours, if not days, due to load shedding.

A mixed energy policy as articulated by the SACP would serve South Africa's people best, especially the working class. This would include the continued focus on coal for primary energy supply while simultaneously seizing the opportunities for local beneficiation of our renewable energy economy. The approach is one of both/and, not either/or as there is no need for sacrifices or trade-offs. Some would prefer sacrifices or trade-offs to be made to secure long-term contracts for big business and foreign capital in South Africa's renewable energy economy.

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## Load shedding impact

Continued from Page 9

On the one hand, coal-fired power stations sustain jobs and the European states that have pressurised the Global South under the guise of a 'just transition' have begun to re-open their own coal mines for energy generation. Examples of this are the recently opened coal mines in Germany and the UK. Let us not fall prey to the hypocrisy of the Global North. Coal is here to stay, and we should embrace it.

On the other hand, renewable energy sources such as solar and hydrogen offer great potential for securing our long-term energy supply. Solar panels should be zero-rated for working class communities to ensure that solar is not for big business, but for all. Examples of solar-powered renewable energy can be found in the leftist-run state of Kerala, India, where every household has been turned into a miniature power station through state-supplied solar panels for all. Small enterprises and cooperatives such as that of Sabelwa in Tembisa would benefit immensely from solar-powered refrigerators to store their meat and other products and prevent wastage.

Together with solar, the hydrogen rush has become the new gold rush. Countries such as China have shown that even coal can be converted into hydrogen energy. South Africa has the potential to be a global leader in green hydrogen production due to our natural and technological endowments.

Our vast land, solar and wind resources combined with existing technology make the cost of producing green hydrogen much cheaper than in Europe and other parts of the world. Investing more resources into green infrastructure and green artisanship will ensure that the country is well positioned to seize the new opportunities presented by green hydrogen. The hydrogen economy has the potential to create 14000 new jobs in the short term.

What the country needs is a mixed energy policy and a well-coordinated plan of action for seizing the opportunities of both coal and renewable energy for the best interests of the working class. ★

**Cde Pillay** is an SACP Central Committee member and former YCLSA National Chairperson. He is Chemical Industries Education and Training Authority CEO

April 2023

## UKRAINE CONFLICT

# Ukraine war is a testing ground for imperial dominance

*Western attempts to isolate Russia and move Nato ever closer to its borders, face major challenges, writes Seitebaleng Dikole*



The collapse of the Soviet Union and other socialist states in Europe was regarded by many progressives as the most catastrophic event of history. Western imperialism unleashed many crises that have put humanity in crisis. It is going to be difficult to ignore the catastrophic events that clearly revealed atrocities against humanity in Yugoslavia, Bosnia, Afghanistan Libya and Yemen, among others.

The world is in stage two of western imperialism, as demonstrated through a western proxy war between Ukraine and Russia. In December 2021 Russia raised genuine concerns with Nato and the US about Nato's expansion towards Russia.

It was met with arrogance and conditions for war by US President Joe Biden and Nato Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg. The reality is that Western countries have mistaken Russia to be where it was when the Soviet Union collapsed.

This is part of the continuing tendency of the US to conquer strategic regions by force and intimidation – and, ultimately, to defeat the Peoples' Republic of China, as demonstrated by the undermining of the One China Policy through establishment of a military base in Taiwan and the establishment of a nuclear power bloc known as Aukus (Australia, United Kingdom, and United States).

The war in Ukraine is a testing ground for global US dominance. Nato has said it must ensure Russia does not emerge



A lucrative war for Western arms manufacturers to field-test their latest products



**Chinese President Xi Jinping meets his Russian counterpart, President Vladimir Putin, during President Xi's recent visit to Moscow**

victorious in this war. A Russian victory will be more about global freedom against global oppression and laying out the basis for the emancipation of people and global institutions dominated by the West.

We are at the stage where the West is suffering great losses from what it thought would be an easy victory. The West is part of the war through providing weapons and financing it. In the initial stages there was a peace-brokered ceasefire that was mediated by Turkey. Military companies from the West have employed mercenaries who are fighting on behalf of the West. A recent leak of top-secret US Defence Force documents stated that the US, Britain, France and other Nato members have special force units directly involved in fighting.

The US continues to coerce the world to impose sanctions on Russia, which have devastated many economies. The Western allies had a problem with joint military exercise between Russia, China and South Africa. Responses from the South African government is that the country has the right to undertake military exercises with whoever it wishes.

The other political constraints facing the West includes the reluctance of India and China to support sanctions that are intended to paralyse Russia. Sanctions have failed against Russia. The G7 countries and EU announced a price cap on Russian oil. Russia continues to receive economic surplus through oil. As a full member of OPEC, she continues to make a sterling contribution in the policy mak-

ing of the organisation.

Currently the power of the dollar is facing a challenge and a decline after Russia took a firm position that any country that is unfriendly to it must pay through the ruble.

The EU made a terrible mistake of cutting oil supply from Russia and re-directing the budget to fund the war in Ukraine. This has caused lot of unrest such as public sector strikes that are very prominent in the UK, France and Germany.

It is not rocket science to notice that the sabotage of the Noord Stream project was conducted by the US in collaboration with Finland and Sweden. It has been discovered that the blowing up of a pipe happened at the time of Nato military drills and that explosion was not an accident but the direct involvement of military equipment. This was solely done so that the US can now become the supplier of LNG to the European market. The US and its allies are not supportive to the independent investigation of Noord Stream sabotage, as this was demonstrated through their veto at the UN Security Council.

Brics member countries, for instance, have already stated at the initial stage of the war that they are calling for dialogue between the two parties and that peace is the only solution. The eastern part of Ukraine has been integrated into Russia through a participatory democracy, and now Russia is fighting the war being mindful of the fact that it is not only defending the Russian speaking people but

also the territory that is now part of the motherland. Russian forces are nearing a point of capturing the entire area called Bakhmut and Zelensky is considering negotiations if there is Russian.

Militarily, the entire west cannot meet the standard of Russian weaponry. Since 2014, Russia has developed security systems within the current advanced technology. The world order must be based on the respect of international law where there is no manipulation of existing institutions across the globe. An attempt has been made by the West to replace the power of the Security Council by the General Assembly. With regard to prospect of peace, Russia has made it categorically clear that it is not going to abandon territories that were incorporated after the referendums that were held in Donetsk and Lugansk.

The US and its allies have tried many times to isolate Moscow from participating in international affairs, discrediting its special military operation. Their wish was for many countries not to have diplomatic relations with other countries.

However, the recent visit of Chinese President Xi Jing Ping to Russia was the reaffirmation of the power shift from the global north to the global south.

The ICC (International Criminal Court) pronouncement that it has issued a warrant of arrest for President Vladimir Putin is a great sign of desperation, in a sense that Russia is not a signatory to any statute that seek to operationalise ICC.

We should not forget that the US threatened the ICC with sanctions when American war criminal accused were to account for atrocities that were committed by the US. It came as no surprise when Biden cast doubt on the warrant of arrest issued for Putin, simply because the ICC lacks locus standi on the matter.

A Brics summit is due to be held in South Africa in August, attended by head of the five member states. Indications are that Putin will attend, and South Africa will not cooperate with the ICC.

One must say that the peace plan that was proposed by China remains of utmost important. It is no accident that it was discarded by US. The Chinese regard itself as a champion of peace and mutual respect of nations of the world. The US ambitions in Ukraine, Taiwan and South China sea are facing serious challenges. ★

*Cde Dikole is youth development director at the North West social development department*

## NETBALL WORLD CUP

# World Cup in South Africa represents fruits of democracy

*The Netball World Cup opens huge opportunities – and not only for the Spar Proteas, writes Palesa Motshoene, but also for hundreds of working class girls and women*



South Africa will host the Netball World Cup this year, a first on African soil. This comes after we successfully hosted the Fifa World Cup, one of the biggest tournaments on the global sporting calendar, in 2010. This saw the entire globe converging for the first time on African soil to witness one of the best soccer spectacles. It opened our country to greater opportunities and witnessed massive infrastructure development that eternally changed the face of our sporting facilities.

The Vitality Netball World Cup will be held in Cape Town from 28 July to 6 August 2023, and represent an opportunity for our country and continent to showcase our talent and country. The Netball World Cup 2023 legacy initiative has been created. One of its main goals is to encourage netball participation, particularly among girls and women from disadvantaged backgrounds.

This is seen as a critical step in tackling South Africa's social and economic inequalities, fostering gender equality and encouraging young girls and women to become community leaders. Netball courts are being upgraded and built as part of the legacy programme, local netball organisations are being equipped with the necessary equipment resources and training and staff will be hired on secondment to assist with venue operations. The construction of multi-purpose sport courts, one of which will be a multi-code court, the other dedicated to netball (like the one below at Luthayi High School in Hammarsdale, KZN), has started in township and rural schools throughout the nine provinces.

The government's recovery and re-



**100 days to go: netball players and their supporters in Cape Town celebrate the start of the 100-day count down to the Netball World Cup**

construction strategy include hosting the 2023 Netball World Cup. The World Cup will have positive economic effects for the sports and tourism industries.

There will be an increase in travellers both during and after the World Cup, so this will be a chance to boost local SMMEs and employment opportunities. The level of infrastructure investment, the size and location of the event, and the capacity of local businesses to profit from increased tourism and spending are

just a few of the different factors that will affect the economic prospects for working-class communities in South Africa hosting the Netball World Cup.

The government and event organisers have invested in enhancing infrastructure, such as transport, accommodation, and event facilities, which could generate job opportunities for local employees and stimulate the local economy. The hosting of the World Cup's may also draw tourists to the area, increasing expenditure at nearby establishments including restaurants, hotels, and shops.

Hundreds of thousands of netball fans from across the world are expected to attend and will have an opportunity to enjoy our stunning country while cheering some of the finest teams in the world. Emerging netball nations will be able to

**Hundreds of thousands of netball fans are expected flock to Cape Town for the World Cup in July**



Members of the South African netball Proteas in the United Warriors (home kit) they'll wear for the first time at the World Cup

use it as a platform to gain exposure and experience on the world stage. There will be 16 teams competing in the tournament, including the reigning champions New Zealand, who will go up against some strong competition from teams from Australia, England, and South Africa. The event, which will feature the top netball players from across the world, promises to be thrilling and fiercely contested.

The South African team, usually referred to as the Spar Proteas, has consistently placed among the top 10 teams worldwide in international competitions. The Proteas will be led to the World Cup by coach Norma Plummer, who has given them new focus and enthusiasm. The team is captained by veteran Bongive Msomi, and has

profited from the development of young, talented players who have had a big impact on the team's performance and will continue in that same strength to the World Cup.

The United Warriors South African netball kit, which was influenced by both African and national emblems, has been unveiled by Puma. "South Africa is a diverse country and the story of this team, and this kit design is that our strength lies in our diversity", said Brett Bellinger of Puma. He said the kit makes us world beaters and is an emphatic call for all South Africans and all sports to unite behind the team as they embark on the opportunity to compete in a World Cup on South African soil.

There are several ways for working-class communities in Cape Town to support the South African netball team and participate in the Vitality Netball World Cup 2023:

- Community netball

clubs: Working-class communities in Cape Town may have their own netball clubs where young girls and women can learn and play the sport. These clubs may have connections to the South African Netball Federation and could potentially identify talented players who could represent South Africa in international competitions like the Netball World Cup;

- Working-class neighbourhoods can pack the courts to witness the tournament or follow it on TV – SABC will be airing the tournament. Using social media, community gatherings, and other channels, they can also express their support for the Proteas; and

- Volunteering: Volunteers are frequently required to assist with a variety of responsibilities, including event coordination, hospitality, and transportation, when major sporting events are held in South Africa. Volunteers from Cape Town's working-class neighbourhoods may be needed to make the Netball World Cup a success. ★

*Cde Motshoene is a former publications manager at the YCLSA and an MCom candidate in business management at the University of Johannesburg*



**Netball Proteas' captain Bongive Msomi in action**