



# UMSEBENZI ONLINE

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VOTE X ANC 2024



## THE FINAL PUSH

— ALL OUT FOR A DECISIVE ANC VICTORY!

# The ANC Lives, the ANC Leads!

*Mandla Tshabalala on why of all the parties contesting the elections the ANC is the most dynamic, present, democratic and the most committed to a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic society*

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No one could have said it better than ANC former President Thabo Mbeki: “The ANC is too big to fail”.

These are not the empty words of a former president pompously declaring the importance of his own movement. These are words that resonate with the truth on the ground. The ANC is different from the rest by a country mile.

Of all the liberation movements in South Africa that contested the elections in 1994, the ANC is the only one worthy of calling itself grounded and being among and of the people. The PAC and Azapo are not even a shadow of their former selves, while the SACP remains the ANC’s alliance partner.

This is no accident. It is the result of years of building an organic movement rooted in the hearts and minds of the people. It is not about an individual’s legacy or family lineage but the expression of the will of a people to first resist, then to organise, then to protest, and then to fight, and ultimately to govern. It has always been a covenant with the people.

Many of the new political parties, some of which have peeled off the decaying parts of the ANC (such as the UDM, EFF, COPE, ATM, and now the Zuma Party) are based on the popularity of a proto-fascist leader, and their dictates and lack of shame in referring to these parties as their own. They have proved to be unsustainable because once the popularity of the leader wanes, so does the party. On the other hand, the people have confidence that the ANC, despite its challenges, has the capacity to renew itself and elect new leadership to put it back on track, just as it did recently at its 2017 Nasrec conference.

The way in which the ANC’s campaign has seen all its officials and former leaders, led by the President, on the ground and consistently drawing masses of people behind the ANC has been a remarkable achievement. This has even brought tears to the eyes of the early naysayers who had written us off and dismissed our electoral prospects.

This is underpinned by the fact that our vision is the expression of the collective will of the people.

Many political parties struggle to reflect their non-racial, non-sexist and democratic char-

acter. Some parties are even overtly racist, or close to it, sometimes even realising it. Gayton McKenzie's Patriotic Alliance hates Muslims. The DA has also exposed its racist fangs. The Zuma Party has made it clear that it is anti-white, even though Zuma has reportedly quietly solicited donations from some of them (and the fact that they are predominantly in KZN and some parts of Gauteng tells another story). The EFF's non-racialism is dodgy. I could go on.

The future of this country is non-racialism, and the ANC has shown in both words and deeds that it represents that future. This approach may be the slowest route to economic progress for black people and the consolidation of white wealth, but it is an important tactic in keeping the racists and their powder keg at bay.

We have demonstrated our commitment to non-sexism. We have a record of allowing women to express themselves fully and to take positions of responsibility and decision-making not as a favour but as a right. Yes, much remains to be done, but much has been done.

Any organisation that openly excludes women from leadership positions simply because of their childcare responsibilities is not worthy of being entrusted with state responsibilities. Take the case of Naledi Chirwa of the EFF, who was barred from returning to parliament because of her childcare responsibilities. Or the DA using women as tokens, or openly refusing to condemn the exploitation of women such as the IFP/DA Moonshot gang in one of the KZN municipalities. Or the DA's complicity in violence against women protesting in support of Palestine in the Western Cape, the DA leader ridiculing his ex-wife and calling her road-kill. For crying out loud.

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*The versatility and innovativeness of the ANC's campaign are it doesn't rely on the whims of the leader but is a democratic, open and mass-based project...*

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Consider how democratic the ANC is. It is probably the only political party that involved all our members in the election and selection of candidates for provincial and national legislatures. It is also probably the only party that was open to the nation about how it elected its 900-odd candidates. Some of the other political parties drew up their lists only with the wisdom of the leader, while others called for applications to the leadership, basically making the MPs employees of their political parties.

We have on our list of candidates people from all racial groups, a mix of generations, people with a history of activism (some even from their youth), and from across the gender and class spectrum. These leaders by and large represent the picture of South Africa. It may not seem important what the ANC does with its internal processes, but it is a reflection of how it has approached governance, legislation and other important tasks of the state.

If someone starts small in a picnic-type political party by running its affairs like a tinpot dictator, imagine what they'd do with greater responsibility and authority.

The ANC's campaign has thus far been the most exciting, the most innovative and the most inspiring and talked about. It has seen ANC volunteers sprawled throughout the length and breadth of the country. We've seen many voices echoing our President's central message into the homes of millions of South Africans. We have undoubtedly reached more people than any other political party because we are not just campaigning; we are holding people to account for the promises we made five years ago.

The versatility and innovativeness of the ANC's campaign lie in the fact that it does not rely on the whims and wishes of the leader but that it is a democratic, open and mass-based project led by its National Executive Committee. People are free to think of exciting ways of generating interest in the core message and values of the ANC and the South Africa we want to build without being worried about offending the leader. It is organic, although it has its own weaknesses now and then, here and there, but cannot be collapsed into a fault.

Schoolchildren are echoing the message, and so are teenagers and college and university students, women, workers, and the unemployed (yes, the unemployed because only the ANC gives them hope for opportunities). They see themselves in the ANC, in its manifesto, in its vision, and in its leadership. The leader of the Zuma Party, Jacob Zuma, tried to rubbish the ANC as being of Ramaphosa, whilst in the same week, his daughter proclaimed being heir to whatever it is they are establishing at Nkandla.

This is not the ANC of President Cyril Ramaphosa, just as it was never of Tambo, Mandela or Mbeki. Our President Ramaphosa is clear that he is bound by the collective.

Thus, the ANC is by far the most dynamic, the most present, the most democratic, and the most committed to a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic society. So despite the seemingly apocalyptic moment echoed by the men and women in robes, the voice of the people, unmitigated, is loud and clear: The ANC Lives, the ANC Leads!!!

***Mandla Tshabalala is an activist and a member of the ANC and SACP***

# Never felt more useless in an election campaign – and never happier for that

*Yunus Carrim reports from the campaign trail in Ndaleni, KZN*

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Hands up those of you who felt you were in a “liberated zone” while campaigning in the elections? Well, I had that privilege recently. In Ward 2 in Ndaleni, Richmond, KwaZulu-Natal. So different! Such an easy ride. Many people walking around in ANC T-shirts. Hanging on washing lines are ANC T-Shirts. Every home immediately said they’re voting ANC. You could sense they meant it. Nobody turned us away.

In two or three houses they ushered us away, saying why are you coming here? You know we are ANC! Another said: “But I’m in the CPF. You know me...” – and we walked away. Prodded by me, some said, yes, there are too many problems – mainly jobs – but who else do we vote for? In a house, five boys - about six to eight years old - immediately raised their fists in salute and said ‘Amandla!’ as we walked into the yard.

BET Coordinator, Cde Nhlakanipho Sithole, from the YCL, seems to know almost everybody there. He says that they get over 90% of the vote. I teasingly said: are these actors and actresses you hired to say all this?? To show off? He laughed and said, “Why don’t you go on your own to any house and we’ll stay here?” He said one of the reasons for the strong vote is that people in Ndaleni had to defend themselves against the onslaught from anti-ANC forces in the 1990s and this united them and partly explains their loyalty to the ANC.

About 55 or so comrades took part in the door-to-door campaign, but we had to stop abruptly, as the kombis came to take people to Ashdown (in Msunduzi) for the rally to be addressed by Cde Cyril Ramaphosa. But not before we did a quick review. Nobody said they’d come across anybody who said they won’t vote for the ANC in response to a question.

Of course, it won’t be 100% for us. But it will be high on 29 May. And for those who don’t vote for us, it’ll be less for any other party than residents staying away. Anyway, I said I’ve never felt more unneeded, more useless in an election campaign – but I’ve never been happier for that. Alas, there aren’t enough of these “liberated zones” elsewhere. But if we improve things in the next five years, we’ll certainly have many more of them. Long live the community of Ndaleni!

*Cde Carrim is an SACP Politburo and Central Committee member and Editor of Umsebenzi*

# Vote ANC, but with no blank cheque

## – Some comradely, if critical, observations

*We need to treat the ANC manifesto's key commitments, the ANC itself and the present and future state as sites of important working-class and popular struggles, writes **Jeremy Cronin***

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The “SACP Message to Voters” (published in Umsebenzi, April 2024) outlines “Six Reasons Why You Should Vote ANC”. Since 1994 the SACP has used its organisational and ideological capacities to actively campaign for ANC election victories. In a general sense, then, this year’s Party electoral message continues this strategic positioning. And that’s correct. Of course, we should vote for the ANC, even if we are critical of its failures.

However, in the past the SACP has also made it clear that, as an independent communist party in our own right, we have specific responsibilities and our own voice. We have always said that a vote for the ANC is not a blank cheque. We have aimed to use the electoral campaign to build working class and popular organisation with a view to sustained activism beyond polling days. Getting the balance right between election support for our Alliance partner and the interests of our core working-class constituency is never easy. It is now more important and possibly more challenging than ever before.

The problems with the current Party message begin with its title. It presents itself as a message to “voters”. But who are we realistically seeking to influence? Is it some abstract notion of South African voters in general? If there are such, then we should perhaps best leave such appeals to the “broad church” (and much better resourced) ANC. As the Party, we always need to ask: what are the class dynamics in a specific election? What are the class stakes at play? And what are our specific communist responsibilities in that context?

Back in 1994, the ANC’s liberal US electoral consultants advised against what they called “negative campaigning”, in other words, outlining the strategic agenda of your opponents. “Tell your own positive story and don’t bother with the opposition” - that was their advice. This was a time when, according to imperialist circles, the world had supposedly arrived in a post-ideological era, “history had ended”, and class conflict was meant to be a thing of the past. Arguably, in 1994, given Mandela’s iconic prestige and the general nation-building context of that first non-racial election, the advice had some validity. Although even in the 1994 elections the SACP steadfastly declined to follow that advice.

Today the global and local realities are considerably different. But still the ANC's own electoral messaging is mainly about the ANC's "good story". In the name of "no negative campaigning" there is nothing in the ANC manifesto to assist our popular base to understand the strategic class agendas lined up against the ANC and its alliance. We must not as the SACP simply repeat that same "good story" narrative, which is not deny the many important changes that have happened over the past three decades.

There are two interconnected problems with an approach that is largely centred on telling the "good story".

First, while it is important to record the important (although often uneven) progress made since 1994, we need to ask a simple question: To what extent is the good story accepted by millions of working-class and marginalised poor in our country? How does it stack up against their daily lived experience?

Second, while the ANC attempts to sell a "good story" and avoid so-called negative campaigning, millions of Rands are flowing from the Oppenheimer empire, from Capitec bank founder Michiel le Roux, from Australia-based, Betway online gambling billionaire and Israel supporter Martin Moshal, and even from foreign institutions like the Danish Liberal Democracy Programme and the German Friedrich Nauman Foundation. Tens of millions of Rands and material assistance are flowing from these sources to the DA and to the array of new centre-right parties, like ActionSA, Rise Mzansi and Build One SA (BOSA). Behind these millions of Rands there is one fundamental objective – a negative campaign against the ANC (and its Alliance) to dislodge the ruling party from political power.

We are not speaking of some hidden conspiracy. The big players in the capitalist class, and particularly those in finance capital, are publicly waging an active class struggle on the electoral terrain. And why wouldn't they?

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*We always need to ask: what are the class dynamics in a specific election? What are the class stakes at play? And what are our specific communist responsibilities in that context?*

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Nor are external powers disinterested observers. Their local political party mouthpieces express outrage that the ANC-led government has refused to align with the West in its Nato-proxy war in Ukraine. The same local voices shamefully criticise the ANC-led government for daring to play the leading role in forcing Zionist Israel to face genocide

charges at the ICJ. And it is the same lot that deride the ANC-led government's active participation in BRICS+ as part of the struggle for a more just, multipolar world.

The SACP needs to insistently and consistently point out all of this. However, let's also be honest, the impact of this billionaire-funded, anti-ANC "negative campaigning" would not remotely have the same impact if it were not for the levels of corruption, mismanagement and factionalism that have come to be associated with the ANC. The SACP must not soft pedal on these realities for the sake of elections. While welcoming some progress that has been made in dealing with these negative realities, we must insist on more rapid and more extensive progress.

However, a specific and much-needed task for the SACP lies elsewhere. The capitalist class offensive blames the crises of unemployment, poverty, inequality, and personal insecurity all on ANC corruption and mismanagement. And, of course, there is some truth in this accusation.

But what is consistently left out is the much larger contribution to our socio-economic crises - three decades of neoliberal class war that have allowed massive capital flight, de-industrialisation, cuts to corporate tax, the de-funding of the public sector, and the restructuring of the state into little more than a procuring administration from the private sector. The one part of the "ANC-state" that is never criticised in the mainstream media, or by the array of billionaires and their political party mouthpieces is the Treasury and Reserve Bank nexus. Yet this is where the nerve centre of the anti-working-class offensive is located within the state.

In the SACP's 2024 message to voters ("Six Key Reasons You Should Vote ANC), we correctly highlight important progressive commitments in the ANC's election manifesto. These include advancing industrialisation, using "the Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grants as a mechanism towards phasing in a basic income grant," and a commitment "to sustaining a major public employment programme."

All good and well until you take a closer look. For instance, the ANC's manifesto speaks of a massive public employment programme, funded by government, which aims to create and sustain 2,5 million job opportunities over the next five years. That might sound impressive until you realise that 2,5 million public employment work opportunities over five years amount to little more than half of the nearly 5-million work opportunities achieved in 2009-2014 and then again in 2014-2019 by successive ANC-led administrations. While unemployment has moved deeper into crisis levels, the manifesto lowers ambitions.

The ANC's manifesto commits to aligning "monetary, fiscal and trade policy, along with the transformation of the financial sector, to meet basic needs and support job creation and industrialisation." That sounds good. However, this broad commitment is open to

two quite different readings. It could, of course, be read in a progressive way. But the 1996 GEAR neoliberal policy programme also spoke of massive employment creation and redistribution, but in this case, dependent on capitalist-led growth, driven by the liberalisation of the financial sector and the aligning of monetary and fiscal policy to achieve self-imposed structural adjustment “to attract private investors”.

So, how are we to understand the prospects for implementing the ANC’s progressive manifesto commitments? One reality check is to consider the February budget tabled by National Treasury. Instead of alignment, we have a yawning non-alignment between most of the manifesto’s key commitments and the budget. The budget continues to lock us into punitive austerity with cuts to health, education, public employment programmes and much more. It’s all very well to promise that there will be a phasing of SRD grants towards a basic income grant when, in practice, the budget allocation to the SRD grants has been reduced, and there are fewer and fewer beneficiaries. The manifesto is travelling one way. The budget and National Treasury are going in the opposite direction.

What does this all mean in practice? Why should the SACP even support the ANC in these elections? Is the ANC manifesto simply a list of progressive but empty promises?

We must answer these questions, not as academic observers, but as activists. We need to treat the manifesto’s key commitments and, indeed, the ANC, and the present and future state, as sites of important working class and popular struggles. The fact, for instance, that the commitment to move towards a basic income grant is even in the manifesto is because there has been an active public campaign led by progressive NGOs and with support from the SACP. This in turn, has led to wider support from within the ANC, from key government ministries, and from within the presidency. This provides, not guarantees, but a relatively favourable terrain on which working class and popular struggles must exert intensified pressure.

We will be fooling ourselves and those we are calling upon to vote ANC if we imagine that serious structural transformation can be achieved without exposing the practical convergence (unintended or otherwise) between the regime change agenda of the Openheimer, le Roux, Moshal billionaires and the direction into which Treasury and the Reserve Bank seek to lock us.

Yes, the ANC has many weaknesses and challenges. Despite these, compared to all the other political parties on the ballot paper, it is only the ANC supported by its Alliance that has the potential capacity and popular rootedness to strengthen our democratic national sovereignty in the struggle for national development within an emerging multipolar world. But this requires ongoing active working class and popular mobilisation. So, we should vote for the ANC – but with no blank cheque.

***Cde Cronin is a former SACP Deputy General Secretary, political prisoner and Deputy Minister. He is also a poet.***

# Go all out for a decisive ANC electoral victory

*Tinyiko Ntini stresses that in the remaining few days before the elections, we must intensify voter contact and consolidate our electoral base*

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This election is taking place on the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our freedom and the remarkable progress made by the state in changing the socio-economic conditions of the historically oppressed and marginalised people.

There have been marked changes in education, health, infrastructure, social protection, workers' rights, promotion of co-operatives and small businesses, and improved quality of life, including an increase in life expectancy, among other things. Despite some of the challenges that we are all aware of, we need to emphasise the message that the ANC-led Alliance in government has done well and that ***“Let’s Do More, Together.”***

The SACP argued that the gains of the National Democratic Revolution must be defended. Thus, we agreed to drive an independent yet complementary election campaign within the ANC-headed Alliance.

For the SACP, it will be important that we further contextualise these elections, which are taking place under difficult domestic and external circumstances. The SACP launched its campaign on 10 March 2024 and had about 18,450 Red Brigades active in it.

At the launch of the campaign, SACP General Secretary Cde Solly Mapaila said: “The 2024 elections are tough as part of the fiercely contested direction of our democratic dispensation and its international cooperation and relations policy. There is no problem if the contestation is only among the people of South Africa. However, there is a fundamental problem with any form of, or invitation to, external interference in our elections and other internal affairs. This is because we are a sovereign republic.”

This was in light of the leaked Democratic Alliance letter to the US requesting its intervention.

We succeeded in setting up election structures across our provinces and establishing a National War Room to handle troubleshooting and programme activations. Our campaign was anchored around two objectives: to deliver a decisive victory for the ANC and to build and strengthen the SACP’s organisational capacity.

The SACP showed its commitment to this election campaign by convening an augmented

Party Building Commission, which included our Districts. This was followed up by a Special Augmented Central Committee meeting that mandated all our Districts to launch Red Brigades for the decisive electoral victory. All our structures have implemented the decision and are on the ground to not only popularise the manifesto but also ensure a consolidation towards an electoral victory for the ANC.

The highlights of the campaign include:

- The problematic posture of imperialist forces, especially in light of the International Court of Justice’s case on Israel’s genocide in Palestine. Our structures were highly active in the Africa for Palestine campaign in the “Week for Palestine from 1 to 7 May 2024.
- The need to reposition the National Democratic Revolution, after the ANC-headed Alliance victory on 29 May 2024. This means continuing to raise some issues which affect the working class.
- The manifesto attaches key importance to industrialisation, which would be a source of large-scale employment creation.
- The prioritisation of localisation and domestic manufacturing through international trade policies and other policies.
- The commitment to eliminate barriers that prevent co-operatives from rising and thriving.
- The commitment to tackle the cost-of-living crisis, which is a global capitalist system reality.
- The commitment to extend and improve the Social Relief of Distress Grant and transform it into a foundation for a basic income guarantee for the unemployed towards a Universal Basic Income Grant.

We developed an election programme focusing on impacting all sectors through door-to-door and sectoral engagements. The Red Brigades have made an enormous impact on this campaign. The entire Alliance structures adopted a 40-day battle plan that focused on intensifying our voter contact - and that included a 14-day invasion of KZN and Gauteng.

Let us go all out to secure the ANC’s decisive electoral victory within the framework of our ANC-headed Alliance’s shared electoral platform. We are convinced that we shall triumph come 29 May 2024. We are all preparing for the Siyanqoba Rally on 25 May 2024. With these remaining few days, we must intensify voter contact and consolidate the base.

***Cde Ntini is an SACP CC Member and Assistant Secretary for Campaigns***

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# Need for leaders who put the people first above self-interest

*Fidel Hadebe recalls the life and example of Cde Molefi Sekularo in light of the 30th anniversary of SA's democracy and the challenges of the 29 May elections*

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In April this year, two important moments occurred in our national political calendar, although the one event grabbed all the attention—and rightly so— but leading to the other being pushed into obscurity.

This year marks 14 years since the demise of Dr Molefi Sekularo, who died in a tragic car accident early in April 2010. At the time of his death, Sekularo was the Deputy Minister of Health and was also heading an important government and FIFA sub-committee that was tasked with ensuring that the country's health sector was well prepared to handle all the health aspects of the soccer World Cup that we were scheduled to host later that year.

As we were marking 14 years since his unfortunate and premature demise, the country was also marking 30 years as a democracy, and Cde Sekularo's own fingerprints are not difficult to identify when tracking the history of our struggle for liberation. Although not one to hoard the media limelight, Cde Sekularo was involved in the struggle for freedom from a very young age, and his commitment to social justice remained with him until the tragic event of that day when he was involved in a car crash that claimed his life.

Those who know him have common words or phrases they use to describe him—a social justice activist, a health activist, an African communist, and a feminist, amongst others. One of the most memorable things about his funeral was the coffin he chose to be buried in—a 'tomato box' instead of an expensive shiny casket often associated with official funerals.

In marking the two events that I outline above it is also important to note that this year we will be going to the polls for the seventh time to elect leaders who will or should guide us as a nation in realising the task that we set for ourselves. This task was anchored on the transformation of our society making it a society where all can live in peace and with dignity regardless of class. As a health activist amongst others, this is something that Sekularo strongly believed in. He despised selfish leaders and those who treated the poor with disdain. He was passionate about access to quality healthcare, and he hated corruption.

As we prepare to elect the seventh administration, we do so against the worrying background of poor and, in some instances, collapsed service delivery. The gap between the rich and poor is becoming wider and thus earning us an unpleasant reputation of being one of the most unequal societies in the world. Driving around in any of our townships and informal settlements, one is confronted by a picture of governance neglect where

communities are forced to live side-by-side with mountains of uncollected rubbish that lies on street corners and in front of people's homes as elected officials neglect their primary duty of caring for citizens who elected them into office.

Sadly, citizens, including young children and women, are paying with their lives in this case as they get exposed to diseases they should have been shielded from through basic delivery of services such as water and sanitation amongst others which are key in health and which is something Sefularo strongly advocated for.

In marking 30 years of our democracy and against the background of the forthcoming elections, it is important that we take serious stock of where we come from as a country especially before 1994. We know about the injustices that decorated our pre-1994 national outlook, the oppression of the majority by a minority and the unequal access to key social development services such as health and education.

Sadly, this inequality stubbornly remains with us, and the immediate task facing the new leaders that we elect should be like Sefularo, and strongly believe in social justice beyond just mouthing it in slogans. It is not an exaggeration to say that our country is now at a crossroads, and that which our fallen liberation heroes spent years fighting for is facing the threat of being undermined by continued social and economic injustices that stare us in the face.

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Our country desperately needs leaders who are committed to transforming our society to ensure social justice and equity for citizens. It is heartbreaking to see poor and working-class communities subjected to indignity as elected officials focus on enriching themselves at the expense of the country and its citizens.

No one knows for sure to what extent our country can manage to contain the bottled anger that we see during what we have come to know as service-delivery protests across various communities where citizens resort to violence and wanton destruction of public and private property. What we know with certainty is that such anger reaches a point where it can no longer be contained and the masses turn on their leaders demanding what they think or believe the democratic government owes them.

The coming elections present us with yet another opportunity to correct our governance mistakes of the past 30 years including the racial injustices of the pre-1994 era. The big challenge facing those we elect in May is to revisit the collective promise we made in

1994 – the promise of righting the wrongs of the past and delivering a better life for all the citizens of our country as we said we would do when we set out on a new journey 30 years ago.

This is how we can pay our respects to all our struggle heroes, like Sefularo, who became midwives in the birth of our democracy. If we choose the old ways of neglecting citizens and focusing on self-interest, we will be insulting not only those who are on the fringes of our society but also those who dedicated themselves to our liberation struggles.

*Fidel Hadebe is the former spokesperson of the Department of Health and worked closely*

**SACP**

**NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE**

**WHAT SERVICES WILL BE PROVIDED?**  
NHI will purchase comprehensive personal health service benefits from NHI-contracted public and private health facilities. The service benefits include services provided at primary, secondary, tertiary, specialized and quaternary levels. Once the NHI Fund covers a benefit the medical schemes may not cover the same benefits.

**VOTE X ANC**  
LET'S DO MORE, TOGETHER

102 YEARS OF UNBROKEN STRUGGLE

**SACP**

**NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE**

**BENEFICIARIES**  
NHI will purchase services on behalf of SA citizens, permanent residents, refugees, inmates and specific categories of foreign nationals. All children will be covered for all benefits purchased by the fund regardless of nationality. Visiting foreign nationals will be covered by their mandatory travel insurance.

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