

ANC's choice very clear: Cadres before Lives, Cadres before Livelihoods

By Adrian Roos MP – DA Shadow Deputy Minister of Home Affairs

This special adjustment budget brings the events of the last several years into sharp focus. The Zondo Commission has been about the Rands and cents of state capture and corruption - it was all big numbers. Millions if not billions in the hands of a connected few.

Now we are starting to see what these stolen Rands and cents, what these millions and billions really mean. It is now that we really count the cost of the lives and livelihoods of millions of South Africans that were sold to the highest bidder.

Today we are asked to consider the removal of R562 million from the Home Affairs budget to go towards the fight against Covid-19.

This fight needs urgent and significant funding. We see South African citizens fighting over oxygen tanks, rats drinking their blood out of gutters, their babies dying in maternity wards as there is just no staff there.

The problem is that only a fraction of this R562 million is actually going to the fight against Covid-19.

SAA will get R16.4 billion, the Land Bank R3 billion and e-tolls R2.5 billion. The ANC has made its choice very clear - cadres before lives, cadres before livelihoods.

The Department of Health will receive just R2.9 billion in new funding. And so, while a large portion of this money set aside for Covid-19 relief is going to bailouts, who is going to bail out our brothers and sisters stuck in these hospitals of horror? Who is going to bail out our frontline health care workers who are under-resourced and on the brink of burnout?

You see it's more than just extra funding that is needed.

Minister, the Democratic Alliance raised the issue of foreign-born locally qualified and certified doctors stuck on the foreign workforce management programme. You know this programme only too well. These doctors could be deployed to provide desperately needed re-enforcements in the fight against Covid-19 but are stuck without Home Affairs documentation. The DA urged Home Affairs to assist with the visa status changes of those in South Africa who applied but have not been processed. You did nothing. We have a dire shortage of doctors. Do something.

Suid-Afrikaners en hul gades en gesinne sit steeds vas by grensposte. Die komitee wat hierdie aansoeke oorweeg, vergader slegs een keer per week - dit is nie goed genoeg nie. Intussen loop buitelanders maklik onder ons grenswaslyn in Suid-Afrika in. Doen iets.

Boere op die grens van Lesotho is maklike teikens vir vee en ander diefstal deur misdadigers wat met gemak heen en weer oor die Lesotho-grens kruis. Doen iets.

Now that the Border Management Authority Act is in force, we expect swift and decisive leadership from you on these issues.

The Home Affairs Portfolio Committee report on this budget vote initially stated that lives are more important than livelihoods. Yet when the Democratic Alliance proposed that the committee records

its unhappiness that money taken from government projects for Covid-19 relief was going to eTolls and other bailouts, this was rejected by the ANC - cadres before lives, cadres before livelihoods.

It was Mahatma Ghandi who said, *“A nation’s greatness is measured by how it treats its weakest members.”* In the month of Mandela Day, Madiba would be ashamed at what is happening at the hands of the incapable state.

You can fool some people some time, but you can't fool all the people all the time. Be honest with the people of South Africa and change your motto from *“We Care”* to something else. Perhaps *“Cadres before lives, cadres before livelihoods”*.

The Democratic Alliance rejects this budget.