

The true barometer of freedom is how this government tackles the unemployment and poverty crisis

By **Siviwe Gwarube MP** – DA Deputy Chief Whip

Speaker,

Our deepest condolences are extended to the Gardee family on the tragic loss of their daughter. Sithi kubo mabalale ngenxeba.

We can never consider ourselves free until the war against women is defeated.

Even in the rough and tumble of politics; may we never take for granted the incredible feat it was for South Africa to become a constitutional democracy.

Our transition to democracy, didn't only have global significance.

It signaled a new beginning for a people that had been oppressed and alienated by colonialism and Apartheid.

In 1994 the nation could finally dream of a better South Africa – where the colour and texture of your skin did not determine your lot in life.

That dream has turned into a nightmare for the 35% of working age South Africans who are without work;

The 7 out of 10 young people who are unable to live a life of dignity as they battle endemic unemployment;

And the 30 million South Africans who are living in abject poverty.

Having marked Freedom Day with the people of the Alfred Nzo District last week, it was evident that freedom is a theoretical concept that is not a lived reality in many parts of our country.

Local municipalities have been hollowed out, looted and completely incapacitated.

As a result, abantu bahlala ebugxwayibeni.

They have long lost hope in this government's ability to deliver a better life for them.

That became clear when President Ramaphosa was prevented from delivering a May Day address on Sunday because of workers who are demanding better from their employer and this government.

People are tired of empty words which are cold comfort in a country where the rising cost of living compounds our poverty crisis.

Abantu balambile.

Abantu abanamisebenzi.

Abantu abafumani zinkonzo kuRhulumente.

Abantu banele kukubukele amasela alorhulumente esiba imali ebekelwe ukuphuhlisa eli.

Badiniwe kukufunda the findings of the Zondo Commission detailing how many in government and in this House robbed us blind.

Abantu badanile ukubona iinkokheli zabo zikhuselwe ziiVIP protectors kodwa bona babaleka iimbumbulu kwindawo abahlala kuzo.

The chasing of the President out of the North West is only the beginning of things to come.

People can no longer be fed lies and history lessons about the liberation movement that fought against oppression.

The true barometer of freedom is how this government tackles the unemployment and poverty crisis.

No South African is free when more than half the country is poor.

No South African is free when millions of young people cannot find work.

28 years later, South Africans need a different form of liberation: they need to be freed from government sponsored poverty and a life of indignity.