

Expropriation Bill 23 of 2020 - Not a panacea to ANC's land reform failures

By Madeleine Hicklin MP

DA Shadow Deputy Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure

House Chair,

Land and property rights are a very emotive issue. They are the means by which a person is judged, and is the single most valuable measure of the legacy one can leave one's children.

Many in this house would have South Africa believe that the Democratic Alliance is firmly against this Expropriation Bill 23 of 2020 because the DA doesn't want South Africans to own a piece of land off which they can prosper, become successful and leave a lasting heritage for their children. They are wrong. That is exactly what the DA wants. We believe land reform is both a moral and a political imperative. But this Bill is not going to guarantee that.

The ANC has packaged this Bill as the panacea to South Africa's Land Reform woes, selling it as the means by which South Africans will gain access to their own land which the ANC will give them. This is not the case. The Government has thousands of hectares of land which it could make available tomorrow – in both rural and urban settings – against which many land claims have already been lodged, but which the ANC Government have failed to finalise, or address, for over 20 years.

These same South African's who have waited for years for additional schools, paved roads, and jobs are now being hoodwinked into believing that this Bill will solve all their problems. It is a shameless and boldfaced lie.

Likewise, the EFF did not support this Bill. In public hearing after public hearing, their supporters told us to merely amend Section 25 of the Constitution. Once amended, this Bill would not be necessary. The Amendment was not passed and now this Bill is the back door through which the expropriation of land without compensation will put expropriated property into the hands of the state – not the people, the state. Snake oil sales pitches at best.

The DA supports a realistic approach to land reform, acknowledging the horrific injustices of the past, particularly how our history of racial dispossession has left the country with a skewed pattern of land ownership that has excluded the majority of South Africans from land assets and inclusion in rural economies.

We will create programmes to effectively address the land needs of South Africans who have historically been excluded from land and property ownership, including the need to access urban land and housing opportunities.

The purpose of this Expropriation Bill is not primarily land reform, but instead the creation of a framework to govern state expropriation procedures. Therefore, by holding this Bill up

as a land reform instrument, the ANC government is being disingenuous. A viable and successful Land Reform process should be determined in terms of livelihoods created or supported, and economic value created, rather than hectares of land transferred. Citizens need security of tenure on the land where they live and farm – and peace of mind that their legacy can pass to their children.

None of this can be guaranteed by the Expropriation Bill 23 of 2020.

I thank you.

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