KZN’s collapsing municipalities: Time for administrators to be put under administration

The DA in KwaZulu-Natal has written to provincial CoGTA Chairperson, Zinhle Cele, to request an urgent portfolio committee meeting, to be attended by all eight municipal administrators in the province. (view here)

The call comes as KZN’s municipalities continue to collapse and as the critical municipal intervention tool becomes a mockery due to its ineffectiveness in the province.

The DA’s call comes as COGTA-appointed administrators continue in failing to turn-around our province’s ailing municipalities, raising serious questions around their capability.

It also comes as it becomes increasingly clear that political interference is making it very difficult for some administrators to effectively do their jobs.

The purpose of the meeting we have called for is to get administrators to provide information on turn-around strategies and also tell us about the challenges they are facing so that intervention in the form of solutions can swiftly be found.

There are currently eight KZN municipalities that remain under administration, with very little progress seen to date. These municipalities are Mpofana, Msunduzi, Inkosi Langalibalele, UThukela, Umzinyathi, Abaqulusi, Mtubatuba and uMkhanyakude.

Msunduzi, in particular, is a glaring example of the failure by the administrators to bring positive change. Ever-failing water and electricity infrastructure continues to leave residents in the dark and without water for hours and sometimes days on end.

The municipality also continues to spend millions of Rands on ‘nice to haves’. A prime example is the recent Last Dance event which saw the city spend R3million. This is money that should have been spent on improving services in what is our capital city and coming to the aid of increasingly desperate people.

In uThukela, water services also remain a serious problem, with the DA having asked the South Africa Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) to intervene. In Abaqulusi we recently saw residents been subjected to extra rotational load shedding due to outstanding ESKOM debt. The situation is not much better in other municipalities.

Even the President has admitted that municipalities are failing under an ANC-run government and has vowed to improve this situation. In KZN he needs to start by focussing on those municipalities under administration and get them working again.

KZN’s DA-run uMngeni Municipality will provide him the President with all the proof he needs of how a failing municipality can be turned into a shining example of good governance. The DA invites him to see for himself.

Given the lack of concern shown by KZN’s COGTA Department, it has now become essential that the portfolio committee get involved. We sincerely hope that the Chairperson will treat our request with the seriousness it deserves.