

Lack of employment violates human rights

Speech by Jan de Villiers MP, DA Shadow Minister of Small Business Development

“Africans want to perform work which they are capable of doing, and not work which the government declares them capable of.” On the 20th of April 1964, Nelson Mandela spoke these words, as he stood before the court in what has now become known as the Rivonia trial. During his trial, President Mandela spoke widely on the injustices of the apartheid government and the human rights which should be enjoyed by all South Africans equally. The right to employment, to choose your job, to start your business, is a constitutional human right, contained in the South African Bill of Rights, which reads: *“Every citizen has the right to choose their trade, occupation, or profession freely.*

The Constitution puts an obligation on the government that it **MUST** *“respect, protect, promote and fulfil”* the rights which are contained in the Bill of Rights, which includes the right to work and employment.

This measure puts a duty on the state to create the right environment where people can exercise this human right to be employed, to have a work.

Speaker, according to latest Stats SA Quarterly Labour Force Survey, the unemployment rate for Quarter 4, 2022 was 32, 7%, which means that during the last quarter of 2022, 7, 8 million South Africans were without work, looking for work and available to work, but unable to exercise their constitutional right to work. A right, which constitutionally should be protected and promoted by the ruling government.

But Speaker, these numbers contained another astonishing fact. You see the unemployment rate actually lowered slightly from quarter 3 to quarter 4, with 169 000 jobs that were created in that quarter, of which 167 000 were created in the Western Cape. So let’s pause on that. Of the 169 000 jobs that were created in the previous quarter, 167 000 of the new jobs that, were created in the DA run Western Cape, which is one of nine provinces. The other eight provinces combined, only managed to create 2000 jobs.

Speaker, it is easy for any political party to say that you are pro-poor, to say that you care about the unemployed, but what can be more pro-poor than the actual creation of jobs? What can say louder how much you actually care for the plight of the unemployed, than the actual creation of employment?

If South Africans want a government that really cares, that really is pro-poor and serious about protecting their right to work, their right to employment, a government which knows how to respect, protect, promote and fulfill every person’s right to have a job, they only need to turn to the evidence of the last quarterly work survey.

In 2024, is vote for the DA, is a vote for employment. It is a vote for a party that cares, which can be proved by its clear track record of creating the environment where business can grow, and jobs are created.

A vote for the DA is a vote for jobs because the evidence is clear, there is no more pro-poor party than the Democratic Alliance.