



PRESS RELEASE

Statement by
REV SC MATHEBULA

**EKURHULENI
MAYORAL
CANDIDATE**



**INDEPENDENT CITIZENS
MOVEMENT**

PRESS RELEASE

23 SEPTEMBER 2021



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STATEMENT BY REV. CHRIS MATHEBULA, MAYORAL CANDIDATE OF EKURHULENI MUNICIPALITY

Thursday, 23 September 2021

Ever since the beginning of 2020 when the world was hit by the global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, everything has changed forever. It changed the way we socialise, the way we work, and the way we view life itself. The brutal invasion by this cruel disease challenged many of us in one way or the other.

Personally, I had to dig deeper and conduct a detailed self-introspection to reflect on the impact I have made thus far in my community and my country as a whole. It became apparent that my contribution was but a drop in the ocean relative to the work that needs to be done in South Africa. Our country has a serious leadership deficit and as a result, it is bleeding socially, economically, and politically. For anyone who loves their country, it is impossible to ignore the deteriorating state of affairs and continue as if it's business as usual. Something needs to change and "we must be the change we wish to see in the world".

Not only did COVID-19 confront us with thousands of deaths, but it has also alerted us of the reality and the magnitude of the challenges we are faced with as a country. The pandemic has been a rude awakening for all of us. Our economy is struggling, teenage pregnancies have escalated, gender-based violence has been amplified, national infrastructure stolen and corruption has hit a record high.

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Our space as the religious community was invaded when churches and other faith-based organisations remained closed for the greater part of all Lockdown Alert Levels with very little rationale and scientific backing. This was an indication that it was time to break out of the church walls and bring church to the people.

As a pastor, I have for over 25 years, stuck to my lane, in the comfort zone of the walls of the church and behind the pulpit. However, working in a confined church environment only has not done enough to bring justice for the vulnerable, alleviate poverty for our people, and find means to curb crime. With the raging storm of COVID – 19, it became apparent that we were no longer in a safe space and the days of being a bystander are over. I can no longer be a passenger in a bus driven by a drunk driver leading us to an inevitable fatal end. Many are comfortable to take a back seat and watch the entire nation crumble to pieces, I am not one of them. I am here to challenge the status quo.

It is shameful to note that before COVID, corruption was already a problem, but it took this global pandemic to expose the level of rot in our country. Not only does corruption compromise our leaders' ability to deliver services to their people but it also erodes the economy of our country. As a result, the poor are left poorer and the corrupt are getting richer due to ill-gotten gains.

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It is inconceivable that during a time of such a deep crisis, there are people in leadership positions who are still looking for ways to benefit individually and rob their citizens. This is a time of reckoning. It calls for citizens that are devoted to this country to stand up and do something; it is time for all of us to take a stand.

The valuable votes of the electorate cannot continue to be underplayed by selfish leaders who have no respect for citizens. This has to come to an end. It's time to put a stop to the culture of taking citizens for granted and start rebuilding our nation.

It is the pain stirred by the overall level of disrespect towards citizens that made me rise up to turn the tide. I humbly offer my services not as a politician but as a Devoted Citizen committed to serving God and His people.

While I will not be engaging in any door-to-door campaigns, I will avail myself to the community and continue to allow my work to speak for itself. My track record in Ekurhuleni and beyond has left a footprint in the lives of various members of our communities. My work has touched many people in our community; the vulnerable, the youth, the aged, and families.

As the Titanic sank, the watchmen did just that – they watched, and as a result, what was a joyous trip ended in tragedy. We cannot stand by and watch as our nation experiences its titanic moment.

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However, I for one will not be a bystander as I fully understand the far-reaching impact this will have on our future generations.

In the words of J.F. Clarke, **"A politician thinks of the next election; a statesman, of the next generation."** I am not getting into this for personal gain or fame, I am doing this for our children, their children, and their children's children. South Africa, the time has come and it is now. We have the power to change this narrative, our votes carry so much power, let's use them wisely and take power back to the people.



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