

## **EDITORIAL**

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For some time, the SA government has been captured by wealthy elites, demonstrated in tax cuts for the wealthy and state budget cuts to basic services. The current electricity crisis is indicative of a careless government, insensitive to the impact of its rule and inability to govern.

However, more urgent, is the plight of children, youth and family households who depend on the country's social welfare, despite its inadequacy. More than 16 million South Africans are supported by a social grant for daily survival. Though the grants do not significantly assist people to break out of poverty, they prevent starvation and abject poverty.

The current crisis in the Department of Social Development and cuts to NGOs, including Orphan and Vulnerable Children Centres (OVCCs) threatens lives, and is having a severe impact on households, especially children, women and the aged. This is a contravention of the country's Constitution.

The OVCCs provide often the only meal a day for many children, between Monday and Friday. The workers, predominantly women, work as volunteers getting irregular stipends.

These NGOs and OVCCs are primary organisations reproducing the working class most basic needs under extremely difficult conditions. They care for children and youth in meagre, unacceptable conditions in a wealthy country, and to remove them is shameful.

We call on the SA government, and in particular on Gauteng Premier Lesufi to immediately support the NGOs and OVCCs: to restore their funding and ensure that all children and youth receive decent meals and the necessary social and psychological welfare.

In solidarity!