

Community Views on the #National Shutdown

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A few months ago, Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) Julius Malema president announced plans to shut down the country. This was to send a message to the ANC government to do away with the loadshedding and for Cyril Ramaphosa to step down from his position as state president. EFF members put up posters inviting the community to join the strike.

On 20 March 2023, a day that threatened to bring a lot of distraction in Delville, Germiston in the lead-up, there was no activity, instead small businesses were closed. Retailers along with some of the small businesses opened for business. The street vendors also stayed home in fear of what could happen. Later in the day some of the street vendors did eventually come out to sell but there was little to no business as many people stayed at home. Local taxis operated at a very slow rate than is usual as many people did not go to work. One taxi marshal was very dismissive of the strike saying the EFF is inconsiderate, complaining about the slow rate at which the taxes operated.

“[The] EFF didn’t think too far with this, what do they think we will feed the children at home during this long holiday? Three days is already a long time as it is and it does not help that the children are closing soon,” said Nkululeko from Delville.

Schools at Katlehong were closed and the malls were under a supervision of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), the clinic were working but not like they used to, police and SANDF patrolled the areas and few people were arrested on the day and they are to appear at the Palmridge court on Thursday 23,2023, kids were roaming around the streets some didn’t even know what was happening.

In Katlehong, most people supported the shutdown by not going to work but they also did not go to the protests. They were partying, drinking, eating and on holiday before the official public holiday on 21 March. Some were concerned that many people were not aware that the issues raised by EFF affect the country as a whole.

Working class communities appear exhausted of participating in protests and nothing happens afterwards. Many members of the communities feel like there is no change every time there is a national shutdown.

In an interview to find out what people think about the national shutdown that took place on Monday, 20-year-old Sibusiso said, “as youth being unable to make [ends meet] means I felt like the shutdown was just a waste of time and resources because if the EFF really wanted to fight for a better South Africa, they should have went straight to the parliament and state[d] their grievances rather than taking the whole country to protest knowing that it would be them dominating.”

Thabang Andries from Kliptown said that he feels like they have protested and protested but there has been no change. He did not see what the point of protesting again was. In addition to that, a lot of damage is done during the strikes which sets

the country back and has a negative impact on the economy as it creates unemployment, and many other socio-economic issues arise.

In the build-up, the news of the national shutdown spread like wildfire on the social media streets where many internet users engaged in the discussion through posts and comments, videos and memes. This was a good build up to the national shutdown. One platform that played a very crucial role in this was Tik Tok which is a creative and trend-driven social media app for creating, sharing, and watching of short video clips, for both independent and other content creators.

This article is an amalgum of various submissions by FAJs around Gauteng. The various articles were submitted in March 2023. You may republish this article, so long as you credit the authors and Karibu! Online (www.Karibu.org.za), and do not change the text. Please include a link back to the original article.