

Justice for Bulelani Qolani and Landless Black and Coloured People

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MEDIA RELEASE

Our call is for solidarity of black working-class formations to come together and stand up against the brutality inflicted on the poor at the hands of the City of Cape Town. We have declared the week of 8 February 2023 as the launch of a campaign against the City of Cape Town as this is the week that Bulelani Qolani will be launching his damages ca against the City of Cape Town.

In the midst of the lockdown 2020, when home was declared as the frontline of defense against the COVID-19 pandemic, a gross human violation at the hands of City of Cape Town Law Enforcement was inflicted on Bulelani Qolani, a black man from eThembeni, Khayelitsha.

On 1 July 2020, while carrying out a series of illegal evictions, City of Cape Town Law Enforcement officers entered Qolani's home without his permission or a court order and dragged him out of his home, naked while he was bathing. This, unlike the many Law Enforcement human violations sustained by the people of informal settlements in Cape Town, Qolani's violation was filmed by Bonga Zamisa and subsequently garnered national and international attention.

While what happened to Bulelani is horrifying, it is not uncommon. For many years, the landless people of informal settlements in Cape Town have sustained both physical and psychological abuse at the hands of Law Enforcement.

"As Land Occupations, we feel that this is an attack not only on Bulelani Qolani - it reminds us of the apartheid government, where black people had no freedom," said Wiseman Mpepo, a leader of informal settlement in Khayelitsha.

This is why we have come together as landless people, social movements and organisations to stand up and push back against the continued oppression and abuse of the poor. We will also deliver a list of our demands to the City of Cape Town. We wish to expose the City of Cape Town and Law Enforcement brutality through various means on the day. This will be happening in the same week the sheriff serves Qolani's court papers to the City of Cape Town, which indicate the commencement of the legal process.

We invite all black working-class communities and other entities, who wish to participate in the action to join us on the 8th [of] February 2023 at the Civic Centre at 10h00.

"We see the City of Cape Town as a racist City that undermines Human Rights and the constitution of South Africa. We have on many occasions seen the targeting of Land Occupations, the confiscating people's homes, shooting people, arresting, intimidating, and constant inflicting of trauma by the City of Cape Town, Law enforcement to our families and kids every day. In addition to the abuses we face,

laws that act against the Constitution of South Africa have been passed in the City of Cape Town. These laws sustain the status quo, where the brutalisation of black people is normalised. The human rights violation experienced by Bulelani Qolani is a clear indication that policing in Cape Town carries a culture much like the one experienced by black people during apartheid and that cannot be accepted,” said Nikelwa Maqula, an informal settlement leader.

This Campaign will take different forms of resistance, to expose the City of Cape Town and law enforcement brutality. We will be organising black working-class communities and other entities, who wish to participate in the action, on the 8th [of] February 2023.

Ours is to send a clear message to the City of Town, that the informal settlement dwellers are humans too, and should be treated as such. We have witnessed how its policies and by-laws continue to undermine and criminalise the poor. And all this wages a war against the poor marginalised working class. The launch of Comrade Qolani’s campaign on the 8 February will invigorate the collective and cement our solidarity as different social movements in the struggle to improve the living conditions of our people.

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