

SCHUBART PARK PROTESTERS DEMAND JUSTICE



By **Luvolvethu Ngani**

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Hundreds of former Schubart Park residents marched through Pretoria on Friday, calling on the City of Tshwane to reinstate them to their flats and urgently refurbish the long-neglected complex as mandated by the Constitutional Court.

The residents, who were evicted in 2011, began their march at the old Marabastad bus depot and proceeded to Tshwane House, where they submitted a memorandum of demands to MMC for Corporate and Shared Services, Kholofelo Morodi.

The march briefly turned tense when news broke that one resident had been arrested for allegedly assaulting a Tshwane Metro Police officer. Angered by the arrest, protesters demanded the individual's immediate release. March leaders, however, urged calm, guiding

the crowd to continue peacefully to Tshwane House to hand over their memorandum.

MMC Morodi acknowledged receipt of the demands and said the municipality would respond in due course. Protesters later went to the Pretoria Central Police Station to press for the release of the arrested resident, who remained in custody at the time of publication.

According to the Chairperson of the Schubart Park Residents, Ali Mashimbye, the march was about accountability. "The purpose of our march was to hand in a memorandum of grievances to Executive Mayor Nasiphi Moya, demanding that Schubart Park be renovated according to the ruling delivered by the Constitutional Court," he said.

Residents stressed that life had become increasingly difficult since

their eviction, citing the lack of water, electricity, and security at the complex. Many carried placards demanding reinstatement and refurbishment, while members of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) joined in solidarity.

For resident Solomon Matlala, the fight is deeply personal. "I want to go back to Schubart Park. It is my home, and I belong there," he said.

The memorandum delivered to the municipality outlines two key demands: reinstatement of residents and immediate refurbishment of the flats. Without intervention, residents argue, their situation will continue to deteriorate.

As the City reviews the memorandum and the arrested resident's case remains unresolved, the protest highlights the long and painful wait for justice faced by the Schubart Park community.

WORD FROM THE NEWS EDITOR

From Awareness to Action



By Lesiba Machaka

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Mzansi's Next Road Test September has been a month of reckoning. Across the nation, we have witnessed the heartbreak of retrenchments, the debate over student debt blacklisting, and the determined voices of communities demanding accountability from those in power. These stories are not mere headlines, they are markers of the realities our people face daily. It was also a month of awareness and reflection. Mental Health Awareness

and Albinism Awareness were both observed, reminding us that dignity, inclusivity, and compassion must remain at the centre of our social fabric. Awareness is not a once-off event, but a call to continuous action. As we move into October, South Africa marks Transport Month. Here we must ask ourselves, with honesty: do our roads and public transport systems meet the standards of safety that our citizens deserve? Are our vehicles truly roadworthy? And what does it mean, in human terms, when motorists take to the road

without valid licences? These are not rhetorical questions, but pressing challenges that demand urgent attention from policymakers, enforcers, and indeed, from all of us as responsible citizens. The message is clear: awareness is not enough. We must move from reflection to action, ensuring that the systems we rely on are built to serve and protect us all.

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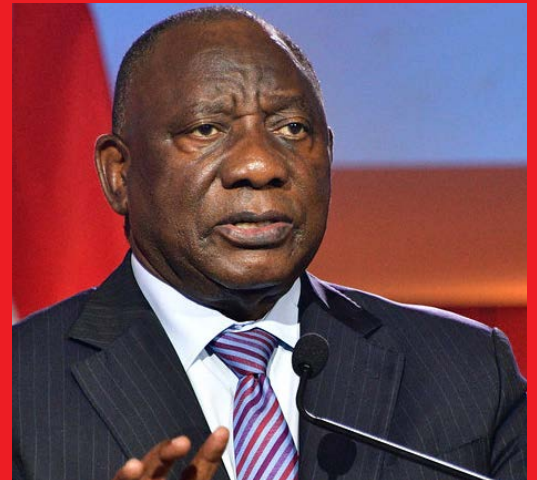
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SCAB Exposes Worrying Municipal Governance Crisis

By Luvolvethu Ngani

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South Africa's municipalities are buckling under the weight of corruption, mismanagement, and chronic inefficiency, according to a new report released by the State Capture and Beyond (SCAB) campaign. The findings paint a stark picture of how governance failures are undermining service delivery and deepening community hardships across the country.

The Report's Findings

Titled Municipal Mismanagement, the SCAB report highlights systemic issues ranging from cadre deployment and procurement fraud to weak leadership and chronic underspending. These challenges, the campaign argues, have left municipalities ill-equipped to provide reliable access to water, electricity, sanitation, and other essential services.

The report warns: "Poor management of municipalities has profound ripple effects, as inadequate service delivery violates human rights and endangers lives."

The Auditor-General's 2024 report echoes these concerns: out of 257 municipalities assessed in the 2023/24 financial year, only 41 received clean or unqualified audits. In many cases, funds allocated for infrastructure development went unspent, resulting in stalled projects and deteriorating services.

Political and Governance Fallout

In an unexpected admission, President Cyril Ramaphosa told ANC councilors at FNB Stadium that municipalities led by the DA often perform better on audits than those under ANC control. "It is hugely painful each time the Auditor-General reports

to Cabinet, that the municipalities doing best are not ANC-controlled," he said.

The DA seized on the remarks. Spokesperson Willie Aucamp said, "The President has confirmed what communities already know: good governance is not a slogan. Municipalities should always put residents first, not only during election season."

The EFF and ActionSA also weighed in, accusing both the ANC and DA of politicizing service delivery. "Communities don't need admissions or excuses," an EFF councilor in Tshwane said. "They need working taps, working lights, and roads without potholes."

Expert Analysis

Analysts argue cadre deployment remains at the heart of the crisis. By prioritizing loyalty over competence, municipalities end up with leadership that lacks expertise to manage complex governance structures.

Professor Ntsikelelo Breakfast of Nelson Mandela University explained: "Local government is the frontline of democracy. If councilors don't take the Auditor-General's report seriously, the collapse of municipalities will deepen inequality."

Civil society echoed this view. Corruption Watch described the failures as "state capture at local level," while OUTA called for stronger accountability mechanisms to prevent chronic underspending.

Communities on the Edge

Residents are bearing the brunt. In rural provinces, many communities go weeks without clean water. In urban townships, electricity cuts and overflowing sewage have become

routine. Service delivery protests have surged, reflecting mounting anger.

A Soshanguve resident who wanted to remain anonymous said delays had real human consequences: "We applied for houses in 2005. They were only built in 2022, and we only moved in this year. You can imagine what it means to wait twenty years."

In Limpopo's Vhembe district, community leader Maria Ramuhala said frustration was boiling over: "We march every year for water, but nothing changes. We live like we are invisible."

Voices from Within the System

Municipal workers themselves are also struggling. SAMWU, the municipal workers' union, said many municipalities fail to pay workers on time, leading to strikes that further disrupt services. "You can't expect service delivery when workers are unpaid and municipalities are bankrupt," a union representative noted.

Meanwhile, SALGA (South African Local Government Association) urged calm, saying many municipalities were working to improve. "We acknowledge serious challenges, but not all municipalities are failing. There are pockets of excellence we must build on," a spokesperson said.

The Way Forward

The SCAB report calls for a renewed commitment to ethical leadership, stronger collaboration between government and communities, and an end to political interference in local appointments.

Without urgent action, it warns, the collapse of municipalities could erode South Africa's democratic foundations and deepen inequality.

NSEAS URGES REPAYMENT OF R45 BILLION OWED TO THE SCHEME



By **Mandhlazi Rodger**

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The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) is calling on former beneficiaries to start repaying their loans, as the scheme battles with an eye-watering R45 billion in unpaid debt dating back to 2018 and earlier.

Speaking at a media briefing in Pretoria on Wednesday, August 27, NSFAS CEO Waseem Carrim said much of this debt stems from the earlier days of the Tertiary Education Fund of South Africa (TEFSA), which NSFAS replaced in 1996.

"As a board and management, we cannot sit back and watch this substantial amount of money go

uncollected. It is not an easy debt to manage," Carrim said.

He stressed that repayment is crucial if the scheme is to continue supporting students from disadvantaged families.

"We understand that many of our previous beneficiaries are now working. We therefore urge those who benefited to repay their loans, so that more upcoming students can be funded," he added.

South Africa's high unemployment rate, however, complicates the issue. Many graduates argue they cannot pay what they do not have.

Khumalo Zakhele, an unemployed graduate from the University of Limpopo, said repayment is unrealistic for those still

struggling to find work.

"We know that if we pay, the funds will help current students with accommodation and allowances. But we graduated years ago and remain unemployed. How are we expected to repay that money?" Zakhele asked.

NSFAS Chairperson Karen Stander noted that repayment obligations only apply to debtors earning above R30,000 per year. "Those who fall below this income threshold are not expected to pay until they reach that bracket," she said. For now, NSFAS faces the uphill task of recovering billions from beneficiaries while balancing compassion for the country's unemployed graduates.

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From Talk to Action: South Africa Moves to Cut Food Waste

By **Neo Enzel-Mcinga**

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Every year, South Africa throws away around 10 million tonnes of food while millions of people go hungry.

To tackle this crisis, the Consumer Goods Council of South Africa (CGCSA) hosted its fifth Food Safety and Sustainability Seminar, bringing together government, businesses, universities, and activists to find real solutions. The event, held in Ekurhuleni, marked the United Nations' International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste, and the message was clear: it's time to stop talking and start acting.

Gauteng MEC for Agriculture, Vuyiswa Ramokgopa, gave the keynote address, pointing out how food waste directly affects communities. While huge amounts of food are lost in the supply chain, 1 in 5 households still go to bed hungry. Children, in particular, suffer from stunting and poor nutrition, a reality that South Africa cannot afford to ignore. "Food waste is not just about throwing away leftovers – it's about lives, health, and opportunities lost," she said.

The seminar gathered voices from across the food chain – from farmers and retailers to researchers and solution-driven entrepreneurs. International partner WRAP added a global perspective, while South African government departments including DFFE, DTIC, and Social Development

emphasised their support for national action. Speakers included Zinhle Tyikwe (CEO of GS1 South Africa), Nicole Roos from Nestlé, and food safety expert Professor Lise Korsten from the University of Pretoria, who all stressed that reducing waste also means saving resources like water, energy, and money.

Zinhle Tyikwe outlined what successful implementation looks like: **"Target, Measure and Act."** The framework is simple but powerful: set specific waste reduction targets, measure progress transparently, and take concrete action when goals aren't being met. It's the difference between making promises and delivering results.

One of the standout stories came from Omor Oyebola, founder of Tonop Food and Confectionary in Pretoria. Instead of cooking in bulk and risking waste, her business produces pre-ordered meals only, ensuring every plate counts. "It's about being accountable," she said. "We need to rethink how food is made and shared."

For Matlou Setati, who leads Food Safety and Sustainability at CGCSA, this work is deeply personal. "I was raised by a merchandiser working in a retail store – that's the core of my passion for this initiative," she shared. Her background connects her to the everyday reality of food supply and inspires her to push for change. According to Setati, the goal is to halve South Africa's food waste by

2030. For the last five years, the focus was on raising awareness and building partnerships. The next phase is about measurable impact. "We're calling on the fresh produce, dairy, and other key sectors to join us in reducing food loss," she said. "Our aim is not only to keep waste out of landfills, but also to make sure surplus food reaches people who need it most."

Linda Drummond, Manager of the South Africa Food Waste Loss Initiative, celebrated five years of progress and issued a call for more partners to join the movement. Those interested can reach out at flw.initiative@cgcsa.co.za.

Why We Should Care

For young people, this isn't just an "industry problem." It's about our future. Less food waste means more affordable food on student budgets. Better nutrition creates healthier communities and stronger education outcomes. And sustainable food systems open up more jobs and innovation opportunities in a growing green economy. The United Nations has set the challenge to cut food waste in half by 2030. If South Africa steps up, it means millions fewer people going hungry and billions of rands saved.

The takeaway from the seminar? Change starts now – and we all have a role to play.

HIGH SCHOOL NEWS

SA INFLUENCERS LINKED TO RUSSIA TRAFFICKING



By **Omphile Maebane**

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Allegations are mounting over the controversial Alabuga Start Programme in Russia, launched in 2022 under the Alabuga Special Economic Zone in Tatarstan.

Marketed as a work-study opportunity in hospitality, catering, and manufacturing, the initiative reportedly placed young women in drone assembly factories instead — raising alarm over human trafficking and exploitative labour practices.

According to the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, at least 200 young African women, alongside peers from Asia and Latin America, ended up assembling military drones in Tatarstan. Many only discovered the truth after their arrival. Some of their co-workers were reportedly

Russian vocational students as young as 15.

South African social media influencers, including Cyan Boujee and Seemah, promoted the programme on TikTok and Instagram, encouraging women to apply with promises of free travel, housing, stipends, and skills development.

One South African applicant, Sharon Khoya (20), recounted her experience:

"During the application they asked for my personal information, medical records, home address, and images. They even said I should not worry about visas or transport money. They promised to provide everything as long as I made it to Russia as soon as possible."

The Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) has urged extreme caution. Clayson Monyela,

spokesperson for DIRCO, said:

"Human trafficking syndicates are luring people into all sorts of illegal activities under slave-like conditions. If something looks too good to be true, get a second opinion. Do not just apply. Contact DIRCO or any of our embassies."

Initially, influencers claimed ignorance about the nature of the work. Cyan Boujee said:

"I didn't know that the programme was fake and had such allegations circulating on social media about it. I wouldn't have involved myself with it in the first place if I had known."

However, criticism of her involvement intensified online. Following heavy backlash, Cyan released a media statement containing a leaked voice note in which she described the conditions some participants endured:

"They starved me. There was a girl that cried when asked about her accommodation and their living conditions."

The Ministry in the Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities has since warned young South Africans against falling prey to job scams abroad.

"So-called work opportunities advertised on social media for positions in Russia are not facilitated with any government intervention," the ministry said in a statement. "We urge young people to always verify posts promising jobs abroad before committing."

The controversy surrounding Alabuga underscores the vulnerability of young South Africans in a climate of high unemployment, where opportunities too often come with devastating risks.



FORD SHIFTS INTO REVERSE: 470 EMPLOYEES TO LOSE JOBS

By Luvolwethu Ngani

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Ford South Africa has announced a restructuring plan that will result in more than 470 employees losing their jobs. The company attributes the retrenchments to reduced production capacity, a move that has dealt another heavy blow to the country's struggling automotive sector.

According to Solidarity, the trade union representing some of the affected workers, the layoffs will impact two major operations: the Struandale engine plant in Gqeberha, where 83 jobs are set to go, and the Silverton vehicle plant in Pretoria, which will see 391

roles cut.

Union leaders have warned that Ford's decision could trigger wider retrenchments across the industry. "When an automotive giant like Ford takes such drastic steps, it is a warning to the entire industry," said Solidarity deputy secretary-general Willie Venter. "We fear that further retrenchments in this industry may be inevitable if conditions do not improve quickly."

South Africa's automotive industry employs more than 115,000 people, with over 80,000 in component manufacturing. Already, at least 4,000 jobs have been lost in recent years due to an influx of imports and a lack of

local content, leading to the closure of 12 companies.

Ford SA, in its statement, expressed regret over the decision: "We understand the impact this has on our valued employees, and we are committed to supporting those who are affected."

For the workers, however, the consequences extend far beyond the factory floor. Tebogo Masilo, a production line manager at the Pretoria plant, said the retrenchments are devastating. "This was my source of income. My children and the grandparents who raised me were depending on me. Now I'm out of work, and at my age, it will be hard to find another job," he said.

"I guess I'll have to start a business, even though I doubt it's not too late."

Ford also clarified that the decision was not influenced by the United States' punitive 25% tariff on South African vehicle exports. Instead, the company cited systemic challenges such as load-shedding and infrastructure backlogs that continue to undermine production.

For now, the future of the affected workers and the wider automotive industry remains uncertain, with industry observers warning that the ripple effects of Ford's cuts could be felt for years to come.

SANLAM RETAIL MASS ADVANCES RETAIL MASS GROWTH STRATEGY

Johannesburg, 27 August 2025: Sanlam Retail Mass is accelerating its growth in South Africa's retail mass market by advancing the integration of Assupol, the insurer it acquired in 2024, into a single platform designed to drive scale and deeper market penetration.

The newly launched "Plan for Funeral, and for Life" campaign is the first unified market-facing initiative post-acquisition. It highlights the importance of planning not only for life's celebrations but also for unexpected challenges.

For customers, the integration brings dual servicing, making it easier to access advice and products in one location rather than traveling between different offices. Digital platforms are also being expanded to provide 24/7 access to policy details, claims processes and financial planning resources, enhancing rather than replacing the adviser-led model.

According to Sanlam Retail Mass, the "Plan for Funeral, and for Life" campaign reflects the company's commitment to helping households manage both immediate needs and long-term financial goals. With inflation pushing up funeral costs, the approach aims to ensure cover keeps pace with real-life needs – from transportation and catering to memorial services – while advisers support families in planning with dignity and confidence.

While framed as a client engagement drive, the campaign also signals Sanlam's intent to consolidate its leadership in funeral cover, a cornerstone

of the mass market, while expanding further into long-term savings and life solutions. By aligning protection needs with broader financial planning, the group aims to shift client behavior from single-product use to lifelong financial engagement.

Sanlam Retail Mass CEO, Bongani Madikiza, says the strategy is about building trust and scale: "We are helping clients plan with clarity and confidence. By combining our strengths with Assupol's trusted relationships, we are creating a sustainable model for inclusive financial growth."

Progress is already visible across distribution, operations and adviser support. Assupol's footprint is enabling cross-sell of Sanlam's full suite of savings, insurance, retirement and healthcare solutions. At the same time, work across IT systems, branch networks and adviser tools is improving efficiency, while advisers benefit from expanded training and product portfolios.

Madikiza adds that the momentum is building: "This is a growth strategy. We are combining trusted community reach with institutional scale to ensure more households can plan with clarity and confidence, while Sanlam strengthens its future earnings base."

With funeral cover remaining one of the most in-demand products in South Africa, the group is positioning itself to transition clients into savings, retirement and healthcare offerings, supporting both financial inclusion and long-term profitability.



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