



9TH PROVINCIAL CONGRESS DECLARATION

EASTERN CAPE

14 – 16 February 2022

East London International Convention Centre

Declaration:

“32 years of working class consciousness, defending workers’ rights and building a self-sustainable union”

We, the 216 delegates drawn from the strong twelve (12) locals and Provincial Executive Committee of the Police and Prison Civil Rights Union (POPCRU) in the Eastern Cape gathered in the POPCRU Eastern Cape 9th Provincial Congress from 14 – 16 February 2022 at the East London International Convention Centre. POPCRU Eastern Cape 9th Provincial Congress was held under the theme “32 years of working class consciousness, defending workers’ rights and building a self-sustainable union”

POPCRU 9th Provincial Congress was also attended by the National Office Bearers, Provincial Leadership of the Federation, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the Leadership of the alliance. The 9th Provincial Congress received a keynote address from the President of POPCRU, Dr Zizamele Cebekhulu and the messages of solidarity from all alliance components, the African National Congress (ANC), South African Communist Party (SACP) and the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO). The keynote address, PEC Secretariat Report and the messages of solidarity served in the plenary as an important political and ideological guide in the plenary deliberations in applying Marxist-Leninist tools of analysis on the socio-economic conditions of the workers and poor throughout the world.

The congress noted that members of POPCRU and workers in the sector played a leading role in the defence of the country and its populace against the novel corona virus. To this end, as the union we wish to express our sincere gratitude and salute to the frontline workers who risked their lives for the nation to survive. The patriotism they displayed during this period shall always be appreciated. It is in this context that we call on the government to give all the frontline workers risk compensation as a token of appreciation.

POPCRU Organisation

The congress expressed its profound appreciation of the unity and cohesion of the union in the province. The unity and cohesion of the union represents the basis for the union to consolidate the class consciousness within its ranks and reposition its shopstewards for improved service to its members. The unity of the organisation shall through hard work and service to members be translated into the membership growth and extensive service.

The Congress therefore resolved to have ongoing political and ideological development programmes at all levels of the organisation. These programmes will be rolled working collaboratively with COSATU and the SACP anchored on building an ideological and political sound cadreship of the union.

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Recently held COSATU 14th Provincial Congress

The congress noted that it was convened after the successful 14th Provincial Congress of our federation, COSATU, recently held in East London. The recently held Provincial Congress of the federation was characterised by an inspiring unity and cohesion. It is our considered view as POPCRU that the unity displayed in the congress is a source of inspiration that we should all draw from in deepening and advancing worker solidarity amongst the COSATU affiliates and the worker unions in general.

The leadership of the alliance in their respective messages of support to POPCRU 9th Provincial Congress reflected positively on the role played by the union in unifying the congress of the federation. The congress therefore recommitted POPCRU to meaningfully contribute in the building of a strong and vibrant COSATU. Our commitment to the building and strengthening of the giant federation is anchored on our clear understanding of founding principles of the federation, and the political meaning of the relationship between the federation and our union.

Gender Based Violence and Femicide

The congress noted disastrous Gender Based Violence and Femicide engulfing the South African society. The congress raised its concern on the scourge of Gender Based Violence and Femicide with the understanding that POPCRU members are affected by the GBVF as first victims and second as state officials dealing with this crisis on a daily basis.

It is in this context that the congress resolved that the union will develop a clear programme to tackle the crisis of the GBVF. Amongst other things the union will work with relative social partners to have psycho-social support programmes to our members and society at large.

We will work to intensify the fight against the gender-based violence and all other forms of women abuse, including sexual harassment and rape, human trafficking and sexual slavery, forced sex work, femicide, as well as discrimination against the LGBTIQ+ community members. This will include confronting Gender Based Violence in the workplace, particularly in the sector where senior officials take sexual advantage of newly recruited officials and at times vulnerable female prisoners.

Socio-Economic Conditions

The congress noted that even before the advent of Covid-19 the country was undergoing a structural and systematic crisis and the receiving end was the working class. It is our view that the austerity measures as implemented by the ANC government cannot transform our economy for the interest of the majority and no redistribution and transformation have ever been achieved through austerity measures.

This time around, as workers we refuse for the working class to be at the receiving end of the budget cuts, why must those who are poor and have nothing must continually tighten their belts? We are therefore calling for a policy regime that will caution workers and the poor against these challenges, particularly the women. We need a comprehensive policy review with no major policy areas spared. It is in this context that the congress raised its concern on the emerging policy divergence including the undermining of the bargaining platforms.

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It is in this context that the congress once more expressed the workers' outrage on the government reneging from the Bargaining Council resolutions in general and the Resolution 1 of 2018 in particular. The congress views the reneging as the ANC led government showing disdain to the workers of this country and undermining the struggles and gains of the workers since the democratic dispensation. To this end, the congress resolved to roll out an ongoing worker led mass action to demand for the government to pay the workers what is due to them.

On police killings

The 9th Provincial Congress noted and condemned the police killings throughout the country. The members of our union have become the target of criminals in the townships with no protection from the state. This is exacerbated by the police officers limited by the Criminal Procedure Act which prohibits officers from protecting themselves.

The congress also expressed its concern on the state of the police station particularly in the rural areas and townships. The state of these stations makes it easy for criminals to attack and disarm our members. The government must immediately improve the state and capacity of the police stations for improved capacity to serve the people and the safety of workers. We further call for the legislation prescribing transportation of police from their workplaces to their homes.

We are therefore calling upon the ANC led government to take decisive steps in quelling the police killings. The state must protect the police officers through amongst other things review of the Criminal Procedure Act. In the same vein, we are calling for an immediate review of the section 46 of the South African Police Act which prohibits the police officers from taking active part in political formations.

Violence in the correctional centres

The Congress noted with great concern the continuing violence and attack of our members in the correctional centres. The inmates have been attacking and killing the members in these institutions. One of the key contributors to this situation is the staff shortage in the correctional centres.

We are calling on the Department of the Public Service and Administration to lift the moratorium on the filling of funded vacant posts in the correctional service. We are calling upon the government to increase the capacity and the security measures in the correctional centres.

Building Developmental State:

The congress calls for more efforts to building of the developmental state with the state playing a central role in the development including decent job creation. There should be more efforts to de-tenderize the state and build effective state capacity to serve the people diligently. Centring the state as employer of last resort, by among others scaling up public employment programmes, this must also be a key site of skills development and our drive for the decent work agenda.

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The congress reaffirmed the COSATU Eastern Cape resolution that the Public infrastructure development, maintenance, care, and security is a key national development and employment creation imperative.

Our proposal is that the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant (R350.00) must be extended until the pensionable age to all unemployed citizens. As we progress, it should be increased progressively towards building it as a foundation for universal basic income guarantee coverage for unemployed persons from the age of 18 to the pensionable age.

Alliance

The congress emphasised the importance of our revolutionary alliance of the African National Congress, South African Communist Party, Congress of South African Trade Unions and South African Civic Organisation. The congress expressed that an alliance is 'unity of opposites'. The classes and strata which come together in a front of struggle usually have different long-term interests and, often, even contradictory expectations from the immediate phase. That our alliance is not only an alliance of organisations but that of classes anchored on the shared programme of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR).

It is for this reason that the congress strongly felt that the manner in which the alliance functioned for the most part after 1994 is outdated and has to be reconfigured both organisationally and programmatically. The status quo, including with regard to the Alliance's approach to policy formulation, deployments and accountability, is just not sustainable. The Congress therefore resolved on an immediate development of a clear programme towards meaningful reconfiguration of the alliance.

The Congress resolved to support the efforts by the SACP cadres to build a strong, vibrant and adaptive Party that is ready for any eventuality. To us, the SACP represents not only our vanguard party but our political home as workers and therefore our insurance. It is for this reason that the congress resolved that all our members should play an active role in building and strengthening the Party of the working class.

The Congress resolved that the South African Communist Party as the party of power and influence that seeks to overthrow bourgeois mode of production for the working class, must contest state power through the ballot, with and for the workers and the poor. The SACP must do so to consolidate the working class power in the state as the terrain of the highest concentration of political power, for the working class as a class on its own and a class for itself. This is in line with the Communist Manifesto in its assertion that "The immediate aim of the Communists is the same as that of all other proletarian parties: formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat."

Violence in the ANC meetings

The Congress noted with great concern the emerging acts of violence in the meetings of the ANC in the build up towards its conferences. The members of our union are deeply affected with these incidents as in their line of duty, they have to protect the people in the meetings thereby putting their lives in risk.

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The Congress expressed its heartfelt condolences to the family of Comrade Booi who was gunned down in the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality. We also wish Comrade Mazwi Mini who was also shot whilst at home a speedy recovery. It is our view that these acts of violence in the ANC meetings reflects the extent of the infiltration of the movement by unscrupulous criminal elements. We are of the view that the acts of violence in the ANC are not delinked from the corrupt network that have taken charge of municipalities. It is also our view that these acts cannot be thoroughly delinked from the non-vetted private securities personnel (iinkabi) protecting some leading sections of the movement. The identity of these heavily armed private armies securing leading sections of the movement need to be thoroughly looked at by the state security machinery, or we run a risk of opening our movement and state to dangerous armed gangsters.

As all organisations in the alliance will be convening their respective congresses, the congress is of the firm view that the key task facing these highest decision-making bodies of the Alliance is to conduct a comprehensive policy review and emerge policy outcomes that will help our country to overcome the crisis-high levels of unemployment, poverty, inequality, and the crisis of social reproduction, in line with our shared strategic perspective of the necessity to advance, deepen and defend a second radical phase of the national democratic revolution.

These important platforms should not be about fixation of leadership contests but focus more on the challenges confronting the workers and the poor. It is in this context that we are concerned with the factional mudslinging in the ANC and the violence coupling it. These unfortunate developments should be a striking reminder to the workers that there is no faction that will be a solution to the ANC or to the working class.

The congress resolved that the union working with COSATU should defend the ANC, the leader of our National Democratic Revolution (NDR) from corrupt anti-renewal elements that seek to derail the ANC. The corrupt beneficiaries of state capture and smash and grab corruption have sought to usurp the ANC in an attempt to protect their overnight ill-gotten wealth. The workers and the poor cannot afford to have an ANC that is led by a corrupt criminal network for it will have a dire impact on their livelihoods. To this end we are calling upon organised and unorganised workers to make informed decisions in this regard and not allow the ANC led movement and our revolution to be usurped by the anti-renewal state capture corrupt criminal network.

International Solidarity

In deepening international worker solidarity, the congress guided by the founding principles of COSATU, with one being the international worker solidarity. The congress pledges our solidarity with the working people of the oppressed countries, Palestine, Swaziland, Sahara and other parts.

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Conclusion

The 9th Provincial Congress reaffirmed the 2015 congress resolution on strengthening and capacitating the organisation at a local level, and further called for the immediate implementation of this resolution.

POPCRU 9th Provincial Congress elected the following POBs:

Provincial Chairperson: **Comrade Luzuko Rawana**
Provincial Deputy Chairperson: **Comrade Bongiwe Mcitwa**
Provincial Secretary: **Comrade Xolani Prusente**
Provincial Deputy Secretary: **Comrade Thandiwe Ncipa**
Provincial Treasurer: **Comrade Melubakho Mkweta**

Thank you!



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