



YCLSA

**THE YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE
OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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MEDIA STATEMENT

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YCLSA MOURNS THE BRUTAL KILLING OF TWO YOUNG COMRADES IN KATLEHONG AND CALLS FOR DECISIVE ACTION AGAINST CRIMINALITY IN EKURHULENI

The Young Communist League of South Africa (YCLSA) has learnt with profound sadness and outrage of the tragic shooting in Katlehong, Ekurhuleni, on Tuesday, 13 October 2026. We have since learnt that the death toll has risen to four young people, with several others injured. What makes this tragedy particularly painful is that the victims were attacked while participating in a procession following a memorial service held in honour of a member of the African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL), who was herself brutally murdered approximately two weeks ago. A gathering intended to honour a fallen comrade and bring comfort to a grieving family has now left more families mourning their loved ones. We extend our deepest and most heartfelt condolences to the families of the deceased, their friends, the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL), the ANCWL and the broader Katlehong community. We wish those injured a full and speedy recovery, and stand in solidarity with every family whose life has been shattered by this tragedy.

In a country where young people constitute a significant share of the electorate, yet remain amongst those most affected by unemployment, poverty and exclusion, the loss of four young lives demands more than another statement of condemnation. Too many young people are becoming disillusioned with politics because they see little change in the conditions of their daily lives. Their withdrawal from political participation must confront us with difficult questions about whether our democracy is delivering on its promises to them. Young people cannot be valued for their votes during elections and then abandoned to unemployment, despair and violence between elections. Their lives have value beyond the ballot box. They are workers and students, organisers and caregivers, and sons and daughters whose hopes deserve the opportunity to become reality. When a young person is killed, a family loses a loved one, a community loses a contribution that can never be replaced, and our country loses part of its future. A democracy that calls upon its youth to shape its future must protect their right to live long enough to build it.

The YCLSA is deeply concerned about the deteriorating safety and security situation in Ekurhuleni, which has over the past few months experienced deeply disturbing incidents of violent criminality. The recent killings of women across the municipality, alongside other violent incidents, have created an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty amongst communities. We cannot accept a situation in which our people are increasingly becoming prisoners in their own communities, while criminals appear emboldened to act with impunity. The democratic state has an obligation to protect the lives of its citizens, and this responsibility must find practical expression through effective, visible and intelligence-driven policing. The continued occurrence of such violent incidents raises serious concerns about police visibility, crime intelligence, the circulation of illegal

firearms and the effectiveness of crime prevention strategies in Ekurhuleni. It cannot be that communities only witness intensified police operations after lives have already been lost.

The YCLSA maintains that the security and dignity of the working class must remain central to the responsibilities of the democratic state. Our people must be able to walk their streets, attend community gatherings, organise politically and mourn their loved ones without the fear of being subjected to violence. We therefore call upon the leadership of the South African Police Service (SAPS), working together with the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Police Department (EMPD), to urgently strengthen policing operations in crime-affected communities. This must include sustained police visibility, strengthened criminal intelligence, decisive interventions against illegal firearms and improved investigative capacity to ensure that perpetrators of violent crimes are brought to justice. The reported surrender of a suspect must be followed by a credible investigation that establishes the full circumstances of the incident and ensures accountability in accordance with the law.

Of particular concern to the YCLSA is the occurrence of these killings during the period leading towards the 2026 Local Government Elections. While the motive behind this shooting remains subject to investigation, we are deeply concerned about the dangers posed by political intolerance and the possibility of violence being used to resolve political differences. Our revolutionary movement cannot afford a culture in which political contestation is accompanied by intimidation, threats and the loss of life. Political differences must be confronted through ideological engagement, persuasion and democratic processes, never through the barrel of a gun. No political position, organisational disagreement or electoral contest is worth the life of a single comrade. We call upon law enforcement agencies to remain vigilant against all forms of political violence and intimidation as the country approaches the elections. Equally, political organisations carry a responsibility to ensure that political activity does not become a breeding ground for hostility and violence.

The YCLSA further calls on the Gauteng provincial leadership of SAPS to account for the measures being implemented to address the worrying levels of violent crime in Ekurhuleni. Our communities require more than assurances and condemnations after every tragedy. They deserve sustained interventions that restore public confidence in law enforcement and make their neighbourhoods safe. To the families of those killed, we recognise that no statement of condemnation can bring back your loved ones or take away the pain you carry. We share in your grief and hope that those entrusted with upholding the law will act with the urgency and seriousness that these painful losses demand. The YCLSA reiterates that the lives of our people are sacred. The freedom for which generations of revolutionaries sacrificed their lives must never coexist comfortably with a reality in which communities live in constant fear of criminal violence.

May the souls of our fallen comrades rest in eternal peace. Their lives mattered, and justice must prevail

ISSUED BY

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