

MEDIA STATEMENT-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday April 06, 2017

NEHAWU NEC STATEMENT

The National Education Health & Allied Workers' Union [NEHAWU] convened its ordinary National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting on the 5-6th April 2017. The NEC considered the international context, national political and socio-economic situation and organisational matters affecting our members and the working class in general.

The meeting began by paying tribute and honour to our fallen giant, Comrade Ahmed Mohamed Kathrada, our beloved Isithwalandwe/Seaparankoe, who passed away on the 28th March 2017 after a short illness. His passing away will forever remain a wound in the hearts and minds of South Africans because of the role he played in defeating the apartheid regime. Uncle Kathy joined the Young Communist League of South Africa [YCLSA] in 1941 at the tender age of 14 and dedicated his life to serving the struggle for freedom first in the Transvaal Passive Resistance Council and later in the Transvaal Indian Youth Congress where he fought gallantly for a just, classless and non-racial South Africa.

The meeting also takes place in the month of April as we commemorate three outstanding martyrs of our liberation movement in the form of Solomon Mahlangu [April 06], Chris Hani [April 10] and Oliver Tambo [April 24]. We shall be celebrating their lives and times more especially the selflessness they displayed in the struggle for the dismantling of the apartheid regime and the fruits of democracy that we enjoy today.

This NEC meeting was our last one before we convene our 11th National Congress in June.

The meeting took place just after we concluded a successful 13th Israel Apartheid Week and as we are about to begin celebrating the centenary of the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917. Our meeting also had the pleasure of being addressed by the ambassador of Palestine, Cde. Hashem Dajani on the current situation in Palestine. Our last NEC meeting held in November 2016 directed the national union that, as part of our program of action, we mark the year 2017 as the year to

celebrate this imperative milestone in the history of our revolution. To this end, NEHAWU will officially celebrate this important milestone on April 13, 2017 at the Johannesburg City Hall.

As part of the deliberations on the international situation, as NEHAWU we will be focusing on the following:

- The implementation of our international program on the centenary of the Great October Socialist Russian revolution in line with the national work plan
- Draw international lessons and engage the South African Communist Party [SACP] in on-going discussions on the character of the international situation and to continue the assessment of the collapse of socialism and problems pertaining to our own revolution.
- Intensify international solidarity support through campaigns with Swaziland, Western Sahara, Cuba, Palestine, the Basque country, Kurdish people, the Middle East, Venezuela and Brazil.
- A deeper effort to grow and strengthen the class oriented trade union movement in the African continent.

As NEHAWU, we note with regret the travesty of the re-admission of Morocco which is a colonial occupying force into the African Union as a member state and we will continue to support the international campaign for the Saharawi peoples' right to self-determination, and for an end of the occupation of Western Sahara by Morocco.

On the current political situation

As NEHAWU, we reaffirm our call on President Jacob Zuma to do the honourable thing by resigning and we are encouraged that our call has now been echoed by our federation COSATU and the SACP. The events of the evening of the 30th March 2017 underscores our conviction that his leadership of the country is untenable. In particular, the fact that the President has used a dubious and shoddy "intelligence report" to make such a serious decision of sacking both the Finance Minister Cde Pravin Gordhan and the Deputy Finance Minister Cde Mcebisi Jonas. In itself this speaks volumes on his capacity and judgement.

The attempt to drive a new narrative that he had to fire Pravin Gordhan because of a broken down relationship between himself and the Finance

Minister is in itself an attempt to cover up the spurious conspiracy highlighted by the spurious report.

We take a dim view that the NWC of the ANC has taken lightly the fact that very serious allegations have been recklessly levelled against two senior ANC leaders in Cde Pravin Gordhan and Cde Mcebisi Jonas by the President. We call on President Zuma to clarify whether he stands by the allegations of treason that he has levelled against these two comrades. Otherwise President must make an apology to both these comrades and the public. We call on the Office of the Inspector-General of Intelligence to investigate the whole matter of this dubious and shoddy report.

We call on our members not to participate in any protest action organised by formations that are outside the alliance including the planned activities of the 7th March 2017. Similarly we call on all the ANC MPs not to participate in favour of the motion of no confidence by opposition parties on the 18th April 2017.

NEHAWU welcomes the move by the SACP to convene an Imbizo on April 22-24th 2017 as part of an ongoing process to interact with motive forces of the NDR to deeply appreciate the challenges confronting the revolution.

On socio-economic issues

As a union in the public sector we are concerned about the economic consequences arising from President Zuma's reckless political actions, including the rising in debt servicing costs and the borrowing rate which will have a serve consequence on the fiscus. We view this in a serious light to the extent that it may affect the coming round of public service negotiations leading to a dispute.

We condemn the decision of the rating agencies to downgrade our economy to a junk status as there is no basis with regards to policy trajectory of the Medium Term expenditure framework as presented by Parliament in February other than their own prejudices.

As NEHAWU, we are revolted by the behaviour of the Minister of Social Development, Bathabile Dlamini, and how she has handled our demands that were presented to her on our march on the 10th February 2017 and the subsequent strike that followed. We are very unhappy in the manner in which she has responded to the strike including delaying tactics, the flooding of courts with interdicts and the high handedness of the police

with the view of breaking our strike. This has led to the strike being protracted with no sign of an end in sight.

A meeting is scheduled between the Minister and the national union for Tuesday 11th April 2017 to try resolve outstanding issues from the negotiations that took place in the past two weeks. However, heading towards that meeting we will be intensifying the strike action on the ground. To this end, we will be organising marches to all Premiers Offices in provinces and the National Office of the Department of Social Development.

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