

From: Hon. Dereleen James – Member of Parliament, ActionSA
To: H.E Cyril Ramaphosa – President, Republic of South Africa
Date: Tuesday, 09 September 2025
Subject: Mr President, The Bloodshed And Terror Must End – Declare A State Of
Emergency On The Cape Flats

Mr President,

How many more children must die before you act?

I come from Eldorado Park, where for many years before entering politics, I was involved in fighting the scourge of drugs and gangsterism.

I have dedicated my life to this work, shaped in no small part by the fact that my own family has not been untouched by this social crisis. I struggled to save my own son from his addiction, a tragedy that I continue to devote my time to ensuring no other family must endure.

Now, in Parliament, I have been exposed to the full extent of this crisis across our country, particularly in Cape Town, through many oversight visits to places such as Mitchells Plain, Bonteheuwel, Lenteguur and Ravensmead, where families are torn apart by bullets every day. What is happening can only be described as a state of terror, where bullet casings litter the streets across the Cape Flats.

I do not know what more I can do or say, and I cannot remain silent. In every interaction and every story, the common thread is that your government has abandoned these communities by under-resourcing police stations, incapacitating social services and leaving people defenceless against warring gangs who are destroying the already fragile fabric of these communities, and I fear we have reached a point of no return.

The Cape Flats is a literal warzone. There is no other way to describe it. Every single day, the sound of gunfire is pierced only by the cries of mothers who have lost their children. Our children are gunned down daily. Where there should be laughter, there is gunfire and cries of anguish. Where there should be joy, there is death. Where there should be safety, there is only fear.

In July, five-year-old Melokuhle Tshaka was killed by a stray bullet in Nyanga while walking to the shop with her aunt. Now, walking to the shops is not safe.

Earlier this month, schools in Lotus River and Grassy Park had to close due to several shootings. Now, our schools are not safe.

On the 19th of August, two-year-old Esmine Francke was killed while playing with her friends, who were also injured in the incident. Now, playing outside is not safe.

Three days later, two-month-old Moegsien Isaacs died after being hit by a stray bullet inside his mother's Bonteheuwel home. Now, even our homes are not safe.

Across the Western Cape, 63 children are known to have been murdered in just the last five months. These are stolen futures, destroyed families and communities broken down bullet by bullet.

The statistics confirm what we know to be the truth that there is a complete breakdown of law and order, with the Cape Flats now a warzone.

Out of the top five "murder stations" in the country, four are in the City of Cape Town (Delft, Mfuleni, Nyanga, and Philippi East). Between January and March this year, 208 of South Africa's 240 gang-related murders, 9 out of 10, occurred in the Western Cape. In the same period, 273 of the 308 gang-related attempted murders in the country, also 9 out of 10, occurred in the Western Cape. Furthermore, almost half of South Africa's drug-related crimes occur in the Western Cape, the majority in the Cape Flats. Your own delegation lamented this harrowing reality in the Oval Office on 21 May this year.

Mr President, the victims of gang- and drug-related crime are human beings and our fellow citizens. They are deserving of safety, dignity, and freedom from fear, not abandonment and neglect.

We have the tools to fix this, so why will you not act? How many more small coffins must be buried before you show concern and finally act?

Your new Minister of Police is in the Cape Flats today, but like every Minister before him who has made promises never followed by intervention, the bloodshed continues, families are destroyed, and the cries of communities for a sustained and bold intervention fall on deaf ears.

That is why, as a last resort, I am pleading with you to declare, for the first time in our democratic history, a State of Emergency in terms of Section 37 of the Constitution. I make this call fully aware of the gravity of such a decision. But while States of Emergency in the past were used as tools of oppression, this one must be used to liberate our communities from the blanket of fear and death that has smothered them for too long.

The State of Emergency must not be symbolic. It must deliver concrete action:

1. **Street-by-Street Intelligence Operations**

Deploy our intelligence services for a systematic, targeted sweep, street by street, house by house. A blanket deployment without intelligence leads to failure. A coordinated, intelligence-led approach can dismantle gang structures at their root.

2. **Deploy the South African National Defence Force**

Relieve the pressure on under-resourced police stations and officers, while restoring immediate calm and safety to communities under siege.

3. **A Whole-of-Government Response**

The crisis cannot be left to the police service alone. Social Development must be deployed en masse to rescue children being exploited by gangs, while additional targeted support in schools will help prevent gangsterism from breeding a new generation of victims.

4. **Special Courts to Expedite Justice**

During the 2010 FIFA World Cup, 56 special courts operated in day and night shifts to deal swiftly with crime. We must replicate this model in all gang-ridden areas to ensure cases are fast-tracked and gangsters are put behind bars, not back onto our streets.

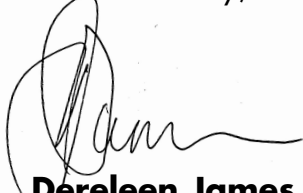
5. **Repurpose SETAs for Real Skills Development**

Instead of wasting R20 billion annually, funding failing SETAs, let us redirect some of these funds to targeted, long-term skills development programmes for vulnerable communities. In 2013, a pilot project in Eldorado Park was implemented, which can now be used as a model and upscaled. Breaking the cycle of poverty is essential to breaking the cycle of violence.

Mr President, you swore an oath to defend the lives and dignity of all South Africans. The mothers and fathers of the Cape Flats are crying out for you to keep that promise. The time for incoherent, piecemeal interventions is over.

Declare a State of Emergency! Deploy every resource at your disposal! Break the cycle of violence! Restore peace to the Cape Flats! ActionSA stands ready to assist in making this a reality. But the responsibility to act lies with you. Delay will only mean more small coffins and more broken families.

Yours sincerely,



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