

Plaaslike Besorgde Inwoners/Local Concerned Citizens (PBI)

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Sent: Friday, 18 June 2021 00:31

To: freeandfair <freeandfair@elections.org.za>

Subject: Free and fair elections in the Covid pandemic

The IEC

Att: Justice Dikgang Moseneke

I am Virgill Gericke, President of the PBI, Plaaslike Besorgde Inwoners/Local Concerned Citizens. We operate from George in the Western Cape.

Our party is registered nationally, but currently limit our participation in the upcoming elections on a regionally bound model. This will essentially include the entire Garden Route and all seven Municipalities falling within the borders of the Garden Route.

Our District was heavily affected by the recent Covid pandemic and the subsequent related deaths in our region.

Hundreds of our citizens died and thousands were infected by this deadly virus. The loss of life in this region has resulted in many families being without a breadwinner. Our region is still suffer the after effects which are clearly observed in the struggling economy and job losses.

In terms of research presented by world renowned medical experts, this virus is deadly and mutating from time to time. It is confirmed that people with comorbidities are much more vulnerable to this virus.

Our national government has introduced lockdown Regulations to curb the spread of the virus. These Regulations are adjusted intermittently in order to minimize the effect of this virus on the lives of citizens. As a party, we appreciate all efforts by government to deal with the pandemic.

It is however as sad state of affairs to see how political parties are divided on the scientific evidence produced by scientists and how they are trying to score cheap political points out of a deadly worldwide pandemic. Furthermore, it is an insult to the citizens of this country when parties, claiming to be considerate and sensitive to the circumstances of our people, blatantly twist and distort this scientific evidence in order to suit their political agenda.

In many ways this pandemic is being used to divide our country along racial, economic and social lines.

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What is more aggravating, are the parties calling for the postponement of the 27 October 2021 elections in contravention of our Constitutional obligation to hold LGE every five years. This is confusing the public and causing rifts under the electorate. The hype of uncertainty that some political parties try to cast over the elections, creates further instability and confusion.

The right to vote, is a fundamental right and cannot be denied by all sorts of excuses and political mudslinging. Our government is democratically elected and should lead from the front. This is the wish of the people. Therefore, in the midst of a crisis or pandemic, it is incumbent upon all interested and affected parties to work together to finding a satisfactory solution within the framework of the law.

No tragedy, pandemic or disaster may be allowed to distract the government of meeting it's Constitutional obligations. It is for any government to plan ahead and adjust it strategies in such a way that will put the interest of it's citizens first.

Even in the face of this deadly pandemic, elections should proceed. Since the dawn of democracy, the events focusing on the run up to the elections, have become a gross point of concern to the PBI.

Because local government elections are so important, the electorate should be inspired to exercise their right to vote in order to improve the quality of life.

The time has arrived in South Africa to admit that the way we conduct our elections, fall short of the real definition of electoral democracy and a dignified election..

This pandemic is assisting us to pause and reflect on the way in which we hold elections.

The run up to the elections should at all times be without suspicion.

Health protocols should be observed at all times.

This included sanitization of hands, social distancing and wearing of a mask.

That strict measures be put in place to serve in local voting districts.

That the elderly and people with comorbidities be afforded to vote first.

That more VD's should be created in previously disadvantaged communities to also encourage people to vote closer to their homes.

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To possibly defer the elections over three days to eliminate long queues and waiting periods that will make people despondent to vote.

To prohibit the playing of loud music during Election time. This will effectively stop the congregation of voters at one place.

To seriously consider to allow only five people/ parties per street or block to canvass in order to prevent or minimize the spread of the virus.

That, in the event we are off target, the navy be used to assist us with voter education etc

That the transportation of people on trucks be prohibited in order to restore the dignity of people and stop the spread of the virus.

Let us bring back sanity again to the day of voting, where people can exercise their.

The IEC must be afforded more powers to enforce the laws of our country.

In the unlikely event that the elections cannot be held this year, the politicians and party reps should mobilise orderly to make the elections a reality.

Regards

Virgill Gericke

President

PBI

The PBI is prepared and willing to make proper oral submissions in this regard.

Greetings

Virgill Gericke

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