

8 August 2023

Media Statement

From the desk of the General Secretary, Bishop Malusi Mpumlwana

SACC CONDEMNS CAPE TOWN VIOLENCE; CALLS FOR COCT & SANTACO LEADERSHIP TO REACH A SPEEDY RESOLUTION

The South African Council of Churches (SACC) notes with deep concern the deteriorating situation in Cape Town caused by the current standoff in the City, between the government and the taxi industry - especially those that are under the South African National Taxi Council (Santaco) in the province.

This strike has obviously affected the lives of the very poor in the city who depend entirely on this form of transport to live their lives productively and meaningfully. This includes getting to work, getting to and from school for children, accessing health facilities for those who need them and many more forms of a normal dignified life.

The SACC supports the efforts of faith organisations, community based organisations, and civil society organisations convened under the WC Transport Crisis Action Group which is working tirelessly to contribute to a peaceful resolution of the matter and the resumption of normal lives of our people.

In the last few days our concern has deepened as we see the violence, looting, destruction of property and the general sense of lawlessness that can easily become a bi-product of such mass action, with opportunists and criminal elements taking advantage of the situation to pursue their criminal intention that seems to be adding to this crisis. We also note with sadness, reports of the deaths of two people in this painful episode for the communities of Cape Town.

Our anxiety as the Council of Churches is further heightened by the failure to sustain meaningful engagement between Santaco and governments of the city and province, which can only worsen the situation as positions are hardened by those involved. We would like to believe that neither Santaco nor the governments of the Western Cape and Cape Town would like this matter to escalate any further, therefore, it is with this in mind that the SACC calls for:

1. All parties involved in the stalemate to create the environment for meaningful talks and commit to going back to the negotiating table to solve their differences for the sake of those affected by the strike, especially the poor.
2. The end of violence, looting and destruction of property, and for no more blood to be spilt in the name of this protest. There can be no justification for the loss of any more lives due to this taxi strike, therefore every conceivable negotiation tool and tactic must be explored to restore peace for all road users.

3. Every effort to be made to calm down the existing tensions in our communities in Cape Town so as to give an honest attempt at solving this impasse the best chance to succeed.

It is our prayer that both the Government and Santaco will heed their interventions, and receive this effort as an honest attempt to contribute to the resolution of the crisis.

Lastly we call on people of faith, through their different traditions, to pray for our country, especially the city of Cape Town, as it goes through this crisis.

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SACC Media enquiries and memorial service attendance:

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About SACC

The South African Council of Churches (SACC) is an ecumenical association of affiliated Christian Churches, and blocks of churches such as The Evangelical Alliance and the Council of African Independent Churches, and the International Federation of Christian Churches, with a mandate to lead common Christian action that works for moral witness in South Africa. SACC does not exist for the propagation and the advancement of its doctrinal position, but is the place where our diverse interpretations of our faith come together in action for **social justice**. It therefore seeks to achieve a visible, just socio-economic and ecological impact, enabled through engaged churches-in-community for a reconciled South Africa and our sub-continent.