



ANC DESTRUCTION OF WATER SUPPLY UNCONSTITUTIONAL

The Preamble to the South African constitution (1996) says it is the government's role to "improve the quality of life of all citizens". The Founding Provisions of the constitution are that citizens are entitled to human dignity. Section 24 – Bill of Rights – Environment, Section (a) declares "Everyone has the right to an environment that is not harmful to the health and well being of citizens", while Section (b) says that "The environment must be protected for the benefit of present and future generations through reasonable legislative and other measures that:

- I. Prevent pollution and ecological degradation
- II. Promote conservation, and
- III. Secure ecologically sustainable development and the use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development.

The South African government transgresses these provisions every single day, and has been doing so since it took power in 1994. Those opposition local government councillors and provincial representatives, as well as concerned ratepayer groups, who are constantly petitioning the president or who issue press statements on how badly the ANC regime is handling the SA water crisis, should have taken the government to court years ago for not discharging its obligations under the constitution. One particularly serious situation has now been brought to the court's attention by activist group Afriforum which has secured a win over negligence and incompetence. In a decision by the Mmabatho High Court, Ngaka Modiri Molema district municipality has been ordered to supply and distribute clean water to residents, and where needed, to repair infrastructure. The municipality has been given six months to comply with the court's decision.

The provision of clean water is a basic human right. In South Africa this right has been trampled upon by an ignorant, incompetent and uncaring government which thinks it is above accountability. These ANC political charlatans do not appear to be concerned that they are seen for what they are throughout the world. Social media has guaranteed that. The fact that citizens' groups must take them to court to make them do their job does not elicit any apologetic or explanatory comment from their party or president, despite the fact that the latter has been issuing outrageous statements for years about how he will ensure that municipalities will employ

competent people, and that he will see that mayors are “qualified”. He has not and never will change the status quo with regard to party-hack deployment: he needs these votes to stay in power. The collapse of South Africa's service infrastructure can be laid directly at the door of president Cyril Ramaphosa who chaired the party's cadre deployment committee for years. He made sure that politically-correct party hacks were placed into all levels of government in order that he and his party should stay in power, whatever the cost to South Africa. The fact that most of them were woefully incompetent was irrelevant.

THE UNITED NATIONS

In 2010, the United Nations General Assembly explicitly recognised the human right to water and sanitation. “Everyone has the right to sufficient continuous, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic use”, says the World Health Organisation (WHO Fact Sheet: Drinking Water – 2019). The WHO produces water quality guidelines, one of which places specific emphasis on “Developing drinking water quality regulations and standards”. As South Africa is a UN member, it should be implementing these requirements as an imperative. Yet the ANC regime does not even vaguely approach meeting the criteria for the correct and full implementation of the UN's regulations on clean water.

In August of this year, TLU SA's Environmental Committee demanded that government either repair SA's water resources or ask private institutions to get the job done.

According to SA's 2019 Water and Sanitation Masterplan, 56% of the 1150 municipal wastewater treatment works in South Africa and 44% of the 962 water treatment works are weak or critical, with 11% being utterly dysfunctional. The main reason for our country's dirty water supply is the deterioration of water treatment works because of municipal corruption, mismanagement and incapable staff. Our rivers and dams are polluted because of mass squatting and inadequate prosecution of polluters. This affects agricultural sustainability, says TLU SA's Environmental Committee. Sewage running down streets and draining into soil in Bela Bela, Limpopo province is now being investigated by the SA Human Rights Commission (HRA). This contamination has been in existence since 2019, with not a movement from the ANC council to rectify matters, despite R45 million being earmarked last year for the repair and maintenance of sewage systems. Requests for comment from the ANC-run council have gone unanswered.

Parts of Parys in the Free State have been without water for more than a month. There is not one qualified technician in service at the municipality, said one resident who has lived in the area all his life. “When there is water, it is too dirty to drink”, he declared. Water tanks are sent to relieve the situation but sabotage has undermined this effort – taps are stolen and even the tanks are broken into and pipes plundered. “There are no skills whatsoever within the council”, declared another resident. “We must now buy water and at the same time pay our water tariff bills on time”.

WHAT IS THE CURRENT SITUATION WITH WATER AND AGRICULTURE?

There are not many constants in present-day South Africa, but provision of food 24/7 is one of them. This country has never run out of food. In a continent where food security is in many cases a hit-and-miss affair, it is odd that so many South Africans take food availability for granted. Many never even think of farms as the well-spring of what they buy in the supermarket, or the source of the take-away meat and pap lunches they eat every day. There's nary a thought that one day, this vital sustenance may not be around.

What a trump card food security really is when it is common cause that millions throughout the world are without even one meal a day! According to the UN, 785 million people lack even a basic drinking-water service, including 144 million people who are dependent on surface water. Globally, at least 2 billion people use a drinking water source contaminated with faeces. Contaminated water can transmit diseases such as diarrhoea, cholera, dysentery, typhoid and polio, while contaminated drinking water is estimated to cause 485 000 diarrhoeal deaths each year. By 2025, half of the world's population will be living in water-stressed areas. (WHO Water Fact Sheet, 2019).

South Africans must not think this shocking situation does not apply to their own country. They think these conditions only exist in countries where women walk for miles with a plastic bucket on their heads "looking for water", or in countries where pollution causes outbreaks of cholera and typhoid. In fact, this "not enough clean water" situation exists in many areas of South Africa. It is perhaps even worse here because millions live in so-called developed cities and towns where clean water is expected to emanate from a tap. And so it was pre-1994.

Most South Africans are not aware that only 12% of their country's land is arable, that there are few perennial rivers, and that only one percent of the land is irrigated. The country's average rainfall is 464 mm, but this rainfall varies from desert conditions in the west to sub-tropical areas in some eastern parts.

FARMING

Water is the most vital element in agriculture. South Africa is a very dry country, yet water seems to be the orphan priority of the governing elite. Like so many of their ilk, they appear to believe it will be available forever. Planning has never been their forte, either now or during their cultural history. Use what is here and let tomorrow look after itself. No wonder most of the African continent has remained behind the rest of the world when it comes to regular food supplies. What has happened to water in South Africa is a horror story, particularly so because when the country was handed over in 1994, water management was of the best quality in the world. At the time around 60 000 farmers were producing food for around 40 million people. Now only 35 000 farmers feed more than 60 million people, under the most onerous of circumstances.

Reports appear frequently of polluted water seeping into agricultural land. Some of these farms have been in one family for generations and they are now ruined. Complaints to those responsible for this situation go unheeded. In the Matjhabeng municipality of the Free State, taps are dry for weeks on end. A complaints petition with 900 signatures was handed to the Free State administrator's secretary. Nothing happened. More than R150m of water was lost due to leaks, while only 20% of the province's water infrastructure has been checked for wear and tear. Maintenance is an unknown word in president Ramaphosa's South Africa. The mayor of this municipality has been phoned, written to, emailed and petitioned. He answers nothing. He is busy with meetings to discuss increasing the municipal taxes. The frustrated residents are fobbed off with promises and yet another meeting "to discuss the issue".

There are hundreds of stories like this throughout the country. "For more than a month, wheelchair-bound Mampe Ramaele has been unable to leave her home in Boipatong (which lies on the edge of the Vaal River) because sewage overflowing from a nearby manhole has formed a stinking moat around her house. If she does try to leave, her wheels get stuck in the sludge". (Sunday Times 26.9.21). This is real post-colonial Africa stuff!

Earlier this year the SA Human Rights Commission reported that the Vaal Dam on which about 19 million people depend for drinking water, is polluted beyond acceptable standards and "may very well have been irreparably damaged". Rand Water says it will cost R2.2bn to fix the system. Meanwhile sewage continues to pour into the Vaal River while the ANC dithers, and the president says nothing. (Sunday Times 26.9.21)

Population growth is unchecked. SA's population figure is unknown – somewhere near 60 million is estimated. Our government tells us border control has been "tightened up" with a supposedly stricter check on the Zimbabwe/SA border. But there is a huge loophole on the SA/Mozambique border: thousands stream into South Africa every week, apparently unchecked. These people are not only Mozambicans but are from points north in Africa. Malawians and others in the region who work in SA now travel down through Mozambique, enter South Africa at the Komatipoort border, and return to Malawi and other countries the way they came.

In a pre-election walkabout to canvas votes for the ANC in the upcoming municipal election, president Ramaphosa asked citizens to "give the ANC another chance"! It's like asking the executioner to go easy on the guillotine! This brazen show of complete indifference to the destruction he and his party have wreaked on South Africa is simply an indication of a pattern for our future. More lies, more indifference, more entitlement, more clinging to power no matter what. Promises and promises, with absolutely no intention of keeping them. What a travesty we have become!