

## **Ebrahim Patel – A Caretaker of Corruption?**

**Mat Cuthbert MP – DA Shadow Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition**

Honourable House Chairperson,

There is no denying that South Africa finds itself in the most desperate economic and health circumstances since the Great Depression of the late 1920's and the onset of HIV Aids denialism in the early 2000's.

StatsSA's latest quarterly labour force survey revealed that unemployment stood at 30.1% as per the standard definition for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2020.

The South African Reserve Bank (SARB), National Treasury and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimate that we will lose anywhere between 3 to 7 Million further jobs once the full impact of the world's longest lockdown is calculated.

Moreover, the South African Consumer Confidence Index reported in early July 2020 that consumer confidence stood at -33 points – its worst in 35 years.

Let me be crystal clear, the dire economic circumstances we find ourselves are not solely a by-product of the Covid-19 pandemic but 26 years of poorly devised economic policy, cadre deployment and largescale corruption.

However, for the purposes of this debate let us zoom in closer to home.

What has transpired at the National Lotteries Commission (NLC) over the last few years could not be described as anything but criminal.

The DA has tirelessly fought over the years to have the list of NLC grant beneficiaries released.

As there is significant evidence in the public domain which has revealed how certain members of the NLC hierarchy and their associates used grant funding to their line their pockets at the expense of the poor.

Each time an investigation has been instituted, the NLC have acted as both the trial and the jury despite being the defendants in each case.

Questionably so, they have cleared themselves of any wrongdoing each and every time.

All while they have prevented the public and parliament from scrutinising their list of beneficiaries over the past 2 years as well as their most recent Covid-19 Relief Fund.

Each and every step of the way the ANC members of the portfolio committee have aided and abetted the NLC in executing their crime.

Buying into the outlandish conspiracy theories spouted by the NLC and willfully misinterpreting the NLC's legislation.

Only after the DA sought a legal opinion which found that the NLC had acted unlawfully and subsequently laid criminal charges against their Board did Parliament table their own legal opinion which arrived at a similar conclusion.

Suddenly, the ANC had their "Road to Damascus" moment and proclaimed themselves as "champions of accountability and transparency".

All the while Minister Patel has acted as caretaker instead of dealing with corruption in his own ranks.

The latest example of this being the list of Covid-19 Relief Fund beneficiaries which were to be provided to him and subsequently the committee by the 17 July 2020.

Minister, where is this list?

We've recently seen two key witnesses in the Denzhe investigation's cars being torched by criminals.

Minister, what will it take for you to act?

There is no other option but to fire the NLC board with immediate effect.

Failure to do so will only confirm that you are in fact a "Caretaker of Corruption".

I thank you.