



## A strong DA can rescue SA from NHI

Issued by John Steenhuisen MP – Leader of the Democratic Alliance

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**Note to editors:** The following speech was delivered today by the Leader of the Democratic Alliance, John Steenhuisen, during a Live Address to the Nation.

My fellow South Africans,

Last night, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced that he would sign the National Health Insurance bill into law on Wednesday, the 15th of May.

It is no exaggeration to say that this announcement has triggered widespread panic amongst the people of South Africa.

Within hours of Ramaphosa's announcement, the Democratic Alliance was inundated with queries from panicked citizens.

Some of them asked if this meant that their sick relatives would continue to receive the critical care keeping them alive, whether their medical aids have now expired, and how they are supposed to afford the astronomical tax increases that Ramaphosa plans to impose.

The scale of panic we saw in response to this announcement, is without precedent.

Ordinarily, it would be difficult to understand how a President could wilfully plunge a country into such a crisis.

However, it is obvious for all to see why Ramaphosa has decided to do this to us.

He has made this move out of sheer political desperation.

After months of ignoring the ongoing implosion of ANC support, the party has finally realised that its 50% majority will become a thing of the past at the election on the 29th of May.

Out of desperation, it cast around for any populist lever it could pull in the hopes of magically boosting its terminal fortunes.

Unfortunately for the people of South Africa, Ramaphosa chose the NHI as the ANC's last stand before it finally loses power in less than three weeks.

It is difficult to think of a more cynical and destructive move.

It is a dishonour to the office of President that Ramaphosa could sink this low.

What he has done by making this announcement, is to play with the lives of the South African people for imaginary political gain.

By making this announcement, Ramaphosa has made a fatal miscalculation.

His transparent desperation to find something – anything – he can spin as a populist “solution” to the problems created by 30 years of ANC misrule, now confirms for all to see how scared the ANC is of the approaching election.

The people of South Africa are not so easily fooled.

For months, Ramaphosa has sought to downplay the approaching reality of the ANC becoming a minority party.



organisation to lose its majority.

But Ramaphosa's desperate political ploy is also a miscalculation for another reason.

By signing this bill into law on Wednesday, the ANC will be signing the death warrant of healthcare in South Africa.

The visceral and immediate rejection of Ramaphosa's announcement by the South African people shows that they understand this for what it is.

A cheap election ploy where the ANC is using the lives of the people as political props.

They will not stand for it.

And neither will the Democratic Alliance.

On this fight – the literal fight for the lives of South Africans and for the future of this country – the people stand with the DA against the ANC.

Fortunately, the DA has been preparing for this moment for many months.

We always understood that the NHI was destined to be used as a cheap stunt by an increasingly-desperate and populist ANC.

Having the foresight to understand that the ANC is so depraved that it would not hesitate to put peoples' lives at risk as an election gimmick, has enabled the DA to quietly prepare for this moment in the background.

That is why I am now in a position to make the following announcement.

The Democratic Alliance will, upon its signing into law by Ramaphosa, challenge the ANC's NHI all the way to the Constitutional Court.

Our legal team was briefed months ago already and will file our legal challenge against this devastating legislation without delay.

We have built up reams of correspondence, including with Ramaphosa himself, that we will enter into evidence to show that the process which led to the adoption of this bill by Parliament disregarded public input, and that the bill itself is flagrantly unconstitutional.

But we will not stop there.

I furthermore pledge today before the nation that if this country elects the DA into national government on the 29th of May, we will immediately repeal the NHI bill and prevent it from destroying this country.

For this is no ordinary piece of legislation.

It is more comprehensive in scope, more corrupt in intent, and more deadly in impact, than BEE, load shedding, cadre deployment, land expropriation and nationalisation put together.

To implement, the NHI would cost well in excess of R200 billion per year – with some estimates as high as R1 trillion.

To give you an idea of how much extra tax this is, it would be equivalent of increasing VAT from 14% to 21.5%, increasing personal income tax by 31%, imposing an additional payroll tax of R1 500 per month on every working person – or a combination of all of the above.

It is perhaps understandable that a BEE billionaire would have no appreciation for the enormous hardships South Africans endure on a daily basis.

Our country is home to 30 million people trapped in desperate poverty.

Millions of children go to bed hungry every night.

And the minority of people who are lucky enough to be employed, struggle to put food on the table amidst the greatest cost-of-living crisis in a generation.

It is this country – the real South Africa – that the ANC now wants to tax to death.

But the catastrophe that is the NHI, does not end there.



NHI would empower the Minister of Health to be directly involved in the day-to-day management of the biggest pile of taxpayer money that has ever been accumulated in South Africa.

The looting that will take place is easy to imagine, yet too ghastly to contemplate.

Just like ANC cadres looted Eskom to the point of collapsing our electricity supply.

Just like they looted our water infrastructure to the point of our taps running dry.

So too will they loot this NHI fund while people die.

This is not theoretical.

The very Health Minister appointed by Cyril Ramaphosa when he was elected President, Zweli Mkhize, looted public funds through the Digital Vibes scandal.

Now imagine what would happen if ANC cadres like Mkhize had unfettered access to hundreds of billions of Rands meant for healthcare.

The doctors and nurses that should be the pride of our nation, will flee as the sector collapses and their job prospects evaporate.

Once you picture the looting spree that will follow, you will understand that this is the real reason the ANC created the NHI.

To loot the little that is left to loot from the people.

The DA is deeply committed to realising the vision of a dignified life for all South Africans.

This includes fulfilling the right to decent healthcare for all as outlined in our Constitution.

It is out of this profound commitment, that the DA has already built a world-class public healthcare system in the Western Cape.

The fact that public hospitals and clinics in the Western Cape already deliver high-quality taxpayer funded services to impoverished communities, disproves the fig leaf created by the ANC to justify its plans to loot through the NHI.

If the ANC wants to know how to deliver dignified healthcare that saves the lives of our most vulnerable citizens, they only need to visit one of the public hospitals run by the DA-led Western Cape.

We don't need an Eskom for healthcare in this country.

What we need is a new government that doesn't steal the money meant for healthcare.

That is why we need the DA in government.

Not only will we bring our demonstrated expertise in running a world-class public health system in the Western Cape to bear.

We will also partner with the private sector to leverage the expertise of our country's world-class doctors and nurses to fix the public health sector that the ANC has broken.

We will root out corruption and cadre deployment, improve service delivery, and protect existing zero-fee care at public facilities, just like we are already doing in the Western Cape.

Moreover, the DA's manifesto pledges to introduce a social reinsurance system that will lower the costs of medical aid while enhancing benefits, and enable cross-subsidisation to fund insurance for poor citizens.

This will dramatically expand access to high quality insurance for all – leveraging the private health sector, instead of destroying it like the ANC is trying to do.

The ANC's NHI will achieve none of these things for the 30 million South Africans living in poverty, because it was not designed to serve the poor.

Like everything else the ANC has done for the past three decades, it was designed only to enrich the looters who will be in control of the biggest pot of taxpayer money our country has ever seen.

My fellow South Africans,



It presents a threat to the health and lives of every single South African.

And it cynically exploits the ANC's failure over the past 30 years to build a quality public healthcare system, like the DA has done in the Western Cape.

Now is the time for us to unite to protect our beloved country before it is too late.

I therefore call upon all sectors of society to join the DA in our legal challenge against the NHI.

I call upon Cosatu to prioritise the lives and health of civil servants, teachers, police officers and other workers over their political allegiance to the ANC, by joining the DA in this fight.

I call upon our world-class doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other medical professionals who make us proud to be South African, to join the DA's fight to save our healthcare system.

I call upon the people of South Africa to rise up as one against the ANC's plan to bankrupt us all, and to make it impossible for the poorest among us to ever receive quality medical care.

All of this must culminate in the defeat of the ANC at the ballot box on the 29th of May, and its replacement by a new government, anchored by the demonstrated track record of good governance of the Democratic Alliance.

The ANC has now shown us all how cheap our lives are to them.

They have confirmed that they are prepared to set South Africa on fire just to try and cling to power.

In his desperation for a populist stunt to aid the ANC's failing fortunes, Ramaphosa has confirmed that there is now only one way left to prevent the NHI from taking the life of our country.

The only way to avert this Doomsday, is for millions of voters to unite as one on the 29th of May, and vote for the DA.

Because a strong DA is our last chance to rescue South Africa.

Thank you.

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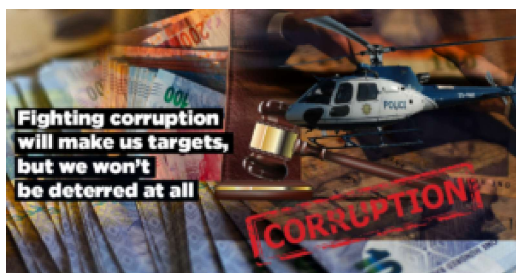
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