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To: All Media Houses / Editors

COPE Calls for Immediate Removal of Gauteng Premier Lesufi Following Public Protector's Damning Report

For Immediate Release

The Congress of the People (COPE) calls for the immediate removal of Gauteng Premier Panyaza Lesufi following the damning findings of the Public Protector's report into the mismanagement and unlawful deployment of the so-called Crime Prevention Wardens, AmaPanyaza.

According to the report, the Gauteng Department of Community Safety unlawfully spent R450 million on the recruitment, training, and equipping of approximately 6,000 wardens — all without the necessary legal authorisation. The funds were used for accommodation, transport, uniforms, and even the purchase of nearly 200 luxury vehicles.

The Public Protector found that the appointment and deployment of these wardens were both irregular and unlawful. Despite this, Premier Lesufi has continued to defend the programme, only recently announcing its disbandment amid growing controversy over the wardens' legal status.

This represents a gross misuse of public funds and a failure of leadership at the highest level. COPE demands that Premier Lesufi and his advisors on this project take full responsibility for this wasteful expenditure and step down immediately. His actions have betrayed the trust of Gauteng residents and jeopardised the livelihoods of the 6,000 wardens affected by his incompetence.

COPE further calls on the Gauteng Provincial Government to absorb and properly deploy these wardens within legitimate public safety structures or other government institutions — to safeguard their livelihoods and ensure their skills are put to lawful, productive use.

"Premier Lesufi must fall on his sword. He has disrespected the people of Gauteng by wasting R450 million on an unlawful project. He should personally repay this money to demonstrate accountability and integrity,"
Said COPE Acting General Secretary, Erick Mohlapamaswi

COPE also calls on the provincial government to immediately halt all further spending on the AmaPanyaza project and to initiate a full forensic audit to identify everyone involved in this gross mismanagement of public resources.

The people of Gauteng deserve honesty, transparency, and effective leadership — not unlawful political experiments disguised as crime-fighting initiatives.

COPE fully supports the findings of the Public Protector and will continue to hold those in power accountable for their actions.

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