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To all media houses

## **COPE CALLS ON CITIZENS TO PARTICIPATE IN ANNUAL CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW PROCESS**

For Immediate Release

The Congress of the People (COPE) is urging all South Africans to take an active role in defending and strengthening constitutional democracy by participating in the 2025 Annual Constitutional Review Process, especially following the recent judgment by the Western Cape High Court, which declared several provisions of the Refugees Act to be unconstitutional and invalid.

The party has noted the court declaration with disappointment and believes the ruling risks weakening South Africa's ability to regulate asylum claims and maintain the integrity of its borders.

The Joint Constitutional Review Committee, comprising Members of Parliament from both the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces, conducts an annual review of the Constitution to ensure that it remains relevant, responsive and reflective of the will of the people.

COPE believes that the strength of South Africa's democracy lies in the active participation of its citizens.

"While we fully support human rights and the protection of genuine asylum seekers, we are concerned that this ruling opens the door to the exploitation of our asylum system," said COPE's Acting General Secretary Erick Mohlapamaswi:

"South Africa must balance compassion with the need for a rules-based immigration system that protects the country's sovereignty, stability and resources.

### **COPE, therefore, encourages citizens to:**

- Submit proposals to amend the Constitution to better define and regulate asylum procedures
- Promote legal clarity and consistency between legislation and constitutional protections
- Engage in democratic processes to ensure the Constitution reflects the will of the people while maintaining legal order and fairness

“This is your Constitution. If you believe it needs to be amended to address gaps in immigration, asylum, or other critical areas, then this is your chance to act,” added Mohlapamaswi:

“The Constitution is not a static document. It is a living instrument meant to serve the evolving needs of the people. We encourage every South African to seize this opportunity to contribute constructively to its development.”

As a party rooted in constitutionalism and public accountability, COPE remains committed to defending the Constitution. We believe that inclusive public participation is essential for protecting the rights, freedoms and values enshrined in our supreme law.

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