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To All Media Houses / Editors

COPE CONDEMNS POLICE HEAVY-HANDEDNESS IN JOBURG WATER PROTESTS

The Congress of the People (COPE) strongly condemns the outrageous and heavy-handed actions of the police in Johannesburg, where rubber bullets were fired at residents and journalists protesting the lack of clean and reliable water in Westbury and Coronationville. This deplorable incident, reported on September 11, 2025, is a stark violation of the constitutional rights of South Africans, who are guaranteed access to water under Section 27 of our Constitution.

The use of force to suppress peaceful demands for basic services is an affront to democracy and human dignity. We question why police actions are being deployed to prevent citizens from exercising their legitimate right to demand accountability for this week-long water crisis, a failure rooted in the ANC-led city government's gross incompetence.

Failed leadership, exemplified by figures like Mayor Dada Morero, lies at the core of this problem. Rather than addressing the systemic neglect and corruption that have crippled water infrastructure, issues well-documented by the Water Research Commission (2023), these failed leaders resort to police violence to shield themselves from the consequences of their mismanagement.

The people are not criminals; they are merely demanding the service delivery they deserve. This disturbing scene echoes the brutal killing of Andries Tatane in 2011, murdered by police during a water protest in Ficksburg, a tragedy that exposed the ANC's disregard for its citizens.

COPE stands resolutely with the affected communities, supporting their courageous action to hold the government accountable. We call for the local government elections to be brought forward, providing an urgent opportunity to remove corrupt ANC mayors like Morero and their failed party from power.

Only through renewed leadership committed to service delivery can we restore the rights and dignity of our people. COPE will continue to fight alongside the community for justice and change.

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