

#PatrickMustFall: Empty Promises – Empty Pots

On Monday 8 August 2022, over 50 working-class women from across the Cape Flats will picket at Constantia Circle, a site of privilege and food security, against the invisible violences of hunger, poverty, unemployment and neglect from government and big business who export and waste tons while our communities go hungry.

We are a collective of working-class women from across the Western Cape, Cape Flats – represented by Security & Safety Patrol Delft; Housing Assembly; Bonteheuwel Development Forum; Hope for the Future and the Food Sovereignty Campaign. We as a collective gather twice a month to discuss and work through issues that face us as women, and the communities we serve.

Together we have come to realise that the suffering we face as individuals, is shared among all us as women and our communities. The suffering from gender-based violence, unemployment, hunger, increased cost of living, exposure to gangs and drug abuse among our children, forced removals and evictions and the reality that no one will assist us, so we must help ourselves. By sharing in these daily dealings, we have built solidarity with each other and begun to share in our collective resources and knowledge.

One of the key issues raised in each of our gatherings has been the increasing reality of food insecurity. Our homes and communities are hungry and are finding it more and more difficult to put food on the table.

“After repeatedly being unable to feed my kids after school, I once resorted to keeping a pot of boiling water on the stove to let them think food was going to be ready soon. Each time they asked about the food that day I would tell them that the food was not ready yet, and filled more water into the pot so it would look like something is cooking. They eventually fell asleep at night hungry, waiting for the food I could not provide for them,” – Xoliswa Ngqola, Housing Assembly

According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification analysis report, 11.8 million people in South Africa are at crisis level of hunger.

We know first hands that people who experience long periods of hunger are more likely to get sick and struggle to survive as our body begins using muscle and organs to sustain itself. And so the food crisis is causing a health crisis.

“My body got very weak during covid after I lost my job. I now need to take daily chronic medication for my illness, but I am also unable to many times there is no food to eat, never mind it being nutritious,” – Maureen Philander, Security & Safety Patrol Delft

Food insecurity affected so many people as unemployment and shorter-working hours have meant we cannot afford what little was possible before. We as women face the reality that it is not just our immediate households we feed, but extended family too.

Inequalities and poverty are structural violences that we face on top of the physical violence. We are now at the point where we realise government are not coming to help us – food parcels never reach those who they are intended for and we are tired of empty promises. We have started our own food security measures of successful food gardens and collective feeding schemes even from the little we have.

#PatrickMustFall

At the heart of all these issues is Patrick.

Patrick is the reason behind gender-based violence. Patrick exploits working class women. Patrick makes it so that we are unemployed. Patrick refuses to give us land to grow our own food. Patrick harms the girl child. Patrick benefits from race and gender inequality. Patrick doesn't care that with no food we cannot eat, and if we cannot eat our families and communities get sick.

Patrick is the name our group has organically come to use to refer to the patriarchy – the embodiment all the violences and injustices we face as women, that cannot be separated from capitalism and the exploitation of the working class. Patrick and all he represents, is the enemy of women.

Our Picket

Our picket on 8 August 2022 at 7am at Constantia Circle (Cnr of Ladies Mile and Spaanschemat River Road) draws focus to the violence of food injustice in our communities and how it impacts women in particular. At this picket we raise our voices to the struggles we face and the need for equality, justice and access to dignity. Food is increasingly expensive; without jobs we cannot access nutritious food; without food we cannot be healthy; without health we cannot survive. On top of the daily physical attacks we face from Patrick, Patrick also ensures we are not able to eat or feed our families.

Our Demands

- Land and resources be made freely available in communities so that communities may start their own food gardens to put power back in community hands and ease the food crisis
- Put people before profits. End policies that prioritise the exporting of nutritious foods, while degrading and unhealthy foods are the only affordable options for working class communities
- Employment for young and middle-aged women so we are able to feed our families and communities
- Department of Education to bring back agricultural studies into the formal curriculum so our children and communities can grow their own nutritious food

Contact Details for comment:

Salaama Abrahams – 073 5547 444

Kashiefa Achmat – 073 182 7862
Charmaine Jacobs – 068 409 4519