



## Press Statement 13 July 2022

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### **Government must act with urgency in dealing with electricity crisis**

The Defend Our Democracy Campaign and a number of civil society organisations met with the Minister of Public Enterprises Pravin Gordhan on Tuesday to engage on the country's electricity crisis.

Organisations present raised the impact of the electricity crisis on the lived experiences of people, the economy, and in turn on the stability of our democracy.

The meeting called for the electricity *crisis* to be treated as such by the state and reiterated the views of the National Planning Commission that an energy emergency be declared.

Organisations called for an urgent, integrated, well synchronised and credible plan of action by government to address the problems in the short to medium term. This plan should have clear deliverables, timeframes and indicate who would be accountable for its implementation and success or failure, and how this accountability will be exercised.

The meeting indicated that 'radical transparency' was required to deepen public trust, with daily communication by President Cyril Ramaphosa and the cabinet on the crisis, and the implementation of the action plan to address it.

It called for a more coordinated approach between different state institutions and departments to remove the red tape and immediately allow for the implementation of projects in the pipeline – renewable, as well as those by independent power producers – to bring more capacity to the grid. The meeting noted reports of greater inter-governmental cooperation and collaboration on the crisis and hopes that this will yield the results that society needs and expects.

It however, cautioned against using the crisis to push through unaffordable, poorly conceptualised, environmentally destructive and corrupt deals.



Organisations expressed concern about acts of sabotage at power stations indicating that government and law enforcement agencies must act with swiftness against the perpetrators.

Similarly, those guilty of corruption and capture must be charged and arrested, but also pursued through other means such as individuals being declared delinquent, and businesses being blacklisted. In this regard, the Defend our Democracy campaign welcomes news of recent arrests relating to alleged corruption at Eskom.

Organisations also called on communities to play a role in building energy security by protecting local electricity infrastructure, and paying for services.

Minister Gordhan indicated that the President will be making announcements in relation to the country's energy crisis.

The campaign calls on the President to give the country assurance that government, coordinating with Eskom management, has practical and workable plans put in place urgently to resolve the electricity crisis.

This is an opportunity to make the undertaking of ending loadshedding a national mission for all in society.

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**Issued by the Defend our Democracy Campaign**

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