



# AZAPO

AZANIAN PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION

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**TO: ALL MEDIA FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FROM: AZAPO PRESIDENT: NELVIS QEKEMA**

**DATE: DECEMBER 24, 2021**

**SUBJECT: AZAPO FESTIVE SEASON MESSAGE**

Greetings Azanians

As we are winding down the year for the annual break, it is a good time to reflect and be grateful that we can travel and be with our loved ones under these difficult times.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the normal way of life as we knew it to be, something that we must be accustomed to as the "new normal". That is a life of masks, sanitising and social distance.

As things stand, many of our families have lost their loved ones due to the pandemic. Instead of pausing to indulge in the festive mood, others will still be burying the casualties of the pandemic or giving care to the hospitalised ones.

The result has been the worsening of the already bad economic instability of the country. Black people have come worse off. They have lost their jobs and income to take care of their struggling families in a manner that has worsened their state of poverty.

For a country battling unemployment and poverty, COVID-19 has surely added to our sorrows as Black people, more so when we have always been at the receiving end of the poverty pandemic. It should therefore come as no surprise that this season is fraught with emotion, loss, and pain.

As we know, this is usually the time when families come together and try to forget their hardships by joining the festivities of the season.

Though there is no tangible political reason why we should be happy, we cannot be forever miserable. We need to take a break and indulge in our self-created goodwill and festive environment.

AZAPO observes with concern that the festive period is usually the time when the people take a plunge into a spending-spree of their hard-earned savings. We encourage responsible spending, especially from Black businesses in the mode of "*Buy Black*" or "*Stretch the Rand*".

With that said, AZAPO cautions the Black community against the abuse of alcohol and drugs, as

these substances have a debilitating impact on our dignity and capacity to fight as Black People.

Our roads are usually flooded with inter-provincial travellers who hope to spend the festive season with their families. For unfortunate reasons, many do not make it home alive. As we travel to our various destinations, may we ensure our own safety and that of other road users. Let us ensure that our vehicles are road worthy, and that we do not drink and drive. We urge the road users to be responsible and drive according to the rules of the road. Let us rest when the need arises. One death is one too many.

Of note is that this season has seen an increase in the number of initiates. This has been occasioned by the limitations of COVID-19 regulations, which either suspended or restricted the practice of *ulwaluko/koma* in the past two years. This is no doubt an important cultural practice in the lives of Black people. With the care that goes with this tradition, we should not have to experience the death of young initiates. Yet young lives are needlessly lost to neglect and recklessness by the supposed caregivers. AZAPO conveys its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families.

Interestingly, AZAPO is fresh from its 25th National Congress, which saw the election of a new and vibrant leadership that is determined to positively contribute to society. This leadership is determined to **#ReLioniseAZAPO** and reinvigorate it in such a way that it can adequately respond to the challenges that afflict Black people's daily lives. Given the corruption and leadership decay in the country, AZAPO is particularly excited by the capable leaders who have availed themselves to serve the people and continue the fight for land repossession and restoration of the dignity of Black people.

We are grateful to the membership and supporters of this organisation for maintaining an unwavering confidence in AZAPO. We are also encouraged by the groundswell of support and joining by new members. This certainly gives hope to the future of our country.

May we use this time as an opportunity to relax with our families and friends and appreciate the gift of life. Let us celebrate the resilience that has seen us through these trying times with fortitude. Let us use this time to reflect on ways in which we can make the coming year better.

AZAPO therefore takes this opportunity to wish all Azanians peace, good health, and joy during this festive period.

Happy Holidays!

**AZAPO PRESIDENT NELVIS QEKEMA**

Ends.

Issued by AZAPO Department of Publicity and Information (DPI)

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