



AZAPO

AZANIAN PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION

TO: ALL MEDIA HOUSES FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FROM: AZAPO SECRETARY FOR PUBLICITY & INFORMATION

DATE: January 25, 2024

SUBJECT: AZAPO ON WESBANK ALLEGATIONS

AZAPO feels vindicated that its general suspicion about the treatment of Black people in the so-called independent South Africa has not really changed significantly for the better.

The cost of living continues to rise unabated and without so much of a care from the government. Interest rates are biting high, fuel costs are gridding at our ability to earn decent livelihoods; health and education are equally becoming barriers to economic participation.

AZAPO declares that the allegations levelled against Wesbank are a testimony to the standing profound scepticism that the political settlement of 1994 was the short end of the stick for Black people, and states that it is time they take a firm stand about their own future and lives.

Wesbank stands accused of mistreating its Black clients by over-charging them on interest and fees paid for loans or services offered by the bank. The allegations are not new; but what remains a question, is why no action is taken against such malpractices. These practices are systemic within the banking sector.

Over the years, the banks and the financial sector as a whole, has shown itself to be above the law. The list of these atrocities which must be dealt with in a more effective manner, is forever growing:

- **Racial profiling of Blacks,**
- **Acting with impunity to close accounts of clients without explanation,**
- **Discrimination against Black owned small and medium enterprises (SMEs);**
- **Aversion to lend to Black owned companies, whilst a fund of R200 billion was set aside by government for their benefit,**
- **Attempts to do away with the BEE scoring for banks, and**
- **Rand manipulation by 28 banks, and**
- **Historically, the rescue of Bankorp for R2billion, whilst VBS was allowed to go under.**

The conduct of banks is quite clear that they are pro-growth and development of the economy of the country. All they want are super-profits: rent-seeking mentality.

The reactions in South Africa and specifically by Black people have been predictable – they are livid, as expected, at this crass abuse.

There have been calls for the South African Human Rights Commission to investigate the matter, and some of the political parties are calling for heads to roll at Wesbank.

It is apparent that this is the odd rogueness of the finance and insurance managers, who largely are responsible for final decisions on approval of loan financing; whilst it is the total systematic principle of exclusion.

Whilst the standard of living of ordinary South Africans has reached a point of unbearable pressure, little or nothing is forthcoming from the side of government to really deal with this crisis in a much

more sustainable way.

AZAPO sadly observes that this fundamentally is the clear case that Black people of this country continue to carry on their back the heavy load of subsidizing the lives of their white counterparts.

This is a subtle form of expropriation without compensation exercised by the hegemonic establishment of the banking sector.

It is a historical anomaly that has stubbornly refused to go, in part because of a wayward government. There is sheer lack of aptitude about the necessary policies to transform the country's economic participation and activity.

The only effective response is when our collective client-ship is converted into a resolute political fist.

There is a great need for a boycott of Wesbank until those allegations are cleared, **AZAPO** calls for citizens to rise and fight against these ills.

Equally, there is a burning urgency to establish national and regional commercial banks that will specialize in catering for specific banking services by our people.

AZAPO is making a clarion call for the investigation of abuses of the approval system at Wesbank. We are also calling for a broader investigation into the banking and financial sector on how its monopolistic, dominating and obsolete state is impeding the prosperity of Black people.

AZAPO, notes with great concern that independence and freedom without meaningful re-patterning of the economic and financial space, give vent to the illusion of transformation.

Tackling ownership in a serious manner is not only urgent, it is the real test for a government that cares deeply for its people, in particular the downtrodden Blacks.

AZAPO is calling for a strong and decisive action from the ANC led government and not the slap-in-the-wrist that is often meted out.

The time for action to bring out the future we desire and the status quo that epitomizes deceptive serfdom is **NOW**.

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