



Archdiocese of Cape Town



STATEMENT ON THE ONGOING VIOLENCE ASSOCIATED WITH THE TAXI STRIKE

The violence and chaos that has been associated with taxi strike in Cape Town recently, has caused untold hardship and destabilisation for many communities across the city and its environs.

Undoubtedly, it is the right of all organisations to embark on strikes and protest actions in appropriate circumstances. What has been so disconcerting has been the violence, intimidation and destruction that has been associated with the present taxi strike. We deeply regret the fact that people, especially the most vulnerable, were unable to get to work, school or pursue their livelihoods. We are concerned that commuters were prevented from using alternate transport and that, reportedly, in some situations children were involved in acts of violence. Reports indicate that the delivery of basic foods, such as bread, has been disrupted in some places causing greater suffering for those already living in poverty.

It is unacceptable that basic rights of many are curtailed or even decimated by those exercising their rights. This is fundamentally reprehensible. Public action should enhance a human rights culture not undermine it. Martin Luther King reminded us that 'the reason we do not employ violence is because our end is a community at peace with itself.' We urge those engaged in these actions to make use of the many other processes that exist to resolve disputes.

Respect for the rule of law always calls us to responsible action to build the common good and ensure justice for all. We urge all those who are abusing the taxi strikes to engage in dangerous, anti-democratic activity to desist from such activity immediately and engage in constructive and legal action. As people of faith we cannot stand by while so many suffer.

We also appeal to those who wish to use such sensitive moments for narrow political gain, and to urge all stakeholders to desist from inflammatory and divisive statements. As the delicate negotiations unfold we accompany those engaged in resolving the situation, with our prayers and appeal to them to avoid power-broking and to seek resolutions for the greater benefit of the community.

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