**Inyanda Land Rights Movement Media Statement
Water Rights Campaign March**
**28 March 2022**

*South Africa is facing an escalating national water crisis affecting almost all provinces, particularly the rural areas. The collapse of local government and service delivery failures means that the most fundamental Human Right, the right to water, is being violated across the country.*

The Inyanda Land Rights Movement will **lead a march to the Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) offices in Bisho, Eastern Cape, on 28 March 2022.** This march will launch a campaign to respond to the poor provision of water, unsafe drinking water, lack of a water supply for small scale farmers and deteriorating water infrastructure in the province.

Poor water resource management and the lack of maintenance of the aging water infrastructure leaves more and more communities without access to water, let alone clean water.  Rural communities bear the brunt of water outages, unsafe drinking water, no piped tap water and a lack of contingency measures to areas without a permanent water supply. Water resource and infrastructure mismanagement in municipalities is further plagued by systemic corruption, incompetence and wasteful expenditure. Government’s austerity measures has left the water sector with no hope of resolving this crisis any time soon.

There is also disturbing racial disparities in the distribution and supply of clean drinking water and agricultural water. Rural black households and small scale farmers face dire water shortages and do not benefit from a more equitable distribution of water for household and farming purposes. Some commercial farmers are hoarding agricultural water supplies, jeopardising the livelihoods, food sovereignty and food production of small scale farmers. The commodification of water by the private sector, which treats water as a product for profit instead of a natural resource meant to be shared, is compounding this crisis. As a result, the livelihoods of small scale farmers have become almost impossible and the already fragile food security of rural communities is further destabilized.

The Buffalo City Metro and Makana Local municipalities are both examples of the gross failures of the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs as well as Department of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation. The recent contamination of drinking water in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality left countless residents ill after drinking the water.

The Inyanda National Land Movement is calling for government to urgently develop and swiftly implement plans to drastically improve water supply, water resource management, services and infrastructure. The Inyanda National Land Movement demands that:

* The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs adhere to their mandate which is primarily derived from Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9 as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

* The Department of  Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation performs its duties and mandate as per the prescript of Chapter 3 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa:

* Provision of Water Services for drinking and production without racial and class disparities as water is a basic need and a right, not a commodity

* Regular maintenance and rehabilitation of water infrastructural development

* Ensures that local municipalities has the capacity to deliver services and perform their activities

* The Inyanda National Land Movement is against government’s Austerity Budget which cuts social expenditure and negatively affects the delivery of basic needs like access to clean water and commonage land for improved livelihoods of the poor

* The  Government of the ANC must engage with alternative models to conserve water including appropriate water harvesting methods

* Review the present structural arrangements of the Water Boards and various water committees which undermines public participation and promotes the wealthy and private sector’s access to these resources.

**Inyanda National Land Movement protest march details:**

**10h00:**Activists gather at the Bisho Massacre Memorial

**12h00:**Handover of demands to MEC of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), Mr Xolile Nqata, COGTA Offices, Bisho

**Issued by the Inyanda National Land Movement**

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