

<https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article9015>



South Africa

# South African Union Responds to White House Debacle

- IV Online magazine - 2025 - IVP604 - May 2025 -

Publication date: Wednesday 28 May 2025

---

Copyright © International Viewpoint - online socialist magazine - All rights  
reserved

---

**The General Industries Workers Union of South Africa (GIWUSA), a leftwing voice in the South African labor movement, posted the statement below following the May 21 White House meeting of Donald Trump and president Cyril Ramaphosa. Trump's sickening racism was on full display as he pressed the mythology of the "white genocide" of Afrikaner farmers. On this occasion Trump even exceeded his everyday spectacle, presumably prompted by Elon Musk who's seeking to extort favorable concessions for his Starlink operation in South Africa.**

**At the same time, we think that [international] readers will find the response of South African labor militants to be a revealing look into the sharp class and political divisions in today's South Africa and the crisis of the African National Congress government.**

THE [GENERAL INDUSTRIES Workers Union of South Africa](#) (GIWUSA) denounces in the strongest terms President Cyril Ramaphosa's shameful pilgrimage to Washington to beg favors from the world's leading racist imperialist, Donald Trump. This spectacle represents one of clearest expressions of the African National Congress leader's betrayal of the national liberation struggle, reminding us of Marikana when he emailed in a request for what became a massacre, on behalf of the same London mining house that the British (Tory) prime minister once called 'the unacceptable face of capitalism.' The White House lunch and no-doubt humiliating press conference afterwards will also confirm South Africa's status as a neocolonial vassal state of Western Imperialism, willing to bend on a knee at the slightest threat, with Ramaphosa attempting to compete with the corrupt Arab sheiks who last week gave Trump vast personal and corporate gifts.

## Washington Pilgrimage

Yesterday, President Cyril Ramaphosa arrived in Washington DC, cap in hand, to beg for the favor of Donald Trump—a racist demagogue who has spent months vilifying South Africa as a 'genocidal' state while openly advancing white-supremacist narratives, opposed to long-overdue land reform and affirmative action in big business. Today's meeting is not diplomacy as the media and its commentators want to believe; it is the culmination of 31 years of ANC capitulation to imperialism, now laid bare as Ramaphosa grovels before a man who brands the country's land reform as 'racist,' and who insults the sovereignty of the country, paid for with the blood of the black working class and martyrs of the national liberation struggles against the Apartheid regime and Colonialism. He is also expected to 'drop the megaphone' on the other most vital liberation struggle: Palestinians against Israel, at a time Trump talks of removing a million Gazans and forcibly relocating them to Libya.

These are the same masses he betrayed, and the same imperialist interests he served at the CODESA deal-making that left intact the structures of apartheid-capitalism and in countless business deals Ramaphosa made afterwards (with the likes of Glencore, McDonalds, CocaCola, MTN, Standard Bank and others), right up to the illegal stuffing of his Phala Phala couches with undeclared US dollars provided by a Sudanese tycoon in 2020.

All these events are not isolated but constitute one unbroken chain of political treachery and capitulations, including Trump-scale corporate blunders that – like the U.S. President's former Atlantic City casinos – also left two of Ramaphosa's firms (Molope Group and JCI) close to bankruptcy in 1998. Hence the shift in his debt+share strategy, to a form of shake-down Black Empowerment entailing enforced partnerships with white capital: exactly what Elon Musk objects to and Ramaphosa appears to have succumbed to, with talk of a work-around so Musk violates SA's

corporate affirmative action provisions.

The common denominator of these political actions is the underlying political economy of the state and national power structure itself. There are names and addresses associated with that power structure – such as Johan Rupert who helped arrange the White House visit – along with Trump's white golfing heroes: Ernie Els, Retief Goosen and Gary Player. The latter is one of Trump's main recreational allies, and who can forget his role as apartheid's leading sports ambassador. For Ramaphosa and spokesperson Vincent Magwenya to continue – again and again and again – to promote the idea that Ramaphosa and Trump will bond over 18 holes on a well-watered course while vast parts of the city of Johannesburg – especially black townships but now also the formerly-white suburbs – go without drinking water, is symbolic of the times and crimes we face.

Under bourgeois democracy, the capitalist class and imperialism have only a degree of influence – not 100% determination – over who becomes government, although in South Africa they made sure by the late 1980s that ANC elites – starting with Ramaphosa – rapidly shifted from the 1955 Freedom Charter mandate and then the 1994 Reconstruction and Development Programme, to the 1996 neoliberal GEAR regime. The overall choice of government rests with the electorate that is overwhelmingly working class. The powers of imperialism and the local capitalist class – which are intertwined and overlap greatly under neocolonialism – lie in their monopoly over the economy and control over levers of the financial system and trade.

As the recent report of Just Share on manipulation of climate policy shows, capitalists rely upon this economic power to circumvent democratic processes and impose their interests and choices over state policy. Trump is only unique in that he is a maverick, who cares less about the public perceptions and feelings of his enemies (including some powerful elites) and of the working-class people in his own country especially if they are not in his white-male MAGA Make America Great Again camp. He cares nothing about the oppressed people across the world. Tailoring state policy to satisfy leading capitalists' domestic and foreign interests, and advance imperialism is nothing new. The only thing new is the openness and unflinching public blackmail with which Trump is doing it, openly advertising his corrupt personal tendencies.

Trump's Racist Fabrications and Imperialist Bullying

Trump has weaponised lies about 'white genocide' to justify cutting aid – with Elon Musk's DOGE team knocking out 18% of South Africa's AIDS programme as well as health research plus the \$1 billion Just Energy Transition Partnership loan – and expelling the country's ambassador and military attached. He went from causing tragedies to farce by last week resettling 59 Afrikaners as 'refugees'—a grotesque spectacle that insults the millions of Black South Africans who endured real oppression and bloody massacres under apartheid and who in many ways continue to bear these conditions over 30 years into the era of democracy. One just has to look at all instances of police and security violence directed by the state and corporate power and one will find that victims are invariably black.

The Trump administration demands that South Africa exempt U.S. corporations from Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) laws, effectively reinstating apartheid-era economic apartheid. We are certainly not supporters of this kind of assimilation, in which BEE adds a layer of black-diamond brutality to South African capitalism. But it is also clear that the net result of any other policy pursued on the basis of capitalism will be an exclusive ownership of the economy by the white elite and foreign owned Multinational Corporations, as was the case during the 1998 crash of first-generation black capitalism, when the JSE's black-owned firms crashed 50% in value and all the models allowing repayment of debt through sale of shares suddenly failed. Neither that generation nor the current generation of BEE deals makes any sense. But to end all efforts at integration of the C Suite, as Trump insists, is not negotiation; it is colonial imposition.

## Ramaphosa's ANC: A Willing Partner in

# Subjugation

The ANC's betrayal did not start today. Since coming to power in 1994, ANC state elites preserved white monopoly capital while masking its surrender with empty slogans. Ramaphosa, a billionaire who crushed Marikana's workers, now begs Trump to spare South Africa from tariffs—proof that the ANC's 'negotiated settlement' was a pact with monopoly capital and imperialism, not a break from it. If he succeeds in restoring AGOA-style 0% tariffs (which we do not anticipate), the main beneficiaries are Mercedes, BWM and other foreign car companies, BHP Billiton's South32 aluminium smelter, Luxembourg-based ArcelorMittal's steel foundries, the (New York Stock Exchange-listed) Sasol filthy petrochemical plants and other leading foreign capitalists.

The GNU coalition with the DA has only accelerated this surrender, as Ramaphosa's delegation includes ministers ready to barter away not only workers' rights, but broader environmental and social-investment regulations protecting even the most elementary rights of communities against mining monopolies, for Wall Street's approval.

On the latter points, the DA's position is on public record and the ongoing court case against Employment Equity is only the latest tactic in their 30-years long battle. On attacks against workers and community rights, the ANC and DA are completely aligned as evident on the anti-labour laws amendments and the publication of MPRDA amendments bill few days ago. These are calculated to make it easy to fire workers and obtain environmental authorisations in the interests of capital and they are tabled by ANC ministers. The role of Dion George as 'environment minister' – after his previous postings in Sandton representing the ultra-rich as a DA MP, and before that in the 1980s SADF doing what he terms his 'national service' (for which nation?) – confirms the GNU's pro-capital slant in areas our future generations will condemn us for, e.g. in agreeing with Trump that a de facto fossil-fuel addiction is just fine. Hence Ramaphosa is bringing massive offshore oil&gas deals to the White House in hopes that ExxonMobil, Chevron, ConocoPhillips and other U.S. firms will step in where TotalEnergies, Shell and local oil men have failed.

## The Real Crisis: South Africa's Neocolonial Chains

Trump's threats expose the ANC's fatal dependency upon imperialist markets. Over \$2.7 billion in trade hinges on retaining the 0%-tariff AGOA deal, which Trump dangles like a noose but which we can safely predict is now ancient history (even tiny Lesotho was hit with Trump's 50% tariff on 'Liberation Day,' and South Africa's was 32%, even if these were soon paused).

Because of the neo-colonial relationships with international trading partners, instead of industrialising properly by rebuilding clothing, textiles, footwear, appliances, electronics and other essential goods, the ANC's neoliberals turned us into slave labour and the country into a quarry and garden for Western capital from the mid-1990s. Two of the most important exports to the U.S. are minerals (especially platinum and gold) and agricultural products from plantations (especially fruit). These deals plus the AGOA emphasis on aluminium and steel, have locked us into raw material exports, with only automobiles as exceptions.

Now, as Trump demands Ramaphosa kneel, he offers Starlink exemptions to Musk – another apartheid beneficiary – and his data-vacuuming empire. What we have learned about Musk's manipulation of X.com twitter accounts, and of his DOGE team's looting of U.S. government data, suggests that we should be keeping him at arms length, not allowing Musk to suck in South Africans' personal, private data via Starlink.

The agenda Ramaphosa is following will, simply, make labour even more cheap, and make non-renewable resources – especially minerals – and land available for wanton plunder and looting. Ramphosa's offer to buy methane gas

from the U.S. instead of embarking on a genuine Just Energy Transition makes a mockery of the decarbonisation, since the methane is 85 times more potent a greenhouse gas than CO<sub>2</sub> over a twenty-year period. Trump and former coal-mining tycoon Ramaphosa – aged 78 and 72, respectively – simply do not care about leaving an inhabitable planet behind them for coming generations.

# The Way Forward: Break the Chains of Neocolonialism!

We cannot beg for scraps from Trump's table. The solution is revolutionary change:

- Nationalise the mines, banks, and monopolies under workers' control – no compensation to thieves!
- Expropriate big landed estates into public ownership to be managed by those working it and also to redistribute it to the landless for increased food production, housing and other uses.
- Rebuild manufacturing through state-led industrialisation, including beneficiation of the minerals and Green industrial revolution, thus breaking imperialist dependency.
- Lower interest rates to ensure productive capital can be deployed into job-creating investments, and impose tighter exchange controls to halt the existing runaway capital flight.
- Refuse any new unfair trade and investment deals – and cancel all existing unequal trade deals – and refuse to be blackmailed by Washington, either via AGOA or the IMF's influence over Treasury's budget, also unveiled on May 21.
- Forge international solidarity with working and oppressed people in America, and with anti-imperialist movements everywhere, while reaffirming aid to Palestine not only through new International Court of Justice anti-genocide demands but also through imposition of BDS (including against Glencore and Ramaphosa's brother-in-law Patrice Motsepe), instead of groveling to racist warmongers like Trump.

Ramaphosa's trip is a disgrace, but it exposes the truth: the ANC has sold out. The working class must take power into its own hands.

Source: [Against the Current](#).

PS:

*If you like this article or have found it useful, please consider donating towards the work of International Viewpoint. Simply follow this link: [Donate](#) then enter an amount of your choice. One-off donations are very welcome. But regular donations by standing order are also vital to our continuing functioning. See the last paragraph of [this article](#) for our bank account details and take out a standing order. Thanks.*