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## ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

# Political parties welcome high court ruling against Eskom's load shedding

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ACTIONSA, UDM, and 17 other political parties lauded the decision by the North Gauteng High Court in Pretoria on Friday that upheld their request to exempt hospitals, clinics, schools, and police stations from load shedding.

The court ruled that the Department of Public Works, in conjunction with or without other organs of State, must "within 60 days take all reasonable steps to provide uninterrupted electricity supply to all public health establishments, schools and SAPS stations across South Africa."

ActionSA's head of strategic litigation, Gill Benson, has called this judgment a positive legal victory for South Africans who suffer due to rolling blackouts. "The legal victory ensures that communities across South Africa will no longer be subject to the failures of the ANC at Eskom, which have left our communities defenceless when hospitals, police stations and schools lose electricity during increasing levels of load shedding," Benson said.

In a ruling passed by Judge Norman Davis, Minister of Public Enterprises, Pravin Gordhan, is ordered to "take all



ACTIONSA has called the judgment a positive legal victory for South Africans who suffer due to rolling blackouts. | PHANDO JIKELO African News Agency (ANA)

reasonable steps" within 60 days to ensure that hospitals, schools and police stations are removed from the load shedding schedule.

The judgment comes on the back of a campaign by the UDM, IFP, Action SA, the National Union of Metalworkers, Build One SA and other organisations to spare hospitals and clinics, 23 000 public schools and police stations from load shedding. This campaign was launched by these forma-

tions in February with the court case that began on March 20, by opposition political parties and other community formations.

ActionSA and other parties blame the ruling party for subjecting South Africans to load shedding for more than 15 years. "It is clear that the ANC government lacks the will to resolve the crisis, leaving South Africans in the dark. It is our belief that without urgent intervention, the government will continue to let the ensuing crisis persist unabated," she said.

Reacting to the judgment, Build One SA (Bosa) leader Mmusi Maimane said he was proud of this victory. "Bosa can be proud to have achieved such a significant legal victory so early in our history. This proves that, empowered by our public and social capital and the faith placed in us as community representatives, we will continue to fight for the constitutional rights of our citizens at all junctures and through all avenues available to us," Maimane said.

Eskom argued that it would be technically impossible to isolate and exclude some buildings from load shedding, given how embedded they were in Eskom's transmission and distribution networks.