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# Allocate percentage of parliament, legislature seats to youths under 35

The biggest crisis facing SA today isn't loadshedding, crime, or coalition chaos.

It's unemployment. And we are treating it like background noise.

Stats SA's latest figures put broad unemployment at 32.6%. For people under 35, it's above 45%.

That means nearly half of this country's youth wake up with no place to go, no payslip to expect, and no line on the budget that truly prioritises them.

We've normalised it. We shouldn't have.

History is instructive here. Oppressive systems don't fall because of policy papers.

They fall when enough young people decide they have nothing left to lose.

In 1976, it was Afrikaans and Bantu Education.

In 2015, it was #FeesMustFall.

Different triggers, same truth: when the youth move as one, the country moves with them — or stops entirely. Unemployment is that next trigger.

It cuts across race, language

and province. It doesn't care if you studied at Nelson Mandela University or left school in grade 10.

It is the one grievance shared by a graduate in Mthembu and a matriculant in Gunguluza Area 11.

That's dangerous for the status quo, because shared pain is the fastest way to build unity.

Right now, parliament and the nine provincial legislatures debate youth unemployment like it's a theoretical problem.

The average MP is in their 50s.

They last updated a CV before Google existed.

They sit on portfolio committees where "youth development" means a workshop and a T-shirt.

Meanwhile, the actual youth are locked out — of jobs, and of the rooms where decisions about jobs are made.

Here's the analysis leaders don't want to hear: you cannot police your way out of hopelessness.

You cannot PR your way

out of hunger. When unemployment finally unites this generation, it won't look like a march to the Union Buildings.

It will look like a country which has come to a standstill.

Taxi ranks. Highways. Ports. Municipal offices.

Because when work stops being an option, disruption becomes the only leverage.

The warning signs are already here.

Service delivery protests are increasingly led by young, unemployed men.

Illegal mining isn't just crime — it's employment.

Tender hijackings aren't just corruption — they're survival.

We're already seeing the early, fractured versions of what happens when the state can't answer the question, "Where's my job?"

So what must change?

1. Political will: Put 30% of safe parliamentary and legislature seats in the hands of under-35s.

If you're legislating for the next 30 years, put 30-year-olds in the room.

2. Economic will: Kill the red tape.

A young person shouldn't need R10,000 and six months to register a business that can employ three friends.

3. Budget will: Tie every infrastructure grant, every department of land reform and rural development project, every municipal EPWP to real, accredited skills and exit jobs.

No more "training for the sake of training".

We survived 1976. We survived 2015.

But both times, the state was forced to respond after the fact. We don't have that luxury any more.

The youth of 2026 are more connected, more informed and more desperate than any generation before them.

Ignore that, and one day unemployment will do what no political party has managed: unite the youth.

And on that day, they will be unstoppable.

The clock is ticking. The question isn't if. It's when.

*Lindlithemba Sicheba, Kwa-Nobuhle*