

**Media Release by the Anglican Bishop of Johannesburg,
the Right Revd Dr Steve Moreo,
on the increasing incidence of racism as hate speech in South Africa,
21 June 2018.**

The souls of South Africans are slowly being eaten away by the hate speech of people like EFF leaders Julius Malema and Floyd Shivambu who have clearly embarked on an offensive of naked racism to harm the country.

So says the Anglican Bishop of Johannesburg, the Right Revd Dr Steve Moreo, in a statement released today and sent to the members of his diocese in Gauteng. He was commenting in particular on recent utterances by the EFF leaders against Indians.

"The comments that have been made are nothing more than hate speech - a political tool that is reminiscent of the most abhorrent racism of apartheid against which millions of South Africans fought to attain their freedom in 1994. The nature of their attacks is such that I fear we may be beginning to see a roll-back of the very freedoms for which great men and women of the struggle fought."

The racism being peddled by Malema had become a cancer that was eating away at the rejuvenated healthy cells of ubuntu that had followed 1994. Great leaders such as Nelson Mandela had shown how a spirit of big-heartedness and reconciliation, of seeing people through the African eyes of ubuntu, could begin to craft a South African renaissance that had been the envy of the world for a while. But the hatred inherent in racism was actively eating it away like a malignancy.

Bishop Moreo asked why Malema would castigate and insult Indians based on perhaps one experience he had: "I suspect Mr Malema is actually nervous to meet some of the very people he belittles, whose humanity he questions, whose ubuntu he denies when he makes his racist rants."

The bishop said that there would always be differences between people. But the tendency in many quarters to single out race as the great differentiator was an illustration of evil forces at work.

"It is not only the Malemas who should desist in this, but all of us. People in business, the entertainment world, on the sports field, in the home, wherever, should think carefully about what they say. Ubuntu, reconciliation... those should be our watchwords as Africans living in this country.

"And Mr Malema and his comrades have a great need to understand and embrace ubuntu. They have a responsibility, as elected leaders, to engage others, and speak about their differences, and find one another. That is the African way. That is the ubuntu way. Why would the EFF leaders shun this?"

Bishop Moreo said if the present trend continued, modern-day racism could become institutionalised and be far worse than apartheid, with even worse consequences for the country.

"And beware: when you start to label someone as a racist, you immediately become a racist yourself.

Bishop Moreo said people of faith should renew efforts to play a leading role in demonstrating the love of one another which all religions espouse.

"I particularly ask Anglicans in my diocese to continue to engage with one another as we seek to overcome this renewed scourge of racism that has reared its satanic head in our land. We did this before as we struggled, not without our differences, in the pre 1994 days. Now is the time for us as Christians to rise up again and show that we will not allow racism to take hold at the expense of love and reconciliation."