



## PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# **OSA introduces a real alternative to wrestle power away from political parties and back into the hands of the people**

Today the One South Africa Movement (OSA) introduces our unique and innovative alternative to the political *status quo*: an election model to return real power back to voters and in turn see citizen-led governments elected into municipalities across South Africa in the upcoming 2021 Local Government Elections.

South Africans from all walks of life are sick and tired of our politics and are losing hope in a real alternative pathway forward for our nation. The events that have unfolded over the past weeks – within both the governing party and the official opposition – yet again confirm to South Africans what they intrinsically know: SA's political system is broken, self-serving and in critical need of change.

In particular, the state of local government is at crisis level, as towns across the country are bankrupt and unable to deliver constitutionally guaranteed basic services. We cannot continue to stumble along the same path, expecting political parties to fix a cartel-like system that only they benefit from. Our collective hopes have been dashed one too many times.

With our Local Government Elections just over 160 days away, it is vital that we explore a new, authentic way to give power back to communities. Not perceived power or contrived and manufactured gimmicks to hoodwink voters – actual power into the hands of the people.

Following months of extensive consultation with relevant stakeholders, community organizations and potential candidates, today we formally hit the ground running as we campaign using a brand-new model in a select number of municipalities in which governance and service delivery has ground to a halt.

### **The Section 15A Model**

Our model makes use of Section 15A of the Electoral Commission Act, a mechanism that allows for the registration of an organization or movement to participate in municipal elections, without being registered as a traditional political party with political party structures. By using this mechanism, independent candidates can stand for election in various wards, whilst also registering as a conglomerate of independent candidates to gain the benefit of the proportional representation (PR) vote. This model gives communities the power to take back control of their own destiny from political parties and install citizen-led governments in their municipalities.

While OSA encourages and champions independent candidates, we must acknowledge that the election of independents as ward councillors alone doesn't guarantee a citizen-led takeover of a municipality, as independents will not be able to benefit from the proportional representation vote. We want to see independent candidates succeed and Section 15A of the Electoral Commission Act provides the answer to this as it enables a citizen-led organization to win control of municipal wards but also an entire municipality, thereby forming a citizen-led government.

Independent candidates will therefore appear on both the ward and PR voting ballots. Practically, OSA has used the following five-step framework for independent organizations wanting to compete in the upcoming elections.

1. Residents of a particular municipality to bring together key influencers and community leaders to form a residents steering committee.
2. The steering committee to call together a municipal stakeholders meeting including but not limited to business chambers, farmers unions, ratepayers' associations, parents associations and faith-based organisations. The steering committee would form an association and give it a name.
3. The relevant association should then register in terms of S15A of the Electoral Commission Act to contest all wards and the entire municipality.
4. The association should then nominate the top community and ward leaders to stand as ward and PR candidates in the local government election, in consultation with the community.
5. A campaign plan must then be developed and executed to ensure the nominees become elected and form a new government that restores power to the people and rescues the municipality.

Such organizations are *not* political parties. Political parties are by definition not independent. It's only logic that if you are required to submit to a political party and accountable to its leadership for fear of losing your job, then you cannot at the same time be a free-thinking community representative and servant of the people.

Rather, such organizations are technical in nature – they provide structure by giving candidates a coordinated platform to campaign for election and to govern post-election. There is no caucus process, no “party line” and no disciplinary procedures that will be imposed upon candidates by the Section 15A organization. All candidates that stand under Section 15A organizations retain their independence and are answerable to the community only.

Historically, political parties in government tend to favour their constituents over those who did not vote for them in an election. Our model is guided by the principle that communities govern as a collective and for basic services to be delivered to every home and every person – regardless of political affiliation.

### **OSA's Role**

The One South Africa Movement will provide these organizations with technical expertise, management and roll out of professionalized election campaigns, tailor made for each specific municipality.

We will support associations both in registering to contest the elections, selecting their candidates, developing their campaign plan, and executing the election campaign. This relationship would be governed by a Memorandum of Understanding agreed to with an association in terms of which, OSA would provide the following support:

- Assisting the association with registration with the IEC.
- Developing and rolling out candidate nominations.
- Developing municipal and ward voter profiles.
- Developing a campaign strategy and plan, including bespoke messaging.
- Developing a registration campaign.
- Developing municipal and ward campaign teams

Our role is not limited to just working with the associations and candidates but also working to empower the communities to hold their elected candidates to account. We will help communities develop mechanisms to ensure accountability in substance after the election. In addition, OSA will be providing training to prepare councilors for office and prospective elected officials with support to be able to govern effectively.

### **Call to Action**

In the coming weeks we will finalize the municipalities in which we will partner with Section 15A independent associations to contest October's elections. We encourage every community in South Africa to consider this unique opportunity and to join us. It's now time we stand up, organize and take back control of our towns and cities.

Now that voter registration weekend is confirmed for 17 & 18 July, we will work closely with associations to ensure each and every potential voter is registered to vote by rolling out targeted registration campaigns.

*(If you would like to find out more, please see contact details at the bottom of this press release or email us at [info@osa.org.za](mailto:info@osa.org.za))*

### **Conclusion**

We are convinced our new model is a solution to the political party dominance that has taken power away from the people. It will depolarize and depoliticize local government, allowing for government to be controlled by citizen-led organizations and competent individuals – citizens who are honest, equipped and passionate about delivering basic services in a financially prudent and responsible manner.

Party politics is all we've ever known in democratic South Africa. Hence one can appreciate the reluctance to move beyond such a paradigm. But we have no choice. The system has shown us one too many times how fundamentally broken it is. We are convinced we have found the solution.

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