MEDIA RELEASE
by CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (CDP)

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Stand-up and Protect your Rights says CDP

"True freedom and democracy will only come to South Africa when the people of this country are prepared to stand up and make their voices heard," said Rev Theunis Botha, Leader of the Christian Democratic Party (CDP)

"A few weeks ago, we saw a community come together and speak out against a Mosque being built in their area. Some of the most effective movements have come from grass roots, as communities took a non-violent but vocal stand in order to preserve their rights as people of principle. When a petition signed by over 2600 residents of Valhalla, Centurion, produced in just three days and when over 500 residents, at short notice, filled a hall to capacity, in order to voice their objection to a mosque being erected in their area, government must take note.

"We are presently finding people, all over the country, making a stand in order to voice their opposition to one thing or another, eg – Outa's toll road struggle being a prime example. On a much smaller scale, in Valhalla, a situation has developed which on the surface may seem insignificant in comparison to Outa and other more newsworthy topics, but for the people of the area it is of equal importance.

"The concerns of these residents are the same as those experienced in communities in other parts of the world. A prime example is the reaction of residents in Europe as they object to their church buildings being turned into mosques. In London there is fierce objection to the building of a large Mosque in their area saying that it is a 'recruiting ground for Al Qaeda'. Even in Russia resistance has grown as communities oppose mosques being erected in their residential areas. There are other cases throughout the world where communities are up in arms concerning this issue and are vocally making their concerns known. This is a development that we dare not ignore, especially because of the implication it holds for our respective communities.

"When the Mayor of Tshwane Metro is alleged to have said, that the ANC will not allow communities or even the courts to dictate to them, as in the case of street names and the Pretoria name changes, as they are in the majority, then societies, groups, movements etc, have lost their rights and democracy has failed in South Africa. We see this with the Outa initiative, as government continues with its intransigence. We also see this with the issue of the Valhalla residents, where a certain member of the petitions board of Tshwane apparently said that they would not listen to the community regarding the donation of municipal land as it belongs to the municipality and they have the final say. These two statements along with the President's statement in parliament and what is happening with the Outa initiative appears to indicate a policy shift within the ANC when it comes to dealing with communities and minority rights.

"The CDP sees this as a dangerous development and encourages all communities that are being marginalised by the ANC to join together and guard against their rights being violated."

Staan vas en beskerm jou regte – CDP

"Ware vryheid en demokrasie sal net stewig in Suid-Afrika nesskop as die mense van die land bereid sal wees om die hakke in te slaan en hul stemme dik te maak," sê ds. Theunis Botha, leier van die Christen-Demokratiese Party (CDP).

"'n Paar weke gelede het ons gesien hoe 'n gemeenskap saamgestaan het en hul stem te laat hoor teen die beplande oprigting van 'n moskee in hul gebied. Van die mees doeltreffende bewegings het van voetsoolvlak af ontwikkel, soos wat gemeenskappe op nie-gewelddadige wyse maar baie duidelik vasgeskop het oor die regte van mense, as beginselvaste mense, te beskerm.

As 'n petisie deur die inwoners van Valhalla, Centurion, binne drie dae 2 600 handtekeninge opgelewer, en 500 inwoners op kort kennisgewing 'n saal vol pak om beswaar te maak teen die oprigting van 'n moskee in hul gebied, dan moet die regering kennis neem.

"Ons merk oral oor die land laat mense van hulle hoor om beswaar te maak teen sake, soos Outa se stryd wat 'n goeie voorbeeld is. Die saamstaan van mense in Valhalla is wel op 'n veel kleiner skaal en mag in vergelyking met Outa onbeduidend lyk, maar vir die inwoners self is dit net so belangrik.

“Die kommer van die inwoners is dieselfde as dit wat deur gemeenskappe in ander dele van die wêreld ervaar word. ‘n Goeie voorbeeld is waar inwoners van Europa beswaar maak dat hul kerke in moskees omskep word. In Londen is daar hewige teenkanting teen die bou van ‘n groot moskee waar die inwoners sê ‘dit gaan dien as werwingsentrum vir Al-Kaïda’. Selfs in Rusland bou weerstand op soos inwoners beswaar maak teen die oprigting van moskees in hul woongebiede. Daar is ook ander voorbeelde oral in die wêreld. Dit is ‘n ontwikkeling wat ons nie durf ignoreer nie, aangesien dit implikasies vir gemeenskappe inhou.

“Toe die burgemeester van die Tshwane metro na bewering gesê het dat die ANC nie sal toelaat dat gemeenskappe en selfs die howe aan hulle voorskryf nie, soos in die geval van straatname en die naam van Pretoria self, aangesien hulle die meerderheid is – dan het gemeenskappe, groepe en bewegings hul regte verloor en het demokrasie in Suid-Afrika misluk. Ons sien dit met Outa soos die regering hardkoppig voortstu. Ons sien dit ook met betrekking tot die inwoners van Valhalla, waar ‘n lid van die afbakeningsraad blykbaar gesê het daar gaan nie aan die inwoners se versoeke gehoor gegee word nie, omdat die grond wat geskenk word vir die bou van die moskee, munisipale grond is en die munisipaliteit die finale sê het. Hierdie twee stellings, teen die agtergrond van die president se stelling in die parlement en wat met Outa gebeur dui op ‘n beleidsverskuiwing deur die ANC vir soverre dit die hantering van minderheidsregte betref.

“Die CDP beskou dit as ‘n gevaarlike verwikkeling en moedig alle gemeenskappe wat deur die ANC gemarginaliseer word aan om saam te staan en die waak daarteen dat hul regte geskend word.”