



**ZABALAZA  
FOR SOCIALISM**

**CONSTITUTION  
March 2024**

## **PREAMBLE**

We have come together because South Africa is in a deep crisis, where the real and persistent failures of capitalism threaten a descent into barbarism and the destruction of life. We need a new, socialist politics in this country. A politics based on the worth, contribution, and development of every individual will ensure our collective flourishing.

After nearly three decades of democracy, our political leaders have dismally failed to realise the common aspirations of the majority of South Africans for a dignified life.

South Africa is experiencing an unprecedented social, political, and ecological crisis. The period is characterised by decay, deep-seated racism and xenophobia, and the fragmentation of society. This crisis is manifesting in extraordinary levels of violence: femicide (murder of women) and violence based on gender or sexual orientation, violence against children, racist and xenophobic violence that is spreading fear and division in our communities, as well as political violence against activists. The crisis also manifests in mass unemployment and the degradation of towns and rural areas.

As individuals, we represent a convergence of struggles, movements, and political formations, coming together to build a fair and just South Africa by building a movement for socialism that will address the crisis of the Left. A socialism which means freedom, built from the bottom up: democratic, non-sectarian, tolerant of views, participatory, and enlightening.

There is an urgent need to establish a movement for socialism in this country. Such a movement must build power in all spheres of society—in workplaces, schools and communities, and eventually within the state. It must strengthen mass movements and social struggles and engage in national and local elections, with a view to contest state power, and ultimately transform the state itself to be biased toward the needs of the poor, the oppressed, and the excluded.

To achieve these broad objectives, we must initiate a process to create greater political and organisational coherence among ourselves and the broader Left. We must aim to play the role of a catalyst for the creation of such a movement for socialism. We must build a collective of socialist activists that will be equal to these objectives.

We have come together to realise the highest aspirations of all people. We are Pan-Africanists and internationalists who struggle for socialism across the world. Our own country's dream of freedom remains incomplete—the land has not been returned to the people and the wealth of the country has not been shared. Only a socialist politics that makes the case for returning agency and control to ordinary people will make possible the life all South Africans deserve: of freedom, dignity, and equality.



## **1. NAME**

1.1. The name of the Organisation shall be Zabalaza for Socialism (“ZASO”).

## **2. AIMS & OBJECTIVES**

- 2.1. Build a collective of socialist activists that can advance a democratic, feminist, and eco-socialist politics in society.
- 2.2. Advance anti-capitalist consciousness within all sectors of society, especially within popular movements (including the labour, student, youth, and women’s movements).
- 2.3. Facilitate greater unity amongst socialist forces and working class movements to challenge capitalist power.
- 2.4. Promote and strengthen rank-and-file organising among trade unions, organisations for precarious workers, and social movements.
- 2.5. Promote and defend community ownership of land, household food security, and national food sovereignty.
- 2.6. Defend and protect the commons, resist the commodification of life, and fight against the privatisation of social services.
- 2.7. Resist and challenge patriarchy, emphasise its intersection with capitalism, as well as advance a socialist feminist consciousness by conscientising women and capacitating feminist organisations.
- 2.8. Fight any forms of hatred and bigotry, including xenophobia, racism, sexism, and homophobia.
- 2.9. Restore the harmonious relationship between people and nature.

## **3. MEMBERSHIP**

- 3.1. Membership is open to all individuals who agree with the aims and objectives of ZASO and its founding policy documents.
- 3.2. Every new member must undertake an induction process.
- 3.3. Every applicant for membership shall sign an application form, the contents of which shall be determined by the National Conference.
- 3.4. All members are required to pay a joining fee and monthly dues, as determined by the National Committee in consultation with the branches, based on considerations of affordability.

### *Rights, roles, and responsibilities of members*

- 3.5. All members have the right to participate in the activities and decision-making processes of ZASO. Members have the responsibility to uphold the principles, aims, and objectives of ZASO. Members are encouraged to actively contribute to ZASO's campaigns and activities

### *Termination*

- 3.6. Membership in ZASO may be terminated in the following circumstances:
  - 3.6.1. Resignation by written notice to the Branch secretary.
  - 3.6.2. Non-payment of membership fees for a period of three consecutive months without reasonable explanation or condonation from the branch.
  - 3.6.3. Serious violation of ZASO’s principles, aims, and objectives, subject to due process and fair investigation.

3.7. A disciplinary procedure binding on all structures is to be determined by the National Committee in consultation with all structures of ZASO.

#### **4. STRUCTURE**

4.1. All leadership positions in constitutional structures of ZASO must ensure at least 50% representation of women.

##### *National Conference*

4.2. The National Conference is the highest structure of ZASO and its decisions are taken by the majority.

4.3. The National Conference will be held every two years as a delegate conference, and the programme, policies, positions, campaigns and leadership will be democratically determined.

4.4. The National Committee will convene a special National Conference if more than two-thirds of the branches in good standing petition the National Committee

4.5. Each branch shall be entitled to delegates to the National Conference according to the number of paid members in the branch. The number of members for each delegate will be determined by the National Committee no later than three months before the National Conference, according to the number of Zabalaza members at the time, together with its agenda and proposals for resolutions.

4.5.1. All delegates will be elected directly by a General Meeting of the Branch.

4.6. Branches have the right to submit resolutions to the National Conference, to be received by the National Committee at least thirty days prior to the National Conference.

4.7.

##### *National Committee*

4.8. The National Committee is elected at the National Conference. It is the highest decision-making body between conferences. The National Committee shall consist of seventeen members and must meet at least once every four months.

4.8.1. The National Committee shall elect a Secretariat of seven members from its members. It shall have the right to co-opt members to its meetings.

4.8.2. In the first instance, the National Committee is a political organ of ZASO, tasked with directing ZASO's political strategy and interventions in the main sectors of struggle.

4.8.3. The National Committee is expected to consult widely and seek advice from branches in forming its political decisions.

##### *Secretariat*

4.9. The Secretariat is responsible for the effective management and coordination of ZASO on a day-to-day basis. The Secretariat is made up of seven members and is elected by the National Committee.

4.10. The Secretariat must issue a quarterly report to all branches.

4.10.1. The Secretariat shall consist of a Chairperson, National Spokesperson, Secretary, Treasurer, and three additional members who will be assigned a portfolio depending on the needs of the Secretariat.

4.11. The Secretariat must embrace and inculcate the practice of collective leadership.

4.12. Minutes of Secretariat and NC meetings must be circulated timeously to the membership.

## 5. BRANCHES

- 5.1. ZASO's basic unit is the Branch. The Branch organises members within a certain geographic area where people are, and may be a residential area, town, or city, as well as a workplace or place of learning.
- 5.2. The tasks of the Branch are determined by the National Conference and it is responsible for ZASO's operations within its geographical area.
- 5.3. The minimum number of members that can constitute a branch is ten.
- 5.4. Proposals to form Branches are approved by the National Committee. The Branch elects a local secretariat whose task is to lead the Branch's work in the locality as well as to be responsible for contact with the national organisation.
- 5.5. The highest decision-making body in a Branch is the general membership meeting. The Member's meeting is convened by the local secretariat. Branches must meet regularly, at least once a month.
- 5.6. Although the base structure of ZASO is the branch, members may also be organised in other ways, in trade unions, social movements or other forums and activities.
- 5.7. The National Committee and local secretariat are responsible for regularly monitoring the development and status of individual members.
- 5.8. Membership applications are made to the Branch or, where there is none, to ZASO centrally.
- 5.9. Branches must ensure proper induction processes and that new members meet the requirements for belonging to an eco-socialist, feminist organisation.
- 5.10. Each branch shall elect the following officials:
  - 5.10.1. **Secretary:** Responsible for membership management, record keeping, and basic administrative tasks.
  - 5.10.2. **Treasurer:** Responsible for collecting dues, maintaining financial records, and liaising with the national treasurer.
  - 5.10.3. **Chairperson:** Oversees political education, and provides leadership for branch activities and campaigns.

## 6. DISCUSSION AND DECISION-MAKING

- 6.1. Members are entitled to speak at all structural meetings in any of South Africa's official languages and ZASO must ensure that translation is available.
- 6.2. Where possible, we shall strive to arrive at decisions by consensus.
- 6.3. Decisions within ZASO shall in other cases be reached by a simple majority vote, except as otherwise specified in this constitution.
- 6.4. In the event of a tied vote, the resolution falls and has to be tabled again. If another tied vote follows, the matter is adjourned.
- 6.5. Each member shall have one vote.
- 6.6. Changes to the constitution require a two-thirds majority of the National Conference.
- 6.7. Proposed amendments to the constitution must be circulated to all branches at least one month before a tabled vote.

- 6.8. Quorums for all meetings of elected structures of ZASO will be 50% + 1. If there is no quorum, a second meeting will be called within one week and those who attend that second meeting will constitute a quorum.
- 6.9. Quorums for all general meetings will be 30%.

## **7. DISSOLUTION**

- 7.1. Dissolution of ZASO can be decided at a National Conference by a two-thirds majority.
- 7.2. Proposals for dissolution must be announced three months in advance.
- 7.3. In the case of dissolution, the resources of ZASO shall be transferred to an organisation with like-minded goals and objectives, which will be decided by a two-thirds majority.