



# Cape Town City Council: Mayoral Committee *Background Guide*



## **EagleMUNC**

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[www.EagleMUNC.org](http://www.EagleMUNC.org)

**EAGLEMUNC**

## **Introduction**

### **Letter from the Chair:**

Welcome to the Cape Town City Council! My name is Claire Guarini and I am a sophomore International Studies major at Boston College. This is my first year participating in EagleMUNC and I am super excited to have the opportunity to meet all of you at this year's conference. This committee discusses very important issues and I look forward to working with all of you the weekend of the conference.

This committee will be a crisis committee and therefore we will be passing directives rather than resolutions. Those with questions about the style of debate or parliamentary procedure are encouraged to reach out or reference the EagleMUNC website.

The issues in this committee are still relevant and evolving, so it is important for your research to be up to date on the news and current events surrounding our committee. Furthermore, the issues that we will be discussing are current and extremely important not only to South Africa, but also to the rest of the international stage. These topics are rooted in deep historical ties that still persist in some parts of South Africa and the world today. Some of the issues may be sensitive and/or tough to debate. Because of this, I trust that all of you will conduct yourselves in a professional, thoughtful, and informed manner. If you have any concerns or ever feel that you need to talk with someone regarding the topics, feel free to reach out to me via email.

– Claire Guarini

## **Introduction**

Welcome to the Cape Town City Council! As the mayor, I have gathered this special assembly to resolve the most pressing issues facing our city. This special meeting of the Mayoral Committee will include participating members of the committee, in addition to other important members of the Cape Town city government. It is my hope that this special meeting can adequately and comprehensively address the problems impacting the citizens of our city.

## **Historical Background:**

South Africa is located on the southernmost tip of the African continent. The country has a population of about 56.72 million and has three capital cities: Pretoria, Bloemfontein, and Cape Town. Cape Town is the legislative capital of the country and houses Parliament. The city is located on the southwest coast of South Africa and has a population of about 434,000 people.

The city of Cape Town, South Africa has a tremendously long and complex history of colonization. The first European settlers were believed to have reached the region by the early 16th century, although the city was not officially established until 1652 by Jan van Riebeeck, an employee of the Dutch East India Company, to serve as a refreshment station for voyages around the Cape of Good Hope.<sup>1</sup> While there was a non-homogenous majority native population in the region, comprised of communities

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<sup>1</sup>Anacker, Caelen. "Cape Town, South Africa (1652- )." *BlackPast*, 18 June 2019.

## Cape Town City Council: Mayoral Committee

that had lived in the Cape Peninsula and Western Cape long before the beginning of the Christian era, much of the struggle for power persisted between the Dutch and British settlers after the British arrived in 1795.<sup>2</sup> This included a series of armed conflicts, known as the Boers Wars, fought between British colonists and the Boers states,



comprised of the Afrikaans people.

Throughout South Africa's colonization, a new ethnic group developed overtime, known as the Afrikaners, predominantly Dutch descendants who permanently settled in South Africa. This group developed their own language, Afrikaans, and culture, including a sense of white

supremacy.<sup>3</sup>

This developed ethnology of superiority laid the framework for what would later be known as the Apartheid era. This time was wrought with extreme, legalized discrimination and separation between the power-holding white Afrikaans, and the black native South Africans. Through a series of acts beginning in 1948, the government of South Africa created a harmful state that stripped black South Africans of their rights and removed most of their civil liberties.<sup>4</sup> Although the Grand Apartheid

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<sup>2</sup>“History of Cape Town.” *History of Cape Town*, Ritztrade Business Exchange CC, 2019.

<sup>3</sup>“Detailed Hi-Res Maps of Cape Town for Download or Print.” Image. *Large Cape Town Maps for Free Download and Print | High-Resolution and Detailed Maps*,

<sup>4</sup> “The History of Apartheid in South Africa.” *The History of Apartheid in South Africa*.

## **Cape Town City Council: Mayoral Committee**

state was dismantled in 1994, a deep seeded culture of racism and separation remains present in day-to-day life in South Africa. This became glaringly salient through trying times, including the 2018 Cape Town water crisis, in which the city narrowly escaped Day Zero, the day in which the city would completely run out of water.<sup>5</sup> With racial and socioeconomic inequalities still at the core of many of Cape Town's infrastructural and institutional undertakings, it calls to question the city's stability. Will the city have the ability to continue on, or will the societal and environmental pressures cause the city's robust lifestyle to plunge into the most troublesome times in its history?

### **Current Issues:**

The following topics are extremely pertinent and urgent for this assembly of the Cape Town City Council to ensure the prosperity and equality of each and every citizen of the city. It is up to the members of this council to work diligently and conscientiously to prevent crime and chaos within this robust city. Due to Cape Town's dark history of racism and discrimination, the members of this council must pay extreme attention to their actions and fully consider the consequences their decisions will have for the long oppressed members of the city. They must work to correct the troublesome legacy still impacting the black community today.

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<sup>5</sup>Sieff, Kevin. "Divided by Drought." *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 23 Feb. 2018.

**Topic 1: Apartheid: Legacy and Residual Inequality**

Almost two and a half decades after the official end of Apartheid South Africa, the nation may be just as divided as it was in 1994. The World Bank identified South Africa as one of the most unequal countries in the world.<sup>6</sup> Despite being twenty-five years out from Apartheid, its legacy of inequality still prevails in the nation. Today, previously disadvantaged South Africans hold fewer assets, have fewer skills, earn lower wages, and are more likely to be unemployed.<sup>7</sup> Although access to basic services such as electricity, water, education, and health care has improved significantly since the ANC (African National Congress) came to power, there is still unequal access to opportunities and essential public services. Furthermore, the gap between rich and poor is wider in South Africa than in any other country where comparable data exists.<sup>8</sup> Most of the nation's wealth remains in the hands of a small [white] elite and South Africa's richest households are almost ten times wealthier than poorer households.<sup>9</sup> The poverty levels are the highest among the black population, followed by the "coloured" population, which is South Africa's term for mixed-race people.<sup>10</sup>

In response to the evident racial inequalities among the South African citizens, the government has attempted to implement policies to rectify the divide and decrease

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<sup>6</sup> Jason Beaubien, "The Country With the World's Most Inequality," *NPR*, last modified April 2, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Katy Scott, "South Africa is the World's Most Unequal Country," *CNN*, last modified May 10, 2019.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Jason Beaubien, "The Country With the World's Most Inequality."

<sup>10</sup> Katy Scott, "South Africa is the World's Most Unequal Country."

## **Cape Town City Council: Mayoral Committee**

the poverty level. They implemented the Black Economic Empowerment Program to promote the transfer of white-owned businesses to black investors. South Africa has also invested heavily in social programs including free primary education, a plan for universal health care, infrastructure projects to expand access to clean water, and minimum income grants to parents.<sup>11</sup> Despite these attempts, “opportunity inequality” has prevented significant progress. The people who have traditionally had wealth and economic opportunities continue to enjoy the benefits. It is clear that the legacy of apartheid in South Africa lives on through the prevalent differences in both opportunity and economic strength.

### **Topic 2: Water Crisis**

In January 2018, the Cape Town city government announced that the city would be entirely out of water in 90 days. This doomsday deadline became known as “Day Zero.” This shocking announcement provoked, and forced, Cape Town citizens to change their water habits and reduce consumption. Farmers in the countryside did their part to save water by diverting their supply to the city.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, in the city, water tariffs rose and residential water consumption decreased by 30%.<sup>13</sup> These emergency protocols put in place by the government were successful in delaying the arrival of “Day Zero.” However, long-term solutions have not proven to be effective or beneficial and

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Christian Alexander, “A Year After Day Zero,” *City Lab*, last modified April 12, 2019.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

## Cape Town City Council: Mayoral Committee

the water problem is still a pressing issue today. Currently, dams are at half capacity and residential water consumption levels are slowly creeping back up to their original numbers.<sup>14</sup>

The unstable water supply in Cape Town has both economic and racial implications. The disparities in water allocation are directly related to the drastic economic inequality in the city. The divide of water accessibility is clear cut across the racial lines, both social and geographic, that were established during the apartheid era of South Africa. For the poorer neighborhoods of Cape Town, “Day Zero” remains a constant reality and concern.<sup>15</sup> The history of distrust for government policies,

combined with a complex political climate, makes a sustained and unified effort to conserve water impractical and something that is often responded to with anxiety and tension.<sup>16</sup>

While the government has devoted time to finding solutions for the water insecurity, they have yet to find a suitable resolution. For example, the government considered desalinating ocean water and tapping into the aquifer beneath the city. However, the project proved more costly than originally anticipated.



<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Christian Alexander, “A Year After Day Zero.”

<sup>16</sup> Vazken Andréassian, “‘Day Zero’: From Cape Town to Sao Paulo,” *The Conservation*, last modified August 20, 2019.



## Cape Town City Council: Mayoral Committee

Additionally, this idea raised concerns about the environmental impact on local ecosystems and overall sustainability.<sup>17</sup> The pressure is still on to find a solution.

Wealthier households have begun drilling private wells, further underscoring how the deeply ingrained social and economic inequalities of the region impact access to basic human needs such as water.

While the wealthier, mostly white, population of the city has been able to maintain their water supply in the short term, there are serious concerns for the poorer, predominantly black population's ability to obtain similar access. Due to many wealthier households resolving the problem individually, not only are they neglecting the concerns for the majority of the population, but their unilateral efforts threaten the possibility for a long term solution. The city government must take responsibility for the continuation of this crisis. While the crisis is not currently imminent, the city is very aware that conservation measures are essential, as the crisis can easily intensify, particularly during the summer months. Not only must the city council unite the population and create a long term solution to restore the entire city with equal, normal access to potable water, but it must address the concerns of both parties on either side of the crisis. The government must be careful not to upset the rich population and instead maintain their confidence in their government, while also not neglecting the poorer black population that has continuously been oppressed throughout the city's history.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

### **Topic 3: Education**

Another issue facing the people of Cape Town, and the rest of South Africa, is the education system. It has proven itself to be ineffective and outdated, which hinders the progress of the country. Out of a list of “rich countries” educational systems, South Africa ranks at the bottom, at 75 out of 76 nations.<sup>18</sup> The country’s education system has never fully recovered from the 1953 Bantu education law, which was designed to render the country’s majority black population disenfranchised both from the political system and the economy.<sup>19</sup> Essentially, the Bantu Education Law of 1953 reinforced apartheid in the South African education system by strictly enforcing racially segregated educational facilities. Statistics of South Africa’s education system reaffirm this perspective. South African children are falling behind poorer countries in the continent. After attending school for at least six years, 27% of students are still illiterate and almost 50% of students cannot solve basic division problems after at least five years of schooling.<sup>20</sup> Out of all the children in South African schools, only 37% will pass the matriculation exam, and out of those students, only 4% will earn a degree.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>“South Africa Has One of the World’s Worst Education Systems.” *The Economist*, The Economist Newspaper, 7 Jan. 2017.

<sup>19</sup>“Education in South Africa.” *WENR*, 17 Dec. 2018, [wenr.wes.org/2017/05/education-south-africa](http://wenr.wes.org/2017/05/education-south-africa).

<sup>20</sup>“South Africa Has One of the World’s Worst Education Systems.” *The Economist*, The Economist Newspaper, 7 Jan. 2017.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

## **Cape Town City Council: Mayoral Committee**

The South African government has made strides to revitalize their failing education system. However, these policies proved to be futile. Despite devoting just under 20% of the national budget to education, a considerably high percentage by international standards, the teachers themselves were taught in this broken system and serve as another obstacle in improving the schools.<sup>22</sup> Educational resources and infrastructure also vary radically by location, with children in rural areas often attending schools that lack basics like electricity, running water, or books. The government must find a way to utilize the considerable budget targeted for educational reforms and improve the school systems in Cape Town to give more students a chance at an educated and successful life.

### **Topic 4: Gang Violence & Political Dimensions of Organized Crime**

The rise of gang violence in Cape Town has also proved to be a significant problem that warrants attention. Crime statistics from the South African Police Service reveal that there has been a sharp increase in gang related murders in recent years.<sup>23</sup> In fact, one in every five of the 3,729 murders that occurred in the province between April 2017 and March 2018 was the result of gang violence.<sup>24</sup>

Despite bureaucratic efforts, the government has done little to show improvement in regards to gang violence. For instance, one of the most considerable

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<sup>22</sup>“Education in South Africa.” *WENR*, 17 Dec. 2018, [wenr.wes.org/2017/05/education-south-africa](http://wenr.wes.org/2017/05/education-south-africa).

<sup>23</sup>Delano Cole van der Linde. “Why a Law Designed to Fight Gang Violence in South Africa Can't Do the Job.” *The Conversation*, The Conversation, 19 Aug. 2019.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

## Cape Town City Council: Mayoral Committee

obstacles the government faces is that the law does not give the government the power to disrupt gang structures and capabilities.<sup>25</sup> This is a result of the notoriously weak sentences given to gang members. Sentences tend to range from three to six years, most of which come with the option to merely pay a fine. Additionally, the Prevention of Organized Crime Act of 1998 does not include offenses aimed at gang leaders. The closest the law comes to targeting them is through the provision for the crime of inducing another to commit gang activities. This carries a maximum sentence of three years, or an unspecified fine<sup>26</sup>. This has created a very intricate state in which gang violence is often highly political and takes the form of inconsequential organized crime. In addition, it is also extremely difficult to link the high-ranking members to the crimes that their subordinates commit. Because they are so far removed, often times little evidence is found in order to provoke a harsher conviction.<sup>27</sup> In addition to the other problems Cape Town faces, as discussed previously, the city has become the epicentre of gang violence within the country with no foreseeable solutions to the growing problem.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

### **Bloc Positions:**

Cape Town is governed by a 231 member city council elected with mixed-member proportional representation. The council is run by the Executive Mayor who is elected by the council members. The Executive Mayor serves as the principal authority for the city. The mayor also appoints a Mayoral Committee consisting of ten positions, each one given a different role in the city. The Mayoral Committee is comprised of the following portfolios: Deputy of Mayor and Finance, Community Services and Health, Corporate Services, Economic Opportunities and Asset Management, Energy and Climate Change, Human Settlements, Safety and Security, Spatial Planning and Environment, Transport, Urban Management, and Water and Waste.

The most prominent political party within the city council is the Democratic Alliance which holds two-thirds of the seats. The Democratic Alliance (DA) associates itself with liberal values and political philosophies; however, the party remains centrist on economic policy. The African National Congress is the second most popular party holding just under 25% of the seats. When founded, the party's motive was to bring all Africans together in order to defend their rights and freedoms. The African National Congress (ANC) is also a member of Socialist International. The final main political

## **Cape Town City Council: Mayoral Committee**

party represented in the Cape Town City Council is the Economic Freedom Fighters.

With 3% of the seats, the party is a far-left group which strives for traditional Marxist-Leninist principles and attacks the DA and ANC for their pro-business stances.

### **Questions to Consider:**

1. How does a government allow an infrastructural or natural crisis to occur? Is it within the control of the government to prevent them from occurring?
2. How do infrastructural or natural crises highlight racial divisions within a society?
3. In what ways do racial divisions in a society become politically salient in times of stress and conflict?
4. How does the history of a society affect its present day culture? Its class divisions? Its infrastructure?
5. Is it possible for a society to fully reconcile with its troublesome past and racist legacy?
6. How can education shape the way the next generation deals with this legacy?
7. What is the importance of an education system in a society?
8. Does a failing education system lead to a failing society?
9. How do gangs contribute to the political climate of a city/nation's government?

**Cape Town City Council: Mayoral Committee**

10. As a city government, what can be done to combat racial problems? Gang violence?



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