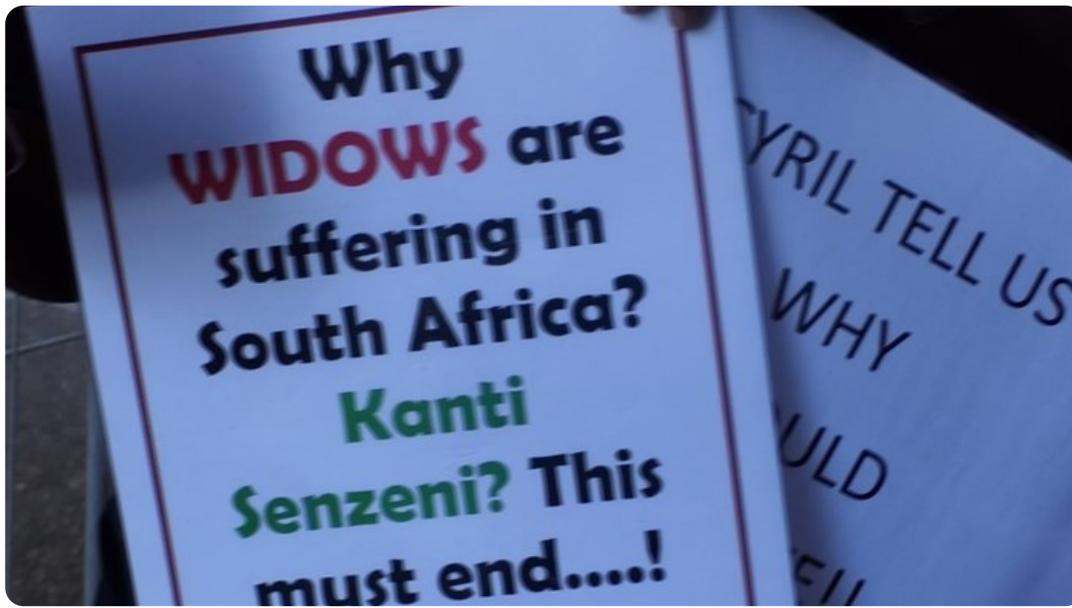


Who will tell Mr. President that SA widows are weeping and mourning again?

For eight years, since 2015, South African widow and chairperson of KZN Widows Voice, Princess Nomthandaz Zibisi, has been pushing to reach and get the attention of the president and members of parliament on tax matters but she felt dribbled by the system—various officials and channels of government.

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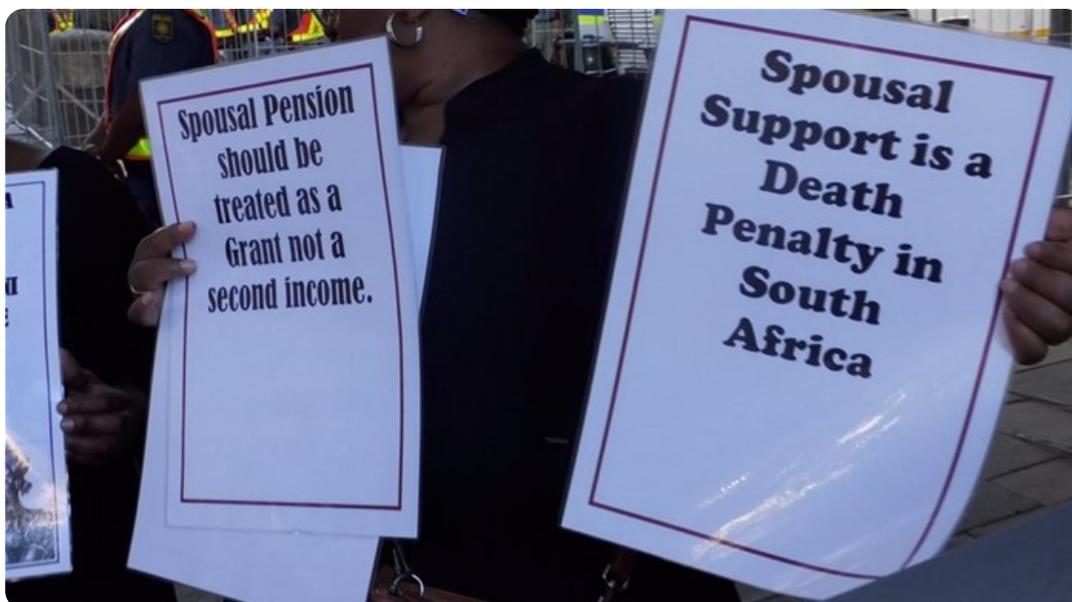


Although government has been rejigged, and some elected parliamentarians have changed hands, yet she and many others whom she represents kept hoping against hope.

From the front of the Parliament Building in Cape Town, as the State of the Nation Address (Sona) event rumbled, Zibisi found her voice in tears before the cameras of MDNTV. 'Though democracy is supposed to be the government of the people, by the people, and for the people, nobody, not even with my many visits, open letters to the president, and emails, cared to listen to us,' she muttered. Her voice drowned in her sobs.

MDNTV brings her situation, and those of the widows and widowers she represents, to the front burner. She believes that the media's attention will sweep aside the deliberate official bottlenecks to redress the oppressive tax regime facing them. Zibisi is a widow and mother of many grown, unemployed young adults from KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa's coastal province. She believes that they are being unfairly treated, and it's time for the government to take notice and bring about a change.

"The problem that we have with the government is that of taxes. There is a hangover of laws from the apartheid era that are still with us today" she asserted.



The party promised that it will reverse all the past imbalances; some of the laws amended. The part not touched is like bread and butter for them, apparently, Zibisi believes widows are being fleeced. "What they are doing to us is mind-boggling: if you receive your salary and also the spousal pension, they merge the two, and the tax bracket goes up because of a falsely bloated salary, then in the end, you find that you are unable to make ends meet," she laments.

Widows reveal that their houses are being repossessed because of the Act in place, which is the Tax Administration Act 2 of 2011; it has become instrument of oppression against them.

The situation has brought despondency in many families where the children has gone through school, graduated and stay home without employment. They argue that the unemployment challenge is as a result of the looting of the state by those who are supposed to be leaders. Regrettably, Zibisi says these people are untouchable, therefore not held accountable.

While the widow worked and did P.A.Y.E. (Pay As You Earn) that means taxes were paid. So, why did it merge the two payments – the spousal pension and the widow's salary or pension? They argued that leads to paying more tax than normal. Their earnest prayer is that government should separate these two monies.

Addressing the matter:

Zibisi narrates that the Parliament has been visited more than eight times. "I was with a standing committee in February, where I left a memorandum. Of course, it promised to send the memo to Parliament to look at it and make some amendments. Until this moment, nothing has been said or done. I also wrote an open letter to the president on 26 January 2020; I sent an email to the president with an acknowledgement given to me.

On elections:

When asked if she would vote for the ruling party in the upcoming elections, Zibisi declined to reveal her choice, stating that her vote is her secret. She expressed concerns about the ruling party, stating that although it is supposed to be a democracy, the government is too autocratic and makes laws that benefit themselves. Zibisi also mentioned that widows want their voices to be heard, and their pensions to be treated as a grant, rather than a second income.

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