

Double standards as thousands attend ANC rally



Viral video footage of an African National Congress (ANC) rally held at the Luthuli 9L Sports Grounds in Polokwane on Sunday, 8 November, attended by thousands not adhering to the social distancing regulations, has infuriated the live events industry who have not been able to work for over eight months.

“We as the TPSA, SACIA and SA Events Council have lodged a complaint with the South African Police, in particular with the Provincial Commissioner of Limpopo, Lieutenant General Nneke Ledwaba,” said Sharif Baker, Chairman of the TPSA. “We are absolutely disgusted at what has happened. It’s a smack in the face for the lives at stake, and literally a smack in the face of us in events who are abiding by the law.”

The Siyanqoba Rally in Ward 14 in Pokowane and issued by the ANC Peter Mokaba Region, included live entertainment and was attended by a massive crowd, most attendees not wearing masks. The event blatantly disregarded the 500 outdoor capacity restrictions as dictated by the ANC government. The current Level 1 risk reduction strategy implemented to slow the spread of Covid-19, allows up to 500 people for outdoor gatherings and a maximum of 250 people for indoor gatherings.



“This event has taken place where thousands of people did not follow a protocol whatsoever while the live events industry starve,” said Baker. “We have not left this alone and have been in communication with Nkosinathi Emmanuel ‘Nathi’ Mthethwa, the Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture while copying in Khumbudzo Phophi Silence Ntshavheni, the Minister of Small Business Development, Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubanem the Minister of Tourism, and the Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, as this matter speaks to all aspects of our industry, both live and business events.”



The live events industry, which effects a range of companies and individuals from technical suppliers and freelancers to event coordinators, has suffered during the Covid-19 period, and while virtual and hybrid events are slowly beginning to take place again, it's hardly sufficient to put bread on the table. The industry stood together for #LightSARED on 5th August when 505 buildings, including iconic sites like Table Mountain, were lit in red across South Africa to demonstrate the plight. The industry has also participated in the global #WemakeEvents campaign to further raise awareness.