

#Flightcasemovement fight for human rights

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For the South African Live Events Industry, September the 8th will never be the same again – it was an emotional day that will be tattooed in the hearts and souls of the two hundred people consisting of business owners, technicians and freelancers, who gathered at the Paul Kruger Statue in Central Pretoria to hand over a memorandum of demands to the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture. Under the banner of the #Flightcasemovement, this historic event saw the industry standing united, marching and pushing flightcases to represent their cause.

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The industry players joined in spirit by those who could not afford the transportation cost to be there, represented the humanitarian violation the technical industry has endured for the past six months. "I felt like I was part of a huge national movement that will never be seen for another hundred years, I was proud to be part of this committee," said Sizwe Mokoena of Ugozi Entertainment, a member of the #Flightcasemovement and who led the protestors in peaceful songs like Asisanamali, the desperate cry to be able to work and generate an income again.



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Since March 15, the South African government has implemented one of the strictest lockdowns across the globe yet has not financially assisted the events industry besides a small income (for some) from COVID-TERS UIF which has also come to an end. Under the gatherings act, events cannot cater to an audience of more than 50 people. It is estimated that the live events industry contributes millions of Rands to the country's GDP. The sad reality is that the industry is now struggling, its people are battling to survive, and many have moved back with their parents, sold their cars, homes and other possessions. "Companies are retrenching devoted staff who have dedicated their life and soul to the industry they hold so dear and deep within their hearts," said Lefa Tsiane from the movement. "Companies are closing doors as bills are piling up and assets are now being repossessed due to the government's strict regulations under the Disaster Act."



Kagiso Moima Wa Masimini, owner of rental company Blackmotion and founder and spokesperson of #Flightcasemovement addressed the crowd in Pretoria. "For years, we have invested in our crew and in equipment," he said. "Now even the banks are telling us that we are high risk. We can't continue like this any longer. Enough is enough. Our industry is always behind the scenes but today we want to be in front of our government and say that we matter too."

While the media has covered various violent protests held in South Africa during this time, #flightcasemovement saw friends in the industry gather together peacefully and taking part in an organized movement.

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"I had to laugh," says Tamsyn Strydom of MGG and an organiser for both #flightcasemovement and #Feedourcrew. "We were probably the only protestors to carry out two site visits before our protest, supply our own marshals (thanks Bra Eddie Sithole), supply water to the participants, register and hand sanitize each participant, and have the representative of the DSAC sing along while signing the memorandum. Metro Traffic even assisted us when we had to reload the trucks. I felt proud to be part of such an incredible industry that holds themselves high in their work ethic and perseverance. What broke my heart was seeing many of my colleagues for the first time in six months, some who have become close friends. My hope is that the government hears our desperate pleas and responds to them in a way that will allow us to survive until our industry regains in momentum."

The memorandum was received by a representative at DSAC, who has promised to address the issues with urgency and in a time frame of less than a week. The demands include the reopening of the live events industry at a 70% capacity; specific relief fund for businesses in the live events and technical production sector to the sum of R2 Billion; extended relief from financial institutions; relaxation of relief fund application requirements for freelancers; recognition of the live events and technical production sector and a seat at the table and a strategic; deliberate and sustainable plan on how to support the sector.



Said Duncan Riley of DWR Distribution who attended the protest, "Congratulations on a very successful march. I felt like I was a part of history in the making and it really touched me. I am still emotional about the movement and its vision and would like to commend everyone involved."

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In the words of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela: We can change the world and make it a better place; it is in your hands to make a difference.”

On behalf of the #Flightcasemovement committee, including Kagiso Moima Wamasimini, Tamsyn Gia, Sizwe Mokoena, Lefa Tsiane, Aubrey Ndaba and Sherryn Riley, thank you to everyone for attending the march.

“Together we can,” concluded brother Aubrey Ndaba, an industry stalwart. “Amandla.”