



NATIONAL NEWS FLASH



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NO MORE!!!

Another school destroyed, more schools vandalized and looted, the education of more children compromised. This is where we find ourselves today.

NAPTOSA is sickened by images of a school in Kwazulu-Natal burned to the ground, and the reason apparently being that people were looking for food. Having stolen everything in the school, there could be no reason other than callous destructiveness for the school to be burned. For, if it is to inflict hurt on government, there is the ballot box to do so.

Equally shocking is the great number of schools that have been looted. Stealing objects and equipment from a school is contemptible, but stealing the future of innocent children and disrupting their lives is unforgivable.

Our Constitution determines that “a child's best interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child” – and one of the greatest matters that concerns children is education. But this constitutional concern for the welfare of our children is of no value if the adults who are supposed to honour and protect the best interests of children, trample these interests at will as the protesters (kind term for common criminals) have once again demonstrated.

How can we move forward as a country if this is the calibre of citizen we have in our midst? If people are unable to act responsibly themselves, Government needs to step in and enforce responsible conduct through legislation. The time has arrived where the destruction and damage to schools can no longer be dealt with as merely an offence of “damage to property”. It needs to be elevated to something more telling for which more severe and deterrent sentences can be imposed and where the damage it causes children, becomes an aggravating factor.

NAPTOSA, on an earlier occasion where schools were destroyed, called these acts tantamount to treason and this view still holds true.

Apart from the psychological impact on the learners and teachers of the affected schools, there is a much wider impact on the psyche of children in general, because every time they see adults being angry at issues in society, they must fear that their school may be targeted for destruction with resultant disruption to their lives.

As NAPTOSA we say “NO MORE”

It is fact that the vandalization of schools are not perpetrated by unknown forces, but by persons living in the community. Therefore, others in the community must know those responsible. We call on them to come forward and do the right thing.

BASIL MANUEL

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR