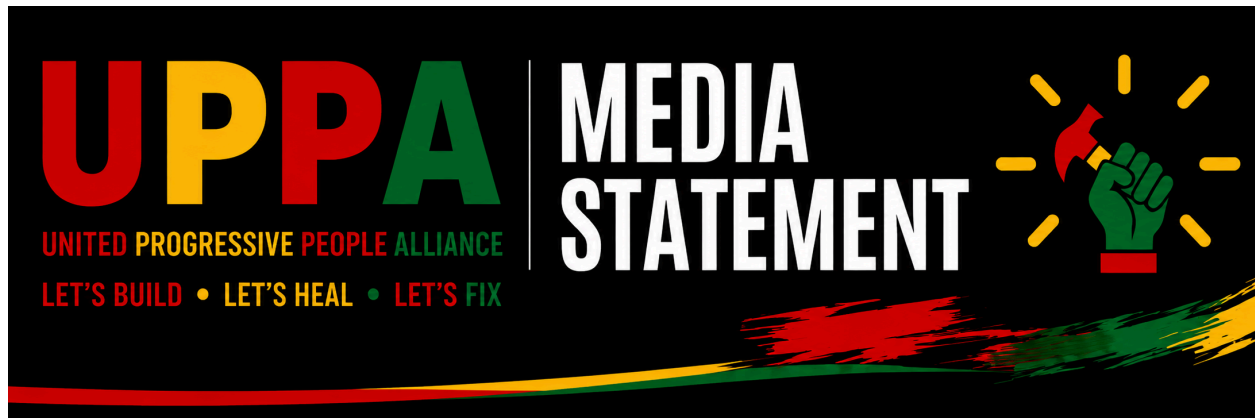




Media statement

KNYSNA CANNOT BE RUN LIKE A PRIVATE CLUB, UPPA DEMANDS ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY AND CLEAN GOVERNMENT

06 October 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The United Progressive People Alliance (UPPA) is deeply concerned by the latest developments in Knysna Municipality, following the arrest of former Executive Mayor Thando Matika, Acting Municipal Manager Boy Ngubo and Acting Chief Financial Officer Busisiwe Lubelwana in connection with allegations of corruption, extortion and money laundering relating to a municipal security-services contract.

All three accused remain entitled to the presumption of innocence, and the courts must be allowed to determine the facts and merits of the case.

But Knysna residents are entitled to ask a very simple question: How did their municipality get to this point?

A municipality exists to serve residents, not political parties, political factions, individual office bearers or politically connected interests.

When the leadership of a municipality becomes engulfed in allegations of this magnitude, the consequences are not confined to the courtroom. They affect public trust, municipal stability, service delivery and every resident who depends on the municipality for basic services.

According to the National Prosecuting Authority, the matter involves allegations of corruption, extortion and money laundering, with the prosecution alleging that a businessman was solicited for kickbacks connected to the continuation of a municipal security contract. The matter has been postponed to 12 October 2026 for a formal bail application.

Knysna has now experienced a succession of deeply troubling developments.

The former mayor was removed by the ANC after his name appeared on the SACP's candidate list for the upcoming elections. He subsequently disputed his removal and maintained that he remained the duly elected mayor. The municipality has since received formal notification from the ANC terminating his membership and has treated the mayoral position as vacant.

The council has struggled with attendance and political instability, while the municipality has been left without a permanent executive mayor and mayoral committee.

Now three senior municipal figures are before the criminal justice system. This is not normal municipal politics. This is a governance crisis.

And the people of Knysna should not be expected to pay the price for political instability, factional battles and alleged corruption.

UPPA believes that every rand entrusted to a municipality belongs first and foremost to the people.

If any public money has been unlawfully obtained, diverted or misused, it must be recovered.

If contracts were manipulated, those responsible must face the consequences.

If officials abused their positions, accountability must follow.

If there were failures of oversight, those failures must also be investigated.

And if anyone is ultimately found innocent, that outcome must equally be respected.

It cannot be used against political opponents while protecting political allies. It cannot begin and end with arrests. It must extend to procurement, contracts, political influence, municipal administration, financial controls and the recovery of public money.

The people of Knysna deserve a municipality where:

- * contracts are awarded transparently;
- * public money is protected;
- * officials are appointed on competence and integrity;
- * political office bearers respect the law;
- * whistleblowers are protected;
- * council oversight actually functions;
- * service delivery is prioritised over political games;
- * and residents can trust the institutions they fund through their taxes and rates.

UPPA therefore calls for:

1. A transparent investigation into all allegations surrounding the security-services contract.

2. Full cooperation between the municipality, SAPS, the NPA and all relevant investigative authorities.
3. The protection of witnesses and whistleblowers who provide information to investigators.
4. A comprehensive review of municipal procurement and contract-management processes.
5. The recovery of any public funds proven to have been unlawfully obtained or lost.
6. Full disclosure, within the bounds of the law, of the municipality's expenditure on security and other extraordinary costs associated with the current political crisis.
7. An urgent restoration of stable, lawful and accountable municipal governance.

Knysna cannot continue to be treated as a battleground for political factions while residents carry the burden of failing governance. Residents do not care which faction wins an internal party argument.

They care about water. Roads. Refuse collection. Housing. Safety. Jobs. Clean administration. Functional municipalities. They want leaders who understand that public office is a responsibility, not an entitlement.

UPPA will not prejudge the criminal case against the accused. That is the responsibility of the courts. But UPPA will also not remain silent when the credibility of local government is placed under such severe strain.

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