

Church Land Programme



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Dancing and tears and moving forward at Kennedy Road:

A statement of solidarity to Abahlali baseMjondolo from CLP

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All of us at CLP [Church Land Programme] were so happy when the 'Kennedy 12' were finally acquitted this week. We congratulate the movement on this victory and for the strength you have all shown throughout the process. We were proud and privileged to find some practical ways of helping during the ordeal. From the times we were able to see some of you in prison and in court, and during the time we were able to provide you with shelter in safe accommodation, the 'Kennedy 12' became much more than a group of 'the accused' to us. We got to know you well as real people. Now that the trial is over we wish you all: peace and love in your lives; healing and strength in your spirits; comfort and security in your homes; and friendship and community in your neighbourhoods. Of course it is true that everyone everywhere deserves these things and we will continue to struggle with you and the movement to achieve that - but we know in your cases especially, just how much they have been disrupted since the attacks of 2009. With the court case behind us, let us move forward! As the CLP, we know that the best way forward is to be guided by the leadership of those who suffer and who mobilise democratically to end suffering and injustice – for everyone, everywhere.

We know that after hearing the decision in court, 'the 12' and others got taxis and went to the Community Hall at Kennedy Road. We know that this was necessary because, in your words, 'the court victory is nothing without also setting our feet again on the soil of Kennedy Road'. We know that there was dancing and celebration in the Hall; we know that you were able to walk for some time in the settlement again; and we know that you were joined in this time of celebration by some of those still staying there. We also know that there were tears.

We have heard from movement's consultations with those who have been affected, and we know of the wish to invite everyone who was displaced from Kennedy Road to be part of taking up their places again. We have heard how you wish for that process to be a careful and welcoming one, that helps to rebuild unity and a real sense of community for the whole settlement. We know that you are already sensitive to the fact that this will not be a simple matter in every case, even though it is obviously right and important. We know that, as a movement, you are committed to involving every affected person in the process and to hearing the dreams and fears, hopes and concerns of all. In the true spirit of Abahlalism, we are confident that you will find the best ways forward by continuing to put into practice the sacred principle that 'everyone counts'.

As you move forward in this way, CLP re-affirms our solidarity and friendship.