

**22 July 2013**

Dear North Carolina chapter of the NAACP,

**Open letter of support from SECTION27 to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People**

SECTION27 stands in solidarity with you, the North Carolina chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, as you revitalise a historic movement to safeguard human rights; in this instance, against attacks from a supermajority in the North Carolina (NC) state legislature.

The NAACP is the oldest and largest civil rights organization in the United States. Since 1909, it has fought for the rights of African-Americans and all oppressed people in the United States. Its mission is "to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination".

As a result of an influx of campaign funding from private donors and a 2011 process of carefully gerrymandering electoral districts, the NC legislature has been taken over by moneyed interests.

From the beginning of 2013, this group has, for example:

- restricted voting rights;
- restricted women's rights;
- cut public benefits to the poor;
- cut funding for education;
- refused to accept money from the federal (national) government to provide healthcare to poor North Carolinians;
- cut taxes for the wealthiest 5% of North Carolinians while raising taxes on the other 95%;
- prohibited people on death row from challenging racially discriminatory verdicts; and
- refused federal funds that would provide unemployment benefits to 170000 North Carolinians.

All of these actions raise grave human rights concerns.

The NC NAACP and other progressive partners have organised weekly protests at the state capital in which thousands of people have come out in support of equality and human rights. It is a movement of people of all colours, ages, faiths and backgrounds. In the

tradition of nonviolent civil disobedience, almost 900 people have subjected themselves to arrest for peaceful protest in order to draw attention to the legislature's attacks on poor and marginalised North Carolinians.

Struggles for freedom in South Africa and the United States share a long history of exchanging strategies and maintaining solidarity in the fight for justice.

For example, the Treatment Action Campaign, out of which SECTION27 has evolved, is a grassroots South African social movement that continues to engage in a combination of activism and legal action. Its work, which has saved millions of lives by leading to wide scale roll out of antiretroviral medication, was, in large part, inspired by the organising tactics of the Treatment Action Group, a US activist organisation that spurred the development and dissemination of the first antiretroviral drugs in the world.

Today, Monday 22 July 2013, the NC NAACP will hold its 12<sup>th</sup> Moral Monday protest at the North Carolina legislature. SECTION27 stands united with the NC NAACP in this historic moment in the fight for equal rights for all people.

Our continued struggle is bound with yours. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote in his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail":

*"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."*

**Viva NC NAACP! Amandla! Forward together, not one step back!**

Yours in the struggle,

SECTION27