

MEDIA STATEMENT

For Immediate Release



26 October 2026

GRAPE conducts Universal Basic Income Service in front of Parliament and handing over of Memorandum of demand to Parliament, 28th October 2026 10:00

Churches Demand a Universal Basic Income Grant Now

Responding to the Minister of Finance's Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement of 21st October 2026, South Africa's churches call on Parliament to stop the delay and implement the Taylor Committee's 2002 recommendation for a Universal Basic Income Grant now

As people of faith committed to justice, compassion, and the dignity of every human being, we welcome every effort by government to cushion South Africans from the rising cost of living. Measures to reduce the impact of rising fuel prices acknowledge the hardship that many households face as global conflicts and economic instability continue to drive up the cost of essential goods and services.

The South African government's renewed fuel subsidy, aimed at cushioning motorists from escalating fuel prices by reducing the fuel levy following the economic impact of the Iran conflict on global oil markets, demonstrates that the government can intervene decisively when external shocks threaten household livelihoods.

While temporary fuel price relief has been welcomed, it raises an important moral and policy question: Why is government prepared to subsidise fuel during a crisis, yet continues to delay the implementation of a Universal Basic Income Grant (UBIG) that would provide ongoing protection to millions of unemployed and impoverished South Africans?

The consequences of rising fuel prices extend far beyond the petrol pump. They increase the cost of food, public transport, healthcare, education, and every basic necessity. The poorest households—many of whom do not own vehicles—bear the heaviest burden through higher prices and reduced purchasing power. Herein lies a deeper economic flaw. A fuel subsidy rewards consumption rather than need: the more petrol a household burns, the more it's supported. The owner of a large vehicle with a full tank benefits far more than a family walking to town or waiting for a taxi, while those who own no car at all—precisely the poorest—receive no direct support whatsoever. The oil companies, for their

part, have reaped extraordinary windfall profits from these very interventions. In this way, public money flows upward to big business rather than downward to people.

A Universal Basic Income Grant is different and reverses this logic: it places resources directly in the hands of those living in poverty and builds the economy from below, where every Rand spent circulates through local shops, markets, and communities. A Basic Income Grant is an investment in social stability, economic participation, and human dignity. Numerous studies have shown that income support increases household resilience, stimulates local economies through increased spending, and reduces hunger and extreme deprivation, offering ownership and participation.

The church, therefore, calls on government to:

- ☑ Implement a Universal Basic Income Grant as a permanent pillar of South Africa's social protection system as a matter of urgency.
- ☑ Ensure that emergency measures, such as fuel levy reductions, do not divert attention from addressing structural poverty and unemployment.

The Churches will conduct a public service and present a memorandum of demand for a UBI to Parliament on 28th October 2026 at 10h00. The Churches believe that it is high time that Parliament stops the delay and implement the Taylor Committee's 2002 recommendation for a Universal Basic Income Grant now.

The Press is invited to participate and report about this important milestone.

Issued by:

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