

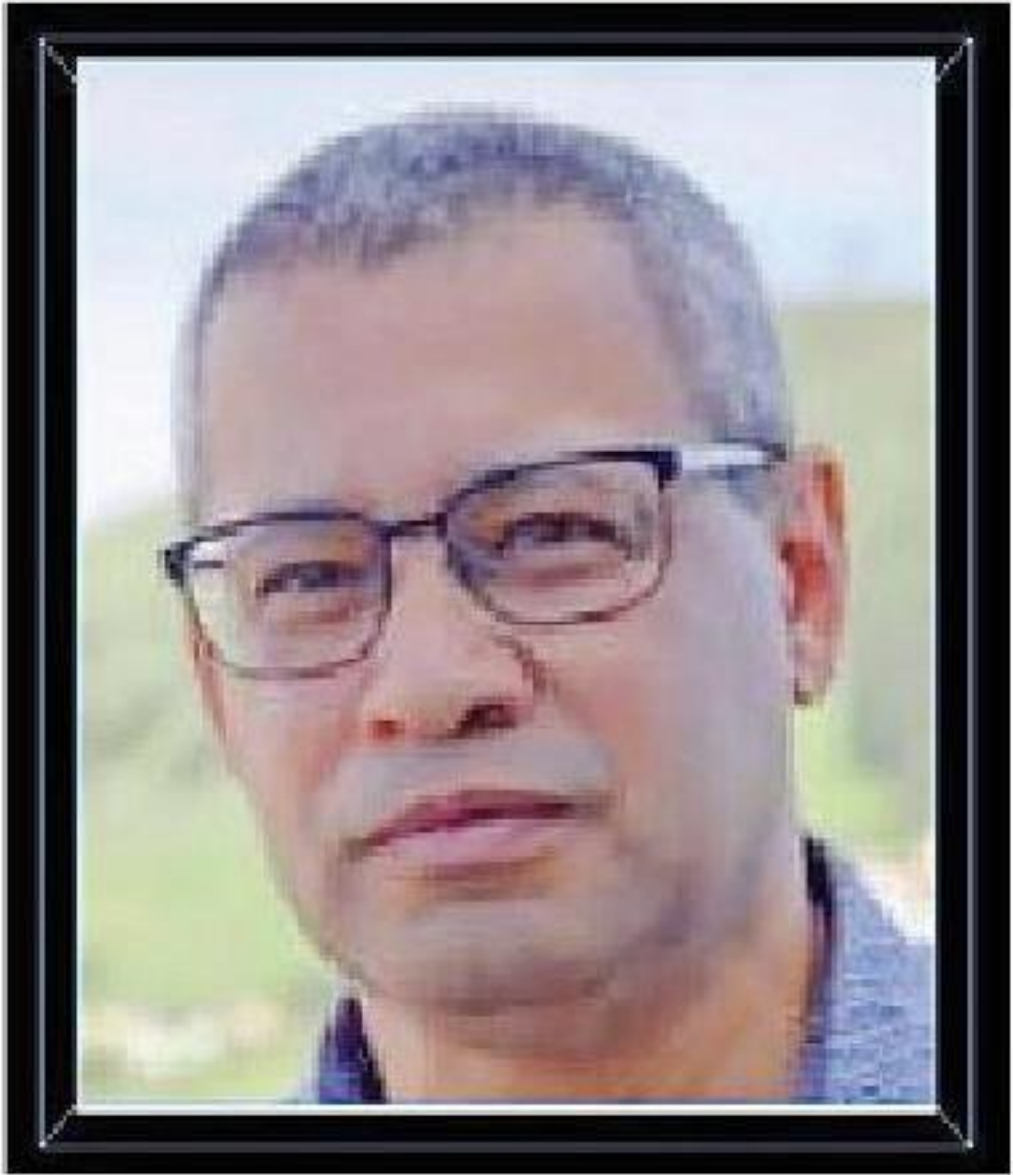
THIS year, it will be 31 years since the signing of a very important document called the Groote Schuur Minute.

This one-page document, signed on 4 May 1990, established “efficient channels of communication between the government and the ANC in order to curb violence and intimidation ...” It further sought “... to review existing security legislation to bring it into line with the new dynamic situation developing in South Africa in order to ensure normal and free political activities.”

The Groote Schuur Minute was the forerunner to the South African Constitution, adopted in May 1996.

Thirty-one years later, violence is once again a real threat to South Africa. The shooting of three teens in Mitchell’s Plain this week. Four children’s bodies were found after they fell into a hole near the N2 Borchers Quarry intersection. The unresolved murder of Lt. Charl Kinnear. Add to that the recent drama of the beach lockdowns, the Cape Independence movement’s efforts to ramp up its message, and the general state of poverty in the

CHANGETHISTORY



LORENZO A DAVIDS

THE UNVEILING
OF A FARCICAL
STATE OF AFFAIRS

country, and we have a recipe for mass reactions to the current suffering. We will soon see a humanitarian crisis of

epic proportions as unemployment and poverty begin to strip down the last vestiges of resilience.

Add into this the scope of State corruption, and one sees a state at war against its people. The Minister of Finance can cook his pilchards on social media, but 27% of South African children suffer from stunting under this government’s watch.

The post-Mbeki era government has continued to bankrupt this country. The governing party is in the middle of an ethical crisis – not that ethics ever mattered in politics. I have no idea how the president can govern effectively when he does not know which faction his ministers are aligned to.

The perfect storm has arrived. A pandemic and health crisis. A bankrupt government. High unemployment. Unnecessary deaths that are making people angry. Rampant violence that the state can no longer control. A bloated and arrogant government and a political aristocracy akin to pre-French Revolution conditions are all fuelling dissent. This is the

perfect storm.

The civic leadership that was so prevalent in the 1980s have all but disappeared. On one side of the political divide, people are too scared to speak out against the ruling party because of a perverse loyalty. On the other, they are too afraid to be savaged on social media for speaking out against the DA. Our democracy is at its frailest. We have now moved to such extreme positions that John Steenhuisen blocks people on Twitter for criticizing him while he insists on freedom of speech in parliament. Bizarre. Others are joining a delegation to visit the Jacob Zuma compound to support him in his bid to defy the highest court in the land. None of these extremes serves to make our democracy stronger.

All this shows that no party should govern a country for 27 years and that no political leader should be allowed to make money off the state through business deals. The nature of politics in the 21st century is that it must be a highly contested space that regularly goes either way.

What will save us? Every city

should have five things to effect a short to medium term turnaround strategy of the decay: A robust integrated housing policy. A strong social safety net. A bold jobs programme. An effective civilian safety system. And finally, a high outcomes education programme.

Unless we have a well-functioning state, we will continue to be distracted by antics such as the “unveiling” of leaders as the Minister of Transport does or “how to cook pilchards” sideshows as the Minister of Finance does. The dysfunctionality is becoming farcical. How do we get back to bringing our democracy “into line with the new dynamic situation developing in South Africa in order to ensure normal and free political activities?”