

Memorandum

Stop the damage to our public broadcaster

The Board of Directors, South African Broadcasting Corporation

Auckland Park, Johannesburg
6 July 2016

The time has come to act – and to act decisively – against the destruction of a national asset, the SABC, and the persecution of those inside it fighting to retain what little remains of its integrity.

The SABC is a public asset, paid for by and accountable to the people of South Africa, and on which nearly half of our people rely exclusively for access to the information on which they rely to make decisions about their lives and this country.

The Board of the SABC is appointed by the President on nomination by the National Assembly, but is ultimately accountable to the people of South Africa, and exists for no other reason than to serve them.

Today we:

- South African Communists in the **SACP**,
- Members of the **Save Our SABC Coalition** and of its affiliates,
- Members of **Media Monitoring Africa**, and of
- The National Association of Manufacturers in Electronic Components (**Namec**)

and all organisations with us today, and in the name of all South Africans supporting these demands and this campaign, submit this memorandum to demand that the Board of Directors of the SABC, non-executive and legally appointed executive directors alike, act as the Constitution of our country, the Broadcasting Act, the PFMA and other legislation requires of them.

We note that the SABC, under your control:

- Continues to allow Hlaudi Motsoeneng, to illegally occupy the office of Chief Operations Officer, in breach of a binding recommendation by the Public Protector, and of the findings of the Western Cape High Court that his appointment as “illegal” and “irrational”;
- Has allowed Motsoeneng, in his (illegal) capacity as COO to act as editor-in-chief, despite the fact that the process by which the “policy” authorising him to act in this position was improper, and in breach of the Broadcasting Act and of administrative justice, both of which are binding on the Board of the SABC, in that the public was not consulted on the draft policy;
- Has taken no action to prevent Motsoeneng, also in his self-proclaimed capacity as editor-in-chief, to illegally seek to impose on SABC journalists an edict in terms of which they are supposedly prohibited from reporting on any actions in which any-

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one sets fire to public property or engages in violent protests, although such censorship is illegal and unconstitutional;

- Has taken no action to prevent Motsoeneng, also in his self-proclaimed capacity as editor-in-chief, to illegally seek to impose on SABC journalists an edict in terms of which they are supposedly prohibited from reporting on public protests against this arbitrary censorship;
- Has taken no action to halt sanctions by the SABC against those of its journalists with the courage and integrity to oppose this attempt at censorship or to make their opposition thereto known publicly; and
- Has allowed Motsoeneng to act at variance with SABC policy to usurp the authority of the Board and of his superiors in a range of other actions, notably in awarding himself remuneration increases; in awarding other members of staff unauthorised increases; and in determining SABC policy – notably, but not exclusively, on broadcast digital migration.

As South African patriots and democrats, we and our compatriots did not fight to end apartheid state broadcasting simply so that the SABC Board could passively allow a self-appointed autocrat to destroy the SABC, or so the Board appointed in our names would allow it to be pillaged and corrupted and to be used as a tool to encourage factionalism in our politics.

Demands

We therefore demand:

- The immediate and unconditional lifting of the suspension of SABC journalists and the dropping of all charges against them;
- The immediate scrapping of the SABC's illegally revised editorial policies – including the mandatory 'upward referral' rule that gives one individual absolute power to decide what the people of South Africa see and hear; and
- The removal of Motsoeneng as 'COO' to which, our courts have found, he was illegally, improperly and irrationally appointed. And, and as a declared liar, we demand that he be dismissed from the SABC entirely.

We require that you entertain our demands immediately and respond before Friday on the issue of the illegal attempts to sanction SABC journalists, and within a week (that is, **before** 14 July 2016) on the other two demands.

Signed, on behalf of the above-mentioned organisations and individuals:

Sekoetlane Phamodi
Media Transformation Task Team

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