



Metropolitan Park, Block B, 1st Floor, 8 Hillside Road, Johannesburg | Tel: +27(11) 079 1642 | Email: info@nfdi.org.za

STATEMENT FROM THE NATIONAL FOUNDATIONS DIALOGUE INITIATIVE (NFDI)

South Africa – foundations call for judicial inquiry into SABC

Johannesburg – A group of prominent foundations representing “illustrious South Africans” including Oliver and Adelaide Tambo, Desmond and Leah Tutu, Chief Albert Luthuli and Thabo Mbeki among others, have called for a judicial commission of inquiry into the SABC.

The Foundations Initiative (TFI) made the call on Friday for President Jacob Zuma to constitute a judicial commission of inquiry to review and make recommendations concerning the public broadcaster’s corporate governance systems, operations, adherence or otherwise to the Constitution, the Broadcasting Act, the SABC charter and all relevant labour legislation.

It said in a statement that certain elements within the SABC have established a “deeply troubling practice”.

TFI said the Public Protector and the courts have already made adverse findings against the SABC’s COO, Hlaudi Motsoeneng, which Communications Minister Faith Muthambi and the SABC board have ignored.

It said “elements within the SABC have established a deeply troubling practice of flouting corporate governance principles”. Motsoeneng’s decision to censor the broadcasting of violent protests in the country was also lambasted.

Stifling open debate

“The SABC’s or more accurately, Mr Motsoeneng’s arbitrary decision to censor the broadcast of violent protests in the country takes the breach to new levels, and offends against the Constitution of the Republic, the Broadcasting Act, the SABC charter and basic democratic ethos, all of which enjoin the SABC to inform the nation in a scrupulously fair, impartial and accurate manner.” It said the SABC is stifling open debate and the free flow of information and ideas.

“This threatens the very essence of our democracy.”

The foundation feels that only the Independent Communication Authority of South Africa (Icasa) or the Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa (BCCSA) can justify the censoring of broadcasts on the public broadcaster.

The foundation added that there are similar governance breaches at the National Directorate of Public Prosecutions, the South African Police Service, the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (Hawks), the Independent Police Investigative Directorate (IPID), Passenger Rail Agency of SA (Prasa), South African Airways, the South African Post Office, the South African Revenue Service, the National Energy Fund, PetroSA and now recently, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).

“We also note that other public institutions have experienced or are experiencing similar governance breaches and leadership failures. These include but are not limited to the unceremonious coerced departure of senior personnel, often resulting in a leadership vacuum, questionable procurement and other ill-advised decisions as well as appointments of people of doubtful backgrounds, qualifications and abilities.”

Author: Wim Pretorius, News24
Date: Johannesburg, 9 July 2016.

For further enquiries:

www.nfdi.org.za

NFDI Office

+27 011 480 4760

A/h 011 0791642

1 The National Foundations Dialogues Initiative (NFDI) is a programme of the following Foundations acting together: The Albert Luthuli Foundation, the Robert Sobukwe Trust, the Helen Suzman Foundation, the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation, the FW de Klerk Foundation, the Thabo Mbeki Foundation, Umlambo Foundation, and the Jakes Gerwel Foundation.