



MEDIA STATEMENT

SABC ACTS AGAINST EMPLOYEES AFTER EVIDENCE SHOWS PRESIDENT'S SPEECH WAS SABOTAGED

Johannesburg – Tuesday, 10 September 2019 - The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) can now provide the public with an update regarding a serious production and transmission failure that occurred in its News Division on the evening of 5 September 2019.

The incident occurred at 18h00 when the SABC News Channel aired an incorrect clip of President Cyril Ramaphosa's pre-recorded address to the nation on The Full View programme.

The SABC's preliminary investigation into the incident has revealed that material for the 18h00 broadcast of the President's pre-recorded address was prepared in good time to ensure a clean transmission. However, unauthorised changes were effected without any communication to the desk. Consequently, the programme published and played the rehearsal clip from President Ramaphosa's recorded address to the nation, instead of the final version.

On that day, the SABC News office in Parliament had earlier sent the feed capturing both the rehearsal and final speech of the President to the Line Records desk. Those involved in production activities were all warned in advance that they should disregard the rehearsal clip. The SABC now has strong prima facie evidence indicating that the broadcast of the incorrect clip was a well-considered and coordinated act of sabotage to bring the SABC and consequently the President into disrepute.

The employees who were involved in production activities at the time of the incident were given opportunity to make written representations as to why disciplinary steps should not be instituted against them. The SABC has received the representations and, after due consideration, the Corporation has decided to suspend three permanent employees and unschedule one freelancer. Due process will be followed. The second phase of the investigation into this incident is still under way.

The public broadcaster's Group Chief Executive Officer, Madoda Mxakwe says "the SABC will not tolerate any acts or omissions that bring the public broadcaster into disrepute, and undermine efforts to eradicate systemic problems of malfeasance and maladministration plaguing the institution".

SABC News and Current Affairs Group Executive, Phathiswa Magopeni says "any employee found to be involved in clandestine activities aimed at undoing the ongoing work to restore the credibility of the public news service, will be dealt with accordingly within the confines of the SABC's human resources and disciplinary policies".

The news operation is mindful of the implications of the incident on its credibility and the reputation of the SABC. Magopeni further says “we are committed to doing everything possible to improve the quality of our work and elevate the standard of our performance. What happened on Thursday has no place at all in the public news service”.

The public broadcaster wants to assure the public that it is on track in dealing with elements that seek to derail the SABC from fulfilling its constitutional imperative as a key pillar of our democracy.

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