



MEDIA STATEMENT

SABC BOARD MAKES PUBLIC FINDINGS OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO INTERFERENCE IN THE SABC NEWSROOM FROM 2012 – 2017.

Johannesburg – Monday, 5 August 2019 – The South African Broadcasting Corporation's (SABC) Board has made public the findings of an Independent Commission of Inquiry into interference in the decision making in Newsroom of the SABC ("the Report") between the years 2012-2017.

In May 2018, the SABC established an independent commission of inquiry and appointed veteran journalist Dr Joe Thloloe as an industry expert to head it. He was supported by Mr. Stephen Tawana from MMM Attorneys.

The SABC established the inquiry after taking into account the 2014 Public Protector's Report: "When Governance and Ethics Fail", the 2017 Parliamentary Ad Hoc Committee inquiry into the SABC, as well as a report by the Complaints and Compliance Committee of ICASA, following a complaint against the public broadcaster by Media Monitoring Africa, SOS and the Freedom of Expression Institute in 2016.

The independent inquiry received written submissions, conducted extensive interviews and some of these in public. Dr Thloloe submitted the final report on 25 February 2019.

As the SABC Board was inquorate at that time, the presentation, consideration and publication of the report had to wait until a newly-constituted board was in place.

At its first quarterly meeting last week, the SABC Board received and acknowledged the Report. It believes that it is an important milestone after a very bleak and dark past, particularly for the SABC's journalists and editorial staff. The Board has approved the publication of the Report and further confirmed that the recommendations of the independent inquiry with respect to oversight and reporting would be taken into account when the SABC finalises its Editorial Policies before the end of September 2019.

The Report sets out details and findings with respect to a very painful period in the history of the public broadcaster. The SABC Board is deeply concerned about the findings on individual employees named in the report as being implicated in editorial interference. It further notes the finding of the Report that the

SABC “suffered from the capricious use of authority and power to terrorise staff and to deflect the corporation from its mandate and its Editorial Policies”.

In this regard, the SABC commits to taking urgent disciplinary action against those implicated, in terms of the SABC’s disciplinary code and policies. The SABC wants to put on record that it will not tolerate any interference with the editorial independence of the newsroom.

The publication of this report will help the SABC deal with its unfortunate past. We thank both Dr Thloloe and Mr Tawana for their important work. The Board views the SABC’s editorial independence as sacrosanct, and is fully committed to upholding public mandate of the broadcaster.

The full report can be accessed here ([live link to the full report on the SABC website](#)).

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Issued by Board Chairperson Bongumusa Makhathini on behalf of the SABC Board.

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