



COUNCIL
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE
SOUTH AFRICAN
CONSTITUTION

Media Statement

Parliament ignores Crisis at SABC

19 July 2016

CASAC wrote to the Speaker of the National Assembly on 29 June 2016 requesting that a meeting of the Portfolio Committee on Communications be convened as a matter of urgency to deal with the crisis at the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). A copy of the letter is attached. The Speaker has not responded to this letter.

The SABC has since announced that it will not abide by the ruling of its constitutionally established regulator, ICASA, to reverse its decision regarding the censorship of the news in relation to protest action. It has now also summarily dismissed eight journalists, ignoring any pretence at due process. This is a blatant act of intimidation of other journalists at the SABC, creating an atmosphere of fear, and undermining any prospect of the SABC meeting its constitutional, legislative and license obligations.

In view of the looming local government elections and the responsibility of the SABC as a public broadcaster to provide equitable access to all political parties and to report objectively on news issues, the position taken by the national legislature is regrettable.

Parliament is once again failing to exercise its constitutional responsibilities to hold the Executive and the SABC Board to account. The rebuke the National Assembly recently received from the Constitutional Court ruling in the Nkandla matter appears to have fallen on deaf ears.

CASAC once again calls on the Speaker, Baleka Mbete, to ensure that the National Assembly executes its constitutional mandate. Parliament must act urgently to remind the Minister of Communication and the SABC Board to respect the Constitution and the law, and facilitate an environment in which free and fair elections can be held on 3 August 2016.

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