



Ms Thoko Didiza

Speaker of the National Assembly

PO Box 15

Parliament Street

CAPE TOWN, 8000

Email: speaker@parliament.gov.za

7 February 2025

Dear Ms Didiza

SOS COALITION, MEDIA MONITORING AFRICA AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN EDITORS' FORUM: THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE SABC BILL

1. SOS Coalition Supporting Public Broadcasting (SOS), Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) and the South African Editor's Forum (SANEF) are taken aback by the delay in gazetting the withdrawal of the SABC Bill.
2. SOS, MMA and SANEF are of the view that the Rules of the National Assembly are extremely clear that it is the Minister that introduced a Bill that has the authority to withdraw it before a second reading thereof (Rule 277 read in conjunction with Rule 334).
3. We understand that the Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies (DCDT), Solly Malatsi, has notified you in writing of his decision to withdraw the SABC Bill in accordance with Rule 277 (1) which states that, "If a Cabinet member, Deputy Minister, committee or member decides not to proceed with the introduction of the a Bill after Rule 276 has been complied with, the Cabinet

member, Deputy Minister, committee or member must without delay inform the speaker in writing of the decision”.

4. The Minister’s decision to withdraw the Bill should have been gazetted in line with Rule 277 (3), which states that “The Speaker must publish a notice in the Gazette stating that the proposed legislation has been withdrawn where a committee or member decides not to proceed with the introduction of the Bill...”.
5. We understand that the Cabinet has written to you, overruling the Minister’s withdrawal of the Bill. This contravenes the rules of the National Assembly as the Bill was not originally introduced by Cabinet to parliament. We emphasise that as the Speaker, you do not have the authority to overrule this decision nor does the Cabinet, either in terms of the Rules of the National Assembly or of the Constitution.
6. We consider the failure to gazette the withdrawal of the SABC Bill, after receiving a written notice from the Minister, a failure to fulfil your duties in line with constitutional requirements and a failure to prioritise the public interest.
7. We acknowledge that the SABC Bill is a contentious piece of legislation, nonetheless, it is your responsibility as the Speaker to follow proper procedures and not become entangled in political disputes.
8. Therefore, we strongly urge you to immediately gazette the withdrawal of the SABC Bill.

Thank you

Yours sincerely

Uyanda Siyotula, SOS Support Public Broadcasting Coalition

William Bird, Media Monitoring Africa

Reggy Moalusi, South African National Editors’ Forum

cc Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies, Solly Malatsi,
ministry@dtps.gov.za

cc Chairperson of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Communications and
Digital Technologies, Ms Khusela Sangoni Diko, ksangoni@parliament.gov.za

cc The President, Cyril Ramaphosa as Head of Cabinet,
presidentrsa@presidency.gov.za