



CFE Condemns Irresponsible Treason Allegations Against Afriforum and Solidarity

The Campaign for Free Expression (CFE) notes with alarm recent statements by Police Minister, Senzo Mchunu that the police are taking “very seriously” treason charges against Afriforum; by Hawks head, General Godfrey Lebeya that they are working closely with the National Prosecuting Authority in investigating these treason charges; and by ANC member of parliament, Nomasonto Motaung that Afriforum and Solidarity’s actions can be termed “treasonous behaviour”.

This invocation of the crime of treason with reference to Afriforum and Solidarity, even if only in the sense of a possible prosecution, is improper and irresponsible. There can be no serious thought that the crime of treason, involving the use or threat of violence in order to overthrow the government, coerce it, threaten its existence or

security, or force a change in constitutional structure can have any application to Afriforum and Solidarity's recent engagements in the US and public pronouncements.

Statements such as these from law enforcement and public officials speak to a heavy-handedness entirely inconsistent with our Constitution and its values. With very limited exception, speech – however provocative, unpopular or unfounded – does not earn criminal sanction in our law and even the inference that it may do so by senior law enforcement officials is to be deprecated.

As aside, it also seems deeply unstrategic. Afriforum and Solidarity appear intent on pushing a narrative with which we and many other South Africans fiercely disagree. It is unquestionable that South Africa faces grave challenges, but their subjective position – that white South Africans, and white Afrikaners in particular, suffer an especial prejudice – is not born out by South Africa's reality. The pursuit of treason charges against them ironically may allow for the perception that there is substance to their posture.

Freedom of speech does not mandate fair, reasoned and conscientious dialogue. Its protections extend far beyond. Arguably, however, genuine commitment to our country and its betterment does compel such speech.



The Campaign for Free Expression is a non-profit organisation dedicated to protecting and expanding the right to free expression for ALL and enabling EVERYONE to exercise this right to the full, whether it by speaking out, by protesting, by revealing information, by blowing the whistle on wrong doing, by arguing, debating, writing, painting, composing or just by shouting out your opinion.

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