



Media Statement

11 July 2025

Civil society organisations call for the gazetting of the SABC Bill withdrawal

The SOS Support Public Broadcasting Coalition (SOS), Media Monitoring Africa (MMA), the South African National Editors' Forum (SANEF), and the Campaign for Free Expression (CFE) reiterate their deep concern over the ongoing delay in formally gazetting the withdrawal of the South African Broadcasting Corporations (SABC) Bill, despite the Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies, Solly Malatsi, having officially withdrawn the Bill in November 2024 in accordance with Rule 334 of the National Assembly (NA) Rules.

About seven months later, the Speaker of the NA has not gazetted the withdrawal as required by Rule 277(3) of the NA Rules. This delay represents a serious breach of the rule of law and separation of powers. The Speaker's inaction continues to leave the SABC in legislative uncertainty, while its financial instability persists.

On 4th July 2025, the undersigned organisations issued formal letters to both Speaker Thoko Didiza and President Cyril Ramaphosa (as Head of Cabinet), urging immediate action. These letters reiterate that:

- The Minister followed due process in withdrawing the Bill, as only the introducing Minister may do so before the second reading;
- The Deputy President, in his role as Leader of Government Business, in his feedback to Cabinet, supported the withdrawal after consultations with both the Speaker and the Minister;
- Cabinet does not have legal authority to overrule the Bill's withdrawal, to do so violates the rules of Parliament and the constitutional principle of the separation of powers;
- No stakeholder supported the Bill during the 2024 public hearings conducted by the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Communications and Digital Technologies;

- The SABC, through its Group Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Nomsa Chabeli, has expressed the urgency of finalising this Bill, to resolve, among others, the SABC's funding crises.

The delay not only frustrates the urgent need for fit-for-purpose legislation to enable a sustainable and independent public broadcaster, but it also wastes valuable time that could have been spent amending and reintroducing an improved Bill.

We therefore call on:

1. The Speaker of the NA to immediately gazette the formal withdrawal of the SABC Bill as per parliamentary rules;
2. Members of Parliament to hold the Speaker and Cabinet accountable for this undue delay and the overreach into legislative processes;
3. Cabinet to respect the independence of Parliament and the decision taken lawfully by Minister Malatsi.

Failure to act now risks further erosion of the SABC's viability!

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