



Media Statement

22 October 2026

CFE Welcomes Court Ruling Allowing Media Access to Former SSA Officials' Criminal Trial

In a victory for media applicants – Media24, amaBhungane and Daily Maverick – and the Campaign for Free Expression, the Pretoria High Court today granted the public and media access to the ongoing trial of former State Security Agency (SSA) employees, Thulani Dlomo and Patrick Mshothola.

Nicole Fritz, executive director of CFE commented: “the granting of this application helps restore the principle of open justice, so essential to the legitimacy of our criminal justice system and the courts themselves. That would be true at any time but it is especially true at this moment in South Africa’s history. When our law enforcement agencies and security services are not just facing credible allegations of criminal infiltration and general rot, but in several instances have been the subject of prominent high level inquiries, the ability of the public to observe their processes, how they arrive at their decisions, the justifications thereof, is critical to their being able to restore and enjoy public trust.”

But she cautioned: “while today’s ruling is a clear victory, we should be concerned that the SSA initially brought an application seeking a total exclusion of the public and media from these proceedings. It seems to me improper that the SSA would even have asked for an order that our highest court has long indicated will not be countenanced: a blanket exclusion of the public and media from court proceedings.

That they did not prevail is, of course, in line with the precepts of our Constitution but also testimony to the vigilance and persistence of the media.”

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