

Madonsela's findings call for proactive response

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In a world where common sense is not so common anymore, our public protector's statements always make sense.

Thuli Madonsela recently expressed her surprise at the recent permanent appointment of SABC's Hlaudi Motsoeneng

The public protector's office recently re-opened another case against the SABC's CEO.

Madonsela's report brought to light that once again the alleged wife-gift-accepting Motsoeneng's appointment did not follow procedure.

Proper governance procedure was not the norm in a Zuma-era appointment, yet again.

The report went on to reveal that Motsoeneng's appointment was fraught with fraud and his salary not properly allocated.

To hear that the person in charge of overseeing distribution of objective information to the country's majority does not even possess a matric and earns more than R1.5-million per annum, does not make sense to "clever people".

Was there no clever black (or white) with a relevant junior or post-grad media or communications degree to run the national broadcaster or is the ANC simply fed up with selecting western-educated professionals to key leadership positions?

Maybe the other side wants a chance - also like Number One.

Hearing stories of patronage on a daily basis makes it easier for us as citizens to be desensitised to the ramifications such lack of proper governance represents for our democracy, and by extension, our daily lives.

Yes, the office of the public protector's responsibility is to protect the rights of the public but no one person can do this without the support of the public.

It is why I sometimes feel that Madonsela stands alone in her crusade to ensure our country is governed according to the values espoused in the constitution and that hers will be a losing battle if we do not support her findings in ways that matter and are effective.

We applaud her - but do we back her when we should?

She stands alone among the high-profile circles she is entrusted to investigate.

But we as citizens have also left her to hang to deal with "her people".

We applaud her and her office around dinner tables and philosophical conversations around television broadcasts of her findings.

We write positive messages about her in social media.



Madonsela has opened a new investigation into the SABC, that will include examining if Motsoeneng has the right qualifications to hold the position of COO of the corporation. (Image: SABC)

But do we stand up for her when she is under attack in a way that is effective or when her findings which are legally binding are ignored?

The answer is a simple no.



It's time citizens stood up so that Madonsela is not left on her own. (Image: GOS)

I attended an event at a Methodist Church where Madonsela was the speaker. Unafraid to answer any question posed to her, people fired away and questioned why her findings were never adhered to.

Not a single question centred on what we could do to help her legally binding findings to be enforced.

In light of her findings with Nkandla having had no consequences for the president and now after Motsoeneng's permanent employment despite her damning report, maybe it is time we started asking pertinent questions on how we can stand up to having the public protector's findings enforced. For starters, we could start by knowing our constitution word for word. I for one am ashamed to admit that I have read the constitution once and am dependent on the media's interpretation of it.

How many of us can recite the constitution inside out?

I bet very few South African citizens can.

We need to say 'Enough'

Our compass against which we measure our leaders is based on what we deem as right and wrong only. Of course there is nothing wrong with that, but using the constitution as our reference point, could add to the cause of making sure a constitutional democracy works for everyone and leaders are accountable to the public. Maybe our whispers (or wrath) on Facebook on Nkandla and other findings by Madonsela can be jotted down in a letter to the president without using an NGO but as private citizens coming together as one and confronting our leaders about the discrepancies in our constitution and how they govern us.

Maybe we could use the very e-mails we use every day to sign a petition attached to our e-mail signatures to say this is enough and demand straight answers and that there be consequences for squandering our taxes in broad daylight.

Government needs to get used to this kind of citizenry where every decision is questioned not only by the media but by its very citizens.

Just because Madonsela and her office are doing a stellar job at making our officials account, does not mean that the citizens of this great country who fought apartheid and won a new democratic dispensation, should not stand together to fight against the erosion of the very gains they have made.

It's time citizens stood up so that Madonsela is not left on her own after her findings.

Source: *Herald*, via I-Net Bridge