

# Mokonyane opposed to SABC retrenchments

Communications Minister Nomwula Mokonyane has expressed strong opposition to possible retrenchments at the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC).



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“As the shareholder, it is our considered view that any retrenchment exercise must be a last resort and an integral part of a holistic, well formulated and broadly canvassed turnaround plan aimed at steering the SABC towards future financial sustainability,” Mokonyane said in a statement on Monday, 17 September 2018.

The Minister, as the shareholder representative, has on few occasions met with the board of the SABC where she expressed her dissatisfaction with the preferred methods of implementing the turnaround plan submitted by the board to her for concurrence.

While the Minister appreciates the precarious financial position of the public broadcaster and the urgent need to contain costs, she has lamented the fact that despite numerous meetings with the SABC board on the need for a comprehensive approach to turnaround the public broadcaster, the board has insisted on retrenchment as the foremost and only solution.

“The Minister has raised her concerns with what she believes is an odd approach by the board of the SABC, which ignores the advice and support of the shareholder in this necessary and critical process of turning the SABC around. This is

inconsistent with the principles of good corporate governance, mutual interest and public good,” the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) said.

Throughout her engagements with the SABC, she has insisted on the process being objective and open to technical support by the shareholder and National Treasury.

“That is why she established a turnaround task team comprising the Department of Communications and National Treasury to work with the SABC in this regard,” said the GCIS.

Mokonyane said the SABC is a national asset and as a public broadcaster, its well-being is not the exclusive domain of the board and its management but that of all stakeholders “with an interest in its sustainability and those include government (as a shareholder), labour, civil society and the broader public”.

Mokonyane is hopeful that the board and executive of the SABC will once again consider the advice and matters raised with them and seek a harmonised way forward based on mutual interest and respect for the benefit of the SABC and South Africa.

Government’s concerns regarding the turnaround plan, include the following:

- Details regarding how much the said retrenchments will save the company both in the short, medium and long term;
- The proposal to close certain offices and reduce staff does not demonstrate the service delivery impact analysis of the said restructuring and scaling down of employees per division, province and occupational category;
- How the SABC is going to manage and balance out the short to medium term challenges in order to achieve its long-term vision set out in the turnaround plan and lastly;
- The SABC is silent on revenue enhancement initiatives, including an improvement plan for the collection of television licences and the possible disposal of non-core and underutilised immovable assets and properties, which is crucial for the financial sustainability of the SABC.

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