

R2K, SOS take on SABC over phone monitoring

The Right2Know Campaign and SOS: Support Public Broadcasting, are taking on the SABC following reports that editorial staffers' phones are being monitored.

The organisations have taken on the SABC by means of a letter, which is addressed to Ellen Zandile Tshabalala, Chairperson, SABC, and it covers the limits of the repressive provisions of National Key Points Act and asks what state security threats the broadcaster faces.



In their letter, R2K and SOS say "We were as shocked as anyone to see [media reports](#) that you invoked the National Key Points Act to warn staff not to leak information to the public. In an interview, Kaizer Kganyago made a similar claim.

"This would not be the first time this has happened at the SABC. One of your predecessors, Khanyi Mkhonza, also invoked the National Key Points Act to deal with internal dissent at the SABC in 2009.

"We are aware that the National Key Points Act is a vicious and unconstitutional apartheid-era security law that has often been used to suppress information and stifle dissent, but you may be interested to know that you have gone beyond the unconstitutional prescripts of the Act.

"There is nothing in the draconian National Key Points Act that would prevent SABC staff from informing the public of evidence of political interference and governance crises at the public broadcaster. As expansive and draconian as the National Key Points Act is, the Act can only go as far as criminalising someone who reveals aspects of the physical security features at a national key point, not the affairs of the national key points in general. [1]

Repressive and should be scrapped



"The law itself is repressive and should be scrapped. And we agree that it is an expansive secrecy law - how else does one explain why all ten of the SABC's offices across the country have been declared national key points? But you are evoking repressive measures that go beyond what is imagined in an apartheid-era secrecy law. This is not a good place to be.

"We also note that you deny the allegation that you warned SABC staff that they may be under state surveillance - do you have any reason to believe that they may be? In any case, we also note that the State Security Agency is now involved in vetting staff. What state security threats do you face, as the public broadcaster?

"We look forward to your response, and will continue to campaign against the National Key Points Act, and towards a public broadcaster that provides quality content and is free from political interference!"

"For more information go to [The Right2Know Campaign](#) and [SOS: Support Public Broadcasting](#)

[1] You may also be interested in our pamphlet, [How the National Key Points Act undermines the public's right to know](#)

See also

- Bizcommunity.com: [Eavesdropping at the SABC](#)

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