

'Remove Motsoeneng: He's bad news' - Davis

Gavin Davis MP, DA Shadow Minister of Communications has called on the Communications Minister Faith Muthabi to remove the SABC's COO Hlaudi Motsoeneng from office as he's bad news for the SABC and bad news for SA.

Speaking in the Department of Communications (GCIS) Budget Vote Debate, 15 July 2014, Davis said the splitting up of the former Department of Communications has raised many questions. But the most important question is "why"? And more specifically, "why now"?

"We have entered the age of convergence - where traditional broadcasting is merging with new digital technologies.



Gavin Davis

"So, why is the Department diverging when everything else is converging?

"There may be very good reasons, but none have been forthcoming. In the absence of any reasonable explanation, our thoughts turn to more sinister motives.

"What exactly is behind the creation of this new Department? As with all things related to this government, the answer is purely political.

"Chairperson, the governing party is losing its grip on power. It is a fact that, under President Zuma:

- The ANC recorded its worst ever election result this year;
- The party dropped in Gauteng by 10 percentage points; and
- At the next local election, the ANC is in danger of losing three cities.
- Guptagate, Nkandlagate, Spygate and Marikanagate have shredded the President's reputation. To survive the next five years, he needs a good story to tell. And he needs all the help he can get to tell it.

So when the President appointed the Cabinet in May, he really put his Faith in Communications. And, make no mistake, Minister Muthambi is a very strategic deployment.

"In her first few weeks in Office, we have learned that the Minister wants to create what she calls a "professional army of communicators" to bring about an "information revolution".

"The Honourable Minister has been at pains to deny that this is a propaganda ministry. But her constant criticism of the media suggests otherwise.

"Last year, when she was still a member of this Portfolio Committee, she said in this very Budget Debate:

'(The) Media continues to publish negative news on government, disregarding the good service delivery record of government.'

"The Minister has continued in this vein since assuming Office. She said a few weeks ago (and I quote):

'I will be the happiest person if we can have a situation where every South African is informed about what government is doing. There are people out there doing good, but the story is not being told.'

"Clearly, the minister thinks it is her job to tell this good story. It is not.



"I propose the minister should take seven steps immediately:

1. Go back to one converged communications department in line with global trends.
2. Move the GCIS away from the SABC and put in place clear guidelines to prevent the abuse of GCIS for political purposes.
3. Break the cycle of dependency that makes community media dependent on government handouts for survival.
4. Reject the proposed "happy news" quota and distance yourself from this talk of licencing journalists.
5. Allow the SABC Board to take steps to remove Hlaudi Motsoeneng from office. He is bad news for the SABC and bad news for South Africa.
6. Move to limit, not increase, political and ministerial influence over the appointment and removal of SABC Board Members.
7. Allow an independent SABC Board to appoint the COO, CEO and CFO without ministerial influence.

"Madam Speaker, we support a government communication system that informs people of their rights and the services they are entitled to. But we reject the creation of a communications machine obsessed with telling people "good stories" about government.

For more:

- *Politicsweb*: [Let's dismantle this propaganda machine before it is too late - Gavin Davis](#)

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