

SABC volcano: unions, SACP, military vets up rhetoric

As the SABC volcano continues to erupt day by day, spewing out lava and sending staff and management scrambling for cover, unions, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the military veterans' association have intensified their rhetoric, hoping someone out there will listen and act urgently to heal the terminally-ill public broadcaster. But, as it is the case in any politicised crisis, some of the rhetoric turns out to be a war of words between comrades.

 By [Issa Sikiti da Silva](#) 22 Oct 2010



Embattled SABC board chairperson Dr Ben Ngubane was the first person to be singled out by the Broadcasting and Electronic Media Allied Workers Union (BEMAWU), which has launched an impassioned plea to President Jacob Zuma and Parliament's communications portfolio committee to remove him because of his "inability to perform".

Demonstrated inability

The union argues that Ngubane has demonstrated inability to carry out simple administrative functions, such as preparing documents for a meeting with an important body like the portfolio committee.

It also says the chairperson failed to sign the delegation of authority letter to enable CFO Robin Nicholson properly manage the SABC in his acting capacity as chief executive.

"By doing so, he put the SABC at severe risk by rendering all decision-making on the highest level inoperative, which will have an effect on the SABC to meet its mandate in terms of programming and repayment of its loan," BEMAWU president Hannes du Buisson said this week, adding that Dr Ngubane must be held accountable.

The union is concerned about Ngubane's erratic professional behaviour, which it said could put its members at risk, as they will be targeted first for retrenchments if the SABC cannot obtain another loan to meet its financial responsibilities.

The SABC board has been bleeding profusely for some time, with four of its members now officially confirmed 'gone too soon'. Therefore, the portfolio committee this week reminded the remaining members that a greater responsibility rests on their shoulders.

"Should be seen as a national service"

"Participation in the board under these circumstances should be seen as a national service," the committee said.

While the MKMVA, a grouping of former military elements of the ANC armed wing, came out in defence of their comrade, calling for the reinstatement of suspended CEO Solly Mokoetle, it also urged Zuma to

appoint a new board and dissolve the current board, saying it has failed the nation and must go.

"The current board is representative of the growing culture of using state institutions as a base of enriching themselves," MKMVA national chairperson Kebby Maphatsoe said yesterday, Thursday, 21 October 2010

And lastly, the SACP this week warned of what it called a 'plot' to take over the broadcaster for white elite interests.

"Factionalised and racialised class interests"

"We have of late been observing how the competing class interests of the liberal offensive, remnants of the 1996 class project and the new tendency in our movement, are all jostling to try and capture this national asset - the SABC - for often narrow factionalised and racialised class interests."

The SACP added: "We have also been concerned that the networks of the liberal offensive against our democracy and its cultures, opportunistically joined by an ultra-left in disarray, are mobilising to capture the SABC for narrow, and often white, elite interests."

However, the organisation did not elaborate on the alleged plot.

For more:

- Business Day: [Confusion reigns over SABC resignations](#)
- Business Day: [Elite unit asked to probe SABC](#)

ABOUT ISSA SIKITI DA SILVA

Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa. His work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to Bizcommunity.com as a senior news writer.

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>