

Joint Media Statement by The Forum of Institutions Supporting Democracy

For immediate release: Friday, 20 November 2015

Attention: Editors, Reporters, Journalists and News Desks

Forum of Institutions Supporting Democracy in South Africa condemns threats against Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities

We, the Chairpersons of the Auditor-General of the Republic of South Africa, Commission for Gender Equality, Financial and Fiscal Commission, Independent Communications Authority of South Africa, Independent Electoral Commission, Public Protector, Pan South African Language Board, Public Service Commission, South African Human Rights Commission, wish to express our dismay and concern at the unwarranted and unsolicited threats and intimidation that are made against the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL Rights Commission) a member of the Forum for Institutions Supporting Democracy (FISD), including the personal attacks and death threats that are alleged to have been made against the Chairperson of the CRL Rights Commission Ms Thoko Mkhwanazi-Xaluva.

The ongoing hearings by the CRL Rights Commission regarding the commercialization of religion and the abuse of people's belief systems is conducted within the mandate of the CRL Rights Commission, which is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic. The Commission is expected to conduct its business without fear or favour. The FISD wish to advise the relevant individuals that any interference with the Commission's work constitutes a violation of the law and will be dealt with accordingly by the appropriate law enforcement agencies. We are informed that the CRL Rights Commission has had to bolster its security to enable it to continue with its process around the hearings and this should not be happening to an institution established to support our hard won democracy.

We, on behalf of all the Constitutional Bodies, wish to state unequivocally that the alleged threats and intimidation directed at the CRL Commission and its Chairperson should not be tolerated in our constitutional democracy and those that are found guilty should face the full force of the law.

We urge those individuals and or groups who are alleged to be making unwarranted threats to desist from such conduct and to respect and uphold the values of our constitutional democracy and its institutions. We pledge our full support to the ongoing hearings by the Commission and have the confidence that the outcome will move our democracy forward.

We also call on other organs of state to assist and protect the CRL to ensure its independence, impartiality, dignity and effectiveness in compliance with Section 181(3) of the Constitution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. M.' or similar, located below the main text.

Issued jointly by the Forum of Institutions Supporting Democracy

Date: 20 November 2015

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