

Press statement

4 April 2021

Demanding accountability central to defending democracy

The Defend our Democracy campaign welcomes the Political Party Funding Act coming into effect.

We echo the sentiments of My Vote Counts and others who over the years have fought for transparency around political party funding.

Speaking on behalf of the Defend our Democracy campaign, Reverend Frank Chikane said, “Experience has taught our country how donations made to political parties can be used as basis to extract favours from politicians at a later stage. The lack of accountability with regards to party funding is central to state capture.”

Defend our Democracy activist Sheila Sisulu added, “For the first time, voters at this year’s local government elections can make informed decisions knowing who is funding the party of their choice. However, the electorate should also keep political parties on their toes and ensure that the Act is implemented and adhered to.”

While Chikane and Sisulu said that the Act was a “step in the right direction for a more transparent democracy”, they expressed deep concern over the Auditor General’s latest report into national and provincial audit outcomes.

“At a time when our economy is under severe strain, and when people are struggling on a day to day basis to make ends meet, government has wasted billions and nothing has been done about it. How is it that R2.22 billion can be lost through irregular procurement because suppliers did not deliver? R983 million was lost through overpaying for goods. Think of how many hospitals could have been improved using this money; how many more students could have had access to tertiary education; or how many dirt roads in rural areas could have been tarred. Why is it that we cannot get the simple control measures right to save money that belongs to the public?” questioned Chikane.

“Defending this democracy is as much about demanding accountability and consequences for current corruption and wasteful expenditure; as it is about countering those who want to destabilise the state. We must address the gaps in our systems that allow for this unchecked misuse of public finances to continue,” Sisulu stated.

Commenting on former President Jacob Zuma’s recent statement reasserting his stance against the Constitutional Court, Sisulu said, “The Zondo Commission of Inquiry’s Advocate Tembeka Ngcukaitobi was correct in saying that Zuma’s conduct threatens our Constitutional order, but that our system does have the answers required to address this conduct. This simply means that there must be consequences for defying the rule of law.”

Sisulu also spoke out against reported plans by paramilitary-like groupings to regather in Nkandla to prevent anticipated possible action being taken against the former President by legally mandated law enforcement authorities. “If today Zuma’s paramilitary-like supporters are able to prevent the law from taking its course, then tomorrow any drug-lord and criminal can do the same. Nothing then stops political, business and criminal cartels from employing their own paramilitary groupings to evade the

law. When the Con Court makes its ruling – whatever that ruling may be – there is a need for the state to assert its authority and ensure that the ruling is carried out in accordance with our Constitution and legal framework.”

Chikane urged South Africans to be part of the Defend our Democracy campaign. “As the justice system is cleaned up and capacitated, and the Zondo Commission closes in on those alleged to have been part of state capture or corrupt activities, we should expect the fightback brigade to intensify efforts to avoid accountability for their malfeasance. We must ensure that they never destabilise this country.”

Chikane also had a message for faith communities. “This weekend, Christians mark Easter, and the Jewish community commemorates Pesach. In a few days Muslims observe the fasting month of Ramadaan. Several days ago, the Hindu community celebrated the festival of Holi. This is a period of spirituality for many people and we ask all to continue praying for the stability of the country and for the forces of good to prevail over who seek to cause chaos to avoid accountability.”

[* Endorse the call to defend our democracy here.](#)

Issued by the Defend our Democracy Campaign

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