



## **Press Statement**

### **Conference for Democratic Renewal and Change to be held**

---

**29 June 2022**

The Defend our Democracy campaign will on the 1-2 July 2022 host the ‘Conference for Democratic Renewal and Change’.

The two-day programme takes place at Birchwood Hotel and Conference Centre in Boksburg.

The conference will see some 300 people from civil society, labour, business, faith-based institutions, youth groups, academia and various other sectors gather to share ideas, strengthen existing work and develop a common programme of action around democratic renewal and change.

Delegates will talk about the threats to democracy, and what should be the collective role in addressing these and envisioning a new, participatory politics. Participants will deliberate on what needs to be done to shift our politics from one that is the sole preserve of political parties, lacks accountability and is not service driven, to one that puts the public interests first.

Former deputy finance minister and author of the book ‘After Dawn – Hope After State Capture’, Mcebisi Jonas, will deliver the keynote address. Jonas will speak about the urgent need for political reform. He will be joined by Prof Sandy Africa, an Associate Professor in Political Sciences at the University of Pretoria in SA. Prof Africa will share insights on threats to democracy and lessons from the July 2021 insurrection.

The conference will see a broad range of panelists engaging on issues of electoral reform; holding public representatives accountable and the critical role of Parliament; how to prevent our municipalities from further collapse; ensuring that the public service works for the benefit of all; rebuilding grassroots activism; getting job creation to be national priority; and defining what

action is needed from civil society to ensure that the Zondo Commission's recommendations are implemented.

These issues, amongst others, emerged through a number of public submissions and recent sectoral and community meetings based on the campaign's [conference discussion document on democratic renewal and change](#).

A special tribute will be paid at the conference to the former head of Corruption Watch, David Lewis, for his activism against corruption. Prof Itumeleng Mosala will also receive an accolade on behalf of the Zondo Commission for its work in tackling corruption and capture.

The conference follows the release of the last of the Zondo Commission's reports, which lay bare the extent of corruption and vast state capture networks that destroyed numerous state institutions.

The conference also takes place a year after the July 2021 unrest, which saw 342 people killed, mass scale destruction, increased racial tensions, and billions of Rands wiped off the economy.

However, it also takes place during the month of Nelson Mandela's 104th birth anniversary. Over and above the general good that people do in honouring the legacy of the first President of democratic South Africa, the moment calls for the country to reflect on the very real threats that this democracy now faces.

It calls for a more active citizenry that will not accept corruption, capture, a lack of accountability, and poor service delivery; but mobilises towards achieving democratic renewal and change.

---

*Issued by Defend our Democracy Campaign*

**For media enquiries, contact:**

**Duduetsang Mmeti**

**Communications Officer - Defend Our Democracy Campaign**

**dudummeti@gmail.com**

**078 0889 294**

**CONFERENCE  
FOR DEMOCRATIC  
RENEWAL AND  
CHANGE**

**Envisioning a new politics  
that will enable people's  
power**

**KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**



**MCEBISI JONAS**



**SANDY AFRIKA**

