



Press Statement

8 May 2026

Defend Our Democracy Welcomes Constitutional Court Ruling on Phala Phala Farm Parliamentary Process

Defend Our Democracy welcomes today's judgment by the Constitutional Court declaring the National Assembly's handling of the Phala Phala matter unconstitutional and invalid. We regard this ruling as a significant affirmation of South Africa's constitutional democracy, the independence of the judiciary, and the supremacy of the rule of law.

This judgment reinforces a foundational principle of our constitutional order: that all public power must be exercised lawfully, rationally, and in accordance with the Constitution. No institution, including Parliament, is above constitutional scrutiny.

Defend Our Democracy is encouraged that the matter has now been referred to the National Assembly to ensure that the correct constitutional procedure is followed. Rule 129 exists to safeguard accountability and integrity in public office, particularly in matters concerning the possible removal of a sitting president.

In December 2022, Members of Parliament voted against adopting the report of the independent Section 89 panel and resolved not to proceed further with the impeachment process. The panel, chaired by retired Chief Justice Sandile Ngcobo, had found that President Cyril Ramaphosa may have violated Section 96(2)(a) of the Constitution as well as Section 34(1) of the Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act (PRECCA) in relation to the 2020 robbery at the Phala Phala game farm.

Today's ruling demonstrates the resilience and strength of South Africa's constitutional democracy. It confirms that constitutional accountability mechanisms must be credible, fair, and procedurally sound. It also affirms the critical role of the judiciary in safeguarding democratic institutions and ensuring that constitutional obligations are fulfilled.

Defend Our Democracy reiterates that accountability is not a partisan issue but a constitutional imperative. Upholding constitutional processes strengthens public trust in democratic institutions and protects the integrity of South Africa's democracy.

We call on all persons, including political parties, to respect the independence of the judiciary and to abide by its decisions, and to cease smear campaigns against the judiciary whenever rulings do not favour them. The rule of law is the cornerstone of democracy, and respect for judicial independence must always be maintained.

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