

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

The Commission has noted with concern the calls made by the lobby group Right 2 Know that this Commission should be disbanded. What really concerns us is not their call for dissolution as such but rather the misinformation peddled and the false allegations made to justify the call. This statement seeks to put the record straight.

Two points need to be made. Firstly, the origin of the latest campaign by a small group of black people purporting to be members of the Right 2 Know Campaign who picketed on Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> September 2014 in front of the offices of the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development in Pretoria is well known to us. In his recent radio interviews when he announced that he and Messrs Paul Holden and Hennie van Vuuren were withdrawing participation from the Commission proceedings, Mr Andrew Feinstein made it clear that they would campaign for the dissolution of the Commission and the latest campaign is a follow-up to that announcement. There can therefore be no disguising who the real instigators of the campaign are. And it cannot be a coincidence that the latest picketing takes place shortly after Mr Hennie van Vuuren was served with a subpoena (on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2014) to appear before the Commission in October. The picketers have also disclosed, through press interviews, that they will be picketing at the Commission's hearing on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2014, which is the date on which Mr van Vuuren is scheduled to appear.

In this regard, it is the Commission's firm view that the people who have been carrying placards and badmouthing the Commission know very little, if any at all, about what is happening at the Commission and are mere foot soldiers. This is borne out by the utterances attributed to one of the picketers in the article appearing in the Pretoria News of the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014 at page 4, entitled: "Right 2 Know members urge disbanding of Seriti probe". One such picketer, Mr Bongani Xezwi, is quoted as saying inter alia the following: "We have seen witnesses and Judges pulling out because (Judge Willie) Seriti won't allow them to give evidence". This statement is not only false but is also borne of complete ignorance of the Commission's proceedings. It is a sad story of people simply being used. If we are wrong in this regard, Mr Bongani Xezwi is hereby invited to personally engage the Commission on the allegations that the Commission lacks transparency and that it will provide a "whitewash".

The second point we wish to make is that the true reasons for the disgruntlement of Messrs Feinstein Holden & van Vuuren leading to their decision not to testify before the Commission relate to the deadlock over their demand that the Commission should provide them with all the documents in its position to enable them to conduct their own investigations into the very same matters that this Commission has been appointed to investigate. This deadlock is fully canvassed in the correspondence exchanged between the Commission and their lawyers and it will be inappropriate for the Commission to elaborate thereon in this statement.

Finally, the Commission wishes to caution members of the public and interested parties that it is a criminal offence to, inter alia, disparage or insult the Commission or its members. The Commission has thus far been extremely reluctant to invoke the powers it has in terms of the regulations to initiate criminal proceedings and other legal measures at its disposal against people who maliciously vilify it or its Chairperson but it may be forced to do so if the disparaging and insults persist. We trust that this shall not become necessary and that people can continue to freely express their views about the Commission and its work and, where necessary, criticise it and thus keep us on our toes.

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**Spokesperson**

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