

SATURDAY 18 OCTOBER 2014:



NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION FOR THE RIGHT TO COMMUNICATE



Image by Clare Louise Thomas | imageincubator.com

CAPE TOWN:

MARCH FOR MEDIA FREEDOM & DIVERSITY

STARTS 10am, outside CTICC

Call Vainola 079-648-1725

JOZI:

RALLY TO KEEP TV FREE / MEDIA FOR DEMOCRACY

STARTS 10am, outside SABC OFFICES

Call Bongani 073-390-1626

DURBAN:

PUBLIC MEETING ON MEDIA FOR DEMOCRACY

Venue to be confirmed

Call Joanne 083-498-1583

WE WANT MORE MEDIA, BETTER MEDIA!

*It's time to make the right to
communicate real for all.*

We are fighting for our right to communicate, to meet our need for information and the freedom to express ourselves. We need to communicate in order to organise, to participate in shaping the economy, to get jobs. To make our democracy work, we need to communicate with government, to tell them what we need and make sure they deliver on their promises. Communication is the foundation of our collective humanity, sharing ideas with a lover, a child, a parent or a friend.

Our law protects our right to communicate. Section 16.1b of our Bill of Rights grants everyone the "freedom to receive or impart information or ideas. But most of us have little way to communicate beyond the people we meet from day to day.

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Our demands are simple!

WE WANT MEDIA THAT WORKS:

- We want media that serve everyone in South Africa
- We want media that inform us so we can make our democracy work
- We want media that give us a voice
- We want media that is diverse, telling all our stories from different points of view
- We want media that is free of government and corporate control
- We want media that is not chained to companies that advertise, and their narrow interests

WE WANT TO BE THE MEDIA:

- We want to access information and to tell our own stories
- We want to access to telephones, cellphones and the internet to be a basic right
- We want free basic airtime and data for all
- We want high speed internet in every home and building
- We want our privacy protected and respected

Support the call for the right to communicate: dial *120*4729# (cost of 20c)

MORE MEDIA, BETTER MEDIA!

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After more than 20 years of democracy South Africa is still a land of immense poverty and suffering with little pockets of great wealth. When it comes to receiving information we see that the richest 16% of South Africans have a wide choice of media and the freedom which fast internet gives them, while the majority of South Africans (65%) have little media access, relying on one under-resourced community radio or newspaper, one or two SABC radio stations and eTV and SABC TV.

Who owns the media?

Two companies control most free TV, Naspers/DSTV has an almost complete dominance over pay TV and four corporations control over 80% of all newspapers and print media. These corporations are Naspers, Caxton, Avusa and Independent media. Our media is therefore almost entirely monopolised.

When it comes to telephone and the Internet, eight out of ten people have cell phones, but only one in ten have Internet in their homes. Only three in ten households have one or more people who can use their cell phones to access the Internet.

And who owns the infrastructure? Again four profiteering corporations control the cell phone networks that most people rely on: MTN, Vodacom, Cell C and Telkom. Two companies control all the fixed connections to peoples homes: Telkom and Neotel.

The companies that control the media and the phones/internet are all doing it to get even richer – to make us pay more so they can profit. They have no interest in us beyond making profits. This undermines our basic right and need to communicate.

What is the role of government?

You would think in a democracy that the government would stand up for the people, but you would be wrong. The Ministry of Communications should have the responsibility of ensuring that the public had access to communications systems, but now it has been given a new mandate: providing PR for the government and with making sure that government propaganda reaches the people.

The Ministry of Telecommunications is more interested in making telephones and the Internet work for business rather than for ordinary people.

Worse still, there are parts of government that want to limit what media we have. We have seen increasing intimidation from the police and legal threats from government and media owners towards journalists and

“We need communication to organise, to participate in the economy, to get jobs”



publications that report things they don't want the public to know. Government is even using old apartheid laws to silence the media.

Today more than ever we need a media that is free from government and commercial control, that can serve the people. Without the right to freely communicate and access information, we cannot hold those with power accountable or engage in the communication and exchange of ideas that are the basis of all our relationships. Without this, there can be no real democracy.

Amabango ethu acacile

SIFUNA AMAZIKO OSASAZO ASEBENZELA ULUNTU

- Sifuna amaziko osasazo asebenzela umntu wonke eMzantsi Afrika
- Sifuna amaziko osasazo asinika ulwazi ukuze senze idemokrasi isebenze
- Sifuna amaziko osasazo azakuba lilizwi loluntu
- Sifuna amaziko osasazo angekho calanye, abalisa amabali ethu ngokweenkalo ezahlukeyo
- Sifuna amaziko osasazo angekho phantsi kolawulo lukarhulumente kunye namashishini
- Sifuna amaziko osasazo angengabo oothoba sikutyele kwiintengiso kunye neemfuno ezigwenxa zamashishini

SIFUNA UKUBA YINXALENYE YEMIMISELO YOSASAZO:

- Sifuna ukufumana ulwazi kwaye sibalise amabali ethu
- Sifuna imfonomfono, iiselfowni kunye ne-internet ibe zizinto esikwaziyo ukufikelela kuzo
- Sifuna umlinganiselo we-airtime nedata osimahla
- Sifuna indlu nasakhiwo ngasinye sibe ne-internet engacothiyiyo
- Sifuna esikwenza bucala kuhlonitshwe kwaye kukhuselwe



DEMAND THAT THE SABC SERVE THE PUBLIC!

The public broadcaster must be free from interference from politicians and advertisers

Most people in South Africa get their information through SABC radio and TV. But despite the efforts of many committed journalists and producers, the ability of the SABC to serve the majority of South Africans is facing political and commercial pressure.

In recent years we have seen shows and news items being cancelled because of pressure from a SABC management that serves political interests. The SABC board is meant to report to Parliament, but they seem to have no independence from the Minister of Communications.

The SABC should serve the public by holding up a mirror to our lives and our culture – keeping us informed and allowing us to have the difficult discussions the country needs. But in a country with so many challenges to tackle, SABC management tell us that we need 70% good news, because South Africa has a “good story to tell.”

Rather than being an independent public broadcaster, we see signs that the SABC is returning to

the days when it was a mouthpiece of the state and ruling party. We have seen them wilfully underplay the state’s use of violence against the people of this country, censoring programming that asks why our public representatives have failed us.

Increasingly we have seen the SABC silencing opposition parties, critics, dissenting voices and the public from airing their grievances and opinions.

The SABC is also undermined by its dependence on advertising to continue its operations. It does not have the funds needed to produce quality programmes and recycles too many reruns of the same old junk – ancient American sitcoms and American soap operas that are good for a bit of relaxing but add very little to our lives. Like community media (see page 7) the SABC needs proper public funding to meet the needs of the people.

“We must ensure freedom of expression for SABC journalists.”

Meanwhile, top bosses at the SABC get away with corruption and inspire no confidence: no action has been taken on the Public Protector’s report which found Hlaudi Motsoeneng and others guilty of abuse of power and maladministration. We demand independent public broadcasting, and the full and urgent implementation of the recommendations in the Public Protector’s report.

The picture does not look good at all. We must take a stand to make the SABC organisationally and politically independent, accountable to our Parliament and financially independent and sustainable. We must ensure freedom of expression for SABC journalists so they can investigate fearlessly and report in the public interest. We must make the SABC the home where our languages, our stories and our cultures come alive, and where we collectively discuss solutions to the many challenges we face.

IMIGUDU YEZINDABA

ESEBENZAYO:

- Sifuna abezindaba banikeze ithuba wonke umuntu eNingizimu Afrika
- Sifuna abezindaba basitshela izindlela zokwenza intando yeningi isisebenzele
- Sifuna abezindaba ukuthi basinike izwi
- Sifuna abezindaba, batshele uwonkewonke izindaba zethu kanye nemibono yethu
- Sifuna imigudu yezindaba ekhululekile ekuphathweni uhulumeni kanye nosomabhizinisi.
- Sifuna imigudu yezindaba engaboshelwe kwizinkampani ukuthi zimemezele okufunwa yizona.

SIFUNA UKUBA ABEZINDABA :

- Sifuna ukuthola ulwazi futhi nokutshela abantu izindaba zethu
- Sifuna ukutholakala kwezincingo, omakhalakhukhwini ne-Internet kube ilungelo eliyisisekelo.
- Sifuna umoya wamahala oyisisekelo kanye ne Data kubo bonke abantu.
- Sifuna internet ehamba ngesivinini emakhaya nakuzona zonke izakhiwo.
- Sifuna izimfihlo zethu zivikelwe futhi zihlonishwe.

Ons wil 'n media hê wat werk:

- Ons wil 'n media hê wat almal in Suid Afrika dien
- Ons wil 'n media hê wat ons inlig sodat ons demokrasie kan laat werk in ons land. Ons wil 'n media hê wat ons help om ons stemme te laat hoor.
- Ons wil 'n media hê wat ons stories van verskillende aspekte laat hoor.
- Ons wil 'n media hê wat vry is van regerings en private beheer
- Ons wil 'n media hê wat nie vasgeanker is aan maatskappye wie gefokus is op advertensies en beperkte balange nie.

Ons wil:

- Die nodige inligting bekom en ons eie stories vertel
- Toegang tot telefone, selfone, internet hê as 'n basiese reg
- Vrye basiese ligtyd hê en data vir almal.
- Wil hê spoed internet hê in elke huis en gebou
- Wil hê dat ons privaatheid beskerm en respekteer word.

DIGITAL TV

FREE SET TOP BOXES NOW!

Across the world there is a big change happening in the technology that brings us television – it's called digital TV. All countries have agreed that the current system of broadcasting (analogue) will be replaced by digital broadcasting by 2015. The new 'digital' TV method that will give better reception quality and can carry many more channels, more efficiently.

Every household will need new equipment called a "set-top box" to continue getting TV, and at some point your current television will stop working.

Digital TV could be good news: There will be many more channels to carry more diverse content and TV will use much less of our airwaves, freeing up space that could be used to deliver high-speed Internet to everyone.

It is not surprising that there is now a fight over who should benefit from these changes and who should pay for them.

Free set-top boxes!

The most important battle currently is to ensure that when we switch to digital TV no-one gets cut off. To stay connected every TV set in every home will have to get a set top box to convert the digital broadcast to your existing TV. It is estimated that

a set top box will cost between R750 and R1200 in every home.

The price of the set top box is likely to go up once the tender to produce them has been awarded. Government has said they could give a discount of 70% to poorer citizens. We should not have to suffer the indignity and expensive bureaucratic process of 'proving' we are poor.

We demand that Set-Top Boxes should be made available, free of charge, to all who want them.

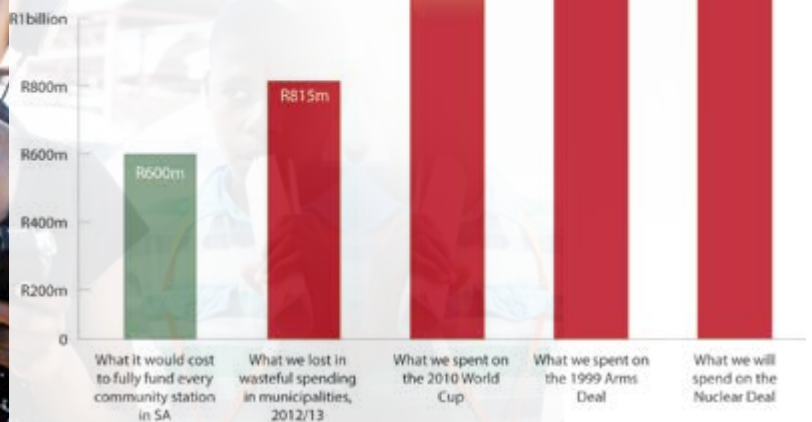
Other countries that have performed digital migration before us have subsidised 100% of the cost for the set top box for all citizens. Why in South Africa should the people pay to continue receiving TV?

If we do not act, it is likely that in the future, South African television will be divided along Apartheid lines: Like our education and health already, there will be an expensive private service for those that can afford it, but the majority will have to make do with a poor quality public service, and those most marginalised will be cut off from receiving television completely.

To save digital TV, we must demand free Set Top Boxes for all!



What would it cost to properly fund 200 community radio stations across SA?



INVEST IN COMMUNITY MEDIA !

We call for proper public funding for community radio!

South Africa has over 200 community radio stations and five community TV stations. For those who live outside major cities, community media is the only alternative to the SABC and is often the only source of media that can focus on local issues that affect members of that community. By law, community media organisations should be non-profit, democratically controlled by their communities and most have a mandate to serve the information needs of the poor and working class.

There are also hundreds of small independent and community newspapers that – like the broadcasters – could give a voice to the voiceless, and hold local elites to account.

But most small and community media have failed to deliver on their democratising potential: instead they face a daily struggle to survive. They are largely dependent on ad-

vertising and must please their advertisers to maintain this trickle of income.

Government is the largest advertiser, meaning that many community media organisations will find it hard to take positions that are independent or critical of government. They survive on crumbs and don't have the funds to employ skilled and independent journalists, or hold discussions on the burning issues of the day.

Too many community media projects choose to play it safe by focusing on entertainment, doing 'public relations' for government or big businesses, and staying away from issues likely to upset local elites.

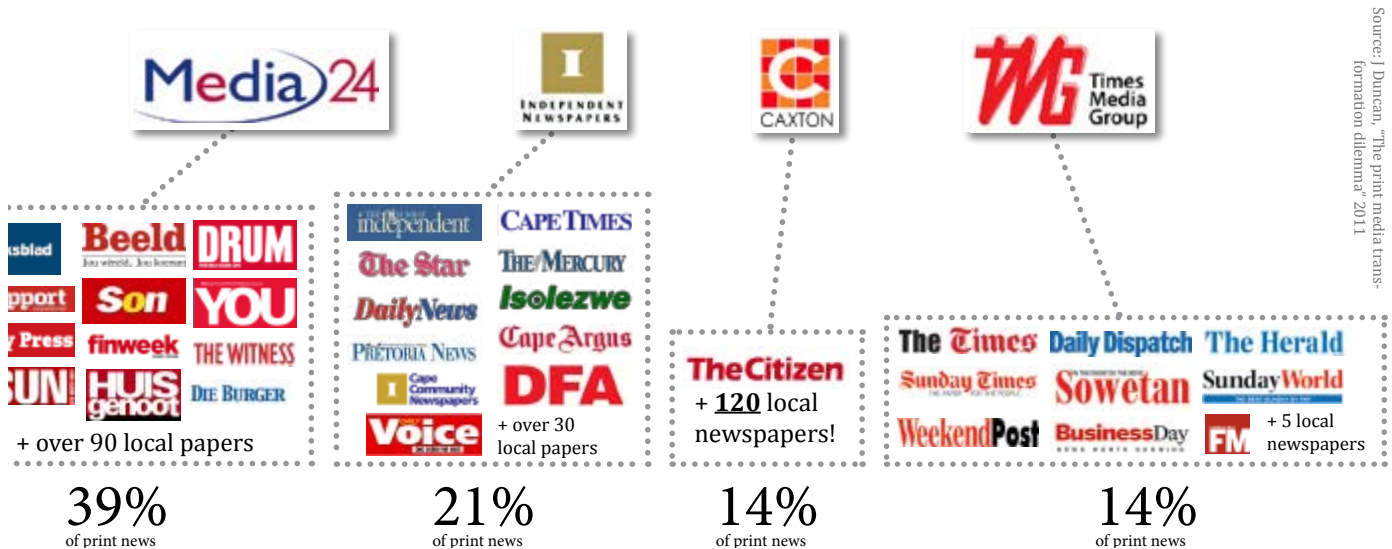
If we want a vibrant democracy we must invest properly in community assets like radio stations that give more power to the people, and that are democratically owned by the communities they serve.

Invest in our democracy

If we want community media that serve the people, it must be paid for through the tax system. It would cost community stations about R3-million year to offer a basic quality service. We must invest in non-commercial media. A good place to start would be to ensure every local community radio and TV receives a grant R3-million a year.

This investment in our democracy would be enough to give greater independence to media projects and let them employ skilled journalists to undertake investigations, hold those in power to account, and address the burning issues of the day. We must demand proper public funding for community media.

**Support the call for the right to communicate:
visit www.r2k.org.za email support@r2k.org.za
dial *120*4729# (cost of 20c)**



Source: J Duncan, "The print media transformation dilemma" 2011

ROLL BACK THE MEDIA MONOPOLIES!

Print ownership shows the need for media diversity!

The South African print media is dominated by four big companies that control over 80% of all newspapers and magazines (with Media24/Naspers controlling 40% alone). When so few people have control over press freedom – and they share the same social and economic interests – our ‘freedom’ and ‘national debate’ becomes an elite privilege that cannot fulfil the vital role of a free media within our democracy.

These media companies undermine our democracy through the marginalisation of the languages spoken by most people and by retrenching staff to cut their costs,

leaving a handful of overworked journalists trying to do the job of many.

Community and small independent newspapers cannot grow, because the dominant corporations either buy them up or engage in corporate bullying that puts local independent media out of business.

We want a media transformation that goes beyond changing the race and gender of the people sitting on the boards and staffing the companies. We demand greater media diversity including limits on the size of the dominant companies and public investment in public and community media. Transformation

must ensure that the media reflect society (especially the majority working-class and poor) at the levels of ownership, staff and product.

Many democracies around the world have passed laws to limit the size of media companies. These laws are not understood as an attack on media freedom, but rather a democratic effort to protect the media from corporate control.

If we are going to mobilise successfully to defend and advance our freedom of expression we must transform the media to meet the communication needs of the majority of South Africans.

SUPPORT OUR JOURNALISTS!

Journalists and media producers work at the coalface of our right to communicate. Good journalists dig for information, confirm facts, and try to hold those in power to account.

It is not an easy job if it is done well. In 2013, 65 journalists, editors, publishers or citizen journalists across the world were either imprisoned or killed doing their jobs. South African journalists also face increasing intimidation and legal threats from government,

our press freedom ranking has dropped from 1st in Africa to 5th in the last ten years.

Threats to journalists’ freedom also come from media owners. Media owners set broad editorial policies that dictate the type of stories journalists should cover and we’ve even seen owners deciding what should be news, and firing editors for printing stories they did not like.

Most owners also aim to cut their costs and increase profits

by retrenching journalists. The remaining journalists have to do even more work with less time and resources. These working environments produce less courageous journalism and more conformity to the needs of the owners.

Our journalists need to be encouraged to cover the stories that really matter to people and when journalists come under attack we must stand up and defend them.

9 things you can do TO BUILD COMMUNITY MEDIA

1. Get involved

According to the Electronic Communications Act community broadcasters have to involve the community on the ownership and control of their radio and/or TV stations. Stations must account to communities at Annual General Meetings, democratically elect their Boards, and offer opportunities for people to produce programmes. No one can stop you from shaping your community broadcasters.

2. Get informed

You have a right to get copies of your station's licence agreement, constitution and financial reports. The licence agreement, issued by Icasa, will tell you what the station's mandate is and what type of shows they have agreed to produce. The constitution will tell you more about the station's objectives and how they elect their Boards.

3. Become a news source

Community radio stations must broadcast news bulletins almost every hour of the day. But too often community journalists do not have the time and funds to cover all the developments in their community. Support them by becoming a source of information. Get to know your station's journalists, have their phone numbers (make sure they have yours). Let them know when something important happens and invite them to your events.

4. Produce a show

Every station should have a regular meeting where community members can comment on all the programmes and propose new shows. Consider hosting a regular show on a topic close to your heart. Every

week you should be ready to do some research on an issue, invite guests, and be at the station on time to take to the airwaves.

5. Give feedback

Most stations have a number of ways to hear from their communities. From call-in shows to SMS lines, outside broadcasts to suggestion boxes. Become an active part of the station. Let them know when they are doing well and where they can improve.

6. Participate in the AGM

By law every station should have an Annual General Meeting (AGM) where they present a Station Manager and financial report, get feedback on progress, and elect a Board to govern the station. Details of the AGM should be announced on air and every listener/viewer can attend. Go to the AGM, have a say, and consider standing for election to the Board.

7. Be patient

Most people at community stations are doing the best job they can under very difficult conditions. Your requests and feedback may not get the response you want immediately. Be patient and try to understand the problem from the stations perspective. But don't give up. Be ready to push your issue up the agenda from a presenter/reporter to the Station Manager, to the Board, to the AGM.



8. Make stations account

Your station is licenced by Icasa and must comply with licence agreements regarding the kind of programmes they must broadcast, the languages they must use, and how they enable community participation. Stations must also ensure their news and current affairs programmes are balanced and accurate. If your station is not complying with their agreements you should make a complaint to the Icasa's Complaints and Compliance Committee. Call 011566 3000, email info@icasa.org.za, and find the guide to making a complaint here: www.r2k.org.za/icasa-complaint.

9. Get support

Build alliances to increase your influence, within your community or with national organisations that work to strengthen community media. Contact R2K (r2k.org.za or 0214471000) or the SOS: Support Public Broadcasting Campaign (soscoalition.org.za or 0117881278). Together we have a stronger voice!

CUT THE COST OF AIRTIME!

Stop the cell phone profiteering!

More than eight in ten people in South Africa have cellphones which could revolutionise how we communicate in the country. With smart phones and the spread of the Internet, we could use our phones to produce and receive our own writing, radio and video. If Biko had lived in the 21st Century, he could have his own Facebook page and YouTube channel.

But the government has handed the power of telephones/cellphones and the Internet to unaccountable profit-making corporations like MTN, Vodacom, Cell C, and Telkom to control. We pay some of the highest costs in the world for airtime and data, as these companies have put their super profits before the communication needs of the people.

Government can regulate these companies through the Independent Communication Authority of South Africa (Icasa). But Icasa is weak and has not done enough to regulate the cartel, limit profiteering, or to ensure everyone has the Internet. By privatising communications services, our government has handed power to companies that have only their own interests at heart.

Give everyone the lowest cell phone rates

Today the country is covered in cell phone adverts promising us 79c per minute or less (with a confusing range of "free" extras). These are much lower rates than we have been paying. You might think this is good news, but know two things: Firstly, the rates they are promising in adverts are still high by international standards and way above their

real costs. Secondly, these are only rates for new customers or users who upgrade their contract. Most of us continue to pay the old exploitative rates per minute.

The cellphone adverts are a marketing trick. We demand that all users should be transferred to the lowest rates offered immediately!

This would be a good start, but it is only the beginning of our battle to make phones and the internet accessible for all. It is the right of everyone in South Africa to communicate. Access of of people to affordable telephones and internet are vital for the health of our democracy. R2K rejects the profiteering of all phone companies at the cost of our people. In the long term we need to end the ownership by private companies of telecommunications and bring these services under democratic control.

**FOR MORE VISIT:
R2K.ORG.ZA/RIGHT2CALL**



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