



LET THE TRUTH BE TOLD! KNOWLEDGE IS POWER!

## SOLIDARITY IN ACTION AGAINST XENOPHOBIA

*Let us unite and fight against xenophobia!*

As South Africa celebrates Freedom Day in 2015, a strong expression of unity is needed. The anti-xenophobia demonstrations are a necessary response to the gruesome acts of violence directed at foreign nationals.

The recent wave of attacks directed at fellow Africans is indefensible and necessitates intensified ways of mobilising and vigilantly protecting the shared values which define us as a nation that continuously aspires to a deeper meaning of freedom.

The killing, assaults and looting must come to an end. Localised solidarity actions are very important in bringing about an end to the violence. Politically correct wording and statements alone will not help the country out of the cycle of violence currently making headlines in the media. Building solidarity in action and continuously supporting the efforts to fight against xenophobia is what Right2Know Campaign is calling for. The recent attacks on foreign nationals show the need to go beyond the rhetoric when we speak about African unity.

At times it is quite unfortunate that speeches our leaders make are not inspiring healthy relations amongst Africans like when President Zuma once said, "We should not think like Africans in Africa. This is not some national road in Malawi", in defence of e-tolls. The recent utterances by the Zulu king also aggravated an already tense situation.

Peace marches that took place



Thousands of South Africans and some foreign nationals attended the Peace March against xenophobia in Durban on 16 April 2015.  
Pic: Tebogo Letsie/Sundaytimes

across South Africa recently are a clear demonstration that there is broad condemnation of the outbreak of attacks on fellow Africans. Political leaders came out in support of calls to stop the violence and slogan like "We Are All African" became the tag line branded in various media platforms.

In KwaZulu Natal, Right2Know leadership has involved itself in the process of building the solidarity with formations of foreign nationals. R2K leaders are part of the leadership of

African Solidarity Coalition, a platform of civil society organisations and collectives of foreign nationals. In the discussions that plan solidarity actions, sending delegates to various government offices and supporting localised efforts against xenophobia, Right2Know is in the heart of that process. In Gauteng, the provincial leadership is actively involved in the organising of the people's march against xenophobia. Several screenings are being organised to enhance

debate and reflections on the wave of attacks. GWG members have also been involved in many other localised anti-xenophobia initiatives and in providing practical support and assistance.

This moment presents us no luxury for working parallel one another. The answers we seek to end these attacks can only be found not from hollow speeches of politicians but from working together in the struggle for a caring and just society.

## Thembelihle: State of Emergency

Over the past few months, the community of Thembelihle in Lenasia has been under heavy attack by the South African Police Service. This is the state's response to the protest actions the community organised against poor service delivery. The conditions of the area worsened by the unresponsiveness of Gauteng MEC of Human Settlements, Jacob Mamabolo. The police have been attacking people with tear gas and rubber bullets. They are harassing community leaders and their families. In the case of Bhayiza Miya and his family, they checked their cell

phones, and 'confiscated' material – including Right2Know Campaign publications. Bhayiza is one of the leaders of the Thembelihle Crisis Committee (a community based organisation taking up service delivery issues and the struggle for the development in the community).

Government's failure to engage the Thembelihle community.

On 16 October 2014, thousands of Thembelihle residents marched peacefully to the local municipal office (Corrobrick Building), to handover a memorandum of grievances

and demands. The memorandum was directed to the Gauteng MEC for Human Settlements and Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Jacob Mamabolo, with regard to water, electricity and sanitation. When asked to address the community on issues raised, he responded by sending a representative from his office to address the community. Subsequently, a meeting was arranged between the MEC and representatives from the community,

This meeting with the MEC was held on 4 November 2014. The meet-

ing agreed to record all decisions and communicate them to the community in writing through their representatives within a timeframe of one week from the date of the meeting. The MEC also promised to address the community on agreements reached at the meeting before going on holiday in December 2015. The MEC's office did not provide the records, neither did the MEC come to address the community.

From February 2015, community

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R2K KZN held a Glebelands Hostel Solidarity Peace Picket at Umlazi Megacity.

# GLEBELANDS: STOP THE KILLINGS

## *Ignore the right-2know, and you ignore the right2live*

“Bafana bam better nikhulume iqini-so niyakunya!” [“You boys had better start talking the truth because you’re going to shit yourselves.”]

These may be the last words he heard when the ‘plastic’ was forced over his head by members of the SAPS, and secured tightly around his throat. As he struggled, his breath was replaced by the soft clinging plastic of the bag, flattening his nose and stretching his mouth wide as he gasped in vain.

Suffocation does not kill quickly, especially when the process is repeated, again and again, to extract information from a victim who simply cannot provide it. He died during the month in which we are told we must celebrate our human rights – just another victim of our increasingly brutal boys in blue.

Since then, many more people

have died and an incalculable number intimidated, assaulted and tortured by police. Used depressingly often by dictatorships to instil fear on society as a whole, torture - particularly ‘tubing’, ‘bagging’ or ‘waterboarding’ - was used regularly by the apartheid regime on political prisoners. It didn’t stop after 1994. It couldn’t when ‘Black Jack’ mentality was accommodated in the force. ‘Tube’ survivors have described the unspeakable terror and utter humiliation of their torture experience – a lifelong psychological trauma that, in the absence of closure brought by justice, is borne in silent alienation.

Police sources who admit to using this popular interrogation technique claim “only the inexperienced kill their victims by mistake,” or “stupidly” leave evidence behind - like the bag or a body. ‘Don’t get caught’ is the message they’ve clearly received.

When a police officer was asked if he ever thought about the impact of his actions on the victim’s family while ‘tubing’ a suspect, he replied,

“No, we’re under pressure to get the info, it’s in the heat of the moment, we can’t wait for an investigation which goes nowhere. These are bad guys.”

But the act of torture dehumanizes the perpetrator as much as it does the victim. At what stage do killer cops become victims themselves? When they melt down and turn their service revolvers on themselves and their families? Or when they turn to serious crime, morphing seamlessly into truck-jackers and rapists, products of increasingly criminal state enterprise?

It will take much more to repair our broken police service than disingenuous platitudes that echo hollow as a grave. Strident declarations by police spokesperson, Solomon Makgale, in response to the Right2Know’s Human Rights Day campaign against police brutality, that SAPS management is really on top of its game and “has always acknowledged instances where the police had acted outside the boundaries of the law,” should have us falling about laughing if we could only

see a better future through our tears.

In memory of Zinakile Fica who died while being tortured by members of the eMlazi SAPS on 13 March 2014, leaving destitute a young wife, four children and five-months-old baby and Thulani Kati, who was killed on 10 April 2015.

And in solidarity with police brutality survivor Tsepo Jali who were tortured on 2 October 2014, allegedly by members of the Public Order Policing Unit, deployed by KZN Premier, Senzo Mchunu, four days after he declared ‘peace’, to end the violence at Glebelands Hostel;

And the woman who cannot be named, also tortured by eMlazi SAPS members and detained at the station’s cells for forty hours without being charged or accused of any crime.

To date, despite SAPS and IPID investigations, no members implicated in these crimes have been suspended, arrested, charged or been sentenced. It is rumoured that one officer may have received a promotion.

## Mandela Park: The struggle for housing

Housing is a big challenge in our country and our government is failing to address the issue. We are seeing people erecting shacks almost every day because they don’t have a place to stay in the city. The Western Cape government is investing in bodies like the Anti-Land Invasion Unit (ALIU), whose sole purpose is to demolish shelters poor people are erecting out of desperation. The work of units like the ALIU and Red Ants is to tear down structures the poor build for desperately needed shelter. As Mandela Backyarders we are saying the Constitution gives us the right to shelter and it is unconstitutional to deny us this important right.

In Mandela Park, Khayelitsha we have a big problem of private companies owning land. We condemn the issue of private companies owning land in Khayelitsha. Companies like Mew Way and National Housing Finance Corporates (NHFC) are making business out of Khayelitsha’s misery. They sell the land to business people who construct flats and rent them out to people at exorbitant prices. As Mandela Park backyarders we want government to acquire this land and build houses for the people.

People in our community are living in overcrowded houses with families living in other families’ houses.

Overcrowded houses have no privacy and health hazards are common. This does not inspire those still at school as they don’t have a space to study. We as Mandela Park Backyarders want government to seriously look at this issue and deliver on the promises they make when they want our votes.

When we are standing up for our rights, fighting for what is rightfully ours, we are accused of being violent. We must be taken seriously when we are appealing for decent housing for all. Government must listen and respond to our grievances seriously and respond to needs of communities. We are tired of sending memorandums

and be told that they will look at it, only not to ever come back to us.

Housing is a human right but our government is not addressing the issue but only show interest when they are campaigning to get peoples votes. They even propose a policy of providing housing for those 40 years and older. What about young people who need houses but don’t meet this narrow criteria? Must they suffer and live on the streets? For a start, decision making about these issues needs to be open and transparent.

“UMANYANO LWABAHLALI IZINDLU NGOKU” - MANDELA PARK BACKYARDERS!!!

# Thembelihle: State of Emergency

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representatives followed up on the MEC on the agreements reached, but with no success. This state of affairs consequently compromised their credibility in the eyes of the community because all that the MEC promised has not been honored. This puts them at risk, over and above the loss of confidence in them by some members of the community.

At a mass meeting held in Thembelihle on 22 February 2015 the community decided that, having exhausted all avenues and allowed sufficient time for the MEC to deliver, they have no choice but to embark on a protest action. The following day the protest started. The MEC was unavailable as he was attending the State of The Province address.

On 24 February members from the MEC's office met representatives of the community where they indicated that the MEC would only be able to address the community after another 14 days. When asked to address the community in a mass meeting about the grievances and outcomes of the meeting held on the 4th of November,



R2K visit to Thembelihle community & mass meeting, 8 March 2015

they declined.

When a mass meeting sat, the majority rejected the proposal from MEC officials to suspend the protest. Instead, they resolved to gather again in 14 days, on 10 March 2015, in anticipation of the MEC's address to the community.

When residents gathered in a mass meeting at Thembelihle Park station, on the 10th March at 13h00, the MEC

again did not show. This angered the community severely. A series of meetings and consultations were held in the community and the decision was to re-embark on protest action. For years Right2Know leadership in Gauteng has been part of the struggles of the Thembelihle community. They organized rights-awareness workshops, took active part in community meetings and demonstrations. During

protests, R2K leaders mobilized donations to help those left with no clothes, food and other necessities. They organized legal support for those arrested, ensured media coverage of the protest and providing various forms of support needed in the process. The Right2Know Campaign calls on MEC Mamabolo to resolve this crisis, engage with the community and deliver on his promises!

# RHODES MUST FALL EVERYWHERE

The Western Cape Right2Know Campaign congratulates the students and workers at the University of Cape Town on their important symbolic victory: Unthinkable only weeks before, the statue of Cecil John Rhodes has fallen. The students and workers can proudly claim this victory as a solid foundation to continue their struggle for a more just university.

Cecil John Rhodes represents the violence and authoritarianism of undemocratic power that still defines much of South Africa today. Rhodes' legacy of corporate and political power denies the majority of people in South Africa and the region control of resources necessary for a life of dignity.

This undemocratic power demands secrecy to survive and resorts to violence when challenged. The #rhodesmustfall movement has shown that popular power is built by throwing light on injustice and building a disciplined and popular organisation. In doing so the students and workers have opened up a critical front on our campuses in the struggle for democracy.

The statue is falling but the authoritarian legacy of Rhodes remains. Power remains shrouded in secrecy



Chumani Maxwele - the student who led the Rhodes Must Fall movement addressing the masses.

and repressive force. Elected students representatives - the SRC - are obliged to sign confidentially agreements before taking up their seats in University structures. Outsourced workers are denied access contracts between the university and the outsourced companies. Campus security

- the controversial G4S - undertake surveillance against organised workers and students.

We stand at the beginning of a new chapter in the struggle to claim our universities as public democratic institutions whose curriculum, students, academic and support workers

serve the majority of South Africans.

The Right2Know Campaign stands behind the students and workers in their struggle. We are committed to defending their right to organize - including their right to access information and to express themselves free of surveillance and intimidation.

**JUSTICE FOR MARIKANA**  
 President Zuma  
 Must Release the  
 Marikana Report NOW!

Get your copy of the R2K  
**Activist Guide to the  
 Gatherings Act, Arrests &  
 Court Processes.**  
 From our offices (details on page 6)  
 or online: <http://www.r2k.org.za/publications/>

# WHO IS SPYING ON OUR ACTIVISTS?

## R2K and allies uncover harassment from 'Big Brother'

This month R2K has brought out an activist handbook that documents how state intelligence structures are harassing certain activists and spying on their work. This is the latest of many scandals that have shone a light on how South Africa's intelligence structures seem to be interfering with our democratic rights.

Other examples include the State Security Agency (SSA) 'jamming the signal' in Parliament in February, and their discredited investigation of claims that Thuli Madonsela and Julius Malema and others are CIA spies.

This is nothing new. Many activist movements through the years have experienced this. Abahlali BaseMjondolo has complained for years of being monitored by intelligence officials, and before that the Anti-Privatisation Forum detected attempts to recruit informers in its ranks. Some of the activists coordinating civil society action at COP17 climate talks in Durban in 2011 reported that intelligence officials demanded to know what their plans were for protesting the climate talks.

The former Minister of State Security even called R2K and its allies campaigning against the Secrecy Bill "local proxies of foreign spies"!

More recently it has also become clear that the government is using its spooks to spy on Numsa and its allies in the United Front.



Pupa Fumba, R2K activist Camping-Out for Openness

## Numsa complaint

In December 2014, Numsa went public with a complaint that State Security officials were harassing their members and allies.

Karl Cloete, Numsa's Deputy General Secretary said that people suspected of acting on behalf of the State Security Agency, "have been trying to recruit shop stewards and activists in Ekurhuleni and Eastern Cape to spy on the union's activities on the proposed United Front." Several officials' cars had been followed and broken into, and laptops stolen.

Numsa issued a warning on the use of intelligence structures to disrupt democratic organisations. "It happens to activists in social movements involved in 'service delivery protests,'" they said. "It happens to investigative journalists digging up all the rot on corruption. It happens to all those who are critical of the status quo. There is a pattern where intelligence forces are used to deal with legitimate and lawful struggles and campaigns. It is a sign of creeping authoritarianism."

## THE SSA AND UNITED FRONT IN EKURHULENI?

In Ekurhuleni, Mxolisi Ndimande, the provincial secretary of the United Front in Gauteng, reported that someone from the SSA had been trying to get information on their activities.

In November 2014, while he was helping to organise a march under the banner of the United Front, Ndimande's phone rang from a private number. It was a woman identifying herself as a representative of the State Security Agency.

She told Ndimande that the SSA was "intervening" because of the submission Ndimande had made to the municipal authorities.

According to Ndimande, she was initially very polite, but said she wanted to know, "Who are these people who want to march all the time, to disrupt this work of the government?"

"What type of intervention is this?" asked Ndimande. "Everything we are doing is in line with the law."

The woman wanted a list of the members of the steering committee of his organisation, which he refused to give without speaking to the committee first.

"That's when she began to be furious," says Ndimande. The woman said she would get back to him after he had consulted his organisation, and ended the call.

She called back a few times, still wanting that information and trying to meet up with Ndimande at a local restaurant, but he refused.

## MYSTERIOUS 'RESEARCHER' IN NUMSA P.E.

Another suspicious encounter was reported in Port Elizabeth. A Numsa member who is active in the United Front structure in PE was approached by someone who said he was a researcher at UKZN, who was interested in finding out more about the United Front.

According to the Numsa member: "He told me his research wanted to know the state of Numsa on the ground. Are there any activities? Are there any meetings? Are there any gatherings, any programmes? And most importantly, he wanted the names of the leaders."

The researcher offered him a stipend to help get this information.

After getting some documentation on Numsa's activities, and interviewing several Numsa members and UF affiliates, the 'researcher' disappeared. The number he provided is now disconnected. UKZN does not have any records of a student or researcher by that name and the UKZN human resources department did not have any record of a staff member matching the name he provided for his supervisor.

## SSA TRIES TO RECRUIT A SPY IN THE UNITED FRONT?

In November 2014, one of the leaders of the United Front, Brian Ashley, discovered that two SSA officials had visited a comrade of his. (This person has asked to remain anonymous.)

They wanted to know about his relationship with Brian Ashley, who they said was "an activist who wants regime change". The SSA officials mentioned that Brian was involved with Amcu's strike activities at Marikana – although it's not clear how assisting workers in a union makes you a threat to national security!

The officials told Ashley's comrade that they had heard a recorded phone conversation between him and Brian Ashley about a plan to organise a general strike – implying that the SSA was intercepting a phone conversation between the two.

Not only would this be an illegal invasion of their privacy, but Brian says that they never had that conversation.

"Firstly, we never discussed a general strike," says Brian. "Secondly – so what if we did? The last time I checked the right to strike was in the Constitution!"

Brian's comrade reported the interaction to him, and said that he suspected the SSA officials wanted him to become an informer on Ashley's activities.

# INTELLIGENCE OPERATIVE HARASS ANTI- CRIME ACTIVIST

## Meet Miriam

Miriam\* is an active member of Right2Know who is also very involved in anti-crime efforts in her community, where violent crime has drawn the attention of the authorities. In January 2015, men apparently representing an intelligence structure approached her three times, and she later discovered her house was under physical surveillance.

One evening while she and members of her community were doing an anti-crimex called her over. There were three men, she says – all in plain clothes.

“They asked what the protest was about and who I am, and am I the convenor of this march,” says Miriam. Assuming that they were just residents who had come to support the event, she answered all their questions. Then the man in the driver’s seat asked her name. “My name is Miriam,” she answered.

He said, “Oh, you’re the Miriam?” He turned to the guy in the passenger seat and said, as if they already knew about her, “This is Miriam, have a good look at her.”

Miriam was taken aback, but thought it was possible they had heard her name through the grapevine.

## Miriam’s second encounter

The next night, residents again took to streets in a peaceful march. The same car rolled up. This time only two of the men, but this time the man behind the wheel asked her to get into the car. She sat in the back seat.

This time, says Miriam, their questions were a lot more direct: Where do you stay? Do you have children? Are you married? Which organisation do you represent?

Miriam was stunned. “I’m starting to ask questions back,” she says. “Why do you want to know who’s my family? Why do you want to know where I stay? What interest is it to you who I am?”

The man responded, “It’s just part of our work,” but refused to say what sort of ‘work’ that was.

Miriam remembers feeling suddenly very unsafe. She told them, “Guys if you don’t have any more questions for me, I will rather get out of the car.”

The meeting had left Miriam feeling shaken, and she reported it to her committee the following day.

## Miriam’s third encounter

That next evening, for the third night running, she joined the residents’ march through the streets. This time, as she was walking, one of the men from the car came up behind her and grabbed her. “He came up alongside me and hugged me like this,” says Miriam, simulating linking of arms, “and pulled me out of the protest and into the car.”

She was wearing a Right2Know t-shirt, and when she got into the back seat, one of the first things the men asked her was if she worked for Right2Know.

She said, “No, but I’m a great supporter of Right2Know.”

It became clear that the men had found out a lot of information about Miriam since their last meeting, including her affiliation with Right2Know. They began to list other organisations that she was affiliated with or where she had been employed. Some of the information was inaccurate, but it was clear that they had researched her.

Just then, her phone rang: one of her committee members had followed her from the protest. He had just called a local police contact to give a description of the men he’d seen accost Miriam.

He told Miriam, “Make a smart move and get out of the car and don’t give them any more answers. These guys are from the national intelligence office.”

Miriam told the men that she was ending the interview and made to get out of the car, but not before one of the men said, “Okay, we know where you stay, if we need you again.”

“That made me scared,” remembers Miriam, especially after they had asked about her children. She had also not told them where she stayed.

## Physical surveillance?

The next week, Miriam noticed that a different white car had been parked on her street several days in a row. She says the car didn’t have a number plate. Two men she didn’t recognise were in the car. Several times, especially at night, one of the men would get out of the car and walk down the street, and peer into her front yard. It seemed clear that she had been put under physical surveillance.

It is difficult for Miriam to know what to make of this. It is clear that their presence made her feel deeply unsafe and violated.

\*Not her real name



R2K activist/s protesting outside parliament.

## KNOW THE SIGNS!

Signs that someone may be monitoring your organisation’s activities:

- A member of Crime Intelligence (or normal police) phones you before a meeting or protest to get information about your organisation and its activities
- A member of Crime Intelligence attends any meeting that you are present in, especially the ‘Section 4’ consultation between the protest organisers and local police/authorities, before a march or protest
- A member of SAPS takes photos/videos of your protest, writes down slogans, or interviews the convenor of the protest
- Police or authorities have information about your movements or activities, but you don’t know how (e.g. police get information on your activities from someone other than you)
- A member of your organisation or someone in the community is approached in private to spy on the organisation
- You are contacted at any point by a member of the State Security Agency (SSA)

## TAKE ACTION!

If one of the experiences described here happens to you, here are some of the steps you can take:

1. Write down everything that happened
2. What happened? (e.g. got a phone call from CI; attended a meeting where CI was present)
3. When did it happen? (Date)
4. Where did it happen? (Area)
5. Names and phone numbers provided (Get the name and rank of the person involved. If it was a phone call, save the number)
6. Inform other members of your organisation
7. If possible, record interactions with officials on your phone
8. You may have grounds to make a complaint to the Inspector General of Intelligence. Visit [www.oigi.gov.za](http://www.oigi.gov.za) or call 080 00 000 13

Get your copy of the R2K handbook:

**BIG BROTHER EXPOSED**  
Stories of State Monitoring and  
Harassment of Activists

From our offices (details on page 6)  
or online: <http://www.bigbrother.r2k.org.za>





The right2Know Campaign is South Africa's first post-Apartheid movement for freedom of expression and access to information. Every year we gather in democratic Provincial Summits and a National Summit to review our work and play the way forward. Pictured here are delegates to our 5th Annual National Summit Held in February in Johannesburg. You can read the summit resolutions here: [www.r2k.org.za/2015resolutions](http://www.r2k.org.za/2015resolutions).

# DEFEND DEMOCRACY: DEFEND PARLIAMENT

## MASS MEETING: Defend Democracy! Hands Off Parliament!

Parliament belongs to the people, and the elected officials who represent citizens in Parliament are meant to act as the voice of the people, pass just and democratic laws and provide oversight to the activities of the Executive. Openness and transparency, where the public are able to meaningfully participate, and journalists are free to accurately report, are crucial if the public is to have confidence that their voices and views are being heard in Parliament.

Yet in just the first quarter of the year we have seen two crucial matters which reflect a serious erosion of these democratic values and violate our right to know: the signal jamming debacle at the State of the Nation Address (SONA) and the secretive appointment process of the new Inspector-General of Intelligence.

R2K has been at the forefront of struggles amid growing concern about abuses by the State Security Agency (SSA). The SSA claimed responsibility for issuing the order for signal jamming, and the matter is now before the courts. The same agency in recent years has also been implicated in divisive political scandals and undue surveillance and interference in the work of journalists and activists.

In January, the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence (JSCI) which is the parliamentary committee tasked with providing oversight on the activities of the intelligence agencies, including the State Security Agency, began appointing the new Inspec-



Community members came out in numbers to send a clear message to those that aim to undermine our hard-won democracy.

tor-General of Intelligence (IGI). The IGI is the person to whom citizens, journalists and activists can submit complaints about illegal surveillance activities and other abuses of intelligence agencies.

The appointment of this person is so important that it requires a two-thirds majority vote in the National Assembly. Despite the public importance of this position, the public and the media have been shut out from the proceedings of the meetings. In response, R2K, as well as other civil society partners, sent numerous letters to the Committee Chairperson and the presiding officers of both the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces, asking for a publicly open process, as well information on short-listed candidates including

their CVs.

The letters and appeals were mostly disregarded, and the committee's process should have been completed by 31 March. However, within the week the interviews were to be finalised, a media report indicated that none of the short-listed candidates would be recommended and the process will be started over again. If true, this will signal an important victory in halting a secretive and rogue process.

At a time of increased state repression and unaccountable behaviour among our intelligence agencies, the role of Parliament and its elected representatives providing oversight of the activities of the executive couldn't be more important. While an open appointment process for the IGI is one struggle, it is worth remembering that

the Intelligence Committee has been operating secretly since the inception of democracy.

R2K will continue to advocate for an IGI appointment process which is open to the public and the media, and will continue to challenge the culture of secrecy in government. Committees are the engine room of Parliament, and the secrecy which has marked this committee cannot continue. It cannot be business as usual, things must change!

## Get Involved

Contact the Right2Know Campaign:

**National Office**  
Organiser: Siviwe Mdoda  
Tel: 082 368 5096  
Email: [siviwe@r2k.org.za](mailto:siviwe@r2k.org.za)

**Gauteng, Limpopo, Northwest**  
Organiser: Bongani Xezwi  
Tel: 011 356 5860 or 073 904 1626  
Email: [bongani@r2k.org.za](mailto:bongani@r2k.org.za)

**KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, Mpumalanga**  
Organiser: Joanne Adams  
Tel: 0312603577 or 0834981583  
Email: [Joanne@r2k.org.za](mailto:Joanne@r2k.org.za)

**Eastern, Northern & Western Cape**  
Organiser: Vainola Makan  
Tel: 0214471000 or 0620144969  
Email: [vainola@r2k.org.za](mailto:vainola@r2k.org.za)

# #HandsOffOurInternet

Freedom of expression applies to the internet and you should be free to receive and impart information online.

However, if the Film and Publication Board (FPB) gets its way, freedom of expression online will be under threat. The FPB, in their new draft policy, wants online publishers to vet and classify content before publication. We must call this what it is – censorship. And this is not just about the big players on the internet. The language of the document is so vague that the content to be classified will include posts on individuals' blogs and social media accounts.

With the creation of a complex and costly layer of bureaucracy that the FPB is calling for, it is very easy to see how news websites would be affected, especially smaller news websites that would be hit hard by the new system of permits that the policy requires.

It looks like the FPB is trying to copy its apartheid predecessor, and these new measures are an assault on media freedom and our constitutional right to receive and impart informa-



tion. The FPB's policy is reactionary, out of touch with the digital age, and threatens one of the most valuable aspects of the internet – the ability to spread information across the world, reaching millions of people in an instant.

The FPB is on a crusade, claiming to

be fighting against child pornography. While we realise that child pornography is a serious crime that needs to be tackled firmly, this cannot come at the expense of democracy and our constitutionally enshrined rights. Child pornography is illegal and there are sufficient laws in place which should

be fully implemented to deal with it. The FPB's approach, however, reflects a total ignorance of the internet and is at odds with the freedom of information and expression.

Right2Know is calling on the FPB to scrap their draft regulations: #HandsOffOurInternet.

## The future of TV

Starting in the next few months, South Africa will be changing its ordinary (or "free-to-air") TV broadcasts to a new digital system which will require different aerials and for viewers to have a set-top box (like a decoder). These will cost around R1000, but after protests by R2K and others the government has agreed to give them for free to 5 million poor households. However R2K is not satisfied and demands that they be free to all who need them. After all, most who can afford to are already using satellite TV which is digital, and won't need the government set-top box.

There will be a certain number of months when both the existing analogue and the digital broadcasts will be working, after which only digital will be available. Viewers who have not managed to install the new aerials and set-top boxes will then be unable to watch TV. This happened recently to many viewers in Kenya, and R2K and other organisations have warned the SA government to avoid such a situation.

SA is far behind in switching to digital TV. This is because the cabinet ministers responsible have been

changed so many times in recent years and because rival factions of the ruling party representing rival commercial interests have disagreed on technical details of the decoders. In the end it seems that they will be fitted with some kind of control system, which R2K has condemned as a possible way to pressurise people to pay their TV licences.

### What will we watch?

One of the advantages of digital TV is that it can carry far more channels. This is the good news.

The bad news is that ICASA has already given two thirds (66%) of the channels to the private sector. The SABC has been given a quarter of the channels (25%). The SABC does not have the resources to produce all these extra public interest channels and is likely to run these as profitable partnerships with the private sector. This dramatic commercialisation of TV will see only 5% of stations be community non-profit.

R2K and other organisations are campaigning for many of the new channels to be community-operated,



as well as the kinds of educational and parliamentary ones currently only enjoyed by satellite viewers.

### Who will get the Internet Airwaves?

Another advantage of moving to Digital TV is that frequencies used by old TV signals will become available to get Internet to people. These frequencies are worth a fortune and government plans to privatise them by selling them to the highest bidder.

The cell phone monopolies (MTN

and VODACOM) are likely to take control of these resources, furthering their control of SA's communication systems. MTN and VODACOM will use these airwaves to maximise their profits.

Right2Know insists that the government must not strengthen the current monopolies and must not be auctioned to the highest bidder. The freed-up airwaves must be used in the public interest, including the delivery of free public WiFi. Government must make at least some of these frequencies available to community-operated data and voice networks.

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## Activist Guide to Internet Access

From our offices (details on page 6) or online: <http://www.r2k.org.za/publications/>





**FREEDOM FOR SOME IS  
FREEDOM FOR NONE**

**- Jonas Gwangwa**

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[www.r2k.org.za](http://www.r2k.org.za) 0214471000 [admin@r2k.org.za](mailto:admin@r2k.org.za)