



# SOS

SAVE OUR SABC  
reclaiming our public broadcaster

Supported by the Open Society Foundation for South Africa

## WHY THE NEED FOR SOS?

Civil society has an important role to play in the shaping of public institutions – in particular our SABC. We should be nominating people to the Board, scrutinising the annual report, debating new legislation, commenting on programming... As the recent crises over leadership at the SABC have unfolded, we have felt compelled to take our rightful place in “Reclaiming our public broadcaster”.

## WHEN WAS SOS LAUNCHED?

On 10 June 2008, NGOs, civil society organisations, trade unions, academics and journalists met to discuss the crisis at the SABC and resolved to form a civil society coalition to ensure listeners and viewers were part of solving the problems.

## SO WHO IS SOS?

Membership of the SOS is open to any individual, NGO, CBO or community. Current SOS Coalition members include: BEMAWU (The Broadcast, Electronic Media and Allied Workers Union); COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions); IDASA, an African Democracy Institute; The FXI (Freedom of Expression Institute); The FXN (Freedom of Expression Network); The IPO (Independent Producers Organisation); The IAJ (Institute for the Advancement of Journalism); The MMP (Media Monitoring Project); The South African Screen Federation (SASFED); MISA South Africa (The South African National Chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa); The NCRF (National Community Radio Forum); The National Consumer Forum; SANGONET (The South African Non-Governmental Organisation Network); SAHA (The South African History Archives); The TAC (Treatment Action Campaign); Workers World Media Productions; Prof. Anton Harber – Caxton Professor of Journalism, University of the Witwatersrand (in his private capacity); Prof. Devan Pillay – Head of Sociology Department, University of the Witwatersrand; Prof. Tawana Kupe – Associate Professor of Media Studies and Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand (in his private capacity); Ms. Justine Limpitlaw – broadcasting lawyer and academic (in her private capacity); Ms. Jeanette Minnie of Zambezi FoX – international Freedom of Expression and Media Consultant

## WHAT IS SOS DOING?

We are lobbying for a review of all government laws and policies to ensure the SABC is more accountable to us – listeners and viewers. We have started a range of campaigns to ensure that listeners and viewers are involved in defining what we want to see and hear on our public broadcaster. We will be launching a road show in 2009 to get community input on the SABC’s Charter.

We have also given input to Parliament on their proposed changes to the Broadcasting Act. These changes are aimed at strengthening clauses on removal of the SABC Board members from office. The SOS submissions have focused on the need to not only review these clauses, but also the entire framework, including appointment of Board members.

Other campaigns include:

- support for the Freedom of Expression Institute’s campaign to revoke the SABC’s Articles of Association. These legal documents undermine the SABC’s independence by, for example, allowing the Minister to play a role in the appointment of the Group Chief Executive Officer;
- support for the Freedom of Expression Institute’s complaint to ICASA about the alleged breach of the SABC Charter as regards the “blacklisting” case; and
- submissions to ICASA on digital broadcasting.



## CONTACT SOS

If you would like to join SOS, support our work, endorse our submissions and/or get regular updates, please contact

Kate Skinner  
SOS Campaign Coordinator  
kate.skinner@mweb.co.za

Website: <http://www.ngopulse.org/group/sos-campaign>

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