

## **Civil Society groups call on EFF to focus on VBS scandal and reflect on race baiting**

*30 May 2019 –*

We the undersigned civil society organisations are deeply disturbed by the recent threats and intimidation directed by the EFF, South Africa's third largest political party, against civil society groups partners such as the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation (AKF), a fellow civil society organisation. In a similar vein the EFF party leadership has attacked journalists writing about financial scandals which implicate the EFF leadership instead of focusing on the substance of investigations by the journalists.

We recognise that neither civil society nor the media are without our own shortcomings which we should address. However, all our countries' political parties need to show their commitment to the Bill of Rights and Constitution by challenging, not promoting, race baiting and other divisive behaviour. We remind them that their leaders and MP's have all sworn an oath of allegiance to these documents and the values they embody before the Chief Justice following their recent election to public office.

The EFF is fully entitled to its own political views but we condemn the violent language and undemocratic assault, both in their recent media statement and subsequently by EFF supporters on Twitter and other social media. We are worried that this is not the first time the EFF has made racist pronouncements. We appeal to the party and its leaders to change course.

The issues of substance that should trouble all South Africans are alleged economic crimes such as the looting of VBS bank and allegations of state capture throughout the state. The impact of this has been fundamental to deepening inequality and poverty in this country. Where political parties have been implicated we call on the leadership to be held to account for their complicity in alleged criminality.

We appeal to the EFF to change the way it engages with those it disagrees with, without resorting to hate and threats of violence. We make this same appeal to every other political party and political leader in our country.

### **Signed by:**

*CASAC; Corruption Watch; Dullah Omar Institute; Helen Suzman Foundation; Johannesburg Against Injustice (JAI); Lawyers for Human Rights (member on Anti-Racism Network); National Council Against Smoking; OUTA; Open Secrets; Platform for the Protection of African Whistle blowers (PPLAAF); Public Affairs Research Institute (PARI); R2K; Rural Health Advocacy Project; Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute (SAFCEI); SECTION27; Treatment Action Campaign; Sustaining the Wild Coast; Teddy Bear Foundation*

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