EFF STATEMENT ON JOURNALISTS IMPLEDICATED AT THE ZONDO COMMISSION BY CRIME INTELLIGENCE WITNESSES

Monday, 30 September, 2019

The EFF is deeply concerned about journalists being implicated by Crime Intelligence witnesses at the Zondo State Capture Commission of Inquiry. The evidence being led indicates that Crime Intelligence had journalists on its payroll who were used to plant stories in the media. One of these is the Sunday Times, former Daily Maverick senior journalist, Ranjeni Munusamy.

The witness currently on the stand has testified that he is aware of three more journalists who were also on the payroll or used by Crime Intelligence to plant stories. We have been reliably told that the list includes very senior journalists some of whom have recently engaged in unethical journalistic practices. They have used illegal and intrusive intelligence equipment and means to collect information on people and openly wrote about this on major platforms and publications.

How information was attained is always a key ethical consideration to a truly ethical journalistic practice. It would be the end of human rights based democratic practice if people’s privacy can be illegally compromised just so a story can sell newspapers.

We call on all journalists who have worked with Crime Intelligence or any other intelligence agencies to come out and confess, so as to avoid the embarrassment that Munusamy is now being subjected to.
The EFF is particularly worried about the credibility of the media in our democracy; once journalists can also be operatives of intelligence agencies, it means they are no longer independent, impartial and cannot cover news in a fair way. This compromises the democratic role that the media is supposed to play in society.

The rogue elements in the employ of intelligence units must be isolated in order to salvage the media and the journalism profession in general from total collapse in the eyes of the public.

The ways in which some of the journalists operate makes it clear that they are trained intelligence agents. This is because they are willing to illegally use intrusive intelligence equipment to attain information or work with those who do so; simply to write about political opponents of their political principals.

In the name of independent, impartial and fair journalistic practices, all journalists embedded with intelligence agencies must confess before being publicly named and shamed.

**ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS**

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