



THE EFF STATEMENT ON FIGHTER RINGO MADLINGOZI AND EUGENE MTHETHWA'S SIT IN AT SAMRO'S OFFICES

Friday, 19 February 2021

The EFF fully supports the sit-in at the SAMRO offices by Fighter Ringo Madlingozi and Eugene Mthethwa. The two artists have been station at these offices since yesterday in protest against the corruption of the South African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO) whose primary role is to protect musicians' intellectual property rights and to collect royalties on behalf of their members.

In the recent past, many artists have lodged a string of complaints against SAMRO on the manner in which they have handled their responsibilities. These complaints include that

- SAMRO is not paying artists their royalties in an open and fair manner
- There is a favoritism and cronyism culture in the disbursements of funds
- Millions of Rands have disappeared unexplained, money that should have gone to artists
- There is widespread corruption in the management of SAMRO with the board entertaining themselves with artist's royalties

These are just SOME of the complaints leveled at the entity.

While many artists are struggling to make ends meet, it would appear the SAMRO management and board are helping themselves to artists' money. SAMRO was at the forefront of opposing the Copyrights Amendment Act which amongst other things, aimed at further regulating how they do business. The Amendment Act was summarily returned to parliament after sitting on President Ramaphosa's desk for almost a year without any valid reason.

It must be noted that Fighter Ringo Madlingozi, a Member of Parliament, has raised these issues in the Portfolio Committee for Arts and Culture on numerous occasions and his voice has fallen on deaf ears. The Portfolio Committee together with the incompetent Minister of Arts and Culture Nathi Mthethwa have never taken the plight of artists to heart. The Department is disarray and often cannot get the basics right. There is not a single SOE under that department that is functioning well. Yet the ANC continues to reappoint Mthethwa as Minister.

We place the debacle of the SAMRO saga squarely in the hands of Ramaphosa who has shown disdain towards artists' issues by delaying to respond to the Amendment Act. We further put hold the incompetent Nathi Mthethwa for failing to respond to artists' issues. It is clear that SAMRO and all similar bodies are not the correct model for artists and must therefore be disbanded.

The EFF calls for a regulatory body to manage the entire Arts and Culture sector, a body that would replace these numerous senseless organisations. The EFF will be submitting a private members bill to the National Assembly to effect this proposal.

We call on Ramaphosa to fire Nathi Mthethwa who has proven completely useless and incompetent. We call on the Portfolio Committee of Arts and Culture to take artists' matters seriously. And lastly, we warn SAMRO to attend to Fighter Ringo and Eugene and deal with the corruption in that body, failing which, SAMRO will feel the wrath of the Economic Freedom Fighters. We will no longer tolerate the abuse of artists by reactionary bodies like SAMRO.

ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS

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