



EFF CONDEMNS THE NAKED CAMPAIGN BY ACTING CHIEF JUSTICE RAYMOND ZONDO IN HIS RESPONSE TO MINISTER LINDIWE SISULU

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The Economic Freedom Fighters condemns what is nothing but a naked campaign for the Office of the Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court by Raymond Zondo, in his response to Minister Lindiwe Sisulu which lacked substance and purpose.

In an unnecessary press briefing, which tied the entire judiciary to a poorly articulated and empty response to an opinion piece, Zondo went on a repetitive tirade, framing a political discussion about the slow-pace of economic transformation in the country as an attack on the judiciary.

Inappropriately, Zondo seems to have taken a political debate, submitted to public discourse by someone who practices political oversight in this country, personally and inadvertently made our judiciary a participant in what is obviously an election battle within the ruling party.

It was not Zondo's place to respond to the Minister, because she is far better placed to assess the social and political conditions in this country as someone tasked with that responsibility. She has therefore in her political assessment, factored in the shortfalls of the judiciary in economic, social and political change in the country.

The response by Zondo is therefore not only a waste of our collective time, it is misguided, misplaced and only serves to prejudice Minister Sisulu and those who hold public place in our society, who may hold similar views as her.

The EFF has on many occasions sighted the pitfalls of our judiciary, to a point where we have rightfully called for amendments where necessary. A key example of this is our call for the amendment of Section 25 of the Constitution to allow for expropriation of land without compensation. This argument highlights the failures of this very constitution to reverse the colonial crime of land theft.

If we are to follow Zondo's logic, our call for land expropriation without compensation is an insult. This is because our call is premised on the failures of the judiciary to enhance land reform, because it entrenches land rights which are based on theft.

Zondo is effectively trying to outlaw political commentary by those who reside within the legislature and that must be rejected with the contempt that it deserves. To critique the law and the failures of its custodians, does not make one a law-breaker.

The only logical conclusion is that he is attempting to stifle Minister Sisulu's political commentary because it is opposed to his vested interests in assuming the office of the Chief Justice. His vested interests can only survive if certain factions within the ruling party are ridiculed in public, using platforms that are not created to do so.

By responding to Minister Sisulu through a press conference, Zondo has effectively ruled himself out of ever presiding on matters that involve or relate to the Minister as a Government Official, Member of Parliament or private individual. Zondo should know and internalise a long held principle that Judges should not rush in where angels fear to tread. His recurrent engagement with public discourse will continue to denigrate the confidence of the people in South Africa's judiciary.

Shamefully, Zondo has not even identified any particular insult from Minister Sisulu. Certain political characterisations are deemed insults by him because they are political, and he does not grasp them. He does not grasp them because he does not belong in the political arena.

Perhaps what is more concerning is that he failed to respond to any of the political arguments she raised in her opinion piece, revealing further that he has entered a space he does not belong in to advance his own campaign.

For Zondo to respond to a political debate, poorly at that, simply reveals that he is misplaced, malicious and factional.

The attention seeking Barry White should heed the old-age saying, that it is not always necessary to speak. In speaking he has not only revealed his shallow grasp of the contemporary issues confronting our country, but has exposed himself as an opportunist, who will go to any length to advance his personal interests.

In our view, there is no difference to what Sisulu and Barry White are doing. Sisulu is campaigning to become the President of the ANC and Barry White is campaigning to be the Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court.

This constitution that Zondo so over-zealously pretends to defend, was born out of political debates which are similar to what Minister Sisulu has raised.

For Zondo to not appreciate this fact, and frame political discussion as insults, shows that he is not fit to preside over the judiciary of a contentious and growing democracy such as South Africa.

ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS

Vuyani Pambo (National Spokesperson): 066 082 0889

Delisile Ngwenya (National Spokesperson): 066 388 8779

Sixolise Gcilishe (National Communications Manager): 071 142 1663

✉ communications@effonline.org

🌐 <http://www.effonline.org>

🐦 @EFFSouthAfrica

📷 @EFFSouthAfrica

📘 Economic Freedom Fighters