

Oral submission on the draft regulations of the political party funding bill on behalf of the amandla.mobi community

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Good morning Chair and speakers,

My name is Khaliel Moses and I will be presenting on behalf of the amandla.mobi community. Amandla.mobi is a movement of over 250 000 people, the majority of whom are Black womxn. Together we are campaigning to build a more just and people-powered Mzansi. We campaign on social, economic, reproductive and racial justice issues that affect low-income Black women. Because we believe by creating a society that is more just and fair for Black women, we create a society that is more just and fair for all.

I would like to start off by commending the efforts of the IEC for getting the bill this far when there has been so much pressure from political parties, and the private interests who fund them, to completely scrap the bill. We understand that the IEC has previously expressed concerns that administering the regulation of party funding isn't within their mandate. Thank you to the IEC for taking on this role. The information related to the funding of political parties keeps voters informed and thus we believe the IEC is the institution best placed to facilitate this.

It is also commendable that the IEC has kept their resolve, despite the immense pressure to scrap the bill. This pressure and intervention manifested in President Ramaphosa's delay in signing the political party funding bill into law. This should raise our alarm bells because it meant political parties didn't have to declare who their funders are before the 2019 elections in May. The resulting lack of political transparency meant voters went into elections uninformed about who funds our parties. Perhaps this was a strategic decision on the ANC's part to keep the public in the dark about whose interests they truly serve. Now that the bill has been signed into law there are members of the ANC and DA who are calling for the bill to be reviewed because they have "found it difficult to fundraise because of the bill". Perhaps it was difficult to raise funds because suddenly the backdoor, under the table negotiations and buying of favors is now being made public for all to see. These attempts by political parties to meddle with and scrap the bill is worrying and so it's important now more than ever that the IEC show strong leadership and continue to push for the full implementation of the party funding bill.

Amandla.mobi is an organization that is people powered and member led. This past week we asked our members to send us what they think of the current draft regulations of the political party funding bill. We received a flood of overwhelming support from our members for the bill in its current form. This is a reflection of the strong support from members of the public and civil society for the bill. The bill sets a strong precedent for political transparency in our democracy and I, on behalf of the amandla.mobi community, would like to commend the IEC on their efforts.

As members of the amandla.mobi community and public we agree that there should be a threshold for the amount of money a political party can receive from one single person, corporate or organisation. We believe that R15 million is a good threshold for this amount. But

we are concerned about the minimum amount from which political parties should have to disclose where the funds have come from. R100 000 is a very large amount of money and for many smaller political parties, they may never receive donations that large. We call on the IEC to lower the minimum threshold amount to R50 000. This will ensure all political parties, no matter their size, will be regulated by this bill. We are also concerned that corporates and individuals may find ways around the R50 000 threshold by either making many smaller donations or making different donations through subsidiaries. We call on the IEC to make sure this doesn't happen by viewing all donations from any single individual, group, organisation or corporate as being one collective donation subject to the R50 000 public declaration threshold. We also call on the IEC to put in place systems and processes to ensure the R50 000 threshold isn't skirted by corporates, individuals, groups and organisations making donations through subsidiaries or shell companies.

We fully support the IEC's commitment to transparency and prevention of state capture by recognizing that sponsorship, donations and the purchase or gifting of assets as political party funding that needs to be regulated and made transparent. We also support the IECs push to curb the influence of foreign interests on our internal politics by banning political parties from receiving any donations from foreign governments or agencies. In the past, the ANC has received funding from both the Chinese and Indian governments. This is unacceptable as no foreign government, regardless of our diplomatic ties, should be able to influence our majority political party. While discussing who can and cannot donate, we urge the IEC to ensure that no party receives donations from anonymous sources. In the current political climate, with our government under constant assault from corruption, bribery and state capture, any individual, group, organisation or corporate entity wishing to donate anonymously should be assumed to have malicious and nefarious intent. Why else would they want to stop the public from knowing they funded a political party?

We fully support the IEC ensuring political parties keep financial records of every donation that exceeds the threshold and having to declare their records to the public every 3 months and 2 months before elections. We also believe these records should be accessible to the public and ensuring these records are posted on political parties social media feeds and websites is a first step towards this. But, regular access to the internet isn't a reality for the majority of South Africans because of ridiculously high, anti-poor data prices. This means that the majority of South Africans won't be able to see information on the funders of political parties and so won't be making an informed vote. We call on the IEC to ensure ALL South Africans, regardless of economic class, is able to access this information by circulating gazettes on all donations received by political parties. These gazettes must be circulated nationwide 2 months before every election cycle, municipal and national.

We also support these financial records being kept but believe records should be kept for 10 years not 5. Because of the timing of the municipal and election cycles, it is important all records of donations that exceed the threshold be kept for at least 10 years. This will ensure voters are

kept informed and have access to information on who funds political parties for both election cycles.

amandla.mobi's campaigns and members are committed to justice for the oppressed and marginalized. We trust you will hear our voices. Thank you for your time.