**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEE FOR SECTION 194 HEARS FROM ADV MKHWEBANE THAT CHARGES ARE A “POLITICALLY MOTIVATED WITCH-HUNT”**

Parliament, Wednesday, 15 March 2023 – The Committee for Section 194 Enquiry into Public Protector (PP) Adv Busisiwe Mkhwebane’s fitness to hold office, today heard the testimony of Adv Mkhwebane of how the charges before the committee are politically motived by an “unholy alliance”.

Adv Mkhwebane read out some parts of her affidavit today in which she accused both the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the African National Congress (ANC) of joining forces in order to remove her and hereby stopping her from investigating them.

She said the whole process is a vanity “special project” of the DA aimed at scoring political points as the first party to have ever caused a head of the Chapter 9 Institution to face impeachment proceedings. She said this process has nothing to do with accountability, and it has nothing to do with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa or the Rule of law.

She said the process is as far removed from the Constitution as the South is from the North and it is a politically motivated witch-hunt masquerading as a bona fide enquiry under the auspices of Section 194 of the Constitution. According to her it is a racially motivated campaign borne out of the fear of real change which might actually benefit the poorest and most marginalised members of the public who are in the main black at the expense of those who benefit the most from an untransformed economic status quo, who are in the main white and the backbone constituency of the DA.

She went on to say that in its efforts to get rid of her for doing her work as prescribed by the Constitution, the DA is abetted by the ANC which is driven by separate motives of retaliation and revenge for having exposed corruption. She refers to the investigations into President Cyril Ramaphosa, CR17/Bosasa, and Minister Pravin Gordhan regarding his role in the South African Revenue Service Investigation Unit.

Adv Mkhwebane told the committee that she has to face charges, yet she never brought the country to this point where there is no electricity causing people to die in hospitals and the economy to suffer. She explained how she was shocked by her suspension from duty by President Ramaphosa and called it a vengeful, retaliatory and illegal act. She also told the committee that sometimes someone must be a sacrificial lamb, referring to the process and the court challenges.

Adv Dali Mpofu, SC, during his introductory before the testimony started, complained about the time provided for Adv Mkhwebane to relay her version to the charges she is facing. The committee set 15 March to 31 March 2023 aside for this. Adv Mpofu said the period allocated is “too short” and added that he was aggrieved by this. According to him Adv Mkhwebane has been unfairly accused of “running away” and being unwilling to testify. “If you are minded to give us until December, we are going to use it,” said Adv Mpofu.

At the close of the hearings today, Adv Mpofu indicated that he is finished sketching the landscape as obtained in part one of Adv Mkhwebane’s 225-page affidavit – which included her educational background and work experience.

At the start of the hearings Committee Chairperson Mr Qubudile Dyantyi said the section 194 committee is about to hear from Adv Mkhwebane, who will have the opportunity to address South Africa in her own testimony.

Mr Dyantyi concluded that the hearings will continue tomorrow with testimony of Adv Mkhwebane. The committee was established on 16 March 2021 to conduct a constitutional inquiry into the Public Protector’s fitness to hold office and is expected to conclude its work by the end of April 2023. Committee documents can be found at Committee for Section 194 Enquiry - Parliament of South Africa

ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMITTEE FOR SECTION 194 ENQUIRY, MR QUBUDILE DYANTYI.

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