**Budget Vote debate on Justice and Constitutional Development**

1. Chairperson, it was the eighteenth century Irish satirist, Jonathan Swift, who once proclaimed “Laws are like cobwebs, which may catch small flies, but let’s wasps and hornets break through”.
2. Even though this was written in a foreign country, many hundreds of years ago, it captures succinctly the nature of justice in this country.
3. We are a country where big name politicians, white businessmen, and top white executives in State owned companies loot freely without ever having to worry about prosecutions. The law, it seems, is made for the man and the woman on the street.
4. Whether it is those who murdered people in Marikana, or those responsible for the death of people at Life Esidimeni, or those responsible to the looting at Eskom, and now, those responsible for looting COVID 19 funds in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal and Gauteng, the law just seems blind to these criminal act.
5. All of these are proof that the NPA does not care about prosecuting politically connected crimes, or crimes committed by white people.
6. The COVID pandemic has become a manna from heaven for the crooked politicians, and the NPA is found wanting when its vigilance is most needed.
7. Shamilla Batohi was appointed as head of the NPA in 2018, and since then, the NPA has not prosecuted a single crime committed by politicians. She has not prosecuted a single prominent white business person.
8. For how much longer must we hear about lack of capacity and skills in the NPA? Is this not just a cop-out by them to avoid prosecuting those who enabled their appointment?
9. The reduction of the budget allocation for the NPA in this adjusted budget will further be used by the leadership of the NPA as an excuse for their sheer inertia, their incompetence and their continued protection of the politically connected.
10. The NPA is not alone. We must ask serious questions about the independence of the judiciary across the board.
11. Why is it not causing any discomfort in society that a high court judge can order the sealing of documents that purportedly show criminal acts in the manner the president conducted his campaign to lead the ruling party?
12. Why is it acceptable for the judiciary to make rules and then bend those rules when it suits a dominant political narrative at the time? What will remain of the law if those with money and influence can simply buy their way out of accountability?
13. We now know that the Chief Magistrate in Pretoria, Desmond Nair, was involved in the looting of BOSASA, but we do not know how the favours he got influenced any of the judgements he had to make.
14. How many other cases similar to this are there? There are many questionable judgements in South African courts, and this puts the very principle of the rule of law in serious danger.
15. Nowhere is the danger posed by the hijacking of the judiciary more pronounced than in the concerted collaboration by the ruling elite and the judiciary to demonize the public Protector, and render her office useless.
16. The spurious and vexatious challenges to almost all the reports that implicate the looters in power, and the consistent demeaning of that office by court judgements, to the extent that they order the Public Protector to personally pay for costs; is the most acute form of Judiciary capture by the Thuma Mina brigade.
17. This department has been an enabler of this gross undermining of the rule of law
18. We reject this budget vote