

Budget Debate on Vote 4: Government Communications and Information systems (GCIS)

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The power of the propaganda machine

Mr/Madam Chairperson

Mr Minister

Mr Deputy Minister

We live in a time of great uncertainty in our country.

We are rocked daily by yet another scandal that would see governments of other country's ousted, we see corruption scandal after corruption scandal,

we witness the poverty index spiraling out of control,

we see the cost of living now at a point of danger levels,

we see the world's finest Governor of an Independent Reserve Bank having no choice but to increase the repo rate regularly to ensure that inflation doesn't simply drown our country, we see health services deteriorate to deadly levels,

we see children drowning in pit toilets,

we see a Postal Service in provisional liquidation,

we see an International diplomatic disaster causing our county to be viewed yet again as a pariah of the international community,

we drive on Swiss cheese style roads due to lack of maintenance,

we have water outages for days on end and most notably, we are in the midst of the worst electricity crisis we have seen yet but pick up any material produced by GCIS and you would think we live in a paradise state with functional departments, problem free living and a government completely adored by its people.

Nothing...could be further from the truth.

I must point out that our budget briefing from GCIS was presented to us recently and a complaint we heard was that a much higher budget was required due to load shedding. I am sorry, but this propaganda machine is so unnecessary, that load shedding budgets should not even be a thought,

given the other departments that are REALLY affected by blackouts and who should be much more worried about them, the printing of government promotion material has no effect on the South African public and I very much doubt whether anyone outside government reads these materials. Cold hard facts!

And this comes from someone who loves her country but is just ashamed by its government.

A propaganda machine is a very powerful and very dangerous machine, and I'm afraid that all GCIS has become is a mouthpiece for the ANC spouting out useless information, pivoting and spinning better than a rendition of any ballet.

I remember a time when GCIS would provide MPs with copies of propaganda newspapers to hand out in constituencies, at least that absolute waste of money and exercise in futility is over, although I am told that certain constituencies still receive this junk mail.

Something that must be addressed urgently is the fact that more and more we are seeing on social media, so called parliamentary offices with tables and tablecloths with ANC logos on them.

Parliamentary TV is becoming increasingly selective in what is shown, and very little anti ANC programs are shown or run on the rerun version when parliament isn't sitting.

I took it upon myself to chat to various MP's pre this speech, the answer was always the same, "we don't really know what GCIS does, or what they can offer Parliament". This is not a healthy situation.

I have gone onto the website, this is what I have found:

Cabinet meeting updates which quite frankly, if this is a true reflection of what happens, I'm not surprised we have the chaos that we do in the country,

I found photos of the cabinet and premiers,

I found photos of recent visits that the President has had, but nothing substantial about the visits,

I found links to Government speeches, which were on the whole, completely useless to the public unless they fully understood the portfolio,

And most bizarrely of all I found a GCIS 2023 Budget Vote Promotional video. This actually angered me because it showed a complete waste of money and exactly why, propaganda machines like this department waste public funds and offer absolutely zero benefit to the South African public.

If the governing party is that broke that they cannot do their own promotions, it should not be allowed to be done through Parliament and at the cost of the South African Taxpayer – with the rumors that Russia is bankrolling the ANC, maybe they should ask them if they can increase their monthly pocket money to make their own promotions.

What I do however still receive is the Official Guide to South African yearbook and let me put this as diplomatically as I can, it makes me cringe.

It speaks with great pride about all the departments and wonderful work they are doing, I ask myself the simple question “are you actually kidding me?”. The editor is Mr Elias Tibane and I think it’s time we have a very frank conversation about the publication he issues.

I have seen not one word about the levels of poverty and the unbelievable and untenable cost of living.

I have seen not one word about children still being taught under trees and dying in pit toilets.

I have seen nothing about a break down in foreign diplomatic relations and covert operations taking place in the middle of the night.

I have seen nothing about the unemployment rate and the rapid removal of international investors,

I have seen nothing about collapsing municipalities and the corruption and criminality attacked thereto.

I have seen nothing regarding the ever-increasing rate of Gender Based Violence, just the odd mention of a talk shop here or there.

I have seen nothing about the fact that we STILL have no actual National Assembly, almost one and a half years since our beautiful building was turned to ash.

I see nothing about the constant rise in crime, making South Africa fall within the same danger levels of a war zone.

I see nothing about the fact that we can now expect the highly likely chance of reaching stage 10 of rolling electricity black outs.

I see nothing mentioned about the implementation of the direct and clear instructions of Chief Justice Raymond Zondo regarding corrective steps that must be taken following the Zondo Commission findings of gross corruption and theft known as State Capture,

The propaganda machine is designed for one thing, and one thing alone, to manipulate the truth and keep South Africans in the dark about the real goings on in government.

The election in 2024 cannot come soon enough, the moonshot election is now our only hope, and the GCIS propaganda machine is absolute proof of that.

Allow me to conclude with the following quote by Sir Winston Churchill:

“Laws just or unjust may govern men’s actions. Tyrannies may restrain or regulate their words. The machinery of Propaganda may pack their minds with falsehood and deny them for many generations of time. But the soul of man thus held in trace or frozen on a long night can be awakened by a spark coming from God knows where and, in a moment, the whole structure of lies and oppression is on trial for its life”,