**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE F.J MULDER MP FF PLUS**

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Honourable House chair

The South African Judiciary is under threat and serious and extraordinary measures should be implemented to rectify this alarming reality.

None of the articles of faith of the South African Constitution is necessarily plausible.

In reality, the constitution is not supreme and entrenched. Subjected to visible socio-economic forces it changes continuously and often so profoundly, regardless of strict amendment requirements.

Honourable Chair, I have said this in the past and I am repeating this point of view in agreement with factual observations made by several constitutional analysts of which the opinion’s of Prof Koos Malan is note worthy.

The bill of individual rights cannot absolutely guarantee justice, because in South Africa, rights are often subject to the ideologically-driven exercise of judicial intrepertation, often with damaging consequences for those relying on the bill of rights

At the head of the judiciary stand the chief juistice as a guardian of our constitution and laws adopted by elected representatives of the people

The chief justice should stand as the champion of the rights of all South Africans and bears responsibility for ensuring equal access to justice.

The mandate of the Office of the chief justice is therefore to provide effective administrative and technical support to the Chief Justice as the Head of the Judiciary and as Head of the Constitutional Court, as well as to render administrative, operational and governance support to the Judiciary.

The Freedom Front Plus is therefore confident that the newly appointed Chief Justice Raymond Zondo will aquit himself with distinction in this role and should therefore be supported by the Office of the Chief Justice in a more adequate manner as what realized up till now, to enable the Chief Justice to implement extraordinary measures required to address our counrty’s extraordinary circumstances.

Honourable chair

In saying that and although the Office of the Chief justice maintained a clean audit, the Freedomfront Plus is concerned about the medium and long term consequences of the government’s attempt to slow expenditure growth by reducing baseline budgets and setting ceilings on compensation spending which resulted in a widened gap between revenue and expenditure , increased pressure on basic service delivery and a lack of progress.

Development such as security services at the courts to the Office of the Chief Justice, inadequacies in ICT security and user access management, as well as ICT operational inefficiencies.

Courts also experience serious infrastructure and maintenance problems.

With regular load shedding a given in South Africa, the lack of or inadequate generators at court buildings are only some of the infrastructure-related difficulties that undermine the efficient running of court matters. At the Supreme Court of Appeal for example, the generator is only able to light the corridors during outages and load shedding. As the courtrooms do not have windows, it is impossible for matters to be heard when the electricity is off. This makes mockery of the right of access to justice.

South African courts are not capacitated to efficiently deliver court services in line with the standards and court rules and this shoud be rectified without delay.

To be able to rectify this unfortunately and serious situation, the South African constitution should firstly be respected and the Office of the Chief justice should be equipped to support a respected Chief Justice to fulfill his mandate

The Freedomfront Plus cannot support this budget

Thank you chair