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**Author:** Mayibongwe Maqhina

PUBLIC BROADCASTER

# Parliamentary committee advances SABC bill for reforms

MAYIBONGWE MAQHINA  
mayibongwe.maqhina@ini.co.za

THE Parliamentary Committee on Communications and Digital Technologies will be prioritising the processing of the SABC Bill for recommendation to the National Assembly no later than June.

The Bill was withdrawn from Parliament by Minister Solly Malatsi in November following extensive stakeholder consultation and the review of public submissions.

Malatsi had stated that the proposed law did not address the sustainable funding model of the public broadcaster.

Although he notified National Assembly Speaker Thoko Didiza of the withdrawal, the Bill has not been formally withdrawn via a notice in the parliamentary communiqué.

Instead, Minister in the Presidency Khumbudzo Ntshavheni previously said the Bill was an executive one and he must make submission to Cabinet

for the withdrawal.

Deputy President Paul Mashatile, who is the leader of government business, had written to Didiza informing her that the Bill was not withdrawn.

On Thursday, Didiza told the programme committee that she had been in engagement with Malatsi and Mashatile.

"Our meeting is going to take place on 6 February in the morning to see how we address that matter going forward and within our rules and also within the Cabinet conventions," she said.

Addressing the media, Communications and Digital Technologies Portfolio Committee chairperson Khusela Sangoni-Diko said the Bill was important and urgent to ensure sustainability and viability of the SABC through a legislative framework for implementation of crucial reforms necessary.

She said while they noted Malatsi opposed two sections out of the 30 in the Bill, the committee will con-



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tinue with processing it until Malatsi receives the requisite authority from Cabinet to withdraw it.

Sangoni-Diko also said they welcomed the steady progress at Postbank to comply with SARB's notice for its banking licence.

She called on Sassa beneficiaries using the bank's cards to replace to avoid disruption of receiving their social grants.

Sangoni-Diko also called on the government and stakeholders to support Postbank as it sought to deliver on its mandate.

Regarding the SA Post Office, Sangoni-Diko said while they recognised the work done by the business rescue practitioners, they should have produced a sustainable plan to guarantee that the entity returned to liquidity and solvency.

"We remain unconvinced that the business rescue practitioners have done to secure strategic and meaningful strategic partnerships.

"The committee will engage the minister and seek to understand the exit strategy of the business rescue practitioners. They can't be there forever," she said.

Meanwhile, the Public Works and Infrastructure Portfolio Committee will undertake a public participation process to understand what transpired in the collapse of the George building that claimed 34 lives last year.

"We will wait for the chair of chairs

to allow for that trip to go to George. We can't give you a specific date when we are going, but in our plan in the second quarter around March, we are anticipating to go and do the public participation and go into detail to understand the collapse of the building," committee chairperson Mokgadi Phiri said.

Phiri also said they noted the appointment of the auditing firm PWC to probe the R800 million oxygen plant tender at the Independent Development Trust.

She said they would await the outcome of the investigation and whether any officials would be held accountable.

She added that they welcomed the signing into law of the Expropriation Bill by President Cyril Ramaphosa last week.

She said the Bill had gone through the necessary processes before it was finalised by the national legislature.

"We are accepting and want to say to the president thank you," Phiri said.