

Address: 18 Cedar Avenue, 1st floor Richmond
Forum, Richmond, 2092, Johannesburg
Postal Address: P.O.Box 30668, Braamfontein, 2017
Tel: +27 (0)114821913
Fax: +27(0)864166135
Email: fxi@fxi.org.za



FREEDOM DAY: EQUALITY AND DIGNITY ARE FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS IN FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

27 April 2016

Press Statement: For Immediate Release

It is twenty- two years after South Africa's first democratic elections and South Africans have more civil and political rights today more than ever before. However, till this day, South Africa has not fully realised the ideals of equality, human dignity and freedom. And despite recently commemorating the 20th anniversary of our Constitution, South Africa is still struggling to define critical positions on equality and dignity which are foundational elements in freedom of expression.

The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DOJ&CD) prepares to introduce the Hate Crimes Bill, a Bill which seeks to address specific forms of aggravated crimes including hate speech. We caution that the department must guard against the expansion of parameters in 'prohibited speech' that may infringe upon free expression. Freedom of expression is indispensable to the functioning of a democracy and should not be restricted. The DOJ&CD should seek to encourage the public to use the existing remedies to hate speech instead of introducing new penalties. It must recognise the link between incitement of violence and hate crimes but treat all individuals as capable of resisting any form of advocacy for racism and other kinds of prejudices.

The Freedom of Expression Institute celebrates Freedom Day with the rest of South Africa, hoping that the public continue to express themselves and participate in shaping the country's civil and political future.

For more information:

Sheniece Linderboom

Mobile: +27 (0)74 783 2743

Zororo Mavindidze

Mobile: +27 (0)73 554 8310

@FXISouthAfrica

Executive Committee: Anton (chairperson), Raymond Louw, Nobuntu Mbelle, Indra de Lanerolle, William Gumede, Oupa Lebogo, Sam Radebe, Franz Kruger. **Executive Director:** Tusi Fokane