



FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION INSTITUTE AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION NETWORK STATEMENT

A tragic week for freedom of expression defenders: FXI and FXN mourn the passing of Freedom of Expression Network Chair – Sam Radebe

30 June 2017

The Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI) and the Freedom of Expression Network (FXN) is deeply saddened by the news of the death of Sam Butizana Radebe. He passed on the 28 June 2017 after a long illness.

Sam was an uncompromising and fearless social justice activist. Sam was hated by the apartheid regime, because of his quest for social justice. He continued his fight against the current neoliberal democratic system. He never vacillated, but stood firm on the side of the poor, marginalised and excluded masses until his last day.

Sam was instrumental in the establishment of the Greater Harrismith Residents Association (GHRA), building on from his work in Social Movement Indaba (SMI). The GHRA initiated campaigns for the socio-economic upliftment of residents around Harrismith. He was imprisoned on a dubious charge of sedition in 2004, along with comrades from the GHRA. The charge was later changed to unlawful gathering after a fierce campaign which included the South African Human Rights Commission, COSATU and the FXI. Sam was also poisoned whilst in police holding cells - an incident which completely affected his health permanently.

Sam contributed to the formation of the FXN, launched in April 2006. The network seeks to counter repression on working class formations, community based organisations and social movements.

Sam was determined to ensure that the poor and vulnerable in society also enjoy their share in the exercise of the right to freedom of expression, including the right to protest and access information. He understood the centrality of free expression in organising. Sam was the national chairperson of the FXN and board members of the FXI. The FXI and FXN share their heartfelt condolences with the family, his comrades and friends.

Sam will be laid to rest on 08 July 2017, in Intabazwe, Harrismith. Rest in Power, Sam!

-ENDS-

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