

BLA STATEMENT ON THE DISCLOSURE OF LEGAL PRACTITIONERS' FEES IN PARLIAMENT

15 NOVEMBER 2022

For immediate media release

Let the message be clear: The BLA cannot sit by and watch the vindictive abuse of black practitioners.

The public disclosure of fees paid to practitioners for work done for the Public Protector Office is a deliberate and sensationalist attempt to discredit and denigrate black practitioners. That such a gratuitous disclosure occurred in the hallowed halls of our Parliament and under the watch of a majority-black government can only be described as a cruel twist of irony.

We note that Advocates Sikhakhane and Ngalwana appeared before the parliamentary committee on 10 November 2022 to set the record straight and to refute the false narrative instigated by the evidence leaders. The BLA is encouraged by the leadership and courage of the two senior counsels in these difficult times. In the same vein, we fully support the media statement released by the Pan Africanist Bar Association of South Africa (PABASA) on this unfortunate matter.

The BLA echoes PABASA's sentiments and unequivocally accepts "*the importance of transparency in the manner in which public funds are used*". However, it has now come to light that the information displayed by the evidence leaders in the section 194 enquiry was inaccurate and misleading. In the circumstances, the attempt was to leave the ineluctable conclusion that black practitioners were out to loot public funds. No amount of apology and contrived contrition by the evidence leaders will

ever undo the damage. We call upon Adv Nazreen Bawa to voluntarily disclose her fees for the work she is doing for our Parliament.

The BLA is on public record decrying the uneven distribution of legal work by the government and big business. Historically white law firms and white male advocates continue to enjoy the lion's share of legal work from both the public and private sectors. It is embarrassing that such an untenable status quo is encouraged by the current government.

The BLA has resolved to challenge the *status quo* and uproot all un-transformative elements **by any means necessary**. The current incident is not an isolated incident. There are many incidents which point to a complete disregard of black practitioners. All that will be revealed.

The BLA will, in due course, publicly unveil its public strategy to deal with issues relating to the continued abuse of black practitioners and professionals at large.

For the BLA it is still **"Aluta Continua!"**

Issued by the President of the BLA

Advocate Bayethe Maswazi