

#UNITE BEHIND

A JUST AND EQUAL SOUTH AFRICA

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Mkhacani Joseph Maswanganyi, MP

Minister, Department of Transport

chabalalar@dot.gov.za (mulangal@dot.gov.za)

cc.

Dikeledi Magadzi, MP

Chairperson, Portfolio Committee on Transport

dmagadzi@parliament.gov.za (vcarelse@parliament.gov.za)

Nelson Godi, MP

Chairperson, Standing Committee on Public Accounts

ngodi@parliament.gov.za (bkali@parliament.gov.za; nnkabinde@parliament.gov.za)

Dear Minister Maswanganyi and Chairpersons Magadzi and Godi,

GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONAL EMERGENCY IN PRASA/METRORAIL

Millions of people and hundreds of thousands of commuters are affected by the crisis of reliability, safety, security and comfort on trains operated by Metrorail in our country. The Metrorail/PRASA crisis represents an emergency in the Western Cape, particularly in Cape Town, for families, schools, clinics, universities, businesses and the broader public and private transport system.

We write this letter to you on behalf of #UniteBehind, a coalition of people's movements working in the fields of land, education, housing, transport, energy, environment, worker rights, social security, women's equality, safety, policing and gender-based violence.

Legal, communication, and governance support organisations, religious bodies and leaders are also affiliated to or support #UniteBehind. We address this letter to you on behalf of our coalition, individuals directly affected by rail services and in the broader public interest.

As an organ of state, Prasa/Metrorail owns and controls significant assets indispensable to growing our economy and its honest functioning in the public interest is imperative.

Alternative Information and Development Centre, Centre for Environmental Rights, District 6 Working Committee, Equal Education, Environmental Monitoring Group, Financial Sector Campaign Coalition, Ndifuna Ukwazi, People's Health Movement, PHA Food & Farming Campaign, Right 2 Know, SAFCEI, SA First Forum, Save SA, Section 27, the Social Justice Coalition, Sonke Gender Justice, the Treatment Action Campaign, Trust for Community Outreach and Education, the Wellington Association Against the Incinerator, the Women and Democracy Initiative, and the Women's Legal Centre.

Minister we welcome your announcement on a R9 billion upgrade to the Western Cape rail system. However, in this letter we request information and urge action from you regarding governance of Prasa/Metrorail; plans, timelines and budgets for spending the promised investment of R9 billion; safety and security on trains, recovering and protecting public assets.

GOVERNANCE & CORRUPTION

The daily crisis faced by commuters of PRASA/Metrorail represents one of the most egregious examples of how state capture and corruption violate amongst others the rights to dignity, life, freedom, security of the person, work, education, and family life. Many of our members are these commuters, and we have a duty to take action that will support the resolution of this crisis.

The state capture and corruption exposed in the: Public Protector's report (No. 3 of 2015/16); Auditor General's annual report (2015/16); and the litigation against Swifambo and Siyangena as well as that against the Directorate for Priority Crimes Investigations (Hawks) and the National Prosecuting Authority by the former PRASA Board together with the crisis in delays, safety and security faced by commuters is the basis on which we make the following urgent requests:

1. What is the process and criteria for selecting the Prasa Board?
2. When will an independent, ethical, efficient, effective, competent and appropriately qualified board be appointed for the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa?
3. Can the public make nominations to your office for the Prasa Board? Given the crisis of confidence in Metrorail services and the corruption, if the public cannot nominate Prasa Board or the process is not opened to parliamentary scrutiny, please provide legally valid reasons for denying public and parliamentary participation in the process.
4. Can you provide the details for how the R9 billion will be allocated? Specifically: the areas for investment; the amounts allocated, the needs analysis and plans upon which the allocation was decided?
5. A leaked internal memorandum on security in the Metrorail WC Region has exposed what can only be described as criminal negligence in the appointment of security guards and the failure to protect people and assets. What steps have you taken to ensure that this crisis is remedied and the appropriate investment is made in people and resources to ensure rail safety for commuters, employees and businesses together with Metrorail asset protection?
6. What action have you taken to ensure assets gained through corruption, fraud, theft and money-laundering in Prasa/Metrorail are frozen, protected and returned to the public rail system where the need for it is desperate?
7. What steps have you and Cabinet taken to ensure that all former Prasa Board members such as current Deputy Minister of Finance Sifiso Buthelezi, its former CEO Lucky Montana, local companies and the global entities such as the Spanish rail company Vosloh Espanã are brought to book?

We urge you to reply to this letter diligently and without delay as required by the Constitution and no later than 23 October 2017.

Yours faithfully,

Members of the #UniteBehind Organising Secretariat


Zackie Achmat



Zukie Vuka



Bruce Baigrie



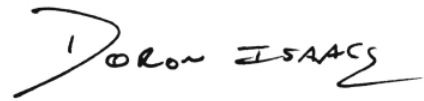
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Zelda Holtzman



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