

5 October 2024

Statement in response to Rebecca Davis (Daily Maverick) Article:

The Foundation wishes to place it on record that all former Heads of State were invited to both the Sisulu Foundation launch which was held at Robben Island, as well as at the inaugural memorial lecture of our icon (Albertina Sisulu), hosted by the University of Cape Town (UCT).

In response to Rebecca Davis's recent *hit piece* on the UCT event featuring former President Jacob Zuma and MP Lindiwe Sisulu, the Foundation and Board of Trustees stand firmly in support of the Patron and her right to contribute meaningfully to South Africa's intellectual spaces.

Davis's article, written with obvious disdain and obscure lunacy, reflects a clear disrespect for individuals central to our country's liberation history. The casual erasure of Sisulu's long-standing service as a Member of Parliament and executive, underscores a clear agenda to diminish her legacy. This is not journalism. It is editorial posturing designed to discredit those who dare to confront power.

Let us be clear: the Patron's credibility was not earned through borrowed authority or institutional backing. Her legacy was built through decades of commitment to the liberation struggle and her defence of democratic freedoms, including the right to speak truth to power—even when it involves journalists with ethical lapses. Davis's hit piece, while predictable in its tone and intent, conveniently ignores this context, reducing the Patron to a caricature without acknowledging the weight of her history or the substance of her critiques.

To address Davis's insinuations about the Patron's views on the South African Constitution, as expressed in *Hi Mzantsi*: the Patron stands firmly by her words. Any suggestion that her critique of the Constitution threatens democratic principles betrays a shallow understanding of democracy itself. Democratic engagement thrives on the questioning of foundational documents—this is not subversion, but rather a sign of vitality.

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Frantz Fanon and other scholars have argued that genuine liberation requires the critical examination of structures that claim to represent the people, particularly when they fall short.

Furthermore, *Daily Maverick* and its allies are welcome to pursue any investigation they see fit concerning our CEO's tenure in government. However, their relentless recycling of discredited accusations only serves to reinforce their bias and hatred. The fact remains: law enforcement agencies have thoroughly cleared CEO of any wrongdoing.

This fixation on reviving baseless claims and bile reveals an almost obsessive desire to defame rather than a pursuit of truth.

As for Davis's baseless claim that UCT was "co-opted" for credibility—this accusation lacks both substance and understanding. Suggesting that the Patron's presence required validation from UCT reveals a failure to grasp how intellectual spaces truly function.

The Patron, as a South African, has every right to engage in these arenas, and she will not be deterred by outdated colonial attitudes rebranded as journalistic critique. Intellectual forums in South Africa belong to all citizens, not only to those who fit a narrow, comfortable narrative.

In closing, we would like to remind Rebecca Davis and her supporters or handlers within white capital power and Western interests that no amount of gatekeeping will prevent the Patron from standing where she belongs—in the heart of South Africa's intellectual and political arenas. Her commitment to fostering genuine democratic discourse remains unwavering.

Attempts to restrict her influence through biased reporting will only fuel her resolve to expose these distortions and challenge those who wield editorial power irresponsibly.

This nation's intellectual landscape is far too important to be dictated by clumsy hit pieces from entrenched voices. The Patron's contributions will continue, marked by the same courage and clarity that have always defined her role in South Africa's journey towards true liberation.

Issued by the Sisulu Foundation for Social Justice

