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Corruption Watch and the Right2Know Campaign challenge Seriti Commission

Today Corruption Watch (CW) and the Right2Know (R2K) Campaign have launched an application in the High Court of South Africa, Gauteng Division, Pretoria. The application asks the court to review and set aside the findings of the Arms Procurement Commission, also known as the Seriti Commission. This follows a relentless struggle by civil society for accountability in a scandal that was one of the most far-reaching in a democratic South Africa. The Seriti Commission's findings cannot be allowed to stand. This review seeks to ensure that a great crime against the people of South Africa will not be whitewashed.

Challenging the arms deal cover-up is particularly relevant given the struggles today against state capture, in an environment in which investigations of irregular procurement and large-scale contracts are increasingly hampered and suppressed. Those who are implicated continue to act with impunity and in most cases remain in their positions without consequences.

The commission was tasked with investigating allegations of corruption in the 1999 arms deal, which cost the country billions of rands in exchange for weapons through processes that lacked transparency. However, after over four years, characterised by a flawed process, the commission's final report claimed it had found no evidence of any corruption in the deal.

The [founding papers](#) show that this finding is the result of an abject failure on the part of the commission to undertake a proper investigation. The commission refused to consider thousands of pages of evidence from previous investigations, and failed to gather or admit highly incriminating evidence despite having the power to do so.

Taken together, this behaviour shows that the commission grossly failed in its mandate to fully investigate and uncover the truth about the arms deal. This deal has deeply corrupted the politics of South Africa, and sits at the heart of the country's fight against corruption and "state capture". The commission's failure to provide the public with the truth undermines the country's attempts to fight these struggles.

CW and R2K have approached the courts because for far too long the corrupt have escaped accountability. Anti-corruption activists, such as our late fearless comrade Godfrey Phiri, continue to bring these issues to light on a daily basis. This case is brought in his name and that of others who demand the right to know and refuse to be silenced.

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Go to www.corruptionwatch.org.za or www.r2k.org.za to view the evidence that the commission ignored and for more background on the arms deal.