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Attacks on public protector's office are an attempt to silence anticorruption voice

Corruption Watch notes with great concern the repeated attacks on the Office of the Public Protector, the latest incident involving comments made by the Justice Portfolio Committee in Parliament last week. The attacks reflect a pattern of disrespect and contempt for a vital institution in South Africa's constitutional democracy.

Under the leadership of Advocate Thuli Madonsela, the Office of the Public Protector has objectively served the South African public, exposing corruption and high levels of maladministration within the public service. There is no evidence that the office has acted with bias or favour on any issue it has brought forward to the public since Adv. Madonsela took office in October 2009. On the contrary, the public protector has maintained the integrity of the office and ensured it judiciously fulfils its constitutional mandate.

"We view the office as a crucial anticorruption body that is well placed to speak authoritatively on the management of public resources. There are disturbing signs of disrespect for this office, and we will do all in our power as a civil society organisation to protect it. The parliamentary committee is well advised to concern itself with rampant maladministration, including in the administration of justice, rather than with shooting the messenger," said Corruption Watch executive director, David Lewis.

Lewis said efforts to deliberately weaken the office should be viewed as an attack on the public's right to accountable and transparent leadership in government.

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