

Safrea concerned over possible press infringements by Northern Cape premier's office

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The Southern African Freelancers' Association expresses concern about alleged infringements of constitutional press freedoms by members of the Northern Cape Office of the Premier.



Credit: Picjumbo (picjumbo.com)

On Wednesday, 10 May, investigative journalist and Safrea member Ntozakhe Mthukwane was reportedly prevented from attending an urgent media briefing called by Sylvia Lucas, Premier of the Northern Cape. The briefing covered a provincial cabinet reshuffle viewed as controversial by segments of the province's ANC structures.

Mthukwane alleges that he was prevented from entering the briefing by a member of the premier's VIP protection unit. He asserts this was done on the instructions of the premier's spokesperson, Brownyn Thomas-Abrahams.

A well-known journalist in the region, and correspondent for News24, Mthukwane has covered several of the premier's briefings previously.

Safrea is concerned about the allegations, which suggest politicians and their associates acting with disregard to constitutionally protected rights of the press and obstructing the coverage of important news for public good.

Such actions also prevent competent freelance journalists such as Mthukwane from carrying out their trade and earning a living.

As Clive Lotter, Vice Chair of Safrea, notes, "The constitution protects journalists in their role of holding officials and institutions to account. Preventing a journalist from doing that job is a clear affront to press freedom."

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Safrea is the Southern African Freelancers' Association. We advocate for and support freelance workers in the communications fields. We also provide resources, tools, training and networking to strengthen freelance careers.

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