

**NDPP MEDIA BRIEFING
FRIDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2019**

Thank you Minister. Good afternoon to the press and the people of South Africa. I am honoured to be welcomed here today as your National Director of Public Prosecutions. I reiterate that my only obligation is to serve the Constitution and you, the people of South Africa, with humility and dedication to the best of my ability.

It's been a particularly dynamic week. Only last Thursday I was still in my office at the ICC. I arrived in South Africa last Friday, and after a weekend with family, the last 4 days have been spent meeting with key stakeholders in preparation for the road ahead.

Today is my first day in office, but already I am greatly enthused by my interactions over the past days, which have been marked by cooperation and commitment. It is inspiring to see diverse sections of Government and Civil Society come together to offer their support in the struggle ahead. We know it will be difficult, but we are determined.

- I return to the NPA at a time of crisis – not only for the organisation but also the rule of law in South Africa. Without it the country is on a slippery slope and the cancer of impunity festers and grows, with devastating impact on the country.
- But despite the challenges, I am confident that the NPA will again become an organisation that puts justice first; one we can all be proud of, and that many countries in Africa and beyond aspire to.
- I have just come out of a meeting with all the NPA staff. I reiterated that we hold the future of our country in our hands. South Africa's constitutional democracy cannot survive disrespect for the rule of law. Justice must win, and not just in terms of empty rhetoric, but by our actions. This is how we in the NPA want to be judged in a few years' time – by our actions not our words.
- I am under no illusion about the challenges and the complexity of the task which lies before us. Our Rainbow Nation is reeling from corruption, violent crime and impunity. Corruption is driven by greed and selfishness. In certain contexts, when public institutions are corrupted, it amounts to theft from ordinary South Africans, just trying to make ends meet.
- I commit to leading an organisation which has the courage and ability to end this damaging state of affairs.
- Perpetrators of corruption and crime within the state and private sector – regardless of who you are, how rich you are, and what position you hold – your days of acting with impunity are numbered.
- I reminded all prosecutors this morning that we are lawyers for the people and that at this time the people don't trust their lawyers. We in the NPA are committed to turning that around. But we have to get our own house in order.
 - We will act with courage - a deep commitment to our constitutional obligations and an unwavering commitment to our independence, which I will fiercely defend.

- Beyond courage, we need an organisation with the capacity to deliver. I have spoken to the Minister about this. I'll work tirelessly with my government counterparts, external partners – including civil society and the private sector – to ensure the NPA is an effective and efficient organisation that can address the challenges facing prosecutors in the 21st century. This will require hard work, innovation, and perseverance.
- I know everyone is hungry for justice. You have every right to be. Serious allegations have emerged, some old and some new, but all damning if they are found to have any basis in fact at all. What is emerging is distressing in the extreme and will receive immediate attention. I will as soon as possible with relevant stakeholders including the team at the Zondo Commission and the Head of the SIU.
- But bear in mind, for justice to win, we can't focus only on the revelations of the Zondo Commission. We need to ensure access and delivery of justice to the millions of victims of crime – including sexual and gender-based violence. All South Africans have a constitutional right to feel safe and secure. Government entities need your support to make our country safe. It is incumbent on every South African to consider how you can contribute to the fight against crime – e.g by not providing a market for stolen goods. We need to consider how our own behaviours might be influencing crime.
- I share your sense of urgency, and commit to moving quickly on a number of pressing matters in the coming weeks and months. But you must understand that my colleagues and I will need to prioritise and fixing the rule of law in South Africa is a long-term endeavour and we need the support of the Nation.
- There is a dark cloud hanging over the NPA. The NPA needs a change in leadership one that prosecutors and all South Africans – can be proud of.
- I also told NPA staff that they have my complete loyalty to those who are committed to upholding the values of the Constitution and to getting the work done. Importantly, however, members of the NPA who are unwilling to work as professionals with integrity do not have a future in the organisation. Prosecutors are not for sale. That said, I have no doubt that the majority of the NPA is comprised of hardworking and committed persons, working in a Criminal Justice System under immense pressure for various reasons. I have no doubt that they share this vision.
- Before concluding, I personally thank those of you in the media, civil society and the state – who have courageously and tirelessly led efforts to expose the nature of corruption and force the government's hand. You have brought us back from the edge of the state capture cliff.
- You will appreciate that I have a desk full of urgent matters. I need to connect with prosecutors throughout the country to understand their needs and priorities, while at the same time delivering on priority issues that need action now. While I intend to build an open and constructive relationship with the media, I would like to limit my engagement with the media in the coming weeks. There's simply too much work to do. I'll be announcing

the NPA communication strategy in due course which will include media engagement. I trust that you will understand this and give me the space to do what I have been appointed to do.