CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIVISTS UNDER ATTACK BY GOVERNMENT
By Right2Know
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As the country gears up to commemorate women's month the Right to Know Campaign(R2K) is appalled at how leaders elected by the people can be so vicious in attacking and threatening a womxn led organisation with such violence without being held accountable. This attack comes at a time in our country were violence against women and children is at its peak.

The Attacks on Socio Economic Rights Institute (SERI) equate to attacks on basic Human Rights
On Wednesday, 27 July 2022 the South African Informal Traders Forum won a case brought to the High Court of Gauteng by SERI, court against the removal of informal traders from the De Villiers, in the City of Johannesburg. Nkululeko Mbundu who is a member of the Mayoral Committee for Economic Development, took his frustration on the case to twitter where he viciously attacked the activists and Lawyers representing the informal traders. Direct threats were made to both Lawyers as they were told to watch their backs and that people knew their location and they were coming for them. This intimidation is a direct attack on activists and our constitution. As a result of this intimidation the institution had to temporarily close their offices as they feared for their lives.

The Right to Know Campaign in the strongest form condemns the attacks on the Socio-Economic Rights Institute. The arrogance of Politicians has proven that humanity is furthest from the minds of most politicians. The culture of intimidation that social justice activists must be subjected to or this leadership style for political parties to get their way and intend on leading or ruling this country? As we head to the next election, we need to give serious thought as to how we educate our people.

The Right to Know campaign calls on the City of Johannesburg to set aside their arrogance and immediately stop intimidation, attacks, or reprisals against our human rights defenders. SERI temporarily closed their offices after threats were made to harm their staff and burn their offices.

The one thing that these politicians must know is that when a woman is told to back off, she pushes harder because women are mothers not only of their own children.
Our demands to the City of Johannesburg are that:

- They ensure that SERI staff and Attorneys are safe and the City will be held accountable should anything happen to them. All necessary protection to be provided to the activists.
- That Mbundu backs-off SERI and Informal Traders leaders.
- We further demand a full investigation and for action to be taken against this Mayoral Committee Member.
- We call for the resignation of Mbundu
- The removal of the twitter comments and a public apology.

Black Women have reached a level of honour and should be celebrated, as the R2K campaign we shall continue to rally behind SERI and any other community that is under attack by leaders without any fear. We also call on other Civil Society formations to rally

behind SERI and call for the resignation of Mbundu to send a strong message that violence of any form will not be tolerated.

This press statement was released by Right2Know on 2 August 2022.