



Public consensus on the heritage of liberation song

The National Heritage Council (NHC) is exploring all possible means to solicit public consensus on protecting South Africa's heritage from being decided in the courts as it was the case recently when a liberation struggle song was banned by the Equality Court. A public dialogue that will engage the supporters of the conflicting views is also considered.

It is disappointing that South Africans find themselves at a crossroads with a delicate choice of what constitute their country's national identity. Again the liberation struggle song is the subject but the implication of banning the "dubul' ibhunu" song in a judgment handed down by Judge Colin Lamont has far reaching consequences on how this country determines its heritage.

"We believe that the public view on the significance of the liberation songs, including "dubul' ibhunu" and other historic pointers of the struggle qualifies to be part of the country's heritage. It cannot be left to the Equality Court alone to pronounce on what should be part of the people's heritage," says Adv. Sonwabile Mancotywa, the Chief Executive Officer of the NHC.

The NHC is also leading a project of reconstructing the liberation history of South Africa on the continent – the Liberation Heritage Route which will be considered by UNESCO for listing as a World Heritage property. This ruling may jeopardise some of the elements of this continental project, especially the intangible heritage which includes the songs and other practices that were unique to the struggle or Battles of Resistance.

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