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National Heritage Council
SOUTH AFRICA

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Media Release

To all media houses

22 October 2018

The Omotoso trial challenges South Africa's religious sector

The High Court trial of Pastor Timothy Omotoso of the Jesus Dominion International and the courage shown by the 22-year old Cheryl Zondi who testified in the case, sounds a call to South Africans to seriously review the operations of the religious sector in the country.

It is especially sad that in this era when these churches so often trample on the human rights of the citizens of this country, the African spirituality is regarded as inferior to Christianity by the same offenders. This signals a need for South Africa to document all forms of African spirituality as part of cultural heritage and religious practice.

“There should be an urgent audit of churches in the country to ascertain the size of this sector. A review of the legislation should be undertaken by government and sign into law new legislation that responds to the current challenges in South Africa. This law should be based on a code of ethics that all churches and the clergy are bound to observe. It is important for us to convene an immediate conversation by key stakeholders in the religious and culture sector to take tackle this problem that is preying on innocent people” says Adv. Sonwabile Mancotywa, CEO of the National Heritage Council.

The Council also take this opportunity to thank Cheryl Zondi for her bravery to testify and strength to handle the invasive cross-examination by defence lawyer Peter Daubermann.

“We wish her well in the final examination that she is due to write as a second year Marketing student at the University of Johannesburg. We also wish those who will testify after her to take courage from where she left,” adds Adv. Mancotywa.

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