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PRESS RELEASE

9 July 2019

IRANTI STRONGLY CONDEMNS ZODWA WABANTU'S COMMENTS ON HER REALITY SHOW ZODWA WABANTU: UNCENSORED ON MOJA LOVE, DSTV CHANNEL 157

1. On 6 July 2019, Zodwa Libram popularly known as Zodwa Wabantu uttered homophobic and transphobic comments on her show, which was potentially seen by millions of viewers watching the show. Zodwa said: "Gay people are naughty. Name a gay person in the industry who has never fought with a girl. They are convinced that they have a vagina, they have a penis. We have vaginas. We accommodate you guys so that you feel that you get to wear makeup. When we talk about me, you'll get a chance too."
2. Iranti strongly condemns these comments and the airing of this particular episode. There is historical violence towards Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ+) people. Over the past decade, the South African media has reported on the rape or murder, often under circumstances of excessive violence, of many LGBTIQ+ people: Eudy Simelane, Khanyiswa 'Lhoyie' Hani, Desmond 'Daisy' Dube, Noluvo Swelindawo, Nonki Smous, Bobby Motlala, Lebogang Moremi, and Lerato 'Themba' Moloi, too many a few.
3. A 2015 report by the Gay and Lesbian Memory in Action (GALA) and Community Media for Development (CMFD) noted that African media has the tendency of overstating stories of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ+) issues, tending to highlight sexuality in stories where it is not relevant.
4. Research has shown that society is still hostile towards the LGBTIQ+ community and the media at times adds to the issues, as can be seen by Zodwa's harmful comments on genitalia, sexual orientation and gender expression. These comments perpetuate certain harmful stereotypes about LGBTIQ+ persons.



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5. In other situations, such as Uganda and Malawi, media reports have crossed serious ethical lines, calling for the arrest and murder of LGBTIQ+ people. Another example from Uganda is the Rolling Stone article calling for Uganda's "top" homosexuals to be hanged. The story, like many articles published in Uganda, claimed there was a gay campaign to recruit schoolchildren. The article published the names of suspected "homosexuals" and gay rights activists. Shortly after the story appeared, police found Ugandan gay rights activist David Kato bludgeoned to death in his home.
6. The role of the media is to be responsible in the content that it produces. The media has a role to ensure that it does not promote content that violates rights enshrined in the Constitution or that promotes violence.
7. We acknowledge the petition through change.org to cancel the show. We would like to call for a meeting with the producers of the show and Zodwa Wabantu to meet and discuss the harmful impact and trauma this episode has LGBTIQ+ community.
8. Following this meeting, we call for a public apology for the harm committed by this episode. We call for Moja Love to curate an episode that promotes positive messaging on LGBTIQ+ rights with a special focus on transgender and gay rights. Irantí is willing to support with the production of this episode.
9. We believe that the media should promote messages and content that is educational, promotes safety, dignity and freedom for everyone.

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