

Independent Media takes stand against fake news accusations

In a statement issued by the Office of the Editor-in-Chief, Independent Media, the organisation says attempts by certain cabinet ministers and government officials accusing Independent Media of fake news are wearing thin.



Source: © mitria [123rf](#) Independent Media says fake news accusations by certain cabinet ministers and government officials are wearing thin

“The recent joint media statement by the Minister of Public Enterprises, Pravin Gordhan and the Minister of Transport, Fikile Mbalula, follows a now trite *modus operandi* of accusing Independent Media of peddling fake news when in fact, they have been given every opportunity to timeously respond to questions posed to them,” says the statement.

“Statements are hurriedly issued after our articles appear in print and online,” it adds.

Addressing the matter currently in the spotlight, the statement explains that questions were timeously sent to the offices of both ministers and their media officials about their alleged fallout regarding a Sanral contract.

“No responses were received to these and follow up questions. A statement was hurriedly issued by Minister Gordhan’s office the day after the article appeared in print and online,” says the statement.

This would not have been necessary had, it points out, if the questions had been responded to before the article was published.

Respond to avoid confusion

The news organisation urges government officials and ministers not to hide behind statements issued after the fact but rather, to respond to their questions and queries which will be incorporated into the stories thus providing clarity or clearing up any confusion.

“Articles which reflect confusion, are a direct result of a lack of response from government,” it states.

Independent Media also reminds the ministers that it was Independent Media journalists who broke the PPE corruption story which, too, was vehemently denied and condemned as fake news.

This subsequently led to the expose of a multi-billion-rand PPE corruption scandal which involved senior government officials throughout the country, including in the office of President Ramaphosa.

“We strive to hold government to account. This can only be done if they are open and candid with the media. Our editors and journalists stand by their stories. We reserve our rights,” the statement concludes.

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