



INVESTIGATION INTO RACISM IN THE MEDIA

INTERIM REPORT

SAHRC Introduction

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1. Preface

At its plenary meeting held in November 1998, the South African Human Rights Commission (the Commission) formally resolved to conduct an investigation into racism in the media in South Africa. This report is intended to explain the ground that has been covered since then, present an overview of the various submissions received by the Commission and the results of the independent research commissioned and completed.

Its purpose is to invite responses from both interested parties and those adversely affected by what is contained in the report. The Commission must stress that this report does not represent its findings or conclusions on the inquiry at this stage. We have provided a summary of the written submissions without commenting on their accuracy or validity. Similarly we have reproduced the report of the research conducted by the independent researchers. Not all the submissions received by the Commission were summarised and included in this report for the reason that many, while valuable in themselves, were of a very general nature and did not significantly address the terms of reference of the inquiry. We are however appreciative to all those who took time to prepare submissions.

In terms of the agreed methodology, all those institutions, corporate bodies, organisations and individuals who have an interest in responding to any part of this report are free to do so and should ensure that their responses reach the offices of the Commission within 30 days from the date of the public release of this report.

**Human Rights Commission
Johannesburg
21st November 1999**

2. Background

At the time of announcing its decision to conduct the inquiry; the Commission released the following statement. The statement is reproduced in full.

2.1 The 26th Plenary Session of the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) held in Johannesburg on 11 November 1998 resolved to conduct an investigation into racism in the media in general. The probe will be undertaken in terms of Section 184(2)(a) of the Constitution, 1996 (Act No 108 of 1996). The Constitution provides that the Commission has "the powers... necessary to perform its functions, including the power...

- (a) to investigate and to report on the observance of human rights...
- (b) to take steps to secure appropriate redress where human rights have been violated..."

2.2 As we all know by now, the SAHRC received a request from the Black Lawyers Association (BLA) and the Association of Black Accountants of South Africa (ABASA). The request was made in terms of Section 7(1)(c) of the Human Rights Commission Act, 1994. The Act provides that the Commission "*may consider such recommendations, suggestions and requests concerning fundamental rights as it may receive from any source.*" This provision allows the Commission to apply its mind to the request received and to make a decision as to the manner of action appropriate for the circumstances of the case. Strictly speaking this is not a complaint although the motivation that is necessary to persuade the Commission to "consider" it must raise a concern that the Commission can understand to be:

- (i) concerned with human rights,
- (ii) within the competence of the Commission to deal with.

2.3 There are four main issues that should be borne in mind in this inquiry:

- (i) The Commission believes that "all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated" (Vienna, 1993). We believe that our Constitution has sought to treat the human rights holistically and to eschew the bogey of hierarchy of rights. The Vienna Declaration goes on to state that "the international community must treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing and with the same emphasis". Kofi Annan captures the current mood in international human rights theory when he says:

*“one cannot pick and choose among human rights, ignoring some while insisting on others. Only as rights equally applied can they be rights universally accepted. Nor can they be applied selectively or relatively, or as a weapon with which to punish others. Their purity is their eternal strength...”*¹

- (ii) The second matter we wish to draw attention to is that one cannot deal adequately with human rights without contextualising them. It is clear to us that racism has been the defining characteristic of South Africa from the moment European settlers set foot on its shores. Racism has defined the relationship between black and white people from time immemorial. The manifest purpose of the struggle for liberation was to address the culture of racism and inequality that had become embedded in South African society. That is why the first substantive set of rights in the Bill of Rights deals with Equality. That is why American human rights jurisprudence emphasises freedom because it speaks to the very heart of the history of America. To us, racism has the same or comparable significance. For others the delivery of basic needs as in economic and social rights is what gives content to the rights culture we all espouse. What the Commission seeks, however, is to understand these societal forces that cause different groups of South Africans to emphasise different rights. Not to end there, but to use that to express and define the need for South Africa to have a balanced understanding of human rights. What is vital for us is the understanding that no rights are absolute and that the exercise of all rights should promote the values espoused by the Constitution: "human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms, non-racialism and non-sexism..."

The national Human Rights Conference sponsored by the Commission in 1997 stated that:

“Conference believes that freedom of expression is a central tenet of democracy. Conference believes that freedom of expression is best promoted when it upholds the values established by the Constitution and the law.”

South Africa has no reason to place freedom of expression on a pedestal above other rights. The media in South Africa cannot justify why it must be treated any differently from any other structures of society who have to abide by our Constitutional principles. In the new Constitution, the Bill of Rights applies vertically and, in appropriate instances, horizontally as well.

¹ Address at University of Tebran on Human Rights day, 10 December 1997.

- (iii) The Commission believes that any inquiry undertaken must be approached from a non-adversarial position. It is not necessary to proceed from the basis of specific allegations. The intention of the Commission is to find the best means of promoting human rights. We believe that the media occupy a very important position in South African society. The media moulds ideas; fashions thinking in society and shapes public opinion. The media is a powerful medium in a democracy. It accordingly has to be exercised responsibly "in an open and democratic society based on human rights, equality and freedom..."
 - (iv) Racism is endemic in South African society. There is no reason to believe that the media are somehow insulated from the prevailing racism in our society. In fact, it is not surprising because South Africa has been governed on racist principles. All South Africans have experienced the negative and hurtful power of racism. What is important now is to take stock. To assess the impact of racism in public life, the language and idiom, symbols, expressions and actions that show the reality of racism, feeding on prejudices and limiting the full and equal enjoyment of all the rights and freedoms.
- 2.4 The Commission wishes to place on record that it is mindful of the implications of this exercise for press freedom. We believe, however, that the best guarantor of press freedom is a society that respects human rights. The press has the same responsibility to respect human rights as everyone else in society. A study of racism in the media, hopefully, will heighten the sensitivity of all South Africans to the issue of racism and will ensure a greater respect for freedom of expression. We believe that these matters are interrelated.
- 2.5 This inquiry must be placed in the context of several other developments:
- (a) The interest of the Commission in the role of the media in the promotion and protection of human rights is not new. In 1996, the Commission planned and held a number of workshops for journalists on the role of the media in human rights. Workshops were held in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town, albeit with limited success. We are at the planning stages of an annual award for the most enterprising journalist in human rights. We have consistently recognised that the media were an important ally in the execution of our mandate;
 - (b) The TRC public hearings on the role of media under apartheid. There was a mixed reaction to this inquiry. One can say that there are important lessons that the media should learn from its role under

apartheid. The media is not immune from complicity in human rights violations.

- (c) The Commission is co-sponsoring the Equality Legislation Drafting Unit. The Unit will publish a Green paper early in 1999 which sets a framework for legislation to give effect to Section 9 of the Constitution. Among other things, the framework has to determine appropriate enforcement mechanisms to ensure equality in South Africa.
- (d) The National Action Plan will be published on 10 December 1998. The NAP is essentially a government document. It is interesting that the media never participated in any of the mechanisms for determining elements necessary to establish a rights-based society. The investigation will give the media an opportunity to make a contribution about how it could contribute to the development of a society free of racism.
- (e) The Commission has already been involved in several inquiries that deal with racism: there is one on racism and racial integration of schools. It is hoped that the report will be ready early in 1999. The Commission has been very active in looking at tertiary institutions where complaints of racism have been abundant.

This inquiry, therefore, falls into a systematic approach by the Commission to investigate racism in society.

2.6 What does the Commission hope to achieve? In the first instance we hope that this inquiry will generate debate and dialogue among South Africans about the nature, meaning and incidence of racism in South Africa. In addition, we believe that South Africans need to be informed about racism if they are to be able to address it. Third, we believe that the media will benefit from closer scrutiny so that they can understand how their work is viewed by South Africans so that they can sharpen their capacity to be responsive to the needs of the people and reflect the true nature of South African society. Fourth, we believe that South Africans, through dialogue, will learn, understand and have the facility to use race theory and analysis so that there need be no defensiveness; will adopt practical and relevant language, and will be sensitive to one another especially when it comes to accusations of racism. Finally, we believe that a probe of this nature will engage all South Africans in seeking common solutions to racism and to constructing a society free of racism.

2.7 The BLA and ABASA requested the Commission to "conduct or cause to be conducted" an investigation of the Mail & Guardian and The Sunday Times "for alleged violations of fundamental rights of black people." In their response, counsel for the newspapers cited argue that the requesting parties have no locus standi, that the

Commission does not have jurisdiction to consider the matter and that the request is flawed in substance. The Commission thus had to consider carefully the preliminary matters raised by counsel for the newspapers.

- 2.8 The Commission ruled that the parties have locus standi. We accepted that they were acting in the interests of black people. It is easy to understand this, if one accepts that the parties are professional bodies with a mandate to promote the interests of black people within their professions. In addition, the procedures for complaints governing the Commission have incorporated the categories of persons set out in Section 38 of the Constitution as having the capacity to approach the Commission. We believe that as a professional body representing the interests of black people, the parties have established their interest in the matter of racism.
- 2.9 Our Constitution seeks to extend locus standi in order to enable anyone with an interest in any matter (especially with regards to seeking the enforcement of the Bill of Rights) to approach the court and, in terms of Section 34 of the Bill of Rights “where appropriate another independent and impartial tribunal” or another forum.” We believe that the Commission falls under “independent and impartial tribunal or forum...”
- 2.10 Next, it was contended on behalf of the newspapers cited that the Human Rights Commission did not have jurisdiction to hear the matter. The reason advanced was that the Commission would be required to make a declaration and balance the respective rights of equality and freedom of expression: a matter only a court of law can determine in terms of Section 38. The Preamble to the Human Rights Commission Act says that the Commission shall be "competent and obliged" to investigate any alleged violation of fundamental rights and to assist any person adversely affected thereby to secure redress." Section 184(1) of the Constitution is even more explicit when it says that the Commission "*must...* monitor and assess the observance of human rights in the Republic". The Commission, therefore, has a duty and an obligation to "monitor and assess the observance of human rights". There is no indication here that Parliament intended to exclude any aspect of human rights from this. Of course, all citizens have a right of access to the courts. The Commission cannot preclude any one approaching the court should they so desire.
- 2.11 Nonetheless, the Commission resolved not to accede to the request by BLA and ABASA. We felt constrained to do so because we felt that it would be difficult to justify an investigation of only two

newspapers when the whole of South African society is grappling with various degrees of success against the scourge of racism. Secondly, we feared that the investigation as envisaged, would put the Commission in a very difficult situation regarding freedom of expression.

- 2.12 Finally, we cannot prejudge the outcome of the inquiry. In January 1999, the Commission will publish in the *Government Gazette* terms of reference and rules of procedure for the inquiry (Section 9(6) and (7) of the Act). The Commission will be able to use its powers in terms of Section 9 and 10 of the Act. We also hope that there will be maximum co-operation from all interested parties such that resort to the powers of the Commission may not be necessary. Members of the public will also have an opportunity to address any observations, concerns and proposals they may have about racism.

The commission hopes to get the assistance of experts and researchers with knowledge of both racism and the media. A report with findings and recommendations will be published. Ends”.

N Barney Pitso
CHAIRPERSON
16 November 1998

3. Media's reaction to the announcement of the Inquiry Project

We include a selection of media reports covering the announcement of this Inquiry. They are intended to provide some broad overview of the media response and reaction to the inquiry. *(These reports are available in the full Interim Report or on request.)*

4. Terms of Reference and Procedure

The following terms of Reference and Procedure have been reproduced in full from a document issued by the Commission on 1 January 1999, in Johannesburg.

4.1 Definitions:

“Act” refers to the Human Rights Act, 1994 (act NO 54 of 1994);
“Constitution” refers to the Republic of South Africa Constitution Act, 1996 (Act No108 of 1996);
“Chairperson” refers to the Chairperson of the South African Human Rights Commission.

4.2 Terms of Reference

- (a) To investigate the handling of race and possible incidence of racism in the media and whether such racism as may be manifested in these products constitutes a violation of fundamental human rights as set out in the Constitution;
- (b) To establish the underlying causes and examine the impact on society of racism in media if such racism is found to be manifested in the product of the media; and
- (c) To make findings and recommendations as appropriate of Reference.

4.3 Procedure

- (a) The investigation will be conducted in terms of the procedure published in the government Gazette Number 17457 published in Government Notice 1465 dated 4th October 1996, read with special procedures set out below.
- (b) Within 14 days of the publication of this notice the Commission will cause to be published, in any manner that the Commission may deem necessary, invitations for submissions from any interested parties, including institutions, organisations and individuals.

Invitations for Public Submissions

- (c) The submissions should be in writing and must disclose the name, address and other contact details of the deponent. Anonymous submissions will not be entertained. Where, however, the deponent does not wish to have her/his name published, the Commission will respect that wish. Confidential submissions, however, having regard to the rules of natural justice, may not necessarily be accorded the same weight as public submissions. Submissions must be submitted within 30 days of publication of the invitation referred to in paragraph 4.3(c) above.

- (d) In order to make the process as inclusive as possible, members of the public may request to make their submissions to the Commission under oath in camera.

Commissioned Research

- (e) The Commission may undertake or commission research which may assist in providing information or data, social analysis or methodology for the investigation.

Analysis and Evaluation

- (f) The Commission will analyse submissions and research in order to determine trends and any *prima facie* allegations of violations of fundamental human rights. Note will be taken of proposals for the further conduct of the investigation and suggestions about how best South Africa can achieve the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination.
- (g) An interim report on the research, submissions and analysis of the information and data submitted, as well as the data itself, will be made available upon request. Those institutions, corporate bodies, organisations and individuals who may have an interest in responding to any part of the interim report, will be offered an opportunity to do so in writing. Responses must be received within 30 days of the release of the report.
- (h) The Commission will thereafter evaluate the responses and invite specific individuals, corporations or institutions to make oral submissions and give testimony at public hearings.
- (i) The time and place of these public hearings will be published in the Government Gazette.

The Panel

- (a) Pursuant to the provisions of the Act, a panel will preside over the public hearings. The Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission, or a person designated by the Chairperson, will chair the panel. The panel will consist of at least three persons. Among the panelists, the Chairperson may invite one or two persons with expertise in racism and/or the media.
- (b) All submissions before the panel will be made under oath or affirmation. The rules of natural justice will apply. Witnesses will be entitled to legal representation. Arguments on points of law or of fact may be addressed to the panel.
- (c) In conducting this Inquiry, the Commission will have recourse to the provisions of Sections 9 and 10 of the Act.

The Report

- (a) The Chairperson and members of the panel will prepare a final report on the Inquiry in terms of Section 15 of the Act. The report will take due notice of all submissions, allegations, responses, and points of law and of fact. Following an analysis of the evidence submitted, the panel will make findings and recommendations.
- (b) The final report of the inquiry and the findings and the recommendations will be made public.

The Draft terms of reference were published for response and comment and written responses were received from the following :

Institute for Media Studies in South Africa

Print Media South Africa

Daily Dispatch

Times Media Limited

NASPERS

In addition the Commission held meetings with the following:

NASPERS

The South African National Editor's Forum (SANEF)

Representatives from the Sunday Times, Mail and Guardian, Business Day and The Financial Mail.

The Freedom of Expression Institute

The meetings discussed the inquiry, areas of concern that had arisen and the general objectives the Commission wished to achieve with the inquiry. Even though consensus could not always be reached, we found the meetings generally to be useful and wish to thank all those who met with us as well as those who responded to the Draft terms of reference.

5. Summary of the Submissions

Introduction

In the following section, we attempt to summarise the submissions which we have received. The submissions are not necessarily arranged in degree of importance. We have treated all submissions as equally important. As indicated in the preface to this report, not all of the submissions received have been included in this report.

Full submissions have not been attached to this report, but are available and will be forwarded to those who have a direct and material interest in them.

1. Author: L Collins

The author makes a general comment about the low numbers of coloured presenters on radio and TV and argues that news about coloured people centres on crime, gangsters and failure. No specific details are provided in support of the broad allegations that are made.

2. Author: Dr B. Hack

The author complains broadly about anti-semitism on radio. He further argues that two newspapers, The Star and the Citizen publish anti-semitic material, in particular a picture of a crowd burning an Israeli flag (date and name of publication are not mentioned). He further alleges that letters published are anti-semitic. The letters referred to by the author are not attached to his submission.

3. Authors: Black Lawyers Association (BLA) and Association OF Black Accountants of South Africa (Abasa)

- (a) Their submission makes the following broad assertions:
Media remains largely in white hands in terms of ownership and accordingly white males by and large continue to control opinion on all current issues, whether of a political, social, economic or educational nature.
- (b) That the Mail and Guardian, in the mode and manner in which they deal with and expose corruption, for example: suggesting those accused are guilty even before any due process, and the under reporting of corruption (amongst whites and in the private sector) creates the impression that black people are essentially corrupt and incompetent. They concede the right of the media to expose corruption but have problems with the biased way in which it is done.
- (c) It is also alleged that the manner in which the Mail and Guardian dealt with two cases of plagiarism involving an African and a white journalist, illustrated the point of differentiated treatment. The issue relating to the black journalist received front-page coverage, whilst that relating to the white journalist was not covered at all.

- (d) It is further argued that when black people wish to respond to articles in which they are criticised, the publication refuses to carry their letters.
- (e) The Sunday Times, they suggested, trivializes the death of black people and reduces them to mere statistics. For example, killings in Richmond received no more than passing coverage while the killing of a white couple, (allegedly by their son) were covered in such detail that the report evoked great sympathy.
- (f) It was submitted that the David Bullard column dealing with the Clinton visit constituted hate speech. In particular, it was argued that he ridiculed the victims of the slave trade when he stated that “they (African Americans) realise that they would probably be living in shacks with no running water if their ancestors hadn't been abducted by slave traders”. It is further argued that Bullard, in dealing with issues of empowerment, uses racial stereotypes which suggest amongst, other things, that blacks do not understand democracy; that they do not have a work and service ethic; and that they use empowerment as an excuse for doing nothing except sitting around and waiting for free handouts.

The submission also deals extensively with international and national case law and norms relating to hate speech and free expression.

4. Author: Mr Dimakatso Collin Mashile

This submission relates to the Star Business Report's reaction to the document referred to as the "Public and Private Annual Racism Audit" that was released to the South African Press Association by the Commission on 25 September 1996. This document was compiled by the Commission at the request of the Department of Foreign Affairs and related to the steps that the South African government had taken to curb racism and racial discrimination in compliance with the International Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, which South Africa has ratified. The document also contained recommendations on steps to be taken to eradicate racism in South Africa.

One of the recommendations in the document stated that “publication and radio and television broadcasts should be carefully analysed to expose the meaning behind language, idioms and image.”

In reaction to the document, the Star Business Report [the diary section of 30 July 1991] allegedly said the following:

"it is not racist, merely realistic, to acknowledge that the majority of people with skills to regulate broadcasting are white"

Mr Mashile, the author of this submission, alleges “that The Star's editorial portrays a colonial/imperial assumption that the majority of people with skills to regulate broadcasting are white. According to him, this argument will hold in Europe and the USA, where the majority of the population is white.” He goes further to state that regulation of broadcasting in South Africa is a new concept therefore South African

whites, just like blacks, cannot claim to have broadcasting regulation skills unless they acquired them at the IBA. According to him, such reportage reinforces the stereotypes about imagined "inefficiencies" of black people and channels the attitude of affluent white people, which this newspaper identifies with.

In his opinion, the comment in the Star Business Report "was purely based on inferential racism", which refers to "those apparently naturalised representatives of events and situations relating to race". The article, according to Mr Mashile, "was full of untruths and fictions and has racist premises and propositions which are inscribed as a set of unquestioned assumptions". Failure to engage or question these assumptions, opines Mr Mashile, will enable racist statements to be formulated without bringing into awareness the racist predicates on which they are grounded.

5. Author: Kobus Pienaar

The author submits that on 7 March 1999, in The Rapport in the gossip column ("Pollux") the following anecdote (attributed to a certain Mr Hannes Schoeman from Durbanville) about an incident during the 1948 election is published:

During the 1948 election brown people boycotted the election. After the election results were announced, a complainant in a rape case was asked to describe what had happened. She explained that she was busy with housework when she heard people shouting and screaming with joy because Mr Bobby Loubser had won the Stellenbosch constituency for the National Party. As she was looking through the window at this event, somebody slowly sneaked up from behind and raped her. The magistrate then asked her whether she screamed. Her response was: "No your honour - people may just have concluded/thought that I had also voted for the National Party".

Kobus Pienaar then wrote a letter on 8 March 1999 to The Rapport stating that he found the anecdote, "...shocking, out of place and offensive".

On the 10 March 1999 Mr C H Karsten, acting editor, wrote that no malice was intended. He accepts that 'sensitive readers' may take offence and promised to explain the matter in the following edition of The Rapport. Karsten also complained about the aggressive tone of Pienaar's letter.

6. Author: Mr L Winegaard

Mr Winegaard alleges that he was attacked by the Department of Housing in the Western Cape and Mr Ivan Pekeur in the letter columns of The Rapport on the 14 February 1999. On 24 February 1999, he responded to these letters. His letter was never published. It was later explained to him that the correspondence in this matter had been stopped. He feels aggrieved and is of the opinion that Rapport deprived him of his dignity and the right to freedom of expression.

7. Author: Professor Kwesi Prah

This submission alleges that a letter [Rebirth? Africa has yet to be born] published in the Cape Times of 22 June 1999, was the result of the fertile imagination of someone who wishes to present views under the dark cloak of a fictitious character. The letter to the press purported to come from a Ghanaian professor of history. This letter was replete with thinly veiled insults to Africans.

Professor Kwesi Prah, the author of this submission, then subsequently wrote a letter to the Cape Times. His letter was edited considerably. It omitted much of the Professor's questioning of the veracity of the author. He was then informed by the Cape Times that his letter was too long and hence the editing. According to Professor Prah, the editing disposed of the thrust of his letter, which revealed, after some investigation, that the writer of the mischievous letter was fictitious.

Professor Prah believes that the Cape Times may have been complicit in the fake letter. This allegation is bolstered by the fact that the Cape Times staff failed, firstly to afford him the right to reply to the racist letter and, secondly, failed to locate the original letter in question.

8. Author: South African Jewish Board of Deputies

This submission makes detailed account of anti-semitic statements in both the print and electronic media. Most of the allegations are to be found in the Afrikaner media as well as the Muslim News. The submission alleges that the HNP newspapers regularly carry Holocaust denial material.

Addressing a very complex issue the national chairperson concludes that much of the anti-semitic slants/slurs are not racist but in fact political. This is particularly so in the coverage and or analysis of the Middle East conflict. She notes that there is clearly a built-in tension between balanced reporting and “fair” comment.

The Chairperson, in her submission, also implies that the anti-semitism constitutes racism and recognises that other aspects of racism are clearly visible and equally deserving of an investigation. This particular submission makes note of how the media has equated the TRC process as being a lie.(like the Holocaust).

The submission also suggests that articles published in the Die Afrikaner were published under a pseudonym and that the letter to the paper is vicious and could be censored.

In terms of this particular investigation, it is important to keep the focus on racism in the mainstream media. While we recognise that anti-semitic aspersions are rife in the media, this inquiry is tailored to racism in the mainstream media and, to reiterate the words of the author, “except for the letters page issue we cannot find significant examples of anti-

semitism in the way in which mainstream newspapers handle news in which Jews feature particularly”.

9. Author: South African Agricultural Union

The SAAU is of the opinion that hate speech against farmers in the media contributes to crime against and murders of farmers. The thrust of her argument is very similar to that of the Viljoen case. Attached to the submission is a transcript of John Qwelane's talk show. The author suggests that John Qwelane's talk show constitutes hate speech.

10. Author: Media Review Network

In a well-researched and extensively put-together submission, the author alleges that (in the media) “perceptions of Islam, at times, is painfully distorted”.

The submission covers both radio and the print media. It outlines a vocabulary that the media employs exclusively when reporting on Muslims. Some examples are “fundamentalists”, “extremists”, “fanatics” and “terrorists”.

It defines racism as “a systematic discrimination against, or exclusion or oppression of a group of people based upon a quality as in skin colour or hair texture, or ideology. It's not simply random acts. Racism is about having the power or capacity to translate prejudices and attitudes or feelings of superiority into practice, custom, policy or law”.

The submission notes that “the religion and its followers are being maligned” and offers the terminology “Islamophobia”. To define this the key features of Islamophobia include the portrayal of Muslim cultures as monolithic, intolerant of pluralism, patriarchal, misogynistic, fundamentalist and potentially threatening to other cultures”.

The submission details accounts of biased reporting at both an international as well as a local level. At an international level, the submission highlights that western media is pervasive in its reporting and is uncritically regurgitated. CNN is quoted.

The report continues with case studies, many of which exemplify prejudices and intolerance of a religious nature. The case studies presented, they say, clearly perpetuate negative anti-Muslim stereotypes that are allied with antagonism. But whether they fit the brief of the Commission's inquiry is hard for them to say.

The submission notes on more than one occasion how the media engages in bias and selective reporting. This, it suggests, should be addressed through sensitisation workshops with journalists.

Again, as in other submissions, issue is raised with the letters page. A further illustration in the submission presented as media bias is that responses to letters are not published,

and cite as a case in point-Ebrahim Suliman's letter, whose letter was written in response to a letter by Uri Oren, the Israeli Ambassador to South Africa.

The Sunday Times response to the query of non-publication was that the letter was too long.

The submission also raises concern with a pattern of academic studies taking their data from the news media. They argue that the media as a source for academic writing, should be noted as being sensational, unverified and inaccurate. They go on to state that “the consequential danger of such reports feed into academic circles which in turn perpetuates a vicious circle of lies innuendo and deception”.

In a supporting submission, Media Review Network object to SABC bias. They contest that the SABC has frequently maligned Muslims and Islam, sometimes unwittingly, but often very wilfully.

This submission concludes by stating that it is estimated that about ninety percent of news and information circulating in the world is controlled in one way or another by four news agencies located in the West. Finally, the submission makes recommendations; one of which is a new code of conduct.

11. Authors: Kubeshni Govender and Andrew P Jones

The submission alleges that racism in the media is a manifestation of what happens in the academia media industries generally. In support of this allegation, the authors allege racism and consistent unfair and discriminatory treatment of ‘people of colour’ against the Director of the Centre for Cultural and Media Studies at the University of Natal, Prof K. G. Tomaselli and his wife, Dr. R. E. Terr Tomaselli, a senior lecturer and acting head of the Department of Communication under which the Centre falls.

According to the submission, racism and unfair and discriminatory treatment at the Centre take such forms as:

- Incidences of verbal abuse directed at ‘people of colour’;
- Racist comments made about ‘people of colour’; and
- Unfair labour practice.

Most of these allegations (we understand from the submission), are the subject matter of litigation between the parties mentioned above.

12. Independent Newspaper Holdings

In response to the call for submissions a letter was received from the above advising that they chose not to make a submission but instead forwarded to us a copy of a written submission they had earlier made to Truth and Reconciliation Commission.