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19 October 2021

MEDIA RELEASE

UNWARRANTED ATTACK BY THE UMBRELLA FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE ON KHATO CIVILS (PTY) LTD, AND ITS CHAIRMAN, MR. SIMBI PHIRI

1. Khato Civils (Pty) Ltd, and its chairman, Mr. Simbi Phiri (hereinafter, the aggrieved), hereby express deep concern, and disappointment, over a Media release, by the Umbrella for Democratic Change, dated the 18/10/21. The aforesaid media release carried defamatory and misleading allegations intended to tarnish the good name of the company, and that of its chairman, aforesaid.
2. In particular, the following allegations, bear reference;

Ad Simbi Phiri (Chairman- Khato Civils (Pty) Ltd.)

- a. That he feasts on irregularly awarded tender profits
- b. That he is a mouthpiece of BDP political handlers.
- c. That he is a phoney businessman
- d. That he has a highly questionable past
- e. That he has a shallow and distorted mind
- f. That he interferes in the local politics of the country, while he is foreigner.

Ad Khato Civils (Pty) Ltd

- a. That the company is beneficiary of an irregularly awarded tender
- b. That the company's work is substandard
- c. That the company fraudulently hiked tender prices on the Masama-Mmamashia project from P470m to P790m and then to P900m.

3. The aggrieved wish to put it on record, that they respect all national leaders of the Republic of Botswana. Respect for national leadership is, and has always been the culture of the Company, and has been observed in every country where it has undertaken projects. National leadership, in this context, includes both the ruling, and opposition party

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Company Secretary: M Kgatle

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South Zambezi Directors: Mr. S.A. Phiri (Executive Chairman) – Mrs. S. Phiri (Corporate Affairs)

Mr. E. Sikaala (Pr.Tech.Eng) Mr. M.J. Makgonye (Projects) – Mrs. C. Phiri (HR)



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leadership. Therefore, it was never the intention of Khato Civils (Pty) Ltd, or its chairman, to denigrate or in any way, disrespect the political opposition leadership.

4. Specifically, the aggrieved wish to put it on the record that the coinage, "*the opposition*", as used in the interview conducted by The Argus Online publication, had no specific or implied reference to the political opposition. Same referred to those who spearheaded opposition to the project, as opposed to the political opposition. Key among those, were the company's competitors, who did their best to ensure that the project never got off the starting blocks.
5. The aggrieved are aware that some leading figures in both the ruling party, and the opposition, succumbed to falsehoods peddled by the competitors. It is instructive, that in spite of the fact that the competitor's opposition fought so fervently to have the project aborted, on grounds of corruption, none ever challenged the tender award in court, or otherwise sought its review. That alone, is testament that the tender award was unassailable, on the merits.
6. The tender was advertised in March 2018, and it was for Design and construction of approximately 100 km and associated works from Masama wellfield to Mmamashia water treatment plant. The tender closed on the 7th of June, 2018 and there were 13 companies in total that submitted their bids. There was never any selective tender process undertaken towards the award of this tender in favour of Khato Civils.
7. The amount that Khato Civils tendered for is P781 million inclusive of VAT and therefore we are perplexed by the accusation that price has been inflated. The tender price for the project as submitted by Khato Civils has never changed and people are free to go and inspect the original tender documents. It is shocking that there is now an amount of P400 million tender price being mentioned.
8. To that extent, the Umbrella For Democratic Change misconstrued the words of Mr. Simbi Phiri, and embarked on an unjustified campaign of vitriol. The aggrieved find the substance of the media release unfortunate, to say the least, and accordingly demand a retraction, and an apology for the same.
9. As a person, Mr. Simbi Phiri, is a respected business leader with an international reputation. He feels defamed in his person, and so does the

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Company Khato Civils (Pty) Ltd, which likewise has an international reputation spanning many parts of Africa, and the world.

10. Our critics thrive on the narrow-minded idea that a black-owned company is incapable of delivering international quality works, which they believe can only be delivered by companies which are owned by non-blacks. Going by such backward mind-set, any success by a black-owned company is associated with corrupt or fraudulent elements.
11. The aggrieved, accordingly, challenge the Umbrella For Democratic Change, in vindication of its claims, to produce verifiable evidence substantiating the malicious and injurious claims made in its Media Release. It is demanded that the same produce the evidence, within ten (10) days of the release hereof. In the event of failure so to do, the aggrieved shall take advise on legal recourse, to vindicate their names.
12. The aggrieved are content to appear before court, should the Umbrella For Democratic Change so elect, to answer to any civil claim or criminal accusation. The aggrieved take exception to the threats made in the media release and affirm that the company shall not succumb to any bullying or intimidation, and shall lawfully trade in its space, without fear, or favour.
13. Khato Civils (Pty) Ltd, and its Chairman, Mr. Simbi Phiri, wish to assure the good, and peace-loving people of the Republic of Botswana, of its commitment to observance of the rule of law, and high level professional and ethical conduct, upon which its business model is based.
14. Khato Civils has a proven track record for service excellence, and we have executed this project without fail and within the required time frame. The water is now flowing from Masama Fields to Mmamashia for over a month now. We are of the view that that the article made serious unfounded allegations and innuendos intended to bring Khato Civils, its affiliate company, South Zambezi and its chairman into disrepute.
15. If anyone has credible information that Khato Civils or any of its directors has been involved in any corrupt activities, we advise them go and report the matter to the law enforcement agencies and stop peddling lies that they cannot substantiate without any credible evidence.

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We will therefore not tolerate or accept any unsubstantiated innuendos intended to bring disrepute to Khato Civils, South Zambezi, its directors, stakeholders, and employees go unchallenged.

Issued by:

Mongezi Mnyani
GROUP CEO
KHATO CIVILS

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