



17 September 2026

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION, JUSTICE MBUYISELI MADLANGA

This morning we will depart from our routine, albeit momentarily, to mark a milestone in the Commission's life.

It was on this day, 17 September, exactly one year ago, that Lieutenant-General Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi appeared as the Commission's first witness to place before the Commission, under oath, the extremely serious allegations which he made public at a media briefing three months previously. When he made the allegations on 6 July 2025, their truth and implications were too ghastly to contemplate. That, because they were just too grave.

The allegations were so grave that in a brief statement I made before the hearing of evidence commenced, I said that if the allegations proved to be true, that would spell doom for South Africa's criminal justice system because a healthy criminal justice system is key to the rule of law and thus to a functioning constitutional democracy. The allegations were at odds with what is expected of a proper, functioning criminal justice system.

Among others, General Mkhwanazi's allegations painted a grim picture of the infiltration of, and exertion of undue influence on, the criminal justice system by certain elements of criminality. If true, the allegations meant that we have a pliable, compliant criminal justice system. Put bluntly, that would be a corrupt criminal justice system. I said at the time that pliability, corruption and dysfunctionality in the criminal justice system were at odds with what we, South Africans, expect of and are entitled to from a criminal justice system.

Where has the evidence that has been led before the Commission taken us a year after we heard General Mkhwanazi, the Commission's first witness? Have his allegations been proven to have been false, or are they proving to be true? I am well aware that the Commission is yet to assess all the evidence it will be having before it at the conclusion of evidence and make definitive determinations in its final report. That notwithstanding, I cannot but say a few words on the trends that are emerging.

Unfortunately, what is emerging from the evidence is that there are indications of serious criminality within the criminal justice system and that this is the result of the infiltration of, and undue influence on, the criminal justice system by elements of criminality. The fact that a number of players within the criminal justice system have been charged criminally, with some dismissed from their employment and others facing disciplinary charges, lends credence to these indications.

It is commendable that what appears to be criminality within the criminal justice system is coming out. This is commendable because, hopefully, that will help towards stemming the tide. What is painful, though, is that this apparent criminality suggests that for some time now, our criminal justice system has been populated by malleable, corrupt state functionaries. With such a criminal justice system, those criminals who exert undue, improper influence on state functionaries will rarely, if ever, answer for their criminal deeds. To ask rhetorically, over the years, how many such criminals have escaped facing criminal charges and sanctions?

With the revelations that are coming out, we trust that justice will be served. Better still, we trust that in the end this process will yield results that will play a meaningful role towards putting in place mechanisms that will help significantly towards curbing a recurrence of apparent criminality of the nature that is emerging before the Commission.

Thus far, a number of people and institutions have supported the Commission process. I will thank them all when this process concludes. Suffice it to say we are grateful to them all. The overwhelming public support for the Commission process is not going unnoticed. For that too, we are truly grateful.

THANK YOU ALL!

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***ISSUED BY THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO CRIMINALITY, POLITICAL INTERFERENCE
AND CORRUPTION IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM***