



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

04 November 2019

STOP THE BANTUSTAN BILLS FAILURE TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE NOTICE FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS ON THE TRADITIONAL COURTS BILL

In the coming days, some of the provincial legislatures will be convening public hearings on the Traditional Courts Bill [B1B-2017]. The Bill was recently revived by the National Council of Provinces on 17 October 2019, and what has followed can only be observed as a 'mad rush' to give the illusion of public participation. The public hearings on the Traditional Courts Bill are now scheduled for November 2019 in the following provinces:

- Eastern Cape: 5-8 November
- Mpumalanga: 21 November [Tentative]
- Limpopo: 15 November [Tentative]
- North West: 8 November [Tentative]
- KwaZulu-Natal: TBD
- Northern Cape: 19-22 November [Tentative]
- Gauteng: TBD
- Western Cape: 5-8 November
- Free State: 5-7 November

The **Stop Bantustans Campaign**, an initiative of the **Alliance for Rural Democracy** together with allied organizations and movements, has noted that the public hearings are now happening with insufficient notice to affected communities and interested stakeholders. It is disappointing that the public hearings are not being widely publicised on various platforms and there is little information that is readily available from some of the legislatures regarding the processes and what, if any, support or transportation is available for communities through public participation.

The Stop The Bantustans Bills Campaign is calling for *meaningful public participation*, as outlined in the Constitution. **And we call on the Provincial Legislatures to use their existing budgets to ensure that the most vulnerable, rural women, are able to attend and participate in these hearings.** We believe there is room for improvement if the public hearings proceed as aforementioned, and would welcome any changes or additional hearings that includes: adequate notice to interested and affected individual/s; pre-hearing workshops and education on the contents of the Bill; proper communication on the dates and locations of hearings; information on the logistics support and transport for rural communities to attend the hearings; wider social engagement via radio and newspapers, and social media regarding the public hearings to ensure more people have the opportunity to attend; extension of the deadline for written submissions.

We will also work with our allies in the provinces to monitor these hearings as we have learnt from bitter experience that some Committees will rush the process only to perform a 'tick-box hearing' that does not enable people to meaningfully participate in law and policy making. The result thereof is the enactment of laws or policies that are not reflective of the lived experience of the rural masses.

We remain steadfastly opposed to the Traditional Courts Bill in its current form for as long as it does not recognise the fundamental **right to say no** and to '**opt - out**'; thus relegating rural communities to the Bantustan-system of separate democracy for rural and urban counterparts. We believe in equality, justice and one South Africa for all!

For more information about the march, contact admin@stopthebantustanbills.org or visit <https://stopthebantustanbills.org>

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