

Is it time to Free the Apartheid Archives?

Political events in recent years are increasingly characterised by a climate of secrecy and intrigue particularly in government departments comprising the so-called security cluster. This trend not only impacts on responsible record keeping in the post-Apartheid state, but also continues inhibiting a critical engagement with records created by the former Apartheid government. Moreover, the National Archive and other departmental archives are lacking basic crucial skills and capacities to a) adhere to their record keeping and oversight functions and b) to initiate processes of declassifying Apartheid state records. States which have recently undergone drastic system changes followed by transition, such as Germany and countries in South America subsequently introduced legislation which allowed for the opening of classified records generated by the former regimes. This is not the case in South Africa,

where many of the records of the Apartheid state remain classified.

The 1-day Colloquium seeks the participation of civil society organisations, social justice and research institutions, academic intuitions and interested members of the public, as well as representatives from the National Archives and the SANDE. The event aims at examining the status and role of archives and public records in democratic societies, and to initiate steps to engage the state and relevant institutions to adhere to their duties in the public interest and as a matter of administrative justice and transparency. One of the outcomes of this Colloquium could include a call for an audit of the Apartheid era archives. This would require legislation to declassify these records, in order to have a process of public and transparent engagement with them. The Colloquium aims to create public awareness about the urgent need for

an open and transparent regulation of the records of the Apartheid era and to promote initiatives in the interest of sound public record keeping.

Keynote speakers will include Ronnie Kasrils, former Minister for Intelligence, and Yasmin Sooka, Director of the Foundation for Human Rights in South Africa. Presentations will include contributions from the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation/Germany, which has been closely engaged in the discourse around the Stasi Archives, and which will reflect on the model of Germany's legislative framework for the Stasi Archive, in order to derive lessons for South Africa. South African speakers will be representing the 'Access to Information Network', the National Archives and the Archive at the SANDE, and furthermore include legal experts in the field of PAIA, Human Rights and Transparency and Transitional Justice.

**24 Aug 2017
9.00-17.00**

University of the
Witwatersrand Humanities
PG Seminar Room,
South-West Engineering

**THE COLLOQUIUM
WILL BE FOLLOWED BY
A COCKTAIL EVENT**

**To RSVP
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The event is sponsored by the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung with funds of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of the Federal Republic of Germany



**Promoting open and transparent public record keeping
for a democratic South Africa**

