**SABC reporters are 'pathetic': SAFM founder**

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The SABC's reporters are "pathetic" and the broadcaster is like a patient with multiple organ failure, the founder of SAFM and a candidate for a position on the broadcaster's board has told MPs.

"Watch the BBC when there is a breaking story," Govin Reddy told MPs on parliament's portfolio committee on communications on Friday.

"They will go on camera with someone in New York. The presenter who is interviewing interviews with absolute authority. They have done the research, they know it all.

"You don't get that from the SABC. The reporters from field are pathetic. I'm sorry to say."

Reddy, who started the broadcaster's radio news station SAFM in 1995, said the public broadcaster was failing in its duty of informing and educating the South African populace.

"The public broadcaster is supposed to inform and educate the SA populace," he said.

"You have to speak simple language and give context and background and educate. They don't do that. It is stories that are just blurted out."

Newsreaders at the SABC haven't been trained, he said.

"Newsreaders must be journalists. Newsreaders must understand what they are reading. They mustn't be repeating words.

"If there is an important story, they must be an expert on that subject. They must talk to you with authority."

Reddy said he had modelled SAFM on the BBC's Radio 4 as a high quality station but that in recent years it had become "a cheap talkshow similar to 702".

"It was supposed to be a quality station catering to all South Africans. I wanted to have good documentaries and features, et cetera. Now it is a cheap radio talkshow similar to 702."

Reddy said he had spent five years at the SABC at executive level and that he understood the dynamics and politics.

"When you are experienced, have expertise, and are a little older they tend to listen to you more," he said.

"I think I can play a conciliatory role. I have the skills and experience and the people skills to play an interventionist role to bring various warring factions together."

The SABC, he said, was "like a patient with multiple organ failure".

"There is no point fixing kidneys when the lungs have also gone.

"You have to get everything right but you must start somewhere. You have to get the heart pumping, before everything else. The key to a turnaround at the SABC is to have the right people. Developing that human capital would be the starting point."

Fourteen nominees have been shortlisted by MPs to fill four vacancies on the SABC board left by a spate of resignations last year.

The candidates are being interviewed over three days this week. The committee is to present the names of the final four to the National Assembly on February 3. If approved, they are expected to take up their positions during the first quarter of this year.

The four posts became vacant when board members David Niddrie, Barbara Masekela, Felleng Sekha and Makgatho Mello left last October. Their exits followed months of infighting and complaints over a failure to produce a financial strategy for the cash-strapped SABC.

CEO Solly Mokoetle has also since resigned.