



ADJUDICATION NO:19/A/2026

NAME OF PROGRAMME: BREAKFAST SHOW – END OF SHOW

DATE AND TIME OF BROADCAST: EVERY WEEK DAY

BROADCASTER: SABC RADIO 2000

COMPLAINANT: MOLELI

COMPLAINT

Complaint that presenter's daily closing phrase amounts to hate speech, is harmful to children and objectifies women.

APPLICABLE CLAUSES

- Clause 4(2)** Broadcasting service licensees must not broadcast material which, judged within context, amounts to (a) propaganda for war; (b) incitement of imminent violence or (c) the advocacy of hatred that is based on race, ethnicity, religion or gender and that constitutes incitement to cause harm.
- Clause 6(1)** Broadcasting service licensees must not broadcast material which is harmful or disturbing to children at times when a large number of children are likely to be part of the audience.
- Clause 15** Insofar as both news and comment are concerned, broadcasting licensees must exercise exceptional care and consideration in matters involving the private lives, private concerns and dignity of individuals, bearing in mind that the rights to privacy and dignity may be overridden by a legitimate public interest.
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ADJUDICATION

- [1] The complaint concerns the daily closing phrase or "tagline" used by on-air personality Lelo Mzaca on Radio 2000's morning programme, *The Big Breakfast Show*. The complainant, submits that the presenter habitually signposts the end of the show with the expression "*Ya Gripa*" every weekday. The complainant contends that this phrase is a well-known South African colloquialism referencing the anatomical tightness of a woman's vagina during sexual intercourse, used to denote male sexual pleasure.

[2] **The complaint reads as follows:**

"Every week day Lelo Mzaca ends the show by saying Ya Gripa.

That is well known south African slang primarily meaning and referencing the perceived tightness of a woman's vagina during intercourse. To put it bluntly (The more grip the vagina has, the more us males wud refer to the sexual act being pleasurable)

I believe it is highly offensive and degrading to women for this kind of speech to be allowed on prime-time morning family radio time. This kind of talk belongs in pubs or boys locker rooms at best.

We have amongst the highest rates of gender based violence in the world. Such talk should not be allowed on his platform. It's irresponsible and dangerous and objectifies women.

We should be respecting women."

[3] **The Broadcaster responded as follows:**

"BCCSA COMPLAINT: MR MOLELI - RADIO 2000 - BIG BREAKFAST SHOW - 15.05.2026 - 15:00

With regard to the above-mentioned complaints, please find our comments as follows:

1. The SABC submits that the complainant's interpretation of the on-air personality's sign-off phrase "Ya Gripa" is grossly incorrect, mischievous and misleading. "Ya" simply means "It" in multiple languages, and "Gripa" means "grips". Nothing more.
2. At no point did the presenter referred to women's private parts or making any sexual reference. The phrase is a light-hearted, colloquial way of saying, "It's got grip" or "It's holding strong," commonly used in everyday South African slang in completely nonsexual contexts (similar to saying something has a good hold or is solid).

3. The SABC contends that the complaint appears to be based primarily on the complainant's personal beliefs rather than established facts. His interpretation is solely based on his own perception.
4. We conclude by indicating that the sign-off phrase has never been about women's private parts as suggested by the complainant. Women deserve respect and that gender-based violence is a very serious issue. With that said, equating a misunderstood, non-sexual slang sign-off with objectification or contributing to violence really stretches the argument significantly and weaponizes it in the wrong direction. Responsible broadcasting involves context, intent and actual content.

The SABC submits that there was no contravention of the Code."

[4] The Complainant replied as follows:

"Thank you for the response. I do hope you will not simply believe their explanation without doing any kind of research on your part.

Only male callers call in every morning and repeat that same tagline. Even on the voicenotes from listeners, it's only male listeners who repeat that tagline. Why is this? Where are the female listeners why don't they ever repeat it?

Funny I listened this morning and he did not say it when he ended the show today."

EVALUATION

- [5] This matter highlights a fundamental friction that frequently animates South African broadcasting: the gap between a listener's personal perception of what was broadcast on air and the actual, verifiable content of a broadcast. In this instance the complainant ascribed the street slang meaning to the impugned statement. Complaints regarding the objectification of women must be considered carefully in terms of the applicable Codes.
- [6] The essence of the complaint is whether the sign-off phrase "Ya Gripa" crosses the line into a violation of the Free-to-Air Code. The complainant insists that this tagline carries an implicitly crude, locker-room sexual reference that degrades women, noting that its on-air repetition is driven exclusively by male listeners. The SABC, conversely, presents an entirely different etymological account, arguing that the phrase is a common, urban Tsotsitaal expression used simply to indicate that something is "solid", "holding firm," or that the show has a successful, tight grip on its audience.

- [7] This linguistic and cultural friction strongly echoes the structural warnings raised in recent South African socio-legal scholarship, specifically, the 2024 academic study *Perceptions and Practice of South African Court Interpreting*¹. In analysing how fluid language is handled within legal frameworks, the authors criticise a purely mechanical “Conduit Model” of translation, noting that a rigid, word-for-word approach lacks sociolinguistic depth and frequently leads to chaos and misunderstanding.² Yet, conversely, the study vehemently denounces allowing intermediaries to rely on personal intuition³ or subjective “explaining” models. The research demonstrates that when a legal framework permits an individual to filter reality through their own intuition of what is “obscure” or “important,” it introduces personal bias, causing confusion and tragedy⁴ with devastating effects on the legal process.
- [8] The SABC’s defense operates on a somewhat mechanical, literal translation (“Ya means it; “Gripa” means grips). However, as the research notes, literalism does not automatically protect objective truth in a multicultural society, as it can completely mask vital subtext and situational context. Conversely, the complainant’s argument relies on a localised, highly subjective decoding of slang based on personal background and social experience. The answer to bridge this gap lies between individual intuition, and a sterile, purely mechanical literalism that ignores the organic nature of urban South African vernacular.
- [9] The Commission must safeguard accuracy and fairness by relying on a standardised common culture of practice as endorsed by Lebesse and Ndhlovo⁵. In broadcast content regulation, this objective safeguard is the reasonable listener test. The standard is whether a reasonable, broad-minded, and balanced

¹ Samuel Joseph Lebesse and Ketiwe Ndhlovu, 'South African court interpreters' perceptions of the phenomenon of interpreting' (2024) 42(S1) *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies* 1–19, available at: <https://doi.org/10.2989/16073614.2024.2359960>.

² Lebesse and Ndhlovu at 1 and 3.

³ Lebesse and Ndhlovu at 1-3 and 13-14.

⁴ Lebesse and Ndhlovu at 3.

⁵ Lebesse and Ndhlovu at 1.1.

listener, hearing the phrase within the context of a fast-paced, mainstream morning talk show, would understand it as an objective attack on the dignity of women or an incitement of harm.

- [10] The threshold in terms of Clause 4(2) is intentionally and necessarily high. Content will constitute hate speech, if there is a clear advocacy of hatred based on gender coupled with an actual incitement to cause harm. Having reviewed the matter and parsed the linguistic context, I find no evidence that the presenter used the tagline to advocate gender discrimination or to incite hostility. The complainant's observation that only male listeners call in to repeat the tagline highlights an interesting sociological dynamic regarding who occupies this specific colloquial space, but it does not necessarily transform a dual meaning street phrase into an explicit incitement to cause harm.
- [11] While the complainant has attached a specific, localised sexual connotation to the word "grip" a broadcaster cannot be held liable for every subjective subtext an individual listener might bring to a colloquial phrase. As the court interpreting study referred to above warns, when a legal body misinterprets cross-cultural linguistic differences by relying on subjective, non-standardised guesswork, it risks severe, "unintended legal consequences," in this case, the unjust censorship of authentic expression.
- [12] Finally, under Clause 6(1), we must consider the presence of children during the morning commute. As established in *Gerber vs Jacaranda FM*⁶, ordinary words or popular catchphrases that lack explicit sexual terminology do not trigger the harmful curiosity of younger listeners, who lack the adult frame of reference to impose an inappropriate meaning onto the text. In the present matter, however, the impugned phrase does not even fall within this category. Accordingly, it

⁶ Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa (BCCSA), "JacarandaFM 94.2", available at: <https://www.bccsa.co.za/category/jacarandafm-94-2/> (accessed 25 June 2026).

cannot reasonably be regarded as harmful or as contravening the provisions of Clause 6(1). “Ya Gripa” remains, to the general public, an indistinct and energetic sign-off.

- [13] The complainant’s vigilance regarding the respect owed to women in our society is noted. However, equating a slang phrase with the propagation of gender-based violence in this specific context, is not supported by the regulatory framework. The baseline for an objective outcome must be determined in terms of the applicable Code of Conduct. I accordingly conclude that there is no contravention of Clauses 4(2), 6(1) and 15.

The complaint is dismissed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melany Fuma". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

**MELANY FUMA
COMMISSIONER: BROADCASTING COMPLAINTS COMMISSION**