

# Protecting And Promoting Whistleblowing In South Africa

DEMOCRACY  
WORKS  
FOUNDATION

THE WHISTLEBLOWER  
HOUSE

Co-funded by  
the European Union

WHISTLEBLOWING SEMINAR INFO PACK

## STRENGTHENING SOUTH AFRICA'S WHISTLEBLOWING ECOSYSTEM: FROM DISCLOSURE TO ACCOUNTABILITY

**Date:** 15-16 April 2026  
**Venue:** Radisson Red Hotel,  
Rosebank, Johannesburg



## BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

“ *Based on the importance of whistleblowing in South Africa, DWF and TWBH are hosting a two-day seminar that explores the supply and demand of whistleblowing, moving beyond theoretical and legal discussions to focus on the broader whistleblowing ecosystem.* ”

Whistleblowing is a powerful tool for protecting democracy in South Africa, helping to expose corruption, abuse of power and wrongdoing. Whistleblowing emerged as a key force, especially during the state capture period. From the revelations of whistleblowers in major public entities such as South African Airways, Eskom, the Gauteng Department of Health, and SARS, to those in the private and civil society sectors, their disclosures have been instrumental in exposing governance and ethics failures and have catalysed national accountability conversations.

The conversations and debates on whistleblowing continue to shape public discourse. In 2025, South Africa faced heightened national and international scrutiny on whistleblowing through the Madlanga Commission and the work of the ad hoc parliamentary committee investigating allegations of fraud and corruption within the South African Police Service (SAPS). Testimonies at both these commissions have reinforced the central role of whistleblowers in exposing systemic wrongdoing, while also revealing persistent failures in institutional response and protection. This moment underscores the urgency of strengthening South Africa's

whistleblowing ecosystem so that disclosures lead to accountability rather than retaliation.

**Democracy Works Foundation (DWF)** and **The Whistleblower House (TWBH)** have partnered to implement the **Protecting and Promoting Whistleblowing (PPW) project** in South Africa, which is co-funded by the European Union (EU). The project offers direct legal, financial, psychological, and security support to whistleblowers, aiming to strengthen advocacy for whistleblower protection in law and policy frameworks through partnerships with government, business, and civil society, thereby creating a stronger, more supportive environment for whistleblowing. Through the PPW project, DWF and TWBH advocate for the strengthening of a **national ecosystem** of solidarity, support, and accountability – one that supports whistleblowers holistically and values whistleblowers as key actors in shaping more transparent and accountable governance structures and systems.

Based on the importance of whistleblowing in South Africa, DWF and TWBH are hosting a two-day seminar that explores the **supply and**



**demand of whistleblowing**, moving beyond theoretical and legal discussions to focus on the broader **whistleblowing ecosystem**. The seminar will unpack the key trends, opportunities and challenges inherent in both the supply side and demand side of whistleblowing. The seminar will also focus on the policy, advocacy and practice gaps between supply and demand. This seminar responds to a growing recognition that South Africa's whistleblowing landscape requires more **coherent, strategic, and values-driven action**.

Despite existing legal frameworks, effective whistleblower protections in South Africa have not kept pace with lived realities, leaving those who disclose wrongdoing exposed to retaliation, dismissal, harassment, blacklisting, and long-term psychological harm. While courageous whistleblower stories have become a defining feature of the post-state capture era, the systems meant to support and protect these individuals remain fragmented, fragile, and under-resourced, often influenced by power structures and politics. This results in a damaging paradox: disclosures may surface, but systemic change and accountability fail to follow.

Understanding whistleblowing through the **lens of supply and demand**: who provides protection and spaces for whistleblowing (supply), and who receives and acts upon whistleblowing disclosures (demand), offers a useful framework for identifying system misalignments and driving reform. It is important to unpack the **value-chain of whistleblowing** in South Africa to determine if the supply and demand are aligned through the appropriate institutional, legal and advocacy mechanisms. Therefore, understanding the current trends and challenges facing whistleblowing from a systemic perspective is critical.

## SEMINAR THEME AND AIMS

Building on research, learnings and engagements during the PPW project, the theme for the seminar is: ***“Strengthening South Africa’s Whistleblowing Ecosystem: From Disclosure to Accountability”***.

This theme recognises that a credible and effective whistleblowing system requires more than just laws and hotlines. It demands that institutional actors genuinely want, welcome, and act on disclosures (demand), while also ensuring that those who come forward are protected, supported, and respected (supply). The theme will unpack key topics related to the supply and demand side of whistleblowing to set the scene for whistleblowing trends in South Africa.

Beyond scene setting, the seminar will also focus on the policy and practice gaps that are emerging between supply and demand and attempt to discuss ways in which the whistleblower ecosystem can drive policy and advocacy through collaboration, sharing of resources, networks and expertise.

The seminar aims to:

- Unpack the **supply and demand dimensions of whistleblowing** in South Africa
- **Advocate for whistleblower protection** through cross-sector dialogue and collaboration.
- Surface **strategic priorities and action steps for reform** towards ecosystem strengthening.



## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The seminar aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- Improved **collective understanding** of whistleblowing as an **integrated system** shaped by both supply and demand forces.
- Strengthened **cross-sector collaboration and trust** between actors in the whistleblowing ecosystem.
- **Greater strategic clarity** on where to prioritise reforms and interventions in the ecosystem, so that policy, legal and advocacy gaps can be closed.
- **Enhanced readiness** among institutions and advocates to contribute to a more accountable, supportive, and values-driven whistleblowing environment.

## FORMAT

The seminar will take place over 2 days and feature a highly interactive programme, including:

- **Keynote addresses** by leading thinkers on ethical governance.
- **Interactive workshops** on various dimensions of whistleblowing (legal, policy, research, social, etc.)
- **Panel discussions** with legal experts, whistleblowers, and investigative journalists.
- **Case presentations** from the public and private sectors.
- **Peer learning** sessions to unpack themes on a deeper level.



# PROGRAMME DAY 1

(WEDNESDAY, 15 APRIL 2026)

Time	Session Name	Format	Venue
08:30 – 09:00: <b>REGISTRATION</b>			
09:00 – 09:40	<b>SEMINAR CONTEXT SETTING AND PPW OVERVIEW</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Introduction to the Seminar:</b> MC: Mogale Mashipata (DWF Associate)</li> <li>• <b>Opening Remarks:</b> Olmo von Meijenfeldt (DWF)</li> <li>• <b>EU Opening Remarks:</b> Mr Massimo Mina (EU Delegation, Head of Cooperation)</li> <li>• <b>Overview of PPW Preject:</b> Yasmin Shapurjee (DWF) and Ben Theron (TWBH)</li> </ul> Facilitated by: (MC)	Welcome & Opening Session	Studio1&2
09:40 – 10:00	<b>INTRODUCTIONS:</b> Facilitated by: (MC)	Intros	Studio1&2
10:00 – 10:30	<b>UNPACKING THE WHISTLEBLOWING LANDSCAPE IN SOUTH AFRICA</b> Prof. Themba Maseko (Head of School: Wits School of Governance)	Keynote Address	Studio1&2
10:30 – 10:45	<b>MENTIMETER POLL: Audience inputs</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Reflections/highlights from the Keynote Address.</li> <li>2) Poll of 5 questions</li> </ol> Facilitated by: (MC)	Audience Engagement	Studio1&2
10:45-11:00: <b>TEA BREAK</b>			
11:00 – 12:30	<b>ALIGNING SUPPLY AND DEMAND: DOES SOUTH AFRICA HAVE THE WHISTLEBLOWING ECOSYSTEM IT NEEDS?</b> Karam Singh (Good Governance Africa); Devoshum Moodley-Veera (PhD candidate, Stellenbosch University and Member of ACCERUS); Jovita Matos Fazenda (The Ethics Institute) Facilitated by: Patience Hwenha (DWF)	Panel Discussion	Studio1&2
12:30–13:30: <b>LUNCH &amp; NETWORKING</b>			

# PROGRAMME DAY 1

(WEDNESDAY, 15 APRIL 2026)

Time	Session Name	Format	Venue
13:30 — 15:00	<p><b>PARALLEL WORKSHOPS (Select One):</b></p> <p><b>W1: Exposing the Risk of Fake Whistleblower Claims</b> Joanne Philip (J. Phillip Attorneys)</p> <p><b>W2: Whistleblowing in SA: Why Culture Matters</b> Jovita Matos Fazenda (The Ethics Institute)</p> <p><b>W3: Insights Of An Investigative Journalist Into The Key Role Of Whistleblowers In Combating Fraud And Corruption</b> Raymond Joseph (GroundUp)</p> <p><b>W4: Psychological Support for Whistleblowers</b> Leonie Vorster (Leonie Vorster Enterprises)</p>	Parallel Sessions	<p>Studio 3</p> <p>Studio 4</p> <p>Studio 5</p> <p>Studio 6</p>
15:00 –15:30: <b>TEA BREAK &amp; GROUP PHOTO</b>			
15:30 — 16:00	<p><b>REPORT BACK ON KEY CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS WORKSHOP (AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT) &amp; CLOSURE</b></p> <p>Volunteers per workshop to provide feedback to guide discussion: Feedback from Graphic Recorder</p> <p><b>Facilitated by:</b> MC &amp; Sonja Niederhumer (Graphic Harvest)</p>	Reflection Session	Studio1&2
<p>(END OF DAY 1)</p> <p><b>NETWORKING RECEPTION (RADISSON RED ROOFTOP)</b></p> <p>16:30-18:30</p>			

## PROGRAMME DAY 2

(THURSDAY, 16 APRIL 2026)

Time	Session Name	Format	Venue
08:30 — 09:00: <b>REGISTRATION</b>			
09:00 — 09:30	<b>HIGHLIGHTS FROM DAY 1</b> Lerato Maloka, DWF Engagement Manager <b>Facilitated by:</b> MC	Opening Session	Studio 1&2
09:30 — 10:45	<b>WHISTLEBLOWER STORIES PANEL</b> Sikhander Coopoo (Member: Active Citizens); Sello Qhina (Formerly with NLC); Cynthia Stimpel (Courage Hub SA); Sarika Lakraj-Naidoo (Wild Horses Advisory & Consulting Services) <b>Facilitated by:</b> Roshnee Narrandes (PPLAAF-SA)	Panel Discussion	Studio 1&2
10:45-11:00: <b>TEA BREAK</b>			
11:00 — 12:30	<b>PARALLEL WORKSHOPS (Select One):</b> <b>W1: Legal Strategies for Protecting Whistleblowers in Practice</b> Dr Louise Isparta (Advocate) <b>W2: An Overview of TWBH Resources &amp; Journey in Supporting Whistleblowers</b> Ben Theron (The Whistleblower House) <b>W3: From Tip-Off to Impact: How Outa Engages Whistleblowers Through Secure Reporting Platforms, Advocacy &amp; Accountability Campaigns</b> Stefanie Fick (OUTA) <b>W4: Driving Change: The Role of Civil Society in Investigating Whistleblower Allegations and Advocacy for Whistleblower Support</b> Roshnee Narrandes (PPLAAF-SA)	Parallel Sessions	Studio 3 Studio 4 Studio 5 Studio 6
12:30-13:30: <b>LUNCH &amp; NETWORKING</b>			
13:30— 15:00	<b>FUTURES PANEL: WHAT COULD A TRUSTED WHISTLEBLOWING LANDSCAPE LOOK LIKE IN THE FUTURE?</b> Dr Ugljesa Radulovic (UJ); Lebogang Ramafako (Corruption Watch); Cynthia Stimpel (Courage Hub SA) <b>Facilitated by:</b> Zukiswa Kota (Open Government Partnership)	Panel Discussion	Studio1&2
15:00— 15:30	<b>A NATIONAL COMMITMENT TO PROTECTING THOSE WHO PROTECT THE PUBLIC - CALL TO ACTION</b> Summary of Seminar with Key Recommendations and Way Forward <b>Facilitated by:</b> MC & Sonja Niederhumer (Graphic Harvest)	Reflection & Closing	Studio1&2

- PROGRAMME ENDS -



## PROJECT PARTNERS

### **Democracy Works Foundation (DWF)**

is a non-partisan, Southern African non-profit company that works to promote inclusive, equitable and sustainable consensus democracies. DWF is committed to strengthening civil society and state accountability by providing tools, platforms, and content to support democrats, democratic culture, and democratic institutions.

### **The Whistleblower House (TWBH)**

is a not-for-profit, public benefit organisation that facilitates access to support services for whistleblowers, creates awareness of whistleblowers' plight, and acknowledges the vital role of whistleblowers in strengthening ethics and democracy in South Africa.

The PPW project is co-funded by the **European Union (EU)**.



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