

South African National Editors' Forum (SANEF) welcomes President Motlanthe's decision on the Film & Publications A/B

SANEF welcomes the decision by President Kgalema Motlanthe to send the Films and Publications Amendment Bill back to Parliament for review as the bill may be unconstitutional.

SANEF has always maintained that certain aspects of the bill will have a negative impact on the free flow of information and might also impact negatively on the constitutionally guaranteed right to freedom of expression.

Aware of these concerns, SANEF has held negotiations with various stake-holders, including the champions of the bill, to sensitise them to the possible unintended results of such a bill becoming law. When the bill was finally referred to the President for his signature, we also pleaded with the president not to sign the bill into law.

It is in this context that we fully welcome the decision by the president to refer the bill back to parliament.

We believe that it is not necessary for the bill to be scrapped as we are confident that it is not too late for the lawmakers to remove the sections from a bill that has a negative impact on the free flow of information - a key element of any constitutional democracy.