**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MEDIA STATEMENT: MDDA RAISES CONCERN OVER CRIME WAVE HITTING COMMUNITY MEDIA SECTOR**

**Johannesburg, South Africa, 9 February 2018.** The Media Development & Diversity Agency (MDDA) notes with extreme concern the violent robberies that have plagued the community media sector in recent weeks. The latest attack, which occurred over the past week on Cape Town TV, followed a similar incident involving Radio Mafisa in Rustenburg, North West Province, at the end of January 2018. Both Cape Town TV and Radio Mafisa were robbed of expensive broadcast equipment, while the personnel were held hostage and subjected to abuse and violence.

Cape Town TV and Radio Mafisa are respected beneficiaries of MDDA funding. As community media projects they are non-profit organizations, owned and managed by the communities to whom they provide the communication channel necessary to raise the grassroots issues impacting on the areas in which they based.

“The MDDA condemns any attacks on the entrenched right of media projects to work free from the threat of violence, irrespective of whether it be politically or criminally motivated,” commented Musa Sishange, Acting Chairperson of the Board of the MDDA. “The community media projects supported by the MDDA serve historically disadvantaged communities and operate on shoestring budgets, heavily dependent both on donor funding and volunteers to ensure they can continue their critical mandate of providing access to the media for all.

“Community media projects such as Cape Town TV and Radio Mafisa provide an invaluable platform for the often-marginalized voices across our communities, regardless of race, gender, disability and economic class.

“On behalf of all at the MDDA, we extend our sincere sympathies to these stations on what must have been a traumatic event, particularly for the staff directly involved in the attacks.”

The MDDA is a statutory development agency, deriving its mandate, from Section 16 and 32 of the Constitution Act No. 108 of 1996, thereby providing for freedom of expression and access to information. As a partnership between the South African Government and major print and broadcasting companies, it promotes and assists in the development of community media and small commercial media in South Africa and the transformation of the media, by providing support (financial, capacity building, etc.) in terms of the MDDA Act No 14 of 2002. It also aims to raise public awareness with regard to media development and diversity issues, and to encourage media literacy and a culture of reading. For further information: [www.mdda.org.za](http://www.mdda.org.za)

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