

STATEMENT

Mohau Modisakeng & Nomonde Mdebuka

31 July 2018

Mohau Modisakeng

“On the 19th of June, my fiancée, Nomonde Mdebuka (‘Nomonde’) and I were returning from a holiday in Zanzibar when we became involved in an argument at the Jomo Kenyatta airport In Nairobi.

The incident was first publicised on social media, with a factually incorrect account of the events that had transpired. Several journalists subsequently picked up on the story and went on to publish these reports.

In the almost six weeks since the incident, I have been grappling with how to address the controversy around my name in the public domain. The social media narrative - based on opinion, conjecture and untruths, made me question how I could talk to the issue openly and truthfully without merely opening myself up to further vilification.

I hope that this statement will allow me to set the record straight, address the misinformation and underline my commitment to an honest and open dialogue regarding all the issues surrounding this incident.

Part of my inner struggle over the past few weeks has been about how to address the untruths and shed light on the matter in a sincere and authentic way.

The vicious labels assigned to me have made me wrestle with whether it is possible to say anything at all, without being branded as defensive and unrepentant. After much self-reflection, I have decided to break my silence, because nothing could be further from the truth.

At the onset, I wish to address the allegation that I was arrested/detained by Kenyan police for apparently assaulting, Nomonde.

I wish to confirm that I was never arrested or detained and that the reports that I assaulted Nomonde are untrue. All other reports that I was assisted or "saved" from going to jail, as reflected in some of the initial statements, are also untrue.

To further dispel the allegation of physical abuse, it is important to note the following. Upon request of my lawyers, airport officials in Nairobi did a thorough investigation of the closed-circuit footage from the day of the incident, and have confirmed as follows: "[From video footage] at the SA185 boarding gate, it was established that the said passengers were not involved in any physical fight but were rather seen communicating verbally".

The argument between Nomonde and I at the airport was about a personal issue that existed in our relationship and at no stage did I assault her. It was, and never could be, my intention to hurt the person I have not only grown up with, but also love very dearly.

The fact is that all couples sometimes disagree on issues. We are all human, and most people in relationships have to find ways to communicate their different perspectives to each other in a constructive way. We remain committed to finding ways to develop our relationship and communication skills. We are undergoing counselling to address the various private issues that have come up in our relationship. Our respective families have offered us their complete support in this process.

I want to take this opportunity to confirm that I recognise the plight of women, children and vulnerable persons. These issues are finally gaining much needed global attention and highlighting the continued injustice and devastation the vulnerable experience on a daily basis in all spheres of life. People are finally being given an opportunity to share their stories, call out

perpetrators, stop victim blaming and continue the fight to halt the systemic inequality that exists in our societies.

I unequivocally support this, and as a man, I am committed to understanding and confronting my role therein.

As an artist, I have dedicated my career to addressing the systemic violence of our collective history as South Africans, in a very personal way. I have reflected on my own struggles in my creative work as an attempt to shed light on the consequences of the brokenness engendered by apartheid and colonialism on the personal and political lives of South Africans today.

Like all South Africans I am a product of my circumstances, and as such, I grapple with the challenges of this abusive past every day. I grew up in a violent community where I regularly had to witness unspeakable violence. I witnessed the effects of a broken past on many families, including my own. I have seen my own mother be the subject of unspeakable abuse and violence and it is for this reason that I have chosen to use my work as a means to channel and process my personal traumas in an attempt to restore some dignity to my life.

I hope to continue to delve deeper into my work as I confront and interrogate myself, and our country's history. I remain committed to speak up for South Africa and Africa's broken past and to contribute to the on-going narrative through my creative work, with the aim of bringing closure and wholeness, not only to myself, but to the community for whom I speak.

I am a young person who has grown up in a deeply broken society, and I remain committed to continuous self-reflection and improvement.

- ENDS -

Nomonde Mdebuka

"In the last few weeks there has been various reports on social and other media platforms about an incident that took place at the Jomo Kenyatta

Airport in Nairobi involving my fiancée Mohau ('Mohau') Modisakeng and I upon our return from a vacation in Zanzibar.

This statement is meant to address untrue statements published on various social media platforms and in the press regarding Mohau, our relationship and issues pertaining to me personally. I have thought it prudent at this stage to speak in my own voice, and also for the first time to reveal my identity.

I am doing this in an attempt to, once and for all, put a stop to the ongoing false narrative being perpetuated in the media and on social media platforms that I was abused and assaulted by Mohau.

It remains my impression that the individuals who have come forward, and spoken out about the matter, have intentionally and deliberately disregarded the facts.

The allegations have been that Mohau was arrested at the Jomo Kenyatta Airport after he assaulted me, and further that he is an abuser. These accusations have no basis in truth as I can confirm that Mohau was never arrested or detained, and even though we did have an argument at the airport, I deny that he ever assaulted me or verbally abused me as has been/is being reported.

This has also been clarified by officials at Jomo Kenyatta Airport who have corroborated both my and Mohau's version of events, clearing him of any suggestion that there was an assault.

I strongly object to both my and Mohau's privacy being violated. I also strongly object to my story being told by persons who neither know me, nor my history, yet choose to speak on my behalf.

To those who have continued to perpetuate a false narrative and, in the process, disempower and silence me, I kindly request you to stop. The past few weeks of misinformation have caused me incomprehensible humiliation and tremendous harm on a personal, professional and reputational level. This applies to Mohau too.

Finally, I would like to express my deep gratitude to my family, friends and colleagues who have supported me unconditionally through this most challenging period.

- ENDS -

NOTE:

1. Please note Mohau Modisakeng and Nomonde Mdebuka have retained legal counsel and will take further steps to end the damaging rumours should this become necessary.

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