

Stop the sex terror campaign and consult us

WE WOULD like to express our moral disgust at the manner in which the leadership of the City of Cape Town is riding roughshod over human rights in its populist anti-sex worker campaign.

First, valuable NGO resources had to be spent to interdict the city police in court for abusing their powers of arrest to harass the most vulnerable of street sex workers.

Then we learn that the same techniques of entrapment that were used by the apartheid Vice Squad to entice gay men into a liaison with a policeman dressed as a honey trap are now to be used to lure potential clients of sex workers.

Either the same evil people that ran the apartheid vice squad are now employed by the city or J P Smith has no sense of irony.

The DA is very quick to highlight every populist statement of Julius Malema or others in the ANC that is in conflict with our human rights culture and ethos, and yet Smith is happy to trample all over the human rights of the city's most vulnerable citizens.

This hardly demonstrates the liberal tradition of the DA, as he fans the flames of hate.

All good and well, Mr Smith, but when the police under your charge have to be interdicted to stop harassment,

when you use the unconstitutional entrapment techniques of the apartheid vice squad, when the only Christians that surround you are hateful bigots, you must not be surprised at the human rights-based opposition to your scheme or at people exposing your charade for what it is: shameless vote-catching at the expense of the most vulnerable and marginalised of our society.

None of the city's actions under Smith's terror campaign promote or advance sex workers or their rights in any way.

Nor do they create a positive environment and space for opening

up opportunities for sex workers to work safely, or for the rest of civil society to begin to understand the complexities of the world's oldest phenomenon.

Stop the terror, Mr Smith – consult SWEAT and Sisonke, a South African sex workers' rights network.

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