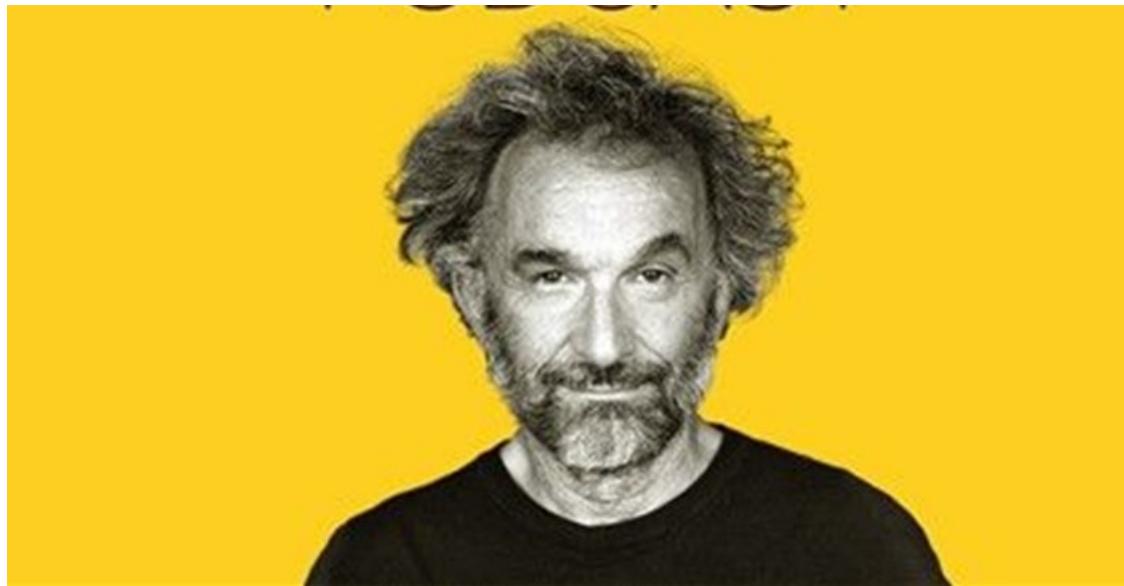


IOL apology to *Daily Maverick* and its editor

Daily Maverick's Styli Charalambous, CEO comments on the recent apology and retraction from IOL to *Daily Maverick* following the article, *Daily Maverick asked me to write and do negative tweets about Dr Iqbal Survé* published in March 2020 in the *Daily News* and on its digital platform *Independent Online*.



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The *Daily Maverick* has reported that *Daily News* editor, Ayanda Mdluli, and *Independent Online* editor Lance Witten have unconditionally retract the article and apologise to *Daily Maverick* and its editor Branko Brkic for the harm that was occasioned through the publication of Mr Modiba's unlawful and defamatory allegations".

Daily News editor, Ayanda Mdluli, and *Independent Online* editor Lance Witten have unconditionally retracted an article that appeared on its digital platform *Independent Online* and apologised to *Daily Maverick* and its editor Branko Brkic.

The retraction was published on last week on [IOL](#).

The retracted article was written by Modibe Modiba and accused *Daily Maverick* and its editor Branko Brkic of orchestrating and financially sponsoring a fake news smear campaign against prominent politicians, businessmen and executives, including Independent Media executive chairman Dr Iqbal Survé.

The apology follows a High Court order Modiba, the source of the article, "unconditionally retract, apologise, and pay damages for his unlawful and defamatory allegations against *Daily Maverick* and Brkic".

In a comment to *Bizcommunity* Styli Charalambous, CEO of the *Daily Maverick* says that while they are delighted they got this apology and retraction, it's unfortunate that they had to go these lengths of time, effort and cost to achieve some remedy.

"The offending articles and tweets were published in 2020, and it's taken that amount of time to have our say in court, obtain a verdict and then try enforce the ruling, which was delivered on 12 August 2022. Every step of the way has meant effort and costs that could be better spent elsewhere," he says.

An indictment of where we are

He adds that while it's a small victory, it's a sad indictment of where we are and the remedies available to people hurt by publishers and others on social media.

"Those who suffer defamatory accusations and lies are forced to turn to the courts because rogue publishers abandon any semblance of a functioning and independent complaint process that would resolve matters quickly, like the Press Council was set up to do.

"But that is precisely why due process is abandoned, forcing people to take the costly and laborious legal route in the hope that they give up and the offending articles remain on the internet, accessible by search engines forever."

A weaponisation of their news

Commenting on the state of the media globally, Charalambous, says: "We are seeing a global rise in the attack on independent media through many channels, and especially the rising threat of legal action."

Referring to this case, he explains that *Independent Newspapers*, *IOL* and Iqbal Survé's legal demands flood their inboxes after every article that they and others publish exposing their actions.

"The law is being used as a tool alongside the weaponisation of their news and social media channels to intimidate upstanding media from publishing the truth.

"We've seen cases where journalists give up a story, or worse, their careers because of this, and it's sad that we currently have very little recourse to protect victims of strategic lawsuits and legal threats.

"Europe is leading in anti-SLAPP (strategic lawsuits against public practice) legislation. Without that protection, we and others will remain targets of abuse and legal threats because they are gaming the legal and publishing system."