

Public figures vs. Public interest

The City Press story about Sports and Recreation Minister, Fikile Mbalula's affair and alleged 'love child'

Not long ago, the Sowetan broke a story about a police officer and a correctional official who shared a passionate moment in the hospital waiting room, while waiting for the suspect they were guarding to be checked. Many cried that Sowetan was subscribing to tabloid journalism. The City Press story about Sports and Recreation Minister, Fikile Mbalula last Sunday was no exception. Many readers expressed their views that the story warranted such attention by the paper, as Mbalula is a public figure. However, Eusbeius McKaiser, political analyst told eNews Channel that though Mbalula is a public figure the story did not benefit the public. I'm merely expressing my view that the media tend to stray from their code of conduct and this is often defended as 'public interest'. In this instance, the story had no benefit to the reader nor to the taxpayer. In the case of the now fired Minister of Corporate Governance and Traditional Affairs, Sicelo Shiceka, it was in the public interest as he squandered public funds disguising as if he went on business. I think journalists, individually need to critically scrutinize their judgment before embarking on a personally involved story. I am in no way defending or endorsing the Minister's behaviour.

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