

Batohi must survive ethnic, race and gender barbs

President Cyril Ramaphosa's appointment of Advocate Shamila Batohi as the NDPP is 'an apt and bold move in the best interests of the country'. However, a close examination of media commentary and political utterances reveals prejudices along ethnic, racial and gender lines, says Dr Devi Moodley Rajab, chair of the Democracy Development Programme, in an analysis in [The Mercury](#). 'Take a close and introspective look at the cartoons dedicated to her appearance and what emerges is an unattractive middle-aged frumpy woman in the ilk of a wet nurse. The de-professionalisation of women in powerful positions is a subtle way of keeping them in place,' she says. 'Why should Batohi – a fourth generation South African – have to apologise for her very being in a post-apartheid era? Why should any South African of any race or hue have to be answerable for an accident of their birth, provided of course that they are law abiding citizens?' In answering these questions, she points out that this 'tough-as-nails public prosecutor' first entered the public consciousness in 2000 as the 'feisty' interrogator of 'disgraced' Proteas captain Hansie Cronje. Her real skill, says Rajab, was evident in **her ability to prosecute, which was described as being nothing short of sheer star quality**: 'There's scarcely a soul who hasn't been quite ravished by her inquisitorial gifts, her innate ability to sense the bogus in any witness trapped in the nimble follow-spot of her cross-examination. She has the finest sense of humbug-detecting antennae in the business. Upon making Cronje cry, she simply said, "I didn't mean to do so. I was only doing my job, and I had to do it properly".' Says Rajab: 'As loyal South Africans, should we not be proud of our human capital? And there are many more gems like Batohi, if we only care to look beyond our narrow lenses.'