



21 September 2018

Zondo commission: Ajay Gupta claims no knowledge of meeting with Mcebisi Jonas

Ajay Gupta has refuted the claim by former deputy finance minister Mcebisi Jonas that the two of them met three years ago at his Saxonwold home, where Gupta then attempted to bribe Jonas with R600-million while also offering him a promotion to the post of finance minister.

Giving his side

Gupta filed an affidavit with the commission of inquiry into state capture, at which Jonas testified in August. His version is that he could not have met with Jonas because he was at the offices of Oakbay in Sandton, and he has cellphone records that prove this. Oakbay Investments is one of the companies owned by the Gupta family. The records, said Gupta, were handed to former public protector Thuli Madonsela, as part of her investigation into state capture prior to her leaving office in 2016.

In the affidavit, [Times Live reports](#), Gupta also accused Madonsela of using a “leading question” to establish that he was the person that Jonas says he met with on October 23, 2015. During his testimony, Jonas said at the time he was unsure of which of the Gupta brothers it was that he met, but got to know later that it was Ajay, as his pictures were published in subsequent media reports.

Madonsela has since urged Gupta to release the recording of his interview with her so that the public could decide if her questions were indeed leading.

Guptas cannot cross-examine

Gupta, along with brother Rajesh, was denied permission to cross-examine Jonas and former ANC MP Vytjie Mentor, who also testified that she was offered a ministerial post by Ajay during a meeting in Saxonwold. She placed Rajesh in the vehicle that was used to transport her from OR Tambo Airport to Sahara Computers in Midrand, when she travelled to Johannesburg to meet then president Jacob Zuma in 2010. Her meeting with Zuma never materialised, but Mentor told the commission that the former president was at the Saxonwold residence at the time she met with Ajay, following a shorter meeting at Sahara earlier.

Commission chair Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo said his decision to dismiss the Guptas’ applications was based on the brothers’ refusal to return to South Africa from their current location of Dubai, to testify. The brothers claimed the incompetence and unfairness of the Hawks and the National Prosecuting Authority placed them in a compromising position as, according to their lawyer Mike Hellens, there appeared to be a warrant for their arrest on returning to the country, although they had not been officially notified of it.

According to Jonas, he had been driven to an undisclosed meeting venue by Duduzane Zuma, whom he had met earlier at the Hyatt hotel in Rosebank. Duduzane appeared nervous when they met at the Hyatt, and told Jonas that he would prefer to move to a more private place. This turned out to be the Guptas' Saxonwold home. Jonas further told the commission he was unaware of what the meeting agenda was or that they would be joined by others.

Useful links:

[Zondo Commission website](#)

[Oakbay](#)