



13 January 2020

Zondo Commission – Zuma set to oppose Zondo summons: reports

Former president Jacob Zuma plans to oppose an application for a summons to be issued to him to appear before the commission of inquiry into state capture later this month. He has failed to appear on two previous occasions scheduled by the commission, in October and November last year.

The commission issued a media statement on Friday saying it was to kick off the hearings for this year by presenting an application, through its legal team, for Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo to summons Zuma to appear from 27 to 31 January. Independent Newspapers reported on Monday 13 January that it was the former president's lawyer, Daniel Mantsha, who said his team intended to oppose the move.

Zuma's appearance, should the summons be issued, will pick up where he left off in July last year. Back then too, the commission had set out a full week for Zuma to provide clarity on some of the evidence brought forward by witnesses but this was cut short when his legal team pulled out of the process, citing unfairness in procedure. On Zondo's direction, his legal team and that of the commission met to re-schedule for a later appearance, once Zuma was to be given the heads up on what direction the questioning would follow.

He was later invited back by Zondo, in October and November, but was unavailable in both instances. In October, his lawyers cited his preoccupation with the corruption trial in the Pietermaritzburg High Court as the reason, while ill-health was responsible for his unavailability in November, they said.

In early December last year, Zondo gave Zuma a number of days to respond to an application by journalist Redi Tlhabi to cross-examine him, after what she referred to as defamatory comments made by him during his July appearance. Zuma said in his testimony that Tlhabi was part of an elaborate campaign to discredit him using the guise of journalism. If her application is granted, Tlhabi will be the first person to cross-examine Zuma, who has to date not submitted an affidavit.

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