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Zondo commission – Myeni wingman too ill for inquiry

Mbongiseni Majola, a programme manager at Mhlathuze Water Board who is accused of facilitating a money laundering scheme that cost the entity millions of rands between 2015 and 2016, is too ill to appear before the commission of inquiry into state capture. Majola, according to Advocate Kate Hofmeyr of the commission's legal team, was scheduled to appear on Wednesday, but has asked instead for a postponement of his testimony to a time when he is well.

This is the second time that Majola has formally applied for a postponement. The first time was in February, when an in-camera witness named "Mr X" testified anonymously on matters including Majola's alleged scheme.

Commission chairperson Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo heard from Majola's lawyer, Francois Roets, that his client was genuinely unable to appear before him due to ill health. Roets said this was not in any way an attempt by Majola to avoid appearing before Zondo.

Mr X told the commission that Majola's construction company Isibonelo was used as a money laundering vehicle to channel millions out of Mhlathuze. Isibonelo was used as a ruse for a major project of the water board. According to Mr X, Majola introduced himself as an engineer employed by the board in January 2015, and presented him with a proposition that he said his "bosses" had for a trustworthy businessman. Mr X understood at the time that Majola's "bosses" included former SAA chair Dudu Myeni, who chaired Mhlathuze at the time. Majola told Mr X of a project that the board was involved in, and said it was outsourced to a private company, Klomac Engineering, based in Durban.

According to Majola, said Mr X, he had a deal with Klomac to pay them inflated fees for services provided, with the intention of moving the excess amounts on these to another entity. This is where Isibonelo came in. Soon after Mr X agreed to this, Majola allegedly created an invoice for an amount of R2.3-million to Klomac, along with a scope of work falsely attributed to Isibonelo. Once the payment was deposited into Isibonelo's account at the end of January, Mr X then received an account number from Majola into which he was to transfer it. Several more transactions of a similar nature followed.

Just over R3-million was channelled through Isibonelo to the Jacob Zuma Foundation, allegedly on the instruction of foundation chairperson Myeni, between 2015 and 2016.

Zondo asked on Wednesday if Majola had been asked specific questions during the commission's investigation into the matter, and Hofmeyr confirmed that he had, and had refused to answer. To date he has not provided an affidavit to the commission, but in granting the postponement, Zondo ordered that this be submitted by August.

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