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Zondo commission – Zondo biased, says Montana to JSC

The commission of inquiry into allegations of state capture has received praise and criticism alike for its work since its establishment in 2018, but never has its chairperson, Deputy Chief Justice (DCJ) Raymond Zondo, been the subject of a personal complaint, until now.

Former Prasa CEO Lucky Montana has lodged a formal complaint against Zondo with the Judicial Service Commission (JSC). The allegations contained in an affidavit Montana reportedly submitted to the JSC include gross misconduct and incompetence on Zondo's part, particularly during the testimonies of former Prasa chairperson Popo Molefe, its head of legal Martha Ngoye, and a suspended general manager in Ngoye's department.

The DCJ's conduct, says the erstwhile CEO, is unbecoming of a senior official of the judiciary.

Montana has been accused by the above witnesses of enabling, and participating in corruption running into billions of rands. Many of the contracts that have come under scrutiny were awarded, according to the allegations, to Montana's friends. Further evidence linked him to several properties in affluent areas, where Montana was the buyer while a company called Precise Trade and Invest allegedly paid for the properties. Precise, Zondo heard, was solely owned by lawyer Riaan van der Walt, who represented some of the entities that had direct dealings with Prasa.

Montana says while the other witnesses enjoyed the indulgence of the commission, his own evidence – with which he aimed to prove his innocence – was being "sabotaged" by the legal and investigative teams of the commission. "The commission is clearly pursuing a witch-hunt against some of us to support certain agendas," he is quoted in a recent report as saying.

Despite his complaint, Montana has reportedly committed to appearing before the commission to give evidence.

The JSC has not yet responded to Montana's complaint.

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