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Zondo commission - Zondo to Zuma: show up or face summons

The commission of inquiry into state capture will not negotiate dates of oral evidence with witnesses, said chairperson Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo on Monday. He was announcing the dates for former president Jacob Zuma's expected appearance before him – from 16 to 20 November.

Zondo said Zuma was initially scheduled to appear this week, but his lawyer Eric Mabuza told the commission in a letter that he could not, as he was preparing for his corruption trial in the Pietermaritzburg High Court. Mabuza said it was unfair for the commission to expect his client to simultaneously consider over 30 affidavits of people who implicated him.

The lawyer also said in the letter in question that the importance of Zuma's trial cannot be emphasised enough.

Zondo said he issued a directive, towards the end of August, compelling Zuma to depose of an affidavit in response to certain matters relating to Eskom. Among these were allegations made by the power utility's former chairperson Zola Tsotsi, who recently testified to a meeting in early March 2015 at Zuma's official residence in Durban where attendees discussed the idea for Tsotsi's board to suspend a number of executives, presumably under the guise of non-performance, while an inquiry was instituted to investigate this.

The meeting was also mentioned in the affidavit of Nick Linnell, a private consultant who went on to prepare documentation recording how the suspensions and inquiry would unfold. Linnell has not yet testified. The meeting, said Tsotsi, was chaired by then SAA chairperson, Dudu Myeni, with whom Linnell had worked at the airline.

On 9 October, said Zondo, his legal team will put in an application for a summons, should there be no response from Zuma's team regarding the November dates.

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