



25 May 2021

Zondo commission – Cyril will be last Zondo witness

President Cyril Ramaphosa will be the last state capture commission witness to give oral evidence, on 31 May and 1 June. Commission chairperson Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo made this announcement on Tuesday morning.

He said while the areas of focus for those two days are clear, Ramaphosa may also be asked on any outstanding matters that were not canvassed when he appeared in April in his capacity as ANC president.

“He will appear in his capacity as president of the country, but as everybody will remember, there will still be some issues that he will need to deal with, which could not be dealt with when he appeared before the commission in his capacity as president of the ANC.

“The commission wishes to wrap up its oral evidence because by the end, it will have covered all the important evidence relating to the matters that were included in the public protector’s report that gave rise to this commission.”

Where the commission needs to consider matters for public proceedings, it will do so. “But for all intents and purposes, the commission is looking at wrapping up the hearing of oral evidence next week.”

Although he had envisaged that his team would have completed the oral evidence phase by the end of March, this did not happen. The commission, added Zondo, was faced with a situation where it had to make time for the evidence of high-ranking government officials, current and former, who had to answer to allegations made against them in the first two years or so of the commission’s term. Had it closed the phase then, it would have been poorer without their versions of events.

“It was important that time be given, be allocated, for them to complete their evidence.

“Everyone knows that if we had ended the hearing of oral evidence by end of March, there is very important evidence that has been led in April and May which would have been left out, which the nation needed to hear.”

He also mentioned that he was aware of outstanding matters such as applications for leave to cross-examine some past witnesses, and said whenever time needs to be allocated for such proceedings, this will be done to afford applicants the opportunity to question them publicly.

Zondo also revealed that the commission would be applying for a “limited” extension from the North Gauteng High Court to give it time to complete its next phase, that of writing up its report on the evidence of the last two and a half years.

“It will be necessary to apply to the high court for a limited extension, but that will now be for the preparation of the report because during the two months, April and May, although a lot of work in regard to the analysis of evidence has been going on behind the scenes, that will not enable us to have the report by the end of June.”

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