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Zondo commission – More of the Gigaba, Mngoma show

Former cabinet minister Malusi Gigaba has maintained that his estranged wife Noma Mngoma used the state capture commission to get back at him for refusing to submit to demands relating to their divorce settlement.

Gigaba returned before the commission on Thursday evening. He again described Mngoma as a pathological liar who is bitter and just wants to humiliate him publicly. He refuted yet again a claim by Mngoma that discussions about their divorce were initiated by her in February last year, and did not proceed because Gigaba pleaded with her to delay proceedings until after he'd made his appearance before the commission. This, according to Mngoma, was so that he could claim spousal privilege as he is implicated in allegations of allowing the Gupta family to influence the running of state-owned entities at the time that Gigaba was minister of public enterprises, between 2010 and 2014.

"It's not true that Ms Mngoma asked for a divorce in February 2020 and that I asked her to delay until I appear before the commission. Mr Chairman, in February 2020 I did not know that I would be appearing before the commission. At that time I was responding to a number of affidavits that were being submitted. The summons for me to appear before the commission occurred this year."

Gigaba's own appearance was delayed owing to Mngoma's decision in December 2020 to depose to an affidavit before the commission after its officials reached out to her following a television interview in which she revealed Gigaba's close relationship with the Guptas.

It was in fact Mngoma who told him of her pending evidence before the commission, said Gigaba, who in his past appearance claimed that his political detractors influenced Mngoma's participation. She told him in March this year that her counsel, Advocate Tembeka Nqukaitobi, was eager for her to give evidence.

"She told me that Mr Tembeka Ngcukaitobi, the senior counsel, was very excited about the prospect of her submitting an affidavit in the commission against me, and that they were in conversation with attorneys of the commission," Gigaba said.

He warned the commission against taking Mngoma's evidence as gospel, as she mixed up important details in her quest to implicate him, for instance dates when he would have travelled on Gupta-related business, but claiming to that these were state trips.

"It would sound like what she says is about petty forgetfulness about dates, but it's not. She is fabricating a story, and in fabricating a story, she fabricates the dates too."

Gigaba is expected to return to the witness stand on Friday.

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