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Zondo commission – Parly report on Bosasa not credible, Makwetla tells Zondo

Deputy minister of military veterans Thabang Makwetla has told the state capture commission that the document purported to be a report of the parliamentary ethics committee that found him guilty of breaching the members ethics code over his relationship with Bosasa is not authentic and cannot be used as evidence.

Makwetla returned before the commission on Monday to be re-examined by his lawyer, Teboho Mosikili. He reiterated that he did not understand security upgrades, installed by Bosasa at his home in 2015, to be done by the company, or to be a favour for special treatment as then deputy minister of correctional services.

It was by way of an arrangement with the late Bosasa CEO Gavin Watson that Makwetla's home in Johannesburg had equipment installed, with the work being done in his absence while he was in Cape Town on official business. The alleged irregular contracts between Bosasa and the Department of Correctional Services – on the commission's radar – were entered into and finalised before he even assumed office in May 2014, said Makwetla.

He disputed the evidence of former Bosasa employee Richard le Roux, who said he oversaw the installations with the help of a number of technicians. It was on the basis of Le Roux's affidavit, the only one that implicates him as one of the beneficiaries of Bosasa's "special projects" for politicians and prominent public officials in return for favours, that Makwetla had to report to Parliament.

What he thought would be a normal process, however, has turned into something that the commission should probably investigate further, he said.

"The report is a five-page document. The commission will have time to read the report. It is the shoddiest of work I've ever encountered at that level. Actually there's no report," said Makwetla, adding that it does not contain his presentations before the committee, which he made in 2018. The report itself was completed in May 2019, a week before Parliament dissolved ahead of the national elections of that year. He was shocked to learn of its existence on first day of testimony in March this year.

Not a single principle of the committee's rule book is included either, which makes him question how the findings were arrived at if it does not state which rules he breached. "This matter arose in 2018. The committee wrote to me and said provide an explanation, which I did. That was the end. I provided an explanation in 2018 and nothing happened and I thought they are satisfied with the explanation that I provided."

Another witness who has undergone a probe into his alleged relationship with Bosasa is Pretoria magistrate Desmond Nair. He too completed his evidence before the commission on Monday.

In his case, Le Roux alleged that he was called on to supervise a security camera system installation at Nair's home, which was undertaken by Bosasa subsidiary Sondolo IT. Sondolo already had a contract for similar work with the courthouse in which Nair was based.

He told the commission, however, that he only learned of the connection between Sondolo and Bosasa when confronted with evidence submitted before the commission. When he asked a Mr Doofjam Baijoo to beef up his security at home, it was because the latter was a regular at the courthouse, and this is how the two of them got to know each other.

"He was an employee of the service provider ... I would see him from time to time, he would come into my office to greet. Nothing to do with work that Sondolo did. If there was something that related to the work that Sondolo did ... Mr Baijoo, and whoever his principals were, would start on operational issues with the court manager or facilities manager."

He denied that he was involved in the awarding of contracts for the courthouse, but only led a steering committee overseeing the rehabilitation of the building after part of it burned down around 2010.

"The only person I spoke to about this installation and the terms of the contract was Mr Baijoo. I did not speak to Mr [Angelo] Agrizzi, I do not know Mr Agrizzi. I did not speak to Mr. Watson, I do not know Mr. Watson," Nair said at his first appearance on Wednesday evening last week.

Nair was investigated by the Magistrates Commission, a process through which Le Roux and Baijoo also deposed to affidavits. He is currently on suspension pending the outcome of that investigation.

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