



Sam Sole <solesam@gmail.com>

Questions for Mr Mdekazi

2 messages

sam sole <solesam@gmail.com>

Tue, May 5, 2020 at 4:59 PM

To: yolelwa@sikunyanainc.co.za

Cc: Micah Reddy <micar@amabhungane.org>, Stefaans Brümmer <stefaansb@amabhungane.org>

Dear Ms Sikunyana,

as discussed, we sent questions to McIntosh Polela for Mr Mdekazi's attention as per Mr Mdekazi's instruction. Questions to the minister and Mr Mdekazi were included in one email, but for your convenience I have extracted the questions relevant to Mr Mdekazi. We have added some additional questions.

Please come back to us by no later than 1pm tomorrow.

best regards

Sam Sole
amabhungane
0824188944

Dear Minister Sisulu, Mr Mphumzi Mdekazi, and the department of human settlements, water and sanitation

RE: Political interference in water boards

I am writing to you concerning a story we intend to run about allegations of political interference in the affairs of the Amatola Water and Lepelle Northern Water. On May 2, the department announced that Amatola Water would be placed under legal administration. In the meantime, the head of Amatola has been placed on suspension while investigations are conducted.

However, these moves have been seen as an attempt to exert political control over the water boards. In two separate affidavits Mr Mdekazi and the minister have been blamed for attempting to influence the awarding of tenders to a company called Empowering Water Solutions.

Please see the questions below:

Amatola Water

1) An affidavit by Vuyo Mitumane, the suspended chief executive of Amatola, suggests that the minister has improperly interfered in the running of AW and, in particular, the board's authority over the awarding of tenders.

According to the affidavit, Zitumane came under intense pressure from the board's deputy chair, Mr Geja.

Zitumane claims that Geja appeared to be, and indeed claimed to be, issuing instructions directly from the minister (despite that the usual conduit between the entity and the minister is the chairperson, not the deputy).

Zitumane further alleges that Geja was appointed at the behest of Mdekazi.

Did Mdekazi have a say in the appointment of Geja?

Did Mdekazi and Geja have a pre-existing relationship prior to the latter's appointment at Amatola? If so, please elaborate.

2) Concerning Mr Mdekazi, an advisor to the minister: it is alleged that Mdekazi is very close to the minister who has allowed him to become a law unto himself. It is even alleged that they are or have been intimate partners.

Please respond

3) In her affidavit, Zitumane claims to possess evidence that Mdekazi has bragged about his power to appoint and dismiss board members. She claims she is a victim of harassment because she stood in the way of attempts to "advance corrupt interests of one Mr. Mphumzi Mdekazi on specific projects".

please respond.

4) What is Mr Mdekazi's response to the claim he bragged about the ability to appoint and fire board members?

5) Zitumane claims that she met Mdekazi in August last year, after which meeting he began to tout the idea of increased funding for AW mega-projects, pushing the idea of sand abstraction – technology which EWS apparently has patented and is the only company in the country performing such work.

According to the affidavit, Mdekazi threatened to have Zitumane removed because she would not award at least 60% of the R230mn drought budget to sand abstraction, which would be carried out by Empowering Water Solutions.

How would Mr Mdekazi respond?

6) What is Mr Mdekazi and/or the minister's relationship to EWS and/or its owner, Mr Bomela?

7) In February, a new board was appointed and Zitumane was told that R230mn would be allocated to drought relief. According to the affidavit, at a meeting just 19 days after the board's appointment, Geja began loudly promoting sand abstraction even though it was not presented in detail at the meeting.

Mdekazi and Geja's promotion of sand abstraction – a method only EWS is able to perform – is detailed above. The minister has also publicly promoted this method and, from the affidavit, it would seem that there is a coordinated push in favour of sand abstraction, which is just one of numerous drought mitigation strategies and has yet to be properly piloted.

Why does there appear to be pressure emanating from the minister's office for this particular method?

8) Zitumane claims that in November EWS sent Amatola Water an email with a report, indicating that EWS was commissioned by the Minister to test various sites, at Whittlesea (Mr. Mdekazi's home) and other sites within Chris Hani District and certain sites at Amathole District Municipality that were not earmarked as priority drought areas.

Zitumane also claims that she was informed by ministry officials "that there is unhappiness about the procurement plan and report as it reveals that I have not allocated 60% of the funding towards sand abstraction and the Minister is intending withdrawing AW mandate."

Zitumane links Mdekazi's "desperation" for money and attempts to influence the sand abstraction contracts to his debt issues. She says Mdekazi confided in her that he was in debt after he led minister Sisulu's campaign for ANC president in the runup to the ANC's Nasrec elective conference.

How would Mr Mdekazi respond to this?

9) The above adds to claims that Mr Mdekazi is a political fixer for the minister. Both he and Mr Bomela are regarded as conduits of influence for ANC secretary general Ace Magashule, which suggests that the promotion of sand abstraction technology is aligned to the minister's political positioning and part political consideration. Please respond.

Lepelle Northern Water

10) The allegations contained in Zitumane's affidavit are strikingly similar to those contained in an affidavit by the chief executive of Lepelle Northern Water, Phineas Legodi. Again, Mr Mdekazi plays a central role.

Legodi says that he met Mdekazi and Bomela in August, at which meeting Bomela touted his sand abstraction technology.

In September, Legodi received a letter from the ministry to the chair of the board, which directed LNW to use the sand abstraction technology. Legodi says he then learnt from ministerial advisors that plans were afoot to remove him because he was seen to be delaying the appointment of EWS.

Does Mr Mdekazi dispute the above? If so, please clarify.

Treasury

11) Mitumane states that she was introduced to Mr Mdekazi on 12 August 2019. In her presence he phoned Mr Willie Mathebula after hours and requested him to meet with them on 13 August 2019 to discuss possibilities of National Treasury funding AW on mega projects that AW has submitted for Budget Facility for Infrastructure. Please comment.

12) Mitumane alleges that on 13 August 2019, Mr Mdekazi, Mr. Mathebula and she met at Sheraton Club lounge. Mr. Mdekazi indicated that AW needs a budget for the projects and Mr. Mathebula must ensure that such happens. Mr. Mathebula was evasive but indicated that he will try. Mr. Mdekazi insisted that she exchange numbers with Mr. Mathebula so that she can follow up.

Please comment and indicate on what basis Mr Mdekazi drafted in Mr Mathebula on government business in this unofficial way.

13) What is the nature of Mr Mdekazi's relationship with Mr Mathebula?

ends

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Tue, May 5, 2020 at 6:16 PM

Good day

We acknowledge receipt of the questions and we will be discussing with our client and take instructions.

We shall revert as requested.

Warm regards

Yolelwa Bhelekazi Sikunyana|Director

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