

Now judges have to declare interests

For the first time, judges will be legally compelled to disclose their business interests outside of their remunerated work.



Mac Maharaj. Image: [Our Campaigns](#)

Presidency spokesman Mac Maharaj said judges had until 29 January to register their outside courtroom business interests, following which a record was expected to be finalised by the end of March this year.

Maharaj said judges, in terms of the Judicial Services Commission Act, also had to disclose the interests of their immediate family members.

The judges were against the move and raised their concerns, especially on their immediate families disclosing their interests, during the hearings last year in Parliament. The judges also warned that the requirement to disclose would discourage senior advocates to act as judges. The decision was announced after Parliament approved regulations governing the code of conduct for judges last year.

"This process will ensure that the disclosure of judges' registrable interests coincides with the start of the 2014 financial year. In terms of Section 13 (4) of the act, judges are required to disclose their interests and those of their family members within 60 days of the fixed date [29 January]," Maharaj said.

The registrar of judges' registrable interests would then be given two months to ensure that the administrative details were in place to record the declarations.

In the past, questions have been raised about judges presiding over cases in which there may be a conflict of interest.

ANC MP and member of the ad hoc committee on judges' interests Luwellyn Landers said the Presidency's announcement

was not surprising.

"It's not something unexpected and out of the blue and everyone understood that this was happening. We wanted this. In the same way that other public office bearers should declare their financial interests, so too should judges," he said.

DA MP Dene Smuts said the decision was possibly "symptomatic of the times". "The fact that it is the first time that this is being done is not controversial," she said.

Source: Sowetan via I-Net Bridge

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>