

## Parliament to map out SABC interim board

Parliament will this month begin discussing names of potential members of the SABC's interim board following the resignation of all the independent board members late last year.



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The crisis at the public broadcaster has been compounded by the fact that contracts for two of its most senior executives are due to expire at the end of this month.

The SABC has no board after the resignation last month of the last board member, chairman Mbulaheni Maguvhe. It is understood the contracts of acting CEO James Aguma and acting chief financial officer Audrey Raphela are due to expire at the end of January, which will leave the SABC rudderless.

The SABC board plays a leading role in concurrence with the communications minister and the president, in the appointment of executives. Without a board no such appointments can be made.

Communications portfolio committee chairman Humphrey Maxegwana said on Monday the appointment of an interim board would be a priority. The names of possible members would be discussed when the committee meets later in January.

"The SABC is top priority ... we will start the process [of discussing names for the interim board] as soon as the 24th of January ... we want to be done as soon as possible so that when the National Assembly speaker asks for them [the names], we will have them ready," he said.

The interim board will have five members who will be appointed for a period not exceeding six months.

Last month, Communications Minister Faith Muthambi asked the ad hoc committee investigating the situation at the SABC to work with urgency in light of the fact the executive contracts were about to expire.

The ad hoc committee will resume its work on Friday. Committee chairman Vincent Smith said on Monday he was confident the committee would complete its final report by 15 February. A draft report was likely to be ready later in January. The draft would be made available to those implicated and their comments would be noted in the final report, said Smith.

The matter was now even more urgent given that the contracts of the acting CEO and acting chief financial officer were about to expire, he said.

Smith said the decision as to whether their contracts would be renewed would also be informed by the contents of the final report.

The ad hoc committee will hear from former SABC chairs Zandile Tshabalala and Ben Ngubane on Friday. The committee was initially scheduled to hear from the final two witnesses on Tuesday, but the sitting was moved to Friday after Ngubane's lawyers requested more time to prepare.

The inquiry has so far revealed the extent of the rot at the SABC, including abuse of power - particularly by former chief operating officer Hlaudi Motsoeneng. It emerged during the inquiry last month that Motsoeneng was the de facto CEO and apparently enjoyed support from President Jacob Zuma.

Last month the High Court in Cape Town ruled that Motsoeneng was not entitled to occupy any position at the SABC until the public protector's 2014 report was set aside or new disciplinary processes against him were finalised.

The court said the initial disciplinary hearing which cleared Motsoeneng of any wrongdoing was "wholly inadequate".

*Source: Business Day*