

KPMG did not flag Free State dairy farm, Zwane tells probe

Mineral Resources Minister Mosebenzi Zwane told Parliament on Wednesday that beleaguered auditing firm KPMG did not raise any concerns about impropriety related to a dairy project in Vrede, which he initiated during his time as Free State MEC for agriculture.



Mining minister, Mosebenzi Zwane

Zwane has been placed at the centre of the state capture storm embroiling the government.

Among other things, the leaked Gupta e-mails hinted that Zwane's relationship with the Gupta family predated his deployment to the national government and that it was the influence of the Guptas that paved the way for him to become minister.

It was also alleged that the Guptas bankrolled a trip to India for Zwane during his time as Free State MEC.

Zwane faced tough questions on matters including his travels abroad, the business people he knew, the Vrede dairy farm and the circumstances under which his curriculum vitae was sent to the Guptas before his appointment as minister.

Zwane sidestepped some questions thrown at him by committee members. He stated before the meeting started that he could not answer questions on details outlined in his responding papers in court.

He denied any knowledge of a web of transactions that channelled money into a wedding planning firm for the Gupta family wedding in Sun City in 2013.

"I would not know the web that has R118m and how it was channelled. I was not part of that web, to my knowledge. It is best to talk to the owners of such a web," he said.

"If there is something untoward that I am made to deal with, I did not stay in the department of agriculture throughout the time that this was implemented," Zwane said.

"I was taken to economic development at some point. I don't remember any situation where I was alerted by KPMG of any impropriety."

When asked about his relationship with the Guptas and whether he met them regularly, Zwane said he met various captains of industry on a regular basis but this did not mean he was close or beholden to them.

Zwane defended his involvement in the Optimum Coal sale, saying he mediated a process between Glencore and Tegeta in the interest of saving jobs.

He said that about 85,000 mine workers would "possibly lose their jobs. That 85,000 had 3,000 who were urgent because the company was put under curators."

Source: *Business Day*

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