

# Deadlines loom for SABC as lobbyists step up the pressure

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The national broadcaster is fighting fires on a number of fronts as key deadlines loom.

The SABC has until Tuesday to respond to the Independent Communications Authority of SA (Icasa) after the regulator ordered it to withdraw its ban on the airing of violent protests.

While the broadcaster has said it would seek a review of the authority's decision, it has not yet formally written to Icasa to inform it of its intentions.

Its financial results are also due to be tabled on Monday, amid reports of spiralling debt and looming cash-flow problems.



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The SABC has already missed a deadline to file opposing papers in an urgent interdict against a ban sought by the Helen Suzman Foundation. The matter is to be heard in the High Court in Pretoria next Tuesday.

SABC spokesman Kaizer Kganyago said on Thursday the broadcaster had not yet responded to Icasa or formally notified the regulator of its intention to review its order. "We will write to them to inform them," he said.

Earlier this week Icasa said that if the matter was being taken up on review the SABC would first have to get a court interdict against the order. Kganyago said he was not aware of this.

Lobby groups are stepping up their pressure on the broadcaster and the ANC.

Right2Know and the SOS Coalition are set to protest outside the ruling party's headquarters at Luthuli House on Friday.

The ANC has referred the deepening crisis at the SABC to its parliamentary caucus.

Parliament's portfolio committee on communications has the authority to act, but its new chairman, Humphrey Maxegwana, was only appointed on 5 May.

This is Maxegwana's first stint in the communications portfolio committee. He was previously a committee whip in the portfolio committee on agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

So far he has attended only one meeting of the communications committee, the one in which he was elected chairman.

Maxegwana replaced Joyce Moloi-Moropa, who left after reportedly being hounded out by committee members who disagreed with her. She is also the treasurer of the South African Communist Party, which has taken a hardline stance on the SABC.

Meanwhile, Media Monitoring Africa and the SOS Coalition have written to the SABC requesting that details of the settlement it has reached with suspended CE Frans Matlala be disclosed.

The letter was addressed to the broadcaster and Matlala's attorney Joe Mothibi. The groups want the SABC to disclose the terms of the settlement within a week or possibly face court action. Mothibi confirmed on Thursday that he had received the letter from the lobby groups and would consider a response, if any, in due course.

*Source: Business Day*

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