

Broadcaster lifts ban on DA adverts

The SABC has cleverly averted a potentially embarrassing verdict over the decision to ban several DA election adverts by agreeing to flight them, pending an indefinite postponement.



The public broadcaster last night served up a nifty solution which, while giving the DA the relief it had sought from the complaints and compliance committee of Icasa, would allow the corporation to escape judgment by way of a potentially scathing ruling.

"The [corporation's] new legal team will have to investigate the facts around the decision by the SABC [to stop flighting the DA's adverts]," said Terry Motau SC.

Motau told the tribunal an agreement had been reached with DA counsel Steven Budlender, which would entail the matter being postponed with the SABC giving an undertaking that it would resume flighting the six adverts that were summarily taken off air.

Tribunal chairman Wandile Tutani noted that, should the postponement last until after the May 7 elections, its outcome would be "purely academic".

Motau argued that the May 7 elections were not an issue and, if the postponement lasts until then, the DA could take up the matter again if it felt passionately about it.

Tutani granted the postponement, ruling that the DA would not suffer any prejudice from it because "the agreement covers what they were looking for".

The DA has also withdrawn its high court application to force Icasa to hear the matter as urgent.

The tribunal this week heard that the SABC pulled the DA's adverts off air because they were deemed too critical of

President Jacob Zuma.

Source: *Sowetan*, via I-Net Bridge

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