

Hunting for Madonsela's new deputy

Four candidates, who are vying for the position of deputy public protector recently vacated by Mamiki Shai, faced a barrage of questions from the parliamentary portfolio committee on justice and constitutional development yesterday (20 November).

The four shortlisted candidates - Zwelethu Madikizela, Lahlang Shelly Somo, Kevin Sifiso Malunga and Motlatjo Ralefatane - were quizzed about their experience, impartiality and views on senior officials from the public protector's office attending party political events.

In August, Public Protector Thuli Madonsela came under fire from the ANC's parliamentary caucus for attending a DA-organised Women's Day event.

Shai's position became tenuous after she was fingered as the author of a document, sent to the justice portfolio committee, alleging that Madonsela was biased against the ANC.

Last month, it was announced Shai's contract, which runs until the end of the month, would not be renewed.

All candidates were required to have at least 10 years' experience as a practising attorney.

Madikizela, 51, a practising attorney from Flagstaff, in Eastern Cape, said he applied for the post after listening to a speech by Madonsela. For him, the public protector's office represents the administration of justice and the upholding of the principles of the constitution.

The acceptance by many communities of vigilante justice showed how the administration of justice had failed, he said.

Asked about Madonsela's attendance at the Women's Day event, Madikizela said it was "okay" as long as she did so in "her personal capacity".

Ralefatane, 50, was a legal adviser to the now defunct Eastern Gauteng Joint Services Board and is a former CCMA commissioner.

Malunga, 38, at present a spokesman for the Marikana Commission of Inquiry and the youngest of the candidates, impressed some members of the committee with his CV, which includes a degree from Georgetown University, in the US.

He is currently enrolled for doctoral studies at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Source: *The Times* via I-Net Bridge

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