

# Mbete may suspend EFF members from Parliament

National Assembly Speaker Baleka Mbete says she has asked Members of Parliament belonging to opposition party, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), to give reasons why they should not be suspended for disrupting the National Assembly last week.



Speaker of the National Assembly, Baleka Mbete has asked members of the EFF to justify, in writing, why they should not be suspended from Parliament after disrupting it last week in contravention of the rules. Image: [UN](#)

The Speaker said this ahead of a Parliamentary Debate on the downgrade of the country's credit rating, the negative outlook assigned by Fitch and the first quarter contraction in South Africa's Gross Domestic Product.

Mbete said she has referred the incident, which led to President Jacob Zuma's oral reply to questions during a House sitting being disrupted, to the Powers and Privileges Committee in Parliament.

"I have to inform the House that the matter is being referred to the Powers and Privileges Committee. The Committee is to investigate whether the conduct of the EFF constitutes contempt of Parliament in terms of the Powers, Privileges and Immunities of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act of 2004," she said.

Last week, the EFF, through its leader Julius Malema, disrupted proceedings when they expressed their dissatisfaction over how President Zuma responded to a question over his response to the Public Protector's report on upgrades at Nkandla.

## Undermining Parliamentary rules

The sitting had to be adjourned after EFF members defied the Speaker's instruction to vacate the chambers for undermining Parliamentary rules and instead chanted slogans and sang struggle songs.

Mbete said the committee had been requested to deal with the investigation as a matter of urgency.

"Honourable members, while the Powers and Privileges Committee is considering the matter, I wish to inform the House that I am considering the implementation of Item 10 of the Schedule to the rules, which makes provision for the suspension of members where the allegations against them are of a very serious nature.

"To this end, I am affording the members involved an opportunity to give reasons in writing why they should not be suspended. The House will be kept informed of developments in this regard," she said.

Meanwhile, Ministers in the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) Cluster briefed members of the media on the disruptions in Parliament.

Cluster Ministers said they have instructed their senior officials to make recommendations on how to prevent such incidents from happening in the future.

Defence and Military Veterans Minister Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula said the cluster, which also heads up security in Parliament, supports a robust democracy and debate, including questions put to the executive.

"But that must be done in a dignified manner. Even if there are disagreements, it must be done within the confines of the law and with respect for the institution," Mapisa-Nqakula said.

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