

Judges find Mpofu's suspension unlawful

A full bench of judges sitting at the South Gauteng High Court (Joburg High Court) this morning handed a judgment in favour of former SABC CEO Dali Mpofu, dismissing the board's appeal with costs of up to R1 million further delivering a financial and moral blow to the embattled and bankrupt government-controlled public broadcaster.

 Bylssa Sikiti da Silva 11 Jun 2009



"I feel vindicated because my dignity and my credibility have been restored," Mpofu told reporters outside Court 8D, where the proceedings took place.

"This judgment by the full bench of judges confirms that their [the board's] grounds to dismiss me were motivated by malice and [a] personal vendetta against me."

Mpofu was first suspended by the board on 6 May last year after he suspended former news boss Snuki Zikalala for alleged misconduct. Mpofu later approached the court to challenge that decision, which was granted in his favour, with Judge J. Tsoka blasting the board for acting unlawfully and instructing it to give Mpofu his job back.

Mpofu's joy was short-lived, however. The board suspended him one more time and later dismissed him altogether. They also reinstated Zikalala and appointed Gab Mampone as acting CEO.

Millions in legal fees

Since then, there has been a litany of court battles between Mpofu and the board, with both parties gunning for each other to the delight of the media - and costing the government-controlled organisation more than R15 million in legal fees.

In its 33-page judgment, the court today set aside the SABC board's appeal, instituted by former chair Kanyi Mkonza.

Asked by reporters if he wanted to go back in the current chaotic environment where back-stabbing, financial mismanagement and lack of capacity were rife, he said: "That is a difficult question. However, I have instructed my lawyer to take the matter to the labour court, so we will take it from there.

"What I want to do is to work hard to bring back stability and clean up the organisation, which is a national asset. I must admit that I had a well-paying job before I came to the SABC, which I only joined because I wanted to serve the public."

The board was not available for comment at the time of going to press.

Also in court

Mail & Guardian may also be in court this afternoon. According to editor-in-chief [Nic Dawes on Twitter](#), the publication is being interdicted over a [satirical image in its Friday section](#).

Update: Dawes has tweeted that the [court battle has been called off](#). For more, see [Twitter Search](#).

Read the full judgment in the Dali Mpofu case [here](#)

ABOUT ISSA SIKITI DA SILVA

Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa. His work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to Bizcommunity.com as a senior news writer.
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