

Now SABC bosses face axe

The parliamentary committee investigating the SABC board's fitness to hold office is recommending tough penalties for those who allowed unauthorised spending at the public broadcaster.



If these recommendations make it through to the final version of the report, the corporation's former COO, Hlaudi Motsoeneng, would almost certainly be among the employees facing action.

A "working document" detailing the committee's findings was leaked yesterday. In it, the committee said action should be taken against employees who "incurred or permitted" more than R5.1bn in irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure between 2014 and 2016.

The committee said that steps should be taken to recover such expenditure.

It had harsh words for the SABC board, which collapsed weeks before the inquiry began, and recommended that an interim board be appointed urgently.

The new board will have its work cut out. Apart from instituting an investigation into all irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure, it must facilitate the implementation of the public protector's remedial action on governance failures at the SABC.

The committee said that the SABC board must institute a forensic audit into the agreement that resulted in the transfer of part of the SABC archives to MultiChoice.

Motsoeneng is said to have championed the deal, which has been mired in controversy. Questions have been raised about whether the archives have been used for commercial gain by a private entity.

The "working document" - to be used as the basis for a draft report - said that Motsoeneng was at the centre of divisions afflicting all the SABC boards in office between 2009 and 2016.

Motsoeneng refused to comment, saying: "I will comment when the time is right."

The committee said the government and parliament should resolve the conflicts between the Public Broadcasting Act and the Companies Act.

Vincent Smith, chairman of the parliamentary committee investigating the conduct of the SABC board, expressed dismay at the leaking of the "working document" and said it was not an official document of his committee.

The committee is expected to deliberate on the findings of the investigation today.

The Save Our SABC Coalition welcomed the recommendations made in the document but expressed shock about the leak.

"We feel that the recommendations are a step in the right direction and in line with what the SOS Coalition has been saying for years," coalition spokesman Duduetsang Makuse said.

Jayshree Pather, of the Right2Know Campaign, said the committee's recommendations were far-reaching and hard-hitting.

"The report is broadly on the right track," Pather said.

Source: The Times

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