

SABC board chair resigns, Cope wants forensic investigation



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SABC board acting chairperson Ashwin Trikamjee, who was 'illegally' appointed after Kanyi Mkonza stepped down, has now also resigned, department of communications (DoC) spokesperson Tiyani Rikhotso told Bizcommunity.com last night, 17 June 2009, as the parliamentary portfolio committee on communications prepares to grill all board members today (Thursday) over the SABC's 'terminal illness'.



"Trikamjee has resigned, we got confirmation today (Wednesday)," Rikhotso said. "As for the hearing of board members taking place tomorrow, I cannot confirm that, it is the problem between SABC and Parliament."

However, Juli Kilian, a Congress of the People (COPE) MP, confirmed in a statement issued last night that the portfolio committee had unanimously agreed to call all board members - including those who have resigned recently - to a hearing which will take place today.

Kilian also said that the committee's hearing will probably derail a sitting of the National Assembly which was due to take place today at 12:00. This sitting was proposed by the chief whip of the ANC at yesterday's Chief Whips Forum who anticipated a resolution by the committee to immediately dissolve the SABC board.

Senior management also accountable

Kilian said: "We don't support an immediate resolution to dismiss the board as we believe there is no quick fix to the woes of the corporation. Too often dysfunctional state departments and public servants are let off the hook by restructuring or redeployment exercises without any punitive consequence for those responsible."

"Simply replacing the current SABC board with new faces without a thorough investigation into the real reasons for the shocking state of affairs, will not resolve the problem."

Furthermore, Kilian said that the responsibility of the SABC's virtual meltdown cannot be attributed solely to the current

board, as senior management must also be held accountable.

“COPE insists on a proper forensic investigation into what appears to be gross financial mismanagement and lack of strategic decision-making. We will ensure that collective and individual accountability will be enforced and that those responsible be dealt with in terms of the provisions of the Public Finance Management Act 29 of 1999.”

Trikamjee's resignation is the eighth since March, paving the way to the official dissolution of the board and the installation of an interim board, which will oversee the SABC's 'terminal illness' for six months before handing over to the new, permanent board.

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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