

# ANC top brass 'pushed Zuma' to ditch SABC boss Ellen Tshabalala

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The ANC's hand in the resignation of Ellen Tshabalala from the SABC is shown in minutes of a meeting of the party's top decision-making body...

The ANC national executive committee last month resolved that Tshabalala should leave to save the image of the public broadcaster.

The decision was taken after a long debate in which committee members expressed concern about the way state-owned enterprises such as the SABC and Eskom were being run.

The committee's decision strengthened the hand of ANC MPs in the communications portfolio committee who were to meet a few days later to consider a complaint about Tshabalala having lied about her qualifications.

It also meant that once the committee had decided to have Tshabalala suspended, National Assembly Speaker Baleka Mbete - the ANC's national chair - could write to President Jacob Zuma asking that Tshabalala be suspended, knowing that she had the backing of her party.



Presidential sources say Zuma was due to suspend Tshabalala this past Friday, but that she avoided that by resigning days earlier. (Image: GCIS)

Zuma reacted to Mbete's letter by announcing last week that he was considering the request. Presidential sources say the president was due to suspend Tshabalala this past Friday, but that she avoided that by resigning days earlier.

## Deny, deny, deny

Despite all indications pointing to the ANC's involvement in her decision, Tshabalala continued to deny it this week, saying that she had only walked away because the "negative publicity" had affected her family.

The ANC's secretary-general, Gwede Mantashe, declined to comment.

But Tshabalala continued trading punches with Higher Education Minister Blade Nzimande, calling him a "very big coward" after he took her to task for faking her qualifications. Nzimande is also a member of the ANC national executive.

The two have been at loggerheads since Nzimande said earlier this year that false qualifications undermined the system.

Earlier this month, parliament's portfolio committee on communications found her guilty of misconduct because she had misrepresented her qualifications.

After her resignation on Wednesday, Tshabalala hinted in interviews that she would take Nzimande's conduct up with Zuma, to whom she is close.

Speaking to the *Sunday Times*, she called Nzimande a "very big coward" who had gone to the media "without consulting me".

Tshabalala said Nzimande had also commented without declaring his vested interest in the SABC, namely that his wife,

Phumelele Ntombela-Nzimande, had applied for the post of CEO.



And out pops the race card... "I resigned because the media wanted me to. I did not want to resign. Worse is that these obsessive calls and attacks were made by my fellow black journalists attacking one of their own. They were following Indian and white people's agenda." (Image: SABC)

## Letter? What letter?

Ntombela-Nzimande was the original complainant to the public protector about Hlaudi Motsoeneng's appointment as chief operating officer and is a former executive at the broadcaster.

She started her career in nursing but has since held several senior posts in government and communications.

"How does a nurse apply for a post in a highly specialised environment?" Tshabalala asked.

Nzimande's spokesperson, Khaye Nkwanyana, said Nzimande had only commented on the qualifications scandal as "custodian of qualification issues in this country" and not because of his wife's application for a job.

"Ellen Tshabalala must not seek to create a diversion away from the fact that she doesn't have a qualification. The fact that she resigned means there was substance to the allegations," said Nkwanyana.

Tshabalala and presidential spokesperson Mac Maharaj denied rumours that Zuma had written to her this week requesting reasons why she should not be removed from the post.

"No such letter was sent," Maharaj said.

Tshabalala said her decision was motivated by the severe pressure and scrutiny her family had come under and vowed to continue to use the courts to prove her qualifications.

Source: *The Times*, via I-Net Bridge

## Meanwhile... pulling out the race card

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According to the *Sunday World* report, Tshabalala claims: "I resigned because the media wanted me to. I did not want to resign. Worse is that these obsessive calls and attacks were made by my fellow Black journalists attacking one of their own. They were following Indian and White people's agenda."

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