

Zuma drops suit against Zapiro cartoon

President Jacob Zuma has withdrawn his claim for damages against a Zapiro cartoon published in the *Sunday Times* and agreed to pay half of its legal costs, according to the newspaper on Saturday.



(Image: GCIS)

The cartoon by Jonathan Shapiro, better known as Zapiro, depicted Zuma unbuckling his trousers as his political allies held down a woman representing 'Lady Justice'.

"President Zuma did the right thing in withdrawing the case. This bodes very well for media freedom," Dario Milo, who represented the *Sunday Times*, told the paper.

"It is to be hoped that he swiftly withdraws his other 12 live cases against the media. This will send out an important signal that the president respects the right of the media to criticise his conduct."

The withdrawal ends a four-year saga that began in 2008 when Zuma sued for R4m in damages to his reputation and R1m for injury to his dignity.

Zuma recently dropped his claim to R100,000 and a demand for an apology.

The case was to have been heard in the High Court in Johannesburg today.

Shapiro told the *Sunday Times* that he had "mixed feelings" about the withdrawal as he believed he would have won the court case "hands down".

"This is a vindication of what I was saying in the cartoon and it's a vindication of the *Sunday Times* for publishing it," Shapiro said.

Source: Sapa via i-Net Bridge

So *this* is the reason Zuma canned his Zapiro lawsuit?

NEWSWATCH: According to a *Times Live* report, presidential spokesman Mac Maharaj says that Jacob Zuma withdrew his R5m lawsuit against Zapiro and the *Sunday Times* in the interests of "free speech".

For more:

- *Times Live*: [Why Zuma canned lawsuit...](#) "To promote free speech" apparently, because, to quote the *Times Live* report, Maharaj said "Zuma was wary of setting a legal precedent that might have the 'effect of limiting the public exercise of free speech' and have 'unforeseen consequences' for 'our media, public commentators and citizens'.

Of course that's the reason, what other could there possibly be?

But let's agree it is nice Zuma is apparently concerned about "limiting the public exercise of free speech".

Now, about that Protection of State Information Bill...

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