

HCI's Golding and Hogan both quit

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The intrigue surrounding Hosken Consolidated Investments (HCI) deepened when executive chairman Marcel Golding quit along with Barbara Hogan, a non-executive director and former cabinet minister, over allegations of political interference at TV station e.tv.



Marcel Golding has quit from HCI and is threatening to go to the CCMA and lodge a complaint of constructive dismissal against the company. Image: [TeeVeeTee](#)

Investment group HCI is a controlling shareholder of e.tv through its Sabido Investments subsidiary. HCI said last week it had suspended Golding and was instituting disciplinary action against him after he had allegedly bought R24m in shares in Ellies, a distributor of set-top boxes and other digital equipment, without board approval.

Golding challenged his suspension in the Labour Court last week, but it ruled that he should face disciplinary proceedings. He announced his resignation shortly thereafter.

eNCA, an e.tv news channel, reported on that Golding is looking at pursuing a claim for constructive dismissal against HCI at the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.

Golding claimed in his court papers that he was being pushed out of the group because he had been trying to protect e.tv's editorial independence.

Annexed to his papers were e-mails and letters exchanged between him, Johnny Copelyn (the other co-founder of HCI), e.tv's Chief Executive Bronwyn Keene-Young (who is married to Golding) and HCI director Yunis Shaik. These relate to the station's coverage of government infrastructure projects.

Secret agreement to broadcast dam opening



HCI Non-executive Director resigned shortly after Golding and confirmed what he'd said about political interference in e.tv's news broadcasts. Image: [GroundUp](#)

In one of the letters Shaik says e.tv had an "agreement" with Economic Development Minister Ebrahim Patel to broadcast an event where President Jacob Zuma would open a new dam.

Patel is a former general secretary of the South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union (Sactwu). Golding and Copelyn are both former unionists. The largest shareholder of HCI is Sactwu with a 32% stake.

However, Judge Anton Steenkamp said in his ruling that while there could be substantial evidence of editorial interference and it was "worrying", it was not central to Golding's application.

In one of three regulatory statements, HCI said: "We note the resignation of Barbara Hogan and express our surprise at the hostile manner in which it is couched and publicly distributed. We thank Barbara for her services to HCI and assure the public that, perhaps other than Marcel himself, no other board members see this matter similarly."

According to Bloomberg, Hogan's letter said Shaik had told her that Sactwu was frustrated that e.tv was not giving Patel enough coverage.

"I am mindful of the briefing that Yunis Shaik gave me when he claimed that Sactwu had lost patience with the editorial practices of e.tv, citing the failure to give prominent coverage to Patel's economic pronouncements," she wrote in a letter dated October 26.

The eNCA website said Hogan had claimed that the Ellies share-deal investigation was done in an "unprofessional way".

Source: BDPro via I-Net Bridge

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