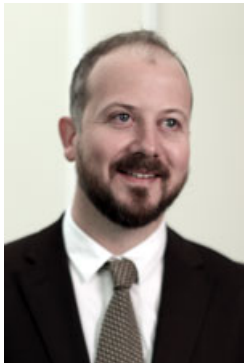


Ellen... Pay back the money

SABC must reject Tshabalala's R1m claim for legal fees says DA's Davis.



"In fact," says Davis, "it is Tshabalala who owes the SABC money, not the other way around."

According to Gavin Davis, the DA's shadow Minister of Communications, it is reported that disgraced former SABC Chair, Ellen Tshabalala, has sent a letter to the SABC Board demanding that the public broadcaster settles her R1m legal bill.

"The DA," writes Davis, "calls on the SABC to reject Tshabalala's claim for R1m in legal fees with the contempt it deserves."

"Tshabalala told the *Sunday World* newspaper: 'The bill is over R1m and I paid it from my pocket. I want my money back and I know I will get it.'"

"Nobody owes Tshabalala anything. Tshabalala's decision to take the parliamentary inquiry to court was hers and hers alone. And, when Tshabalala lied about her qualifications in 2013 she did so in her personal capacity, as an applicant to the SABC Board."

Therefore, says Davis, there is no conceivable way that the public should have to foot Tshabalala's legal bill via the SABC.

"Bizarrely, Tshabalala is also claiming that she only resigned because of a racially motivated conspiracy against her. She said:

'I resigned because the media wanted me too. 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.'

A disaster of her own making

"Ellen Tshabalala must accept that she was the architect of her own demise. She is accountable for all her actions, including the money she spent on high-powered lawyers to frustrate and delay the parliamentary inquiry."

"In fact," says Davis, "it is Tshabalala who owes the SABC money, not the other way around. According to the SABC's fraud and corruption policy (as stated on page 67 of last year's *Annual Report*):

"The SABC shall take appropriate steps, including legal action, to recover any losses from fraudulent and/or corrupt activities or any other wrongful act."

"As Chair of the SABC Board, Ellen Tshabalala was paid R936,000 in the previous financial year for attending Board meetings. This means that she was paid around R1.5m for the 20-month period she was at the SABC."

"The truth is that Tshabalala would not have been appointed to the SABC Board if it were known that she did not have the qualifications she claimed on her application. The R1.5m she was paid must therefore be paid back."

"It is problematic that Tshabalala delegated the authority of SABC CEO to her partner-in-crime, Hlaudi Motsoeneng, shortly before she resigned. We hope that Motsoeneng will not be tempted to return the favour by paying Tshabalala's legal fees out of the SABC's budget."



Tshabalala is reported to have said she will not step down and has said she will not apologise. "Tshabalala must be taught a lesson. Her lack of grace and humility call for this." - Jovial Rantao, Editor of the *Sunday Independent*. (Image: SABC)

Davis says he will be writing to the new Acting Chair of the SABC Board, Professor Mbulaheni Obert Maghuve, urging him to ensure that not a cent of the SABC's money is used to pay for Tshabalala's legal fees. "I will also request him to take steps to recover the R1.5m the SABC paid to Tshabalala during her tenure as Chair."

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