

New top cop takes command



Minister of Police Fikile Mbalula hands over the Sword of Command to the new National Police Commissioner Lieutenant-General Kehla Sitole at the SAPS Academy in Tshwane yesterday.

PICTURE: JACQUES NAUDE / ANA

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Capture inquiry 'won't bow to intimidation'

MAYIBONGWE MACHINA

THE parliamentary inquiry into the capture of Eskom, which has directly linked President Jacob Zuma to allegations of interference at the power utility, will not be derailed by the intimidation of MPs and staff members, ANC MP and acting chairperson for the public enterprises portfolio committee, Zukiswa Rantho, said yesterday.

Yesterday Rantho was adamant they would do their jobs "without fear or favour" after the ANC condemned threats made to those who were party to the inquiry. The ANC also called for a probe into allegations of bribery involving State Security Minister Bongani Bongo.

"We will continue to do our work until such time we are satisfied that we have done a thorough job, and thereafter hand over our work to higher authorities that will come up with results after conducting their own investigations," Rantho said.

Rantho made the comments following weekend reports that

her son received a threatening text message that said "your mother is making our lives difficult".

DA MP Natasha Mazzone, who serves on the committee, was recently followed and her car tampered with. This has prompted the official opposition to demand protection for MPs serving on the committee and witnesses appearing before the inquiry.

The inquiry's evidence leader, Ntuthuzelo Vanara, who was threatened with being reported to the Cape Law Society, has since alleged that Bongo offered him a bribe to collapse the Eskom inquiry.

The DA laid criminal charges against Bongo and lodged a complaint with Public Protector Busisiwe Mkhwebane in line with the Executive Members Ethics Act.

Parliament also referred Bongo's bribe allegation to its ethics committee and to Mkhwebane.

Cleopatra Mosana, Mkhwebane's spokesperson, did not immediately respond to media queries.

According to reports, Bongo

apparently told Vanara that he was following instructions from the acting Eskom board chairperson Zethembe Khoza.

Yesterday, Khoza distanced himself from the allegations that he had instructed Bongo to offer Vanara a bribe to collapse the investigation into the

'Anyone found guilty of such an offence faces imprisonment'

alleged capture of Eskom.

"I have never spoken to Mr Bongo and I have never met him," Khoza said.

He also said Eskom supported the parliamentary inquiry, and that the power utility had previously written to the committee expressing its willingness to give evidence once the process got under way.

"I have absolutely no reason why I, or Eskom, would want to collapse the inquiry when we have been calling for such a legally constituted platform

so that we can place the facts before the committee," Khoza added.

The office of ANC chief whip Jackson Mithembu said it noted with concern media reports of an alleged bribe offered to Vanara to stop the Eskom inquiry.

"The ANC in Parliament takes serious exception to allegations of attempts to collapse this inquiry and derail the work of parliament.

"We welcome Parliament's referral of the matter to the ethics committee and trust that the committee will act with the necessary speed to thoroughly investigate," spokesperson Nonceba Mhlauli said.

"We take allegations of bribery very seriously, and as a consequence, apart from a parliamentary investigation, we call upon the law enforcement authorities to investigate this matter.

"We further condemn any threats made to any member of Parliament or staff who are party to this inquiry and advise them to report any such threats to our police," Mhlauli added.

Parliament's spokesperson,

Moloto Mothapo, said any intimidation of MPs while carrying out their constitutional function was a crime in terms of the Power and Privileges Act.

"Anyone found guilty of such an offence faces imprisonment," Mothapo said.

He said the institution's presiding officers - National Assembly Speaker Baleka Mbete and National Council of Provinces chairperson Thandi Modise - would determine an appropriate course of action to ensure that MPs continued their functions without fear of intimidation or prejudice.

Rantho told Independent Media she did not know why MPs, their families and staff members were being intimidated.

"I don't know if it has anything to do with the Eskom inquiry because I chair the inquiry. When it is said to my son that 'your mother makes our lives difficult', I can only assume it relates to the inquiry, but I don't want to speculate."

She also revealed that her husband was followed by a car in July.



Police officers salute new National Police Commissioner General Khehla John Sitole during his inauguration parade at the Saps training academy yesterday. Picture: Jacques Nelles

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New top cop urged to stabilise Saps

ment in Tshwane yesterday at the official inauguration of the new commissioner of police, General Khehla John Sitole.

Mbalula told Sitole it was crucial that the police worked closely and harmoniously with other components of the justice system. He emphasised that the

independence of Ipid was a key area of concern for him.

Before hundreds of policemen and women at the official parade, where Sitole was presented with the sword of command, Mbalula said: "General, we also encourage you to provide stability in the organisation and finalise the

transformation and complete amalgamation of all 14 pre-democracy different police forces into a democratic Saps in an equitable and fair manner."

He noted that 11 of the 14 forces were from the former TBVC homelands, while the other three units incorporated into the Saps

were the intelligence and protection units of MK and Apla, which comprised the "nonstatutory" block in the service.

Sitole promised to serve the country with loyalty, courage and dignity and honour.

President Jacob Zuma did not attend the ceremony.

Virginia Keppeler

Police Minister Fikile Mbalula has vowed that the work of the Independent Police Investigative Directorate (Ipid) will not be impeded by the police.

Mbalula made the commit-

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New boss takes up the baton

By **KARABO RAMMUTLA**

THE new national police commissioner, General Khehla Sitole, was officially sworn in yesterday.

He was handed a sword of command by Police Minister Fikile Mbalula on behalf of President Jacob Zuma.

Speaking at the ceremony held at the Tshwane Police Academy, Mbalula said the sword symbolises righteousness, justice and the expected efforts of the police to render a fair, non-partisan and apolitical service to the community.

He added that the sword of command binds Sitole to serve the country with loyalty, courage, dignity and honour.

Mbalula said it was Sitole's responsibility as national commissioner to ensure the safety of the citizens of Mzansi.

"The president told me I must repeat that he had no doubt in his mind when he made the decision to appoint General Sitole to lead the SAPS," he said.

Mbalula said Zuma also asked him to encourage the leaders of the police service to give their full co-operation and support to Sitole to ensure that the goals of the SAPS were achieved.

He said the National Development Plan's vision for 2030 is clear on what has to be done to achieve its goals.

"We need to ensure that all people liv-



Police Minister Fikile Mbalula hands the sword of command to new national police boss General Khehla Sitole.

Photo by Karabo Rammutla

ing in South Africa feel safe, not only in their homes but at school, work and even when walking on the streets."

Sitole said he would work towards creating a safe and secure environment for South Africans.

Teacher up for stock theft

OBAKENG MAJE

A 42-YEAR-OLD teacher appeared in the Taung Magistrate's Court yesterday after he was arrested for stock theft.

Enoch Molebiemang, a teacher at Bogosing Secondary School in Maphoitsile village, Taung, was arrested on Friday.

He was nabbed after police found 21 suspected stolen sheep in his possession.

It is alleged that Molebiemang stole sheep from various areas such as Matolong, Maphoitsile, Cokonyane and Nhole.

Some of victims have identified their livestock.

Princess Maleho, 48, said: "I am self-employed and have no income. We found 11 of our sheep in his possession.

"I run an early childhood development and heavily depended on livestock. We urge the judiciary to be harsher on livestock thieves. We cannot continue to have people who steal from us."

Another victim, Joseph Kgosieng from Maphoitsile village said he

lost everything.

"I had cattle, sheep and goats. However, I lost everything after criminals stole them. We survive through our livestock simply because there are no job opportunities here in Taung. The area is predominantly rural."

Lucas Koji from Nhole village said he suspected the criminals were work-

ing as syndicate. Koji said police had to visit auctions:

"We urge our police to ensure that they visit auctions so that they can arrest those who sell stolen livestock. It is very depressing to take care of your livestock and criminals just come and steal it.

"We will end up taking

the law into our own hands because all criminals are roaming the streets. You call the police after arresting them but you will see the person out either on bail or being let free because the police will say there is lack of evidence," he said.

Molebiemang's stock-theft case was postponed to December 4 for formal bail application. - Newsnote



Princess Maleho