

De Wee places Bosasa matter on record

By  Valencia Talane

2 Aug 2021

Former state capture commission secretary Dr Khotso de Wee says he has waited for over two years to clear his name after allegations made by Angelo Agrizzi that he was part of a kickback scheme that benefited from irregular Bosasa contracts.



Source: urbanphotographer – [123RF.com](https://www.123RF.com)

De Wee was the first secretary of the commission, having been part of the team appointed by chairperson Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo in 2018. He was implicated by Agrizzi, the former COO of Bosasa (later African Global Operations), in receiving a payment of R2-million that was to be shared among officials of the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, as it was known at the time. De Wee was COO of the department from 2005 to 2015.

According to Agrizzi, he learned the details of the amount and to whom it was to be given, from Sesinyi Seopela, a Bosasa associate. Seopela, he said, was often charged with dispersing kickback cash to government officials that were on the payroll of Bosasa. De Wee confirmed that in 2009, Bosasa subsidiary Sondolo Integrated Technologies entered into a contract, worth just over R600-million, with the department for the installation and management of CCTV and access control facilities at 127 court buildings across the country. This was in relation to the department's reaction to incidents of violence against court officials and presiding officers, that had become prevalent.

"I reject and deny what Mr Seopela may have allegedly told Mr Agrizzi. I know Mr Seopela, we were in the student movement together," De Wee said, adding that he only learned of Seopela's relationship with Bosasa through Agrizzi's testimony.

“Mr Seopela knows my professional ethics ... he didn't even try to persuade me about Bosasa. I think he knew from the outset that I was going to reject an attempt by him.”



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De Wee further took issue with the commission's investigators focusing on a 2013 contract of similar nature, when it was not in Agrizzi's testimony, as this created the wrong impression in the public, he said.

“What has been transmitted to the public for a period of two years, is the idea that I was paid on the basis of the 2013 contract ... while Mr Agrizzi has told the public about 2012/13, I've never been given documents about 2012/13, and if they are there, I want to see them.”

He told the commission that for the past two years since he elected to take precautionary leave from the commission while it investigated, he has suffered a lot of prejudice. De Wee said his family too has had to live with the allegations against him, which he had initially thought would be investigated and concluded within a short time. He lost his two sisters, his only siblings, within a week of each other in August 2020, without having had his name cleared, said De Wee.

Zondo accepted De Wee's request for special leave soon after Agrizzi's revelations, citing the need for the commission to probe the allegations. He said on Friday attempts to get affidavits from several former Bosasa officials, as well as Seopela, were unsuccessful.

De Wee was replaced on an acting basis by Peter Pedlar, who was later replaced by another acting secretary, before the appointment of the incumbent, Professor Itumeleng Mosala.

This article was originally published on [Corruption Watch](#).

ABOUT VALENCIA TALANE

Valencia Talane is a senior journalist and editor with Corruption Watch in Johannesburg. Talane has followed the hearings of the state capture commission since their commencement in August 2018 with a view to documenting evidence shared therein.

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