

ANC mandate is clear: Get rid of SABC board

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The under-fire SABC board is likely to be dissolved as the governing ANC has resolved that there should be a parliamentary inquiry into its fitness to hold office.



This comes after months of impasse between the board and the party over the former's handling of affairs at the national broadcaster.

But most recently, the ANC has been annoyed by the board's defiance of the Supreme Court of Appeal's decision setting aside the appointment of its former chief operating officer Hlaudi Motsoeneng.

The board's chairman Mbulaheni Maguvhe agreed to Motsoeneng's new appointment as head of corporate affairs last week. This drew the wrath of cabinet and ANC chief whip Jackson Mthembu last week.

The former said the appointment was a total disrespect of the rule of law while Mthembu didn't mince his words, saying it was "the last straw that breaks the camel's back".

Speaking at a media briefing yesterday, ANC secretary-general Gwede Mantashe said the party's national executive committee had agreed that there should be an inquiry into the board's fitness to hold office. The committee is the highest decision-making structure of the ANC between conferences.

Two committee members who spoke on condition of anonymity told *The Times* that an inquiry was a mere formality as the party was clear that the board should go.

One committee member said: "We are dealing with it [SABC board]. We are not compromising regarding those board members who have been disrespecting the ANC. We have given the mandate to dissolve it in parliament. They [parliament] are the ones who will decide but this is just a formality."

Another committee member said they felt the board was making a mockery of the public broadcaster.

"Many agreed that the board was now defying those that had elected it and going against not only the rule of law, but the ANC itself," said the source. "Our comrades have been given a strong mandate and they will see it through."

The chairperson for the portfolio committee on communications, Humphrey Maxegwana, was cautious yesterday with regard to the committee's decision.

"The NEC's decision is an NEC decision, we will follow our own processes. We are going to listen to the board regarding all the issues and questions, we will analyse them and take a decision."

The board appears before the portfolio committee on communications tomorrow and is unlikely to survive, as both the opposition and the ANC want them out.

Also the NEC dealt seems to have also dealt with those who have been speaking in support of the SABC board and Motsoeneng, the uMkhonto weSizwe Military Veterans Association. Mantashe said the NEC asked members of cabinet and NEC members to stop talking outside structures. "This free for all does creates confusion in society and we encourage from the NEC to branches to stop it, that goes to our leagues, that goes to MKMVA," said Mantashe.

The SABC board has also been at loggerheads with Mthembu after he criticised its decision to ban protest footage being shown on television. The Democratic Alliance last week said it would approach the courts if the board is not dissolved.

Source: The Times

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