

Spur rejects grilling, accuses union of 'specific political agenda'

Spur CEO Pierre van Tonder accused Solidarity of trying to score "political points" yesterday after the union's CE penned an open letter, saying he had "lost his appetite" for the restaurant franchise.



Image credit: *Sunday Times*

Spur has faced a backlash from Afrikaans customers who have boycotted the restaurants in protest at the way a confrontation between a white man and a black woman was handled. The man was caught on video threatening to give the woman a "p**s klap" during an argument over their children's behaviour at Texamo Spur at the Glen Shopping Mall in Gauteng in March. He was banned from all Spur restaurants.

Solidarity CE Dirk Hermann, in a letter to Spur chief operations officer Mark Farrelly, said that loyal white customers were tired of being bullied and portrayed as right-wingers.

"I have lost my appetite to eat at Spur," said Hermann. "I am not boycotting Spur. A boycott is too small as if this is just an isolated Spur-incident that deserves a slap on the wrist from the public. This is about white people who are fed up with being bullied," he wrote.

He accused the franchise of dismissing loyal customers. "Spur you messed up. Say you are sorry about it."

But Van Tonder replied the boycott appeared to have a specific political agenda. "I am surprised to see a trade union leader implicitly calling for a boycott and embrace an uninformed narrative without considering the effect such a boycott will have on the jobs of South Africans who rely on Spur franchisees for survival."

He said that the franchise stood by its decision and would not give in to pressure by "an angry mob who chose to interpret our decision in terms of race and to punish us based on this assumption."

In his letter, Van Tonder said Spur had offered to show Solidarity footage of the incident. "You say this invitation is missing the point; I fail to understand how comprehensively informing yourself about all relevant factors could be construed as missing the point," he said.

He added the chain did not release all footage at its disposal at the time of the incident. "I would have expected that you, as a trade unionist with influence in the Afrikaans community, would have informed yourself thoroughly before expressing support for a boycott of this kind.

"We believe when the dust has settled, the public will see that Spur acting swiftly and decisively to an incident of violence against a child was the right thing to do," Van Tonder said.

Source: The Times

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