

It may be time for Eskom's board to resign or be fired: Pravin Gordhan

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Former finance minister Pravin Gordhan - an MP and a member of the public enterprises committee - said on Tuesday, 23 May, members of the Eskom board "have let SA down more often than not", and the time might have arrived for them to resign or be dismissed.



Gordhan's hard-hitting statements were made in an engagement of the committee with public enterprises minister Lynne Brown, Eskom chairperson Ben Ngubane and members of the Eskom board.

Gordhan also called for a judicial committee of inquiry into developments at Eskom and a thorough forensic audit as to how decisions are made at the utility, which he said was far too important to become a personal toy in the hands of a few individuals.

He said the Eskom board sometimes acted with "extreme arrogance" which was "remarkable" when they were supposed to be serving a state institution.

The former minister's comments were made during question time after Brown had made her statement about withdrawing her opposition to a court application by the DA to have Eskom CEO Brian Molefe's appointment set aside.

Gordhan asked the board members who had instructed them to rehire Molefe, even though he said he did not believe he would get a truthful answer. He said parliament needed to investigate whether the board had been forsaking its fiduciary duties and acting recklessly.

He also asked Brown if she had sought legal opinion about what she could or could not do regarding the reappointment of Molefe - an issue that was a labour-relations matter.

Gordhan wanted to know why Brown did not litigate on the matter and simply gave in.

The R30m payment to Molefe, which Brown said she wanted to avoid paying by getting him re-employed, was "a drop in the ocean", said Gordhan, making a comparison to what was currently being stolen.

He said there was context to the rehiring of Molefe, which could not be seen as an isolated incident. Parliament also needed to get to the bottom of Molefe's role at Transnet "to connect all the dots", and find out who did what, and in whose interests.

In a scathing attack, Gordhan said Eskom was abusing state resources and was unwittingly or wittingly - and there was evidence that it was wittingly - seeking to capture Eskom for the benefit of a few.

Gordhan referred to a growing "don't care" attitude about the abuse of state resources and reports about this trend, as those involved knew they were protected.

Source: BDpro

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