Police Minister studying Hawks judgement

Police Minister Nkosinathi Nhleko has noted a decision by the North Gauteng High Court to set aside the appointment of General Berning Ntlemeza.

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On Friday, 17 March 2017, the North Gauteng High Court set aside the decision by the Minister to appoint Ntlemeza as the National Head of the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (DPCI) also knows as the Hawks.

"The Minister respects the court's decision and will be studying the full judgement prior to giving any further comments on the matter," the Ministry of Police said.

The ruling followed an application by lobby groups the Helen Suzan Helen Suzman (HSF) Foundation and Freedom Under Law (FUL), which argued that Ntlemeza's appointment was irrational and unlawful.

Ntlemeza was appointed head of the Hawks in September 2015. He was acting in the position since December 2014 following the suspension and eventual resignation of General Anwa Dramat.

Meanwhile, the Portfolio Committee on Police said it will apply for a special committee meeting to discuss the matter.

"We will obviously study the judgement, but have in the meantime resolved to ensure that we apply for a special Portfolio Committee meeting, which will be held during the recess period on Friday, 7 April 2017, to discuss the matter in detail," Committee Chairperson Francois Beukman said.

The Committee will be calling the Minister of Police to this meeting to explain what remedial steps will be taken in dealing with this ruling, as well as plans to address deficiencies in the appointment process.

Beukman said it was imperative for the executive authority and the appointing authority to deal with the matter at hand as a matter of priority.

"It is critical that the matter is addressed as a matter of priority, as we cannot allow a vacuum in the leadership of the DPCI," he said.

The committee said it will closely monitor further developments, in this regard.