

# Committee sets deadline to axe Icasa chairman

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Convicted fraudster Rubben Mohlaloga has been given five days to say why he should not be removed from his post as chairman of the Independent Communications Authority of SA (Icasa).



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The parliamentary portfolio committee on communications said on Tuesday, 27 Februar it would begin the process of axing Mohlaloga from the state regulatory body following his conviction for fraud and money laundering in mid-January.

"Out of respect for the rule of natural justice, the committee will inform him [Mohlaloga] about the decision [to remove him] and give him five working days to explain why he should not be removed from Icasa," said the committee's chairman, Humphrey Maxegwana.

Business Day understands that the committee had been waiting for legal advice on the correct procedure to follow before starting the process.

This followed a recommendation by former communications minister Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane in late January that the National Assembly should remove Mohlaloga.

National Assembly Speaker Baleka Mbete then instructed the portfolio committee to start the process.

Icasa rules stipulate that a person convicted of fraud is not allowed to be a councillor of the industry body, although Parliament is the only entity with the power to remove such an individual. In response to a question on whether Mohlaloga was still attending board meetings and earning a full salary, an Icasa spokesman said Mohlaloga was "still an appointed chairperson of Icasa".

In January, the Hawks announced that Mohlaloga and three others - including former Land Bank CEO Philemon Radichaba Mohlahlane - had been found guilty of defrauding the Land Bank of about R6m in 2008.

Members of the group, who are due to be sentenced in April, siphoned the cash from an agricultural-focused broad-based black economic empowerment entity, and the money was never used for the benefit of farm workers or emerging farmers, according to the Hawks.

Mohlaloga, a former ANC MP, was chairman of Parliament's portfolio committee on agriculture at the time.

He later joined the Icasa council in mid-2013 and became acting chairman in 2016, though his term expired in August 2017.

He was replaced by Paris Mashile, who also held the position of acting chairman.

Mohlaloga's appointment as full-time Icasa chairman, effective from December 2017, was approved by former president Jacob Zuma.

Some opposition parties said at the time they did not support his appointment.

Mohlaloga told Business Day on Tuesday he had not yet received notice that he had five days to state his case.

*Source: Business Day*

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