

Guptas' PR got R8m job from govt

LONDON, UK: UK public relations firm Bell Pottinger has received at least one South African government tender, valued at more than R8m.



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The DA has submitted a series of parliamentary questions to various government departments questioning whether the PR firm, which has been working for the Guptas and is credited with starting the "white minority capital" narrative, has received any tenders. Several departments including Justice, Mineral Resources, Public Works and the Department of Defence and Military Veterans responded saying the firm had not worked for them. Minister of Tourism Tokozile Xasa indicated SA Tourism, one of its entities, had given the firm a tender.

Bell Pottinger received a three-year contract from SA Tourism's UK office in 2014. It was originally valued at R8.6m but ended up costing R9.6m because of exchange-rate fluctuations. "The services were for public relations including digital PR and online communications," Xasa said. The leaked Gupta e-mails reveal President Jacob Zuma's son Duduzane had allegedly approached the PR firm to help "turn the tide of our country's trajectory long-term".

Five-month campaign

The firm responded it would build a five-month campaign to create a narrative around "the existence of economic apartheid and the vital need for more economic emancipation" which would appeal to business and academic communities and the

"grassroots population". Katharine Child reports the firm has been tweeting about the UK election and South Africans have commented.

Bell Pottinger broke off its relationship with the Guptas in April but some South Africans won't let them forget. The company tweeted a picture of an event it was holding and the reply came: "Where are the Guptas?"

Bell Pottinger tweeted: "Our #political team reveal their Ten Conclusions from the #ElectionResults."

@mikecomm responded: "My 10 conclusions 1. Atul 2. Ajay 3. Tony 4. Jacob 5. Des 6. Andile 7. Malusi 8. Jimbo 9. Brian 10. Kim."

Source: *The Times*

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