

# ‘Festival will go ahead’

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CHIEF REPORTER

THE DIAMONDS and Dorings Festival is set to go ahead this Easter weekend despite an impending eviction order as well as calls from the DA to both artists and ticket holders to boycott the event.

The Public Protector is currently investigating allegations that the millions of rands spent on this event by the Northern Cape provincial government every year, was spent improperly.

DA MPL Boitumelo Babuseng said that he had not received any response yet from artists, after urgently sending e-mails discouraging them from performing at the event pending the outcome of the Public Protector’s report.

“I think the organisers contacted them and told them to ignore my correspondence,” said Babuseng.

According to a court order issued last month, the occupants of the Mittah Seperepere Convention Centre (MSCC) – Umfana Business Enterprises and Silver Solutions CC Joint Venture and International Convention Centre Solutions (ICS) CC – will have to vacate the building by today.

This follows a protracted legal dispute entered into by the Department of Roads and Public Works and the Northern Cape Economic Trade and Investment Promotion

Agency (Nceda) over who the rightful occupants of the building are.

The director of ICS, Clarissa Carstens, stated yesterday that an application to appeal the judgment was submitted about two weeks ago.

“The comedy show on Thursday (tomorrow) and a gospel concert that was planned for Friday at the Mittah Seperepere Convention Centre, will take place. It is business as usual for us.”

Both organisers were confident that their events would not be disrupted.

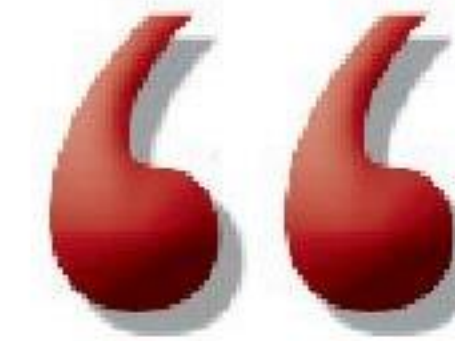
Kgomotso Modiragale stated that he had booked and paid for the venue for Friday’s All White Gospel Show last year already.

“We have already sold 1 000 tickets. We humbly request that this event be allowed to take place as planned at the MSCC.”

Somandla Sibisi added that he was not sure if any artist had responded to the call by the DA not to support the Diamonds and Dorings Festival.

“The comedy show will take place at the MSCC while the jazz festival will also go ahead as planned and our ticket sales have not been affected by the DA’s antics. People are excited for the event and local businesses are equally excited as they are getting bookings.”

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request of the DA, is investigating the funding of R9 million made towards the Diamonds and Dorings Festival by the national and provincial Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, Sol Plaatje Municipality and Frances Baard District Municipality for the 2016/17 financial year.

In addition, Macronymn 37 CC received at least R1.3 million from the Northern Cape Department of Economic Development and Tourism to host the event last year.

The Northern Cape Tourism Authority also assisted in the provision of resources for advertising

and marketing of the event.

The Department of Sport, Arts and Culture has been requested to provide a breakdown of the financial and non-financial support provided to the festival over the past three years.

The department must also stipulate if the allocations made to Macronymn 37 CC were in line with the finance regulations and provide a copy of the service level agreement.

The department has been requested to disclose whether Macronymn 37 CC submitted its financial reports to the department and if it provided a breakdown of expenses and disclosed all benefits, sponsorships and income received.

Spokesperson for the Northern Cape Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, Conrad Fortune, said that the department would offer its full co-operation to the Public Protector.

“We have received a request to investigate the financial assistance provided to Macronymn 37 CC that annually hosts the Diamond and Dorings Festival. The department will ensure that the Public Protector is provided with all the documentation requested in order for them to successfully conclude this investigation. Once this has been done we are of the view that the Public Protector will announce the outcomes of the investigation.”