

DURBAN HIGH COURT

A flurry of activity ahead of Zuma's court case

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The 108-year-old Durban High Court was a hive of activity this week as the countdown to the appearance of former president Jacob Zuma on multiple charges of fraud, corruption and money-laundering began.

The court building is located in central Durban in Masonic Grove lane. Earlier this week Zuma was formally indicted and ordered to appear in court on Friday, April 6.

At one end of the court, public works department workers were removing old and broken desks from the court and putting these in storerooms, while others were busy sweeping floors. One of the workers, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said they had been instructed to clean the place ahead of Zuma's appearance.

"They told us that the court has to look presentable as there would be local and international TV stations and media who will be training their cameras on the [court] building," he said.

A female security guard said the building had been visited by several state security agents. "They were assessing security and taking notes on what measures should be taken to avoid security breaches, if any. They have been coming here since last week already."

Carleen Marais, the Durban High Court manager, was holed up in a meeting of judges for most of Tuesday afternoon, apparently in discussions about the upcoming case.

Major Thulani Zwae, Kwa-Zulu-Natal police spokesman, said police were finalising preparations to preserve order inside and outside court.

The SAPS VIP protection unit, whose provincial headquarters is just a stone's throw from the court, is also said to have been briefed about its deployment.