

# The Guptas put pressure on me, says Maseko

## Ex-GCIS head says they wanted support for New Age, TV channel

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**F**ORMER Government Communication and Information System's (GCIS) boss and cabinet spokesperson Themba Maseko yesterday described the pressure the Guptas subjected him to in order to support their newspaper and television channel.

The former public works director-general also told the commission of inquiry into state capture headed by Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo about Ajay Gupta's approach when the controversial

family wanted GCIS to support the establishment of The New Age newspaper and television channel ANN7.

According to Maseko, Ajay Gupta demanded a share of the GCIS's R600 million media buying budget between September and October 2010.

The commission also wants to call several former directors-general to appear before it following Justice Zondo's announcement yesterday.

Maseko testified that he and several former directors-general, including Barry Gilder, Xoliswa



**Former head of the GCIS, Themba Maseko, is testifying before the state capture inquiry.**

PICTURE: NOKUTHULA MBATHA/AFRICAN NEWS AGENCY (ANA)

Sibeko and Thozì Gwanya, among others, were concerned about state capture and wanted to take a stand against it. Maseko said they were concerned about the capture of the state by the Guptas.

Justice Zondo told his legal and investigations teams that serious

efforts must be made to contact the former directors-general who, along with Maseko, publicly expressed their concern about state capture.

"The country needs them," said Justice Zondo.

Maseko told the commission there were many senior public ser-

vants and middle managers who had information on the Guptas' capture of the state and their political principals' irregular instructions.

"Very few people are willing to come forward," said Maseko, adding that Justice Zondo was also having trouble getting witnesses to testify

before the commission.

Advocate Vincent Maleka, the member of the commission's legal team who was leading Maseko's evidence, announced that a National Treasury representative would shed light on the money spent on the Guptas and their corrupt enter-

prises.

Maseko said a number of directors had complained about the undermining of procurement processes but they feared losing their jobs and reprisals.

He said this was why the directors-general did not want to append their signatures to those of Maseko and the other heads of departments.

Earlier, former ANC MP Vytjie Mentor concluded her three-day testimony with Mahlape Sello, another member of the commission's legal team, questioning her on inconsistencies in her sworn statements submitted to the commission.

Mentor's evidence that she reported the Guptas' offer of giving her a cabinet position were rejected by ANC national chairperson and Mineral Resources Minister Gwede Mantashe, who accused Mentor of lying under oath.

Mantashe said Jessie Duarte was not his deputy secretary-general when Mentor claimed she reported the matter to both of them.

At the time, National Council of Provinces chairperson Thandi Modise was Mantashe's deputy.

Maseko also told the commission that he had a meeting with Mantashe during which he related Ajay Gupta's request.

Phumla Williams, Maseko's successor as GCIS head, is also scheduled to testify at the commission.

Maseko told the commission he was pleased that Williams would also give her testimony before the commission as he wanted access to the diary he used during his tenure at the GCIS. The diary apparently contains details of his meeting with Ajay Gupta.

Maseko continues his testimony today.