

Zuma 'overstepped powers'

Ex-president stood by 'rogue' Eskom CEO

By **Ranjeni Munusamy**

Former public enterprises minister Barbara Hogan has revealed how former president Jacob Zuma overstepped his powers and improperly interfered in a dispute between the chief executive of Eskom and its board.

Hogan said Zuma's actions violated the rules of corporate governance and encouraged a CEO to defy the board and believe he was above company law.

On her second day of evidence at the state capture inquiry yesterday, Hogan testified how Zuma imposed his authority over her portfolio, even shouting at her to stop the Eskom board from firing former CEO Jacob Maroga.

"I got a telephone call from the president and he was really furious and he was shouting at me," Hogan told judge Raymond Zondo.

"You've got to stop it," Zuma apparently instructed Hogan when the board, then chaired by Bobby Godsell, planned to announce Maroga's resignation. Hogan detailed a messy fallout between Maroga and the board in 2000, which caused commotion and confusion at the power utility.



Former public enterprises minister Barbara Hogan at the state capture inquiry where she was giving evidence for the second day. / MASILOSI

"It was a complete and utter nightmare and should never have taken place... The issues were so profound from a constitutional point of view that you didn't have time to think this through," Hogan said.

She said she and her then deputy Enoch Godongwana tried to manage a

"dignified exit" for Maroga. But Zuma met with Maroga privately and then issued an instruction that he stay on in his position.

Maroga wrote to her, declaring that he remained the CEO.

"It was, in effect, a CEO that had gone rogue - on the understanding that the president would back him."

Godsell resigned under severe stress, she said.

"The president was showing very unfortunate signs of imposing his authority without consideration of the constitutional framework," Hogan said.

She said both she and Godongwana were so shocked by what was happening that they wanted to resign.

Creating further confusion, Zuma changed his mind about Maroga's position and requested that Godsell return to Eskom.

Hogan said she then received a phone call from Gwede Mantashe, the ANC secretary-general, who said: "If the black guy goes, the white guy must also go."

On Monday, Hogan testified how Zuma insisted that Siyabonga Gama be appointed as the CEO of Transnet despite facing disciplinary charges at the time and against the recommendation of the SOE's board.

Continuing her testimony yesterday, Hogan spoke of how she attempted to address the governance issues at Transnet with the president in light of the fact that it was left vulnerable without a CEO and board chair. Instead, she was called to a meeting with Zuma and Mantashe on October 31 2010 at the president's residence in Pretoria.

She said her partner, Struggle stalwart Ahmed Kathrada accompanied her but had to wait in the car.

Hogan said Zuma told her that the ANC national executive committee had decided to redeploy her as the ambassador to Finland. Because Kathrada was not able to leave the country, Hogan declined the position and told Zuma and Mantashe that she did not want to stay on as a member of parliament.

"And then there was silence. I asked if that was all, and they said 'yes'."

Hogan's testimony was interrupted yesterday afternoon by a power failure at the venue. She will continue with her testimony today.

Zondo announced that public enterprises minister Pravin Gordhan would testify at the commission on Monday, November 19, and his former deputy Mcebisi Jonas would complete his second round of evidence on Monday, November 26.

KINGDOM DOORS
LUXURY & SAFETY YOU Can AFFORD

1 LENASIA (HEAD OFFICE) Cnr. 3 Medina St & Blackwood Road, Anchorville 011-257-2052/61 • 071 606 5977
2 EVATON PLAZA (Golden Highway) E-Mail: kingdomdoors2@gmail.com 016-582-0535

FREE DOOR SALE !!!