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Zondo clarifies why Tiso Blackstar building was chosen for #StateCaptureInquiry

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State Capture inquiry chairman, Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo. Photo: Karen Sandison/African News Agency(ANA)

Johannesburg - State Capture commission of inquiry chairman Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo on Tuesday said the Tiso Blackstar building in Parktown was chosen after an unsuccessful search for a suitable venue for the work of the commission.

Zondo was responding to the Economic Freedom Fighters' (EFF's) complaint that the commission was wasting money by using a privately-owned property.

"I want to make it clear that after I was appointed as chairperson, I gave an instruction to those tasked with looking for a venue - which was the departments of public works and justice assisted by the secretary - that the preference be given to government venues. Indeed, I was told that various government venues were inspected and for one reason or another, were either unsuitable or unavailable," Zondo said.

Municipal buildings in Centurion, Kempton Park Civic Centre and the Emoyeni Conference Center in Parktown were some of the venues considered but were neither available or suitable for the needs of the commission.

"I just want to make it clear that this commission, public works and the department of justice did not just go for a privately owned building without exploring the possibility of saving costs by using a government venue."

Zondo said although the commission would not interfere in any political events outside the commission, including the rift between Public Enterprises Minister Pravin Gordhan and the EFF, it will not tolerate any harassment and intimidation of witnesses appearing to testify.

Harassment of anyone would deter other witnesses from approaching the commission, which would undermine the commission's work, Zondo said.

"This commission will not consider what is said outside and in the media, and not brought into the commission. Minister Gordhan came to give evidence voluntarily and was prepared to have his evidence tested through cross-examination. Anyone who has credible evidence concerning any alleged doing on his part should come forward and present such."

Zondo said he has confidence in the commission's teams after an earlier attempt by former government spokesman Mzwanele "Jimmy" Manyi to have evidence leader advocate Vincent Maleka replaced.

Manyi said Maleka was biased, but later abandoned his request for Maleka to recuse himself.

"Anyone who has complaints against any member of the investigation or legal team should bring that forward, it will be considered properly. If there is any conduct on the part of anybody, the commission will deal with that appropriately," said Zondo.

"Until evidence has been placed before the commission that any of the members of the legal or investigative team has been involved in any misconduct, I as the chairperson, continue to have confidence in the whole legal team, including its head, Mr Pretorius.

"I continue to have confidence in the investigative team, and until any evidence is placed here, I will continue to accept that they may continue with their work."

The commission will hear testimony from the governing African National Congress (ANC) presented by its chairperson Gwede Mantashe.

ANC leaders such as its head of economic transformation Enoch Godongwana, deputy secretary Jessie Duarte and the head of ANC presidency Zizi Kodwa were at commission ahead of Mantashe's testimony.

* Read more on the #StateCaptureInquiry [here](#) .

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