

■ PURGE

CELE FIRES BACK

Ex-police commissioner says court decision regarding lease agreement vindicates him

KUBEN CHETTY

kuben.chetty@inl.co.za

POLICE Minister Bheki Cele says his 2012 dismissal as national police commissioner over a building lease deal was part of a wider purge at state institutions.

"I was the first victim," he told Independent Media in an interview in Durban yesterday. "What is clear in my mind is that the lease agreement as a method to get rid of me was a fallacy. Someone else can provide the real reasons behind them wanting me out."

Cele said he was vindicated after the North Gauteng High Court last week dismissed the reasons used by former president Jacob Zuma to fire him as national police commissioner in 2012.

The inquiry was initiated by Zuma after the public protector found in 2011 that Cele's involvement in deals to acquire police office space in the run-up to the 2010 Fifa World Cup was "improper, unlawful, and amounted to maladministration".

Then-public protector Thuli Madonsela tabled two reports concerning two lease agreements in Pretoria and Durban worth more than R1.7 billion that the SA Police Service wanted to sign with businessman Roux Shabangu in 2010.

Judge Jake Moloï concluded in 2012 that the evidence produced before him "proved abundantly that there was a questionable relationship between the national commissioner and Shabangu on one hand and between Shabangu and Public Works officials who facilitated the



POLICE Minister Bheki Cele is former top cop. | SHELLEY KJONSTAD African News Agency (ANA)

lease agreements on the other".

According to last week's court order, the inquiry report had since been "reviewed and set aside".

Cele said others with whom he worked closely were removed.

"People like Anwa Dramat (former Hawks boss) were removed. The other person who I was instructed to remove was the late Sean Tshabalala, the divisional commissioner of the Protection and Security Services.

"I refused to remove Sean and I shifted him. I know today that was one of the reasons I was fired. Sean was my comrade, he was doing a good job and I could not remove him."

Turn to Page 2