

Msimanga in works 'stunt' investigation

Bennitt Bartl

Former Tshwane mayor and DA Gauteng premier candidate Solly Msimanga is to be investigated for apparently campaigning at municipal offices.

Current mayor Stevens Mokgalapa acceded to demands by the EFF and ANC to have Msimanga investigated after he held a media briefing about public works vacancies at the Centurion municipal offices last week.

The EFF demanded an investigation into whether the Gauteng premier hopeful had contravened the Electoral Act by campaigning at municipal premises.

EFF councillor Obakeng Ramabodu raised concerns at last Thursday's council meeting after seeing pictures of Msimanga at the offices on social media.

"The Speaker must report Msimanga and the DA," he said.

"Msimanga was wearing DA regalia campaigning on municipal premises and using municipal jobs to campaign."

The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) was designed to create temporary job opportunities for qualifying residents, and offers a stipend in exchange for skills.

Tshwane ANC leader Kgosi Maepa said the mayor ought to issue an instruction that what Msimanga did was wrong and should not happen again.

Mokgalapa said he supported the proposal to investigate the matter.

"We must get to the relevant facts and address this matter as soon as possible," he said.

At a briefing at Centurion council offices on Thursday morning, Msimanga told EPWP workers: "The new open lottery system, which is completely electronic, allocates a number to each employee.

"The system draws a number at random. If that number matches the one of the employees, he or she is allocated that specific work."

The system does away with any interference from political affiliates or metro management, according to Msimanga.

"We have heard of instances whereby workers had to pay bribes and even sleep with officials for jobs.

"These are desperate job seekers who cannot afford to feed their families. Now they are expected to pay for jobs."

He demonstrated how the system worked using a visual aid.

"We have already rolled out the system in Tshwane," he said.

"Our goal is to ultimately roll out the system across the entire province and root out any corruption involved in the EPWP system. It will ensure all have fair access to jobs."

Deputy chief whip of council Crezane Bosch said the event in question took place at a parking lot.

"It was attended mainly by the media and some staff came outside to see what was going on," she said.

"Also, there is no such thing as no-go areas. Msimanga had not contravened any [part of the] Electoral Act.

"Parties could report his conduct if they believe it is wrong to the IEC, but the onus was not on the Speaker to do it as requested by EFF."

DA leader Abel Tau said: "An investigation would get to the bottom of the matter."



Gauteng premier candidate for the DA, Solly Msimanga.