

Zuma trial postponed, expected to plead at next appearance



Former president Jacob Zuma's corruption trial has been adjourned to May 26, 2021. He is also expected to plead on the same day.

This comes after his legal team withdrew a month before the start of the trial on May 17. At the start of Monday's proceedings at the Pietermaritzburg High Court, Judge Piet Koen granted Zuma's former lawyer, Eric Mabuza, leave to withdraw as Zuma's legal representative. No reason was given for the withdrawal.

Zuma and the French company, Thales, face corruption, racketeering and money laundering charges linked to the arms deal. The 79-year-old was greeted with shouts of "Long live Jacob Zuma; long live," as he arrived on the dock at the high court.

Zuma's new legal representative is Thabani Masuku. Masuku said his client was ready to proceed with the trial.

South African Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure Patricia de Lille was present at the court and will be the first witness in the case.

In attendance were suspended African National Congress (ANC) secretary general Ace Magashule, Umkhonto we Sizwe Military Veterans Association's (MKMVA) Carl Niehaus, and ANC National Executive Committee (NEC) member Tony Yengeni who all voiced their support for the former president after the court proceedings at the Freedom Square Park.

Zuma's son, Duduzane Zuma, was also present to support his father.