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BREAKING NEWS

# Right to Justice suing MacPherson over questionable IDT appointments

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NGO Right to Justice is taking embattled Public Works Minister Dean MacPherson to court over questionable IDT board appointments.

In a move that has raised eyebrows, MacPherson has appointed individuals with questionable backgrounds to the board of the Independent Development Trust (IDT). The appointments, which are seen as highly controversial, are allegedly a long-shot attempt to remove the current IDT CEO, Tebogo Malaka, from her position.

MacPherson appointed Derek Naidoo and Matodzi Ratshimbilani to the IDT board as his ministerial appointees, although Naidoo has a controversial past in relation to serious allegations at the Ethekwini Municipality, where he was deputy city manager.

Ratshimbilani was unceremoniously removed from the State Information Technology Agency (SITA) board by then Minister Mondli Ngungubele.

MacPherson is attempting to bring Zimbini Hill and Prof. Raymond Naemeka Nkado back to the IDT board. The pair were previously removed from the board by former Public Works Minister Sihle Zikalala. According to sources at the DPWI, Hill and Nkado have already received an appointment from MacPherson.

"Despite my interventions that sought to stabilise the IDT and its management, you have failed to remedy the situation, further exacerbating the already strained relations between the Board and management to the point that matters are now being dealt with through grievances and letters of complaints about the Acting CEO."

"I further do not have confidence that the current Board will ever be able to deal with the declining status of the IDT," Zikalala said, citing that Hill has failed to assist the IDT and was consumed with complaining about the CEO. Right to Justice said individuals who were removed from one entity's board should never be recycled around other boards.

"There is no shortage of academics and skilled professionals to occupy boards in this country. Recycling Hill and Nkado make it look like there are sinister reasons for their appointment. What is so special about Hill that no one else can surpass her? The manner in which the two are appointed is irregular, as they did not go through the panel. We will exhaust this matter in court. We are also calling on the public to assist with more information about these two."

"We will be serving papers on the minister today. We must not allow state capture 2.0," Right to Justice chairperson Siphesihle Jeje said.

The IDT, a state-owned entity that plays a crucial role in managing development projects across South Africa, has been under increasing scrutiny in recent months.

The organisation, which is tasked with ensuring that state resources are used effectively for the country's development goals, has faced challenges in maintaining transparency and accountability. MacPherson's appointments to the

board have raised alarm bells among political analysts, civil society groups, and industry insiders. Critics argue that selecting individuals with dubious credentials would undermine the credibility of the IDT and could further damage the trust in the public sector's ability to manage funds and development projects effectively.

Malaka, who has been praised for his efforts to steer the IDT toward greater accountability, is reportedly under increasing pressure. Insiders claim that MacPherson, along with his allies, views Malaka as an obstacle to their broader political agenda, which includes consolidating power within the organisation.

The planned board shake-up is being seen by many as an attempt to remove Malaka, despite her track record of promoting transparency and implementing changes that have been seen as critical to improving the IDT's operations.

"There is no doubt that MacPherson is using these appointments to influence the leadership of the IDT and, ultimately, to purge the CEO."

"Malaka's leadership has been a thorn in the side of those who want to control the flow of resources and power within state entities. If these appointments go through, we could see the IDT become yet another instrument of political patronage, and Malaka's efforts to reform the organisation may be undone," Jeje said.

MacPherson, who has faced criticism in the past for his controversial actions, has not publicly commented on the matter, but sources suggest that he remains determined to carry out his plans. The proposed board members are said to have ties to various factions within South African politics, which raises questions about the long-term integrity and effectiveness of the IDT under their influence.

This latest development comes at a time when public trust in government institutions is already at a low point. If MacPherson's proposed appointments are approved, it could send a worrying message about the state of governance in South Africa and the continued politicization of state entities.