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ANOTHER COMMISSION IS COSTLY FOR SA

*Police Minister Senzo Mchunu placed
on leave amid investigations*

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PRESIDENT Cyril Ramaphosa's decision to place Police Minister Senzo Mchunu on special leave, effectively "a paid holiday", raises serious concerns about the lack of urgency in confronting allegations of widespread criminal infiltration and corruption at the highest levels of SAPS, including his own minister of police.

That is how ActionSA reacted to Ramaphosa's announcement that Kwa-Zulu-Natal police commissioner Nhlanelo Mkhwanazi's allegations against Mchunu, among others, necessitated the establishment of a commission of inquiry. The inquiry will be headed by current acting Deputy Chief Justice Mbuyiselo Madlanga.

Mkhwanazi had lifted the lid on the serious allegations about the existence and operation of a criminal syndicate that has allegedly infiltrated law enforcement and intelligence structures in South Africa. He also pinned attempts to disband the Political Killings Task Team on Mchunu, including the removal of key dockets from KwaZulu-Natal to Pretoria allegedly by Deputy National Commissioner for Crime Detection Shadrack Sibiya. Both Mchunu and Sibiya have publicly denied the allegations.

In his address last night, Ramaphosa said Mchunu undertook to give his full cooperation to the commission to enable it to do its work. Mchunu said: "I welcome and respect the President's decision and pledge my commitment to the process. Honour and integrity are the virtues I per-

sonally subscribe to and which we all need to make efforts to uphold. I stand ready to respond to the accusations against me and account to the citizens of the Republic, fully and honestly so."

The commission will investigate allegations relating to the infiltration of law enforcement, intelligence and associated institutions within the criminal justice system by criminal syndicates.

It will also investigate the role of current or former senior officials in South African Police Service, National Prosecuting Authority, State Security Agency, the Judiciary and Magistracy, and the metropolitan police departments of Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni and Tshwane who may have aided or abetted the alleged criminal activity; failed to act on credible intelligence or internal warnings; or benefited financially or politically from a syndicate's operations.

Mkhwanazi's allegations, if proven true, threaten to undermine the confidence of South Africans in the ability of the South African Police Service to protect them and to effectively fight crime and corruption, said Ramaphosa.

"As we intensify the fight against crime, it is vital that we safeguard the integrity and credibility of the police and other law enforcement agencies."

He said the commission will have the power to refer matters for immediate criminal investigation and urgent decisions on prosecution, taking into account the nature of the allegations and evidence the Commission will uncover.

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PRESIDENT Cyril Ramaphosa has placed Police Minister Senzo Mchunu on immediate leave, a step prompted by serious allegations linking him to a criminal syndicate. | GCIS

NATION

Ramaphosa not concerned by Steenhuisen's absence from meeting

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THE Presidency has downplayed DA leader John Steenhuisen's absence from the inaugural meeting of Eminent Persons for the National Dialogue on Friday saying there was "nothing much to read from it".

Steenhuisen, a member of the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) appointed by Ramaphosa to prepare for the National Dialogue, had threatened to boycott the initiative over the president's decision to fire DA member Andrew Whitfield as Trade, Industry and Competition Deputy Minister.

Ramaphosa held his inaugural meeting with members of the National Dialogue Eminent Persons Group at the Union Buildings on Friday.

Asked about Steenhuisen's absence, Presidency spokesperson Vincent Magwenya said Steenhuisen was not the only

member of the IMC who was absent from the meeting.

"Other Ministers even left the meeting earlier."

"So, I would not read too much into his absence considering the many other Ministerial duties that he and his other colleagues have. Besides, there was no specific contribution that was expected from IMC Ministers. The meeting was solely for the President to brief the members of the EPG and to hear their perspectives on the National Dialogue and how they view their task," said Magwenya.

Employment and Labour Minister Nomakhoza Mthembu, along with her Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs Velenkosini Fiki Hlabisa counterpart, and Minister of Electricity and Energy Kgosisi Ramogopa, could also not attend the meeting while Social Development minister Sisi Tolase joined online.

"The President was delighted with the manner in which the meeting progressed. All the members of the Eminent Persons Group were highly enthused about the task ahead of guiding the National Dialogue and serving as its guarantors," said Magwenya.

GNU partner, GOOD's secretary-general Brett Herron said there should be consequences for any party that breaches the GNU Statement of Intent.

Policy analyst Nkosihulule Nyembezi said: "The DA's sharpening differences are now a daily existential struggle (in the GNU) swinging between whether to submit a replacement to the dismissed deputy minister, participate in inter-ministerial meetings for the national dialogue or not."

"How much longer the DA can hold the line is in serious doubt as delays in deciding on such matters do not alter the general direction of travel in the GNU."

NATION

CR skipping Mabuza's burial signaled strained relations

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CONTROVERSY shrouds the absence of President Cyril Ramaphosa and some ANC leaders at the burial site of the late deputy president David Mabuza following his funeral service on Saturday.

The family confirmed that Ramaphosa and other ANC officials were invited to attend the burial.

Mabuza passed away last week at the age of 64, following a short illness. He was buried at a family burial site in Barberton, Mpumalanga.

During the morning session, held at his home, ANC chairperson Gwede Mantashe handed over the party flag, which had draped Mabuza's coffin, to the family. The coffin was then draped in the national flag as the ceremony was handed over to the military in accordance with the Category Two State Funeral protocol.

However, it was the current Deputy President, Paul Mashatile, who handed over the national flag to Mabuza's widow, Nohlanhla, before he was laid to rest. This was strange, according to political analyst Ntsikelelo Breakfast.

It has been alleged that Mabuza and Ramaphosa did not see eye to eye, especially following the outcomes of the ANC's conference in 2022, which saw Mabuza vacate his office.

"It is very strange for him (Ramaphosa) to leave before the coffin is lowered into the grave. It is unusual," he said. Asked why the President did not go to the burial site, ANC Mpumalanga spokesperson, Sasekani Manzini, said questions should be sent to the national leadership.

ANC secretary general Fikile Mbalula said the family spoke at the funeral and nothing was demonstrable that Mabuza's family was angry.

The party's spokesperson Mahlengi Bhengu-Motsiri said the family expressly requested a private burial and to suggest anything else was disingenuous.

"Until he took his last breath, the deputy president remained loyal and committed to the ANC," she said.

The family's spokesperson, Desmond Moela, confirmed that Ramaphosa, along with the ANC's top brass and members and the national executive committee (NEC) and the provincial executive committee (PEC), were invited to the burial site but had "other engagements".

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