

# CAPE TIMES



BAFANA BAFANA kicked off their Africa Cup of Nations on a high when they defeated Angola 2-1 at Marrakesh Stadium in Marrakesh, Morocco, with Lyle Foster among the scorers last night. | AFP

## ROBBEN ISLAND MUSEUM CEO'S DEPARTURE SHROUDED IN SECRECY

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THE Robben Island Museum (RIM) and its now former chief executive Abigail Thulare have remained tight-lipped about details of their “mutual separation of employment” following her suspension amid an investigation into management practices.

This investigation was prompted by internal issues, including allegations of bullying in the workplace.

Amid the investigation, in February 2025, Thulare, was redeployed to the National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF) as the acting CEO. The move was temporary, with a final decision pending the outcome of the investigation.

In a letter seen by the *Cape Times*, dated December 5, the RIM council confirmed that as from December 1, 2025, the parties had agreed on a “mutual separation of employment”.

“Council wishes to thank you for your cooperation during this period,” said the letter attributed to RIM Council

Chairperson Saths Cooper.

Approached for further details on the matter, including the circumstances under which the agreement was reached and whether it entailed a golden handshake, the RIM office of the CEO would only say: “No comment will be made at this time.”

Thulare said: “After careful consideration of this request as well as the strict terms and conditions of the mutual separation agreement signed between myself and RIM which I am bound by, I will not be responding to any of the questions asked by the *Cape Times* as this is a legally binding agreement. It is unfortunate that someone leaked the internal document which is against the POPIA Act and have also breached the conditions of the agreement that both parties agreed upon. I am therefore requesting you to pose the questions to RIM.”

*Abigail Thulare was placed on suspension pending outcome of a probe into management practices*

Thulare became RIM's first female chief executive as part of a new executive team at a time when the institution was emerging from a prolonged period of turmoil. For much of the past decade, RIM had been plagued by mismanagement, with two forensic investigation reports conducted in 2019 and 2020, commissioned by the The Department of Sport Arts and Culture (DSAC) and the former RIM Council, revealing extensive governance failures.

The investigations identified instances of irregular, fruitless, and wasteful expenditure.

These challenges were further compounded by a protracted investigation into alleged misconduct by former employees, which destabilised operations, contributed to poor infrastructure maintenance, and resulted in significant revenue losses from island tours. There

had also been complaints by the Ex-Political Prisoners' Association (EPPA), who had stressed the need for “stability and peace at RIM”.

The DSAC said they had given the RIM Council space to deal with the matter relating to Thulare.

“The Department is aware that the erstwhile CEO was on suspension. The Council of RIM is yet to submit a final report on the matter. This is a matter that is a responsibility of the Council, and the Department has given the Council space to deal with it,” said DSAC spokesperson Zimasa Velaphi.

Thulare's status as CEO became a significant point of discussion at a Sport, Arts and Culture portfolio committee meeting in April.

Giving background on the issue, Sports, Arts and Culture Minister Gayton McKenzie said that significant

internal strife had developed within the museum, allegedly marked by infighting and widespread dissatisfaction.

“According to the minister, around 60-80% of senior management had either resigned or opted not to continue working at the institution, with many citing a toxic work culture as their reason for leaving. In dealing with the CEO's complaints, the Minister explained that the staff had accused the CEO of bullying and creating a hostile environment. The matter had divided the board, with some Members defending her and others calling for her suspension.

“Seeking a compromise, the Minister proposed relocating her rather than suspending her without a completed investigation. The board accepted this proposal, and she was temporarily placed at the National Film and Video Foundation, which had a leadership gap at the time. However, a new CEO has since been appointed at the NFVF, and the Department is currently reviewing the former CEO's status, pending a report. The contents will inform the decision on her future,” the meeting report read.

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### NATION

Judge puts lights out on Eskom-Nersa behind-closed-doors settlement

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THE Gauteng High Court, Pretoria sent Eskom and the National Energy Regulator of South Africa (Nersa) packing when they sought a behind-closed-doors settlement, which would have cost consumers approximately R54 billion. The court not only refused to make the settlement an order of court but said it is untenable that such a decision could be made without public participation. The settlement endeavoured to correct an error in Eskom's allowable revenue determination. The judgment, issued on Sunday, followed Eskom's original court application for a review of Nersa's decision regarding Eskom's Multi-Year Price Determination (MYPD) application tariff.

However, the application turned into a settlement agreement, which would have allowed Eskom to increase electricity tariffs by almost 9% annually, thereby recovering an additional R54 billion from already overburdened consumers. Eskom subsequently asked the court to endorse the R54 billion settlement by making it an order of court to render it lawful. But Judge Jan Swanepoel refused, and he remitted the matter back to Nersa, with the order that the public must be consulted before a final determination is made.

Judge Swanepoel found that Nersa's revenue decision was unlawful, irrational, and based on material calculation errors. The court rejected the notion that Eskom and Nersa could correct these errors through a negotiated compromise that bypasses public scrutiny. Nersa has conceded that its undervaluation by R107 billion was the result of calculation errors. When it entered into negotiations with Eskom, its re-calculation showed that the Regulatory Asset Base value had been underestimated by R44 billion. Eskom took the stance that a re-evaluation of R66 billion was acceptable to it. Based on those figures, they seemed to have agreed to split the difference, and they decided on R54 billion.

“It leaves one with the uncomfortable feeling that the compromise was little more than a thumb-suck,” Judge Swanepoel commented.

“Nersa appeared embarrassed by its mistake. Its purpose for entering into an agreement was, at least partially, to avoid public scrutiny of its error,” the judge said. He added that in wanting the settlement merely to be made an order of court, it wanted to avoid judicial scrutiny. “Even though it was attempting to correct a mistake, one of its motives was self-serving and improper,” he said.

### NATION

## Gun-totting deputy mayor now blames ANC, 'bogus' local leaders

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UNDER-FIRE Bitou Municipality deputy mayor, Nokuzola Kolwapi has accused the ANC and “bogus” local community leaders of using the video showing her discharging a firearm to score political points.

Kolwapi, who is also the leader of a political party Ikhwezi Political Movement (IPM) was celebrating the return of her son from ulwaluko - a sacred Xhosa initiation ceremony that marks the transition into manhood, when the video was taken.

Police have since confirmed an investigation was under way into the incident while Kolwapi has maintained that there was no firearm present, and that the item in her hand is a toy-gun.

Kolwapi believes that the fact that this video was captured during her son's return from ulwaluko, and that the act being performed by a woman “has unsettled some, and that reaction

itself deserves reflection”.

“For generations, power, ritual authority, and public symbolism have been narrowly defined along patriarchal lines.

“A woman occupying this space confidently, visibly, and unapologetically - challenges the assumption that leadership, protection, and cultural authority belong to men alone. It is an assertion that women are not guests in culture or politics - we are custodians and architects of both.

“This moment cannot be separated from the political and social reality of South Africa today,” she said.

“We are a nation grieving; women are being killed in their homes. This was a symbol of taking back our culture, taking back our identity and taking back our power.

“There is no contradiction between celebrating culture and condemning violence. The incident was not a threat; it was a declaration. A declaration that our sons must be raised to honour life,

not dominate it. A declaration that power, when held by women, can be transformative,” she said.

“I remain committed, as a leader and as a mother, to building a South Africa where our traditions evolve without losing their soul, where women's authority is not questioned but respected, and where no woman has to march, protest, or mourn simply to be safe.”

ANC Western Cape provincial spokesperson Sifiso Mtsweni described Kolwapi's actions as “criminal acts”.

“She behaves like a hooligan, a charlatan in public. Discharging a firearm in public is a criminal offence.”

ANC Victor Molosi Region spokesperson Moyisi Magalela said that they noted the video with serious concern.

“The ANC views any alleged conduct involving the discharge of a firearm in a public or private setting with the utmost seriousness, particularly when it involves public representatives who are expected to uphold the law and

act responsibly at all times.

“In this regard, the ANC calls on relevant law enforcement agencies to urgently conduct a thorough and independent investigation into the authenticity of the video and the circumstances surrounding the incident. The law must take its course without fear or favour,” Magalela said.

“The ANC further reiterates its commitment to the rule of law, public safety, and responsible leadership. Should the allegations be substantiated, appropriate action must be taken in line with the law and the organisation's constitutional and disciplinary processes.”

Kolwapi became deputy mayor through a coalition with the DA.

DA leader in the Western Cape, Tertuis Simmers, said: “We do not condone the discharge of firearms in public under any circumstances.

“Two SAPS cases have been opened, and the investigation is underway. We will await due process and will not comment further at this stage.”



BITOU Deputy Executive Mayor Nokuzola Kolwapi is facing criminal charges and widespread condemnation after a video emerged appearing to show her discharging a firearm during a celebratory gathering in KwaNokuthula, Western Cape. | SCREENGAB/X



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IF GUNS DON'T KILL PEOPLE, WHY DO MASS KILLERS ARM THEMSELVES WITH GUNS.  
| **DASHANNE STOKES**