



premier

Office Of The Premier
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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NOTE TO EDITOR: PLEASE DISREGARD STATEMENT SENT EARLIER AND CONSIDER THE ATTACHED

MEDIA STATEMENT

DATE : 17 AUGUST 2015
TO : ALL MEDIA
EMBARGO : IMMEDIATE

MEDIA STATEMENT ON ALLEGATIONS AGAINST OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

On 16th August 2015, the Sunday Tribune carried a front page story titled “**The Party is over – Premier’s office sued for R2.3 million entertainment bill**”.

Apart from the article being sensational, it creates a false impression that the Office of the Premier has been having a wild party costing millions. The publication chose to ignore substantial response provided to the journalist covering the story. The article refers to allegations made by a Mr. Nick Dranias who claim to have rendered services to the Office of the Premier around 2011/12. These claims were purportedly entered into with Mr. Ndabezihle Sibiyi, a former spokesperson of the Premier.

What the article does not say is that when this Mr. Dranias made these allegations and issued summons through his lawyers, the Office of the Premier filed the **Notice of Exception**. After requests made to him to provide documentary proof of his vague claims, he is yet to present such evidence to the Department.

In our response to the Sunday Tribune, we stated that in the absence of this documentary proof, which has not been processed through supply chain management processes of the Department, paying this will be highly irregular. We stated that under no circumstance will such conduct be supported by the current management of this Department. We further stated that as this matter is *sub judice*, it would be improper to discuss it further at any other fora. Doing so, may prejudice the integrity of evidence of potential witnesses at trial.

We then advised that any communication must be done via attorneys of the two parties and not cloud it with any other that may be intended to embarrass government. In this way, a resolution of this matter will be in the manner that will be credible and hopefully be satisfactory to him. This does not mean that the issues raised in the article do not warrant action by the Department. We have taken necessary steps in line with the prescript of prevailing policies, regulations and legislation.

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We had nonetheless advised that pursuing this matter through seeking political opposition support, will not assist. We thus view these allegations as intended to create instability in the Office the Premier.

Subsequent to this, there has been other enquiries regarding the former spokesperson of the Premier. The relationship between Sibiya and his employer is being handled in line with prescripts of the law. Sibiya has served Premier Mchunu as a spokesperson, which has included responsibility of speechwriting. This dates to the time when the he was Acting Premier and even after his inauguration as Premier of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal. At no stage did government doubt his ability to discharge his duties.

We wish to re-emphasise the point that we uphold the principle of good governance, and have put measures in place to inculcate such organisational culture. In this regard, we are attending to this matter of claims against the Department; and will do so in any other similar matter that may surface. We further wish to emphasise that irrespective of the vagueness of the matters published in the Sunday Tribune, we note that we have been served with summons. Therefore, this places this matter within the legal domain. We thus will confine our engagement within the accepted norms as dictated by such process in order to protect both the integrity of the process, as well as the rights of both the plaintiff and the defendant as well as the integrity of evidence of potential witnesses at trial.

The Office of the Premier, particularly under the leadership of Premier Senzo Mchunu, stands for good governance and the protection of the stature of the office. We treat any issue that is contrary to this position with all the seriousness it deserves. If there is any wrongdoing by any official on our side, action will always be taken.

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