



21ST Floor
ISIVUNO HOUSE
North West
Cnr of Madiba and
LilianNgoyi Streets,
Pretoria
South Africa

www.armscomm.org.za

ARMS PROCUREMENT COMMISSION

Transparency, Accountability and the Rule of Law

Private Bag X02
The Tramshed
South Africa
Pretoria
1026
Tel: 012 358 3999
Fax: 012 358 3969
Email: admin@armscomm.org.za

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MEDIA STATEMENT

This Commission does not intend to get embroiled in a perpetual spat with the media on issues raised. However the Commission feel obliged to respond to an article published by one of the Sunday papers. Serious and damaging allegations were raised by the City Press, allegations which we were not given sufficient time to respond to. Given the serious nature of the allegations made, the Commission feels obliged to clarify the issues as raised.

The thrust of the article is that this Commission is disregarding vital evidence gathered by the erstwhile Scorpions in their investigations of the SDPP and comprising massive documentation which is stored in shipping containers at the headquarters of the Hawks. It is alleged that the Commission is avoiding this evidence because it implicates people associated with the ruling party. This is cited as part of the so-called second or secret agenda that the Commission's chairperson and its head of legal research are alleged to be pursuing.

The article is riddled with half-truths and is misleading to say the least. The simple facts are set out hereunder.

The Commission is fully aware of these documents. The reasons why we have not collected and analyzed them are, firstly, that we do not have sufficient safe storage facilities and, secondly, the state in which the documents are, where there are no indexes etc. The documents needed to be scanned and reduced to electronic format. We can confirm that we took possession of some of these documents precisely because they were in hard drives.

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The Commission was fully briefed by some of the officers who were involved in the investigations and are au fait with the contents of these documents and doubt was expressed whether the bulk of them would be of any assistance to the Commission's investigations. The Commission then had to decide whether to embark on a

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time consuming and costly exercise of scanning documents which may turn out to be of no use to the Commission or to rather lead the evidence of the relevant officers who would be better placed to know which of the documents are relevant and would be able to refer to them. We chose the latter course.

It is important to note that the information contained in these documents relates to the terms of reference that do not form part of the hearings proceeding on the 19th August 2013 and will therefore have no impact on these proceedings. It is information that relates to the terms of reference that will be considered in subsequent hearings. The Commission has nonetheless decided to proceed to scan the documents and service providers are being engaged to do that.

Issued by:

Mr William Baloyi

Spokesperson: Arms Procurement Commission

Contacts: 078 095 9477/083 390 7147

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Commissioners: LW Seriti JA (Chairperson); HTM Musi JP ; FM Legodi J

Head of Secretariat: P.N Luphondo