



EFF CALLS FOR THE IMMEDIATE REMOVAL OF BLADE NZIMANDE FOR TENDER-CORRUPTION AND MISMANAGEMENT OF FINANCES

Monday, 2 August 2021

The EFF calls for the removal of Minister of Higher Education Blade Nzimande, for the damning claims against him of tender corruption relating to the procurement of laptops for needy students and mismanagement of the finances of the Department.

While Nzimande was preoccupied with the celebration of the still-born SACP, suspended Director General Gwebinkundla Qonde made revelations of how he was forced to by-pass normal tender processes, in the procurement of 500 000 laptops for students who belong to the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS).

Qonde relayed how a nebulous Ministerial Task Team, which was established to handle the laptop procurement process, was instructed to continue with an existing contract to procure the laptops rather than advertise the tender to allow competitive bidding. This was done under the guise of emergency procurement, which was declined by Treasury, and resulted in Nzimande pressuring Director General Qonde, to proceed with the palpably irregular and illegal process of obtaining the laptops.

The EFF has long called for the removal of Blade Nzimande not only for his perennial failure in managing the Higher Education sector, while making no verifiable contribution to its progress, but also his rampant cronyism and lack of accountability.

Nzimande is well known for intimidation, using his position to frivolously remove individuals from Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETA's) in order to siphon money to entities closely linked to him and those he places in strategic positions. It is no surprise that he is embroiled in yet another scandal, while there is an ongoing forensic investigation into the finances of the National Skills Fund.

Blade Nzimande is callous and corrupt factionalist, whose only purpose in government is to defend the interests of those who secure his Ministerial position. In the wake of a deadly pandemic, he joins the long list of Ministers who have tried to use the emergency procurement process to further theft.

He has no regard for accountability, and is completely disinterested in running an open and accountable sector. Nzimande has turned what ought to be a developmental sector into his fiefdom, thriving at insults, evasion and taking public platform to ridicule students.

There is no reason why Nzimande is retained as a Minister, and the EFF reiterates that the only remaining explanation is that he is entrusted with furthering corruption by the Ramaphosa regime.

We call for the immediate removal of Blade Nzimande and for him to be subjected to a comprehensive investigation on the role he has played in collapsing SETA's and siphoning money from the Department through cronyism and irregular tender processes.

ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS

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