



## **EFF NOTES THE LEAVE OF ABSENCE TAKEN BY NSFAS BOARD CHAIRPERSON ERNEST KHOZA FOLLOWING REVELATIONS OF FRAUD, CORRUPTION AND MISMANAGEMENT OF STATE FUNDS**

Thursday, 11 January 2024

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) notes the leave of absence from the National Students' Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) by Board Chairperson Ernest Khoza, following the damning revelations of his collusion with NSFAS service providers to receive kickbacks and subvert investigative processes into mismanagement of state funds.

Khoza was exposed in recent audio recordings as having side-dealings with service providers to NSFAS, in collusion with the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology Blade Nzimande. Amongst other revelations which revealed a nefarious relationship between Khoza and service providers, it was revealed that Khoza sought to appoint a legal firm that he will be able to control, in the investigations into the awarding of the tenders for the cashless-payment systems.

This plot to appoint a legal entity that he could control, was contrived with one of the service providers of NSFAS, revealing a glaring conflict of interest and subverting of accountability. It is within these recordings, that it is revealed that Blade Nzimande utilized the SACP as an avenue to

receive kick-backs to the tune of R1 million, ostensibly to ensure the protection of the contracts of certain service providers.

On the 09th of January 2024, the EFF, through Member of Parliament and Member of the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education, Science and Technology Mandla Shikwambana opened a case of fraud, corruption and mismanagement of state funds against both Ernest Khoza and Blade Nzimande at Nelspruit Police Station, Mpumalanga.

The case number is CAS 107/1/2024.

The EFF therefore notes that after the opening of the case, Ernest Khoza found it in his conscience to take a leave of absence, to avoid further placing into jeopardy the lives of South African students by perpetuating a rot in NSFAS.

This however is not sufficient, as Khoza must know that there is no longer a place for him at NSFAS after he has been exposed as a leech who has prioritized self-enrichment at the expense of poor students. He and his cronies must know they will never again have access NSFAS and it's its procurement systems, and the sooner he resigns, the better.

The EFF reiterates its call for the immediate resignation of Blade Nzimande as the Minister of Higher Education not only for his incompetence and failure to bring stability in the sector for almost a decade, but additionally, for his involvement in the defrauding of NSFAS.

As things stands, more than 20 000 students are still awaiting their NSFAS disbursements from the year 2023, meaning that they will face obstacles

in registration for the 2024 academic year, and that they wrote their year-end exams without funding.

The upcoming academic year, in which NSFAS is faced with R13 billion budget cut from Treasury, and students are confronted with the newly proposed increases in tuition by 4.5% and residence fees by 6.5%, means students are faced with massive financial exclusion from the tertiary sector. The inevitable crisis requires bold and upright leadership that can fight for the doors of learning to be open at a legislative level, not a leadership such as the likes of Nzimande, who is preoccupied with fighting corruption scandals.

**Blade Nzimande Must Resign And He Must Resign Now!**

**ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS**

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