



THE EFF NOTES THE INCALCITRANT JOHANN RUPERT'S LEOPARD CREEK GOLF ESTATE REFUSAL TO ABIDE BY NKOMAZI MUNICIPAL EVALUATION RATES

Monday, 12 June 2023

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) notes the on-going, four year tit-for-tat legal dispute between the wealthiest lifestyle and luxurious Leopard Creek Golf Estate owned by Johann Rupert and the Nkomazi Local Municipality.

This dispute revolves around the valuation of the property which the municipality tags at R1.6 billion whereas Rupert put the figure at an undervalued R330 million in order to pay less rates and taxes. Rupert took the dispute over the valuation amount of the property to the District Appeal Board where it was dismissed and the property's value was set at R1.56 billion, confirming the Nkomazi Municipality's initial valuation amount.

Aggrieved, and in a typical racist, white man 'baas-skap' attitude, Rupert and company took the matter to the High Court in Mpumalanga seeking the valuation to be set aside, arguing that the Valuation Appeal Body failed to consider relevant considerations and acted arbitrarily in dismissing its application.

The High Court has now ruled in favour of the Leopard Creek Golf Estate and ordered the Valuation Appeal Board to reconsider the matter. The EFF therefore encourages the Nkomazi Municipality to appeal this judgement with the Supreme Court of Appeals (the Appellate Court) in Bloemfontein.

It is a known fact that golf estate properties are very popular for rental investments and second lifestyle homes for the wealthiest people in the country. Additionally, the

Leopard Creek Golf Estate has been one of the main sources of revenue collected through rates and taxes which sustain the Nkomazi Municipality's financial position.

If a municipality is deprived of the right to determine property valuation within its jurisdiction for its clients and customer's properties, this will set a devastating precedence for all municipalities in the country. No municipality will be able to determine valuation and accrue rates and taxes which are key sources of revenue collection in terms of Section 83 of the Local Government: Municipal Property Rates Act, Act No. 6 of 2004.

A reminder is also necessary that the continued existence of this golf estate is due to the extension of goodwill by the Nkomazi Municipality. It is built on ancestral land and a settlement was reached with locals in 2008 not to include this land in a land restitution claim, as long as the estate provided positive economic impact for all involved, as well as access to ancestral graves where needed.

Locals, however, have accused the management of the golf estate of denying them access to their ancestral graves to conduct rituals. They have also alleged that most of the graves have been desecrated and vandalised with no intervention from the government, municipality, nor the South African Human Rights Commission.

We once again highlight the ANC government's continued collusion with racist white monopoly capital through the neglect of the needs of local communities. It is no wonder Rupert feels entitled to act with immense calculated greed without consequences.

The Nkomazi Municipality must, therefore, refuse to be intimidated, submit to the pressure, nor surrender its inherent and democratic right to determine property valuation for the benefit of its residents. Rupert and his ilk should not be allowed to make and break rules as they please, by picking and choosing what laws they will abide by and which ones they will undermine.

It is clear that only an EFF government that is committed to the expropriation of land without compensation, can reconstitute Leopard Creek Golf Estate to its rightful owners.

This will go a long way to show arrogant white men like Rupert that the authority of the State cannot be bullied, or undermined willy-nilly, without consequences.



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