

Govender and Koko back at Eskom - but they're not out of the water yet

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Eskom's acting head of group capital Prish Govender returned to work on Tuesday while the head of generation Matshela Koko is scheduled to do so on Monday next week after both were cleared of wrongdoing by internal disciplinary processes and reinstated late last year.



Matshela Koko

However, their return to work does not mean they are out of the woods as both senior executives are due to appear before the parliamentary inquiry into state capture where they will be grilled by members of the public enterprises portfolio committee.

Koko has been implicated in the pre-payments made by Eskom to Gupta-owned Tegeta Exploration and Resources. Govender allegedly played a central role in Eskom's dealings with Gupta-linked financial advisory firm Trillian Mangement Consultants, which was paid nearly R600m for little or no work done.

The internal disciplinary inquiry against Koko was primarily focused on his alleged non-declaration of a conflict of interest in Eskom's awarding contracts worth about R1bn to Impulse International, a company in which Koko's step-daughter was involved. The enquiry found that while he had not followed set procedures on the system, he had declared his interests in written form to the former chairman of the board, Ben Ngubane, and CEO at the time, Brian Molefe.

DA spokesperson on public enterprises Natasha Mazzone said on Wednesday that both Koko and Govender still had a lot to answer for and would be questioned about these dealings and their links to the Guptas. Last month, Mazzone also laid criminal charges against Koko for possible contravention of the Public Finance Management Act in relation to the Impulse International contracts.

Mazzone said that the two men being found not guilty of wrongdoing did not clear them but simply raised more questions they would have to answer before the committee's inquiry. She said the internal disciplinary process was an "obvious and clear sham".

"We should not forget that the entire board is thoroughly compromised and they should not be allowed to make these kinds of decisions among themselves."

Eskom spokesperson Khulu Phasiwe said Eskom was emphasising to its managers the need for them to declare their conflicts of interest, saying, "This matter will be looked into more vigorously than before".

He acknowledged that the corporate governance problems at the utility had made it difficult for it to raise loans with lenders who demanded to know what was being done about them before considering providing finance.

Source: *BDpro*

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