

E-toll saga deepens, Fedusa sends Zuma open letter

In an open letter to President Jacob Zuma, the Federation of Unions of South Africa (Fedusa) says it has referred the issue of tolling prices, and how they are calculated, to the Competition Commission. Fedusa is seeking an urgent meeting with the president to discuss the issue.



(Image: GCIS)

The letter, penned by Dennis George, Fedusa's general secretary said the union was dissatisfied mostly by the setting of tolling prices in the light of the perceived lack of transparency and what some have called state-endorsed profiteering by Sanral.

"Our management committee therefore resolved yesterday to seek an advisory opinion from the Competition Commission regarding the setting of toll prices and with a view to the possible establishment of a regulatory body to oversee the balancing of interests in this process," read the letter.

George said the open letter to Zuma was as result of the non-response to their previous engagement with the presidency.

"Our previous letter (dated 13 January 2012) in which we requested an urgent meeting with your good self to discuss the then proposed implementation of the Gauteng e-tolling system refers. For reasons unbeknownst to us, we have as yet not received a response from your office," he said.

The e-tolling debacle had been unfolding for the past few months with objections coming from a number of organisations.



AA acts

The Automobile Association this week objected to plans by the South African National Roads Agency (Sanral) to establish a dedicated traffic police unit, saying it could be construed as the establishment of a private army for the sole purpose of toll enforcement.

"Our main concern regarding the process as it unfolded is the total lack of transparency. When the work on the Gauteng roads commenced, most people thought it to be mere infrastructure maintenance in preparation for the 2010 FIFA World Cup," said George.

In his letter George added that there was no direct indication and no proper prior consultation with interest groups about any future tolling costs at that stage.

"This lack of transparency continued since the first indication of possible costs to road users and we believe there is still a lack of a clear and open agenda on the matter," he said.