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Anti-poaching organisation wants Ramaphosa to acknowledge bribery allegations against Eric Nzimande

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Unathi Nkanjeni Reporter

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An anti-poaching organisation has urged President Ramaphosa to acknowledge the allegations of bribery against suspended KwaZulu-Natal court president Eric Nzimande.

Image: GCIS

As the world celebrates Rhino Day on Thursday, anti-poaching organisation Saving the World has called on President Cyril Ramaphosa to acknowledge allegations of bribery against suspended KwaZulu-Natal regional court president Eric Nzimande.

World Rhino Day seeks to create awareness of and find new ways to stop poaching, and keep the endangered species from extinction.

The organisation, in its fight against rhino poaching, met senior US Treasury officials in Washington DC to seek sanctions against certain SA court officials.

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With the Djimon Hounsou Foundation (DHF), it pleaded with Ramaphosa regarding Nzimande, who [Sunday Times Premium](#) has previously reported has been receiving his R1.4m salary since his 2018 suspension.

Nzimande, who is allegedly linked to a rhino poaching kingpin, was suspended for misconduct and faces 112 charges.

The anti-poaching organisation said Ramaphosa must push for his disciplinary hearing and enforce accountability of all implicated officials who allegedly made payments into Nzimande's bank account.

Attempts to contact Nzimande's legal representative, Ravindra Maniklall, were unsuccessful at the time of publishing. This article will be updated when a response is forthcoming.

Suspended KZN regional court president's 50 charges jump to 112

When his suspension was debated, Magistrates' Commission said it was a matter of 'national importance'
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“The Magistrates Commission and the National Prosecuting Authority have used every trick in the book to delay prosecution of these corrupt justice officials, while the ministry of justice claims it cannot interfere. It is an amazing disgrace,” said Jamie Joseph, Saving the Wild director.

“We call on the president to acknowledge these atrocities and bring sanctity back to the courts. The government states that rhino poaching is a high-priority crime — then why is there no minimum sentence for rhino poaching? This is a web of corruption and everyone is getting away with it.”

Joseph took particular issue with Nzimande, putting him at the centre of a “Blood Rhino Blacklist” and focusing on his alleged involvement in poaching cases in Zululand, especially that of alleged poaching “kingpin” Dumisani Gwala.

“Being quiet is being complicit to the crime,” said actor, producer and humanitarian Djimon Hounsou.

“Certain politicians are acting on personal interests with total disregard for human rights and the people of SA, and a natural heritage that must be protected. Enough with inertia. Let justice be done.”

[Actress Pearl Thusi](#) also joined the fight against rhino poaching, saying: “We owe it to future generations to find a way to share this planet in a sustainable way for all life.”



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Image: Steve Winter

When Nzimande's suspension was announced in October 2018, then justice minister Michael Masutha confirmed a host of allegations against him, reported [Sunday Times](#) .

“It is alleged, among others, that Nzimande on various occasions approached the deputy minister recommending the acting appointment of a number of attorneys for them to act in the regional courts within his regional division and, in turn, received numerous payments from these attorneys. It is also alleged Nzimande wrongfully victimised and/or sexually harassed a female acting regional magistrate,” Masutha said at the time.

The Magistrates Commission presented Nzimande's provisional suspension to parliament's select committee on security and justice on February 27 2019, with its chair, advocate Cassim Moosa, saying the charges were serious and numerous. He said the matter was of “national importance”. Speaking at the parliamentary committee meeting in 2019, where Nzimande's suspension was discussed, Moosa said since Nzimande's provisional suspension “the investigating officer has received death threats in this particular matter”.

“In addition, the acting regional court president, Sharon Marks, has had her computer hacked and information has been compromised. [Further] many of the witnesses ... have received visits from Nzimande relating to their evidence,” he said.

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