

Legal defence fund set up for Jacques Pauw over *The President's Keepers*

By [Khulekani Magubane](#)

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On Monday, Media Monitoring Africa announced a "legal defence fund" for journalist and author Jacques Pauw to fight legal challenges over his explosive 2017 book, *The President's Keepers*.

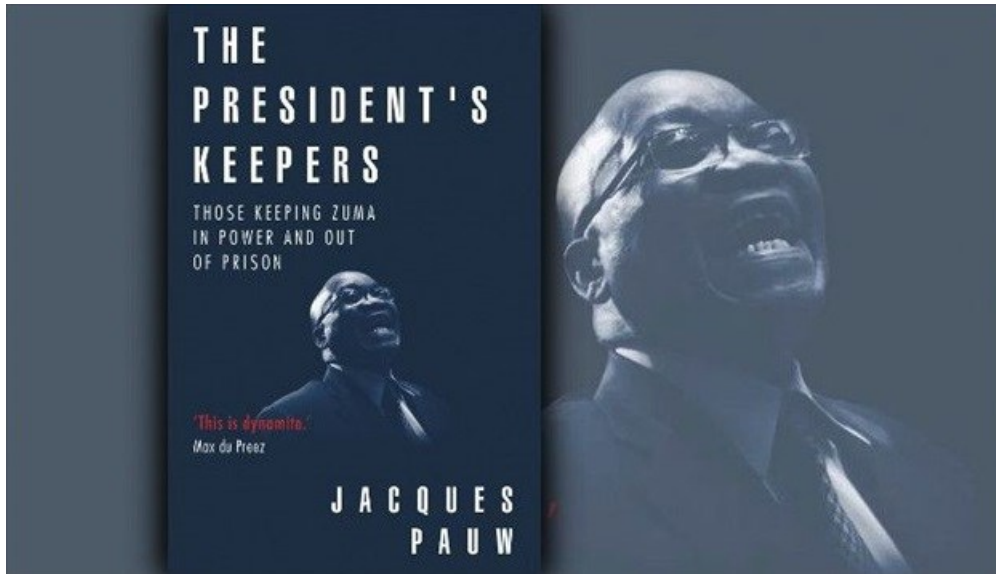


Photo: The Book List

The media advocacy organisation said on its website that this followed "kind offers from members of the public" to assist Pauw with the mammoth legal battles that lay ahead of him after the release of the book.

The bestseller contains damning claims about President Jacob Zuma, including that he extracted a salary from a private company while he was head of state, and that he subsequently failed to submit his tax returns after becoming president.

While the State Security Agency charged Pauw for the punishable offence of disclosing executive details, the South African Revenue Service has also threatened legal action against the journalist, citing violation of the Tax Administration Act.

Media Monitoring Africa said NB Publishers would respond to Sars's application to the High Court in Cape Town soon. Sources say that the state faces the quandary of having to validate Pauw's claims if the information disclosed is proven true in court.

"In what amounts to a relentless campaign of intimidation, there have also been threats of civil suits against Pauw and NB Publishers. Through attorney Willem de Klerk and with senior counsel, NB and Pauw have co-operated with the authorities but have also made it clear that they stand by the book and are prepared to defend it," the statement read.

Media Monitoring Africa said the legal defence fund was a crucial part of a campaign to protect the right to freedom of speech. The organisation's website included details for South Africans who wished to contribute money to the defence fund.

Source: BDpro

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