

Sanef appalled by assault on the Times' photographer by Dudu Myeni

The South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef) has strongly condemned former SAA board chairperson, Dudu Myeni, for her alleged assault on *TimesLIVE* and *Sunday Times* photographer, Sandile Ndlovu.



Source: © moneywebco.za moneyweb.co.za Sanef has strongly condemned former SAA board chairperson, Dudu Myeni, for her alleged assault on a photographer

The alleged assault took place on 11 April, at the Pietermaritzburg high court, where the corruption trial of former president Jacob Zuma was scheduled to begin.

Sanef has learnt that Ndlovu spotted Myeni, a close confidante of Zuma, in conversation with former president's supporters, Carl Niehaus, and photographed them together. Despite being in a public place, inside the high court building near the entrance, Myeni took exception.

According to Ndlovu, when Myeni, Niehaus, and Zuma's daughter Duduzile Zuma-Sambudla, emerged from the waiting room inside the court building, he moved towards them to obtain a photograph.

"They were steps away from me when I took the photographs, but before I could even think, Myeni grabbed my camera and pulled my bag. She said: "Why are you doing this? Why are you doing this?" She tried to hit me, but she missed," Ndlovu says.

Illegal to intimidate journalists

Sanef has expressed its surprise that Myeni seems unaware of the media's role in society and the principle of an open justice system enshrined in our Constitution.

The media is duty-bound to report on events in court buildings, photograph individuals and their supporters outside court, and cover proceedings inside the courtroom with the permission of the court's presiding officer.

Myeni and other political figures were in the Pietermaritzburg court building - a public place -- where Zuma's corruption trial hearing was to take place.

Sanef reminds Myeni that it is illegal to intimidate journalists and that she should expect the presence of the media in every court case — including her own — where she is an accused in a criminal matter at the high court in Johannesburg.

"We further remind Myeni that attempting to prevent journalists from reporting court proceedings infringes on the right of freedom of expression, enshrined in Section 16 of our Constitution.

"She should also realise that every citizen should observe the protection of a free press, freedom of speech and the free flow of information as these are cornerstones of our Constitution.

"Sanef supports the *TimesLIVE*, and *Sunday Times*' call on justice minister Ronald Lamola, and chief justice, Raymond Zondo, to ensure that courts are places where journalists can work unimpeded to inform readers, viewers and listeners about the court hearing and the events surrounding them," states the Forum.

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