

Zuma defiant ahead of next court appearance

The former President's lawyer, Advocate Mike Hellens, might have been in the dark due to a power cut when making his submissions to the KZN High Court (Pietermaritzburg) on Friday, but Jacob Zuma was crystal clear about his innocence, notes [Legalbrief](#). After the proceedings, Zuma, who apparently was suffering from low blood pressure and feeling unwell, told a large crowd that had gathered outside the court: 'We will reveal all next year in terms of how my rights have been violated. This case doesn't respect Zuma's rights. The Constitution must also protect me like it does to others.' Earlier, it had been agreed that the case against Zuma and French arms company Thint, the local subsidiary of Thales, which stands accused of corrupting him, be postponed, as predicted in Friday's [Legalbrief Today](#), to 20-23 May. **In what is their last chance to persuade the court that they have been unfairly treated by the authorities, Zuma and Thint will then argue for the charges against them to be permanently dropped.** A [BusinessLIVE](#) report notes Thint has launched a separate challenge to the case against it, based on a number of legal technical grounds. Zuma's lawyers argue the case against him has been irretrievably tarnished by undue delay and political interference. [News24](#) notes that before the resumption of the case, both parties have to submit papers, beginning with Zuma having to file his heads of argument by 18 April. The state has until 10 May to do the same.

*A [TimesLIVE](#) report notes the case against Zuma is linked to events that played out from 1997, when a French arms company called Thompson-CSF, now known as Thales, scored a R2.6bn contract to provide four navy frigates to the government as part of the wider R60bn arms deal. The state alleges that Thales agreed in 2002 to pay R500 000 to Zuma, then SA's Deputy President, for his 'political protection' in any investigation – a deal allegedly brokered by his former financial adviser Schabir Shaik. The state maintains that Shaik and his Nkobi Holdings made 783 payments to Zuma totalling over R4m in the 10-year period between October 1995 and July 2005. In return for these payments, the state claims, Zuma abused his formal position as MEC and as deputy president of the ANC to do unlawful favours for Shaik, who was jailed for his role in the matter. **In court papers filed last month, Zuma suggests there could be innocent explanations for the meetings he held to allegedly unlawfully assist Shaik's business interests.** He claims his corruption prosecution has been defined by political manipulation, undue delay and 'blatant prosecutorial bias' – all designed 'to prejudice me and declare me synonymous with crime and corruption'. It was Zuma's fourth appearance since the charges against him were re-instated.*