

Zuma silence on legal costs 'unconstitutional'

The DA says President Jacob Zuma's failure to say how much of taxpayers' money was spent fighting his corruption charges is unlawful and unconstitutional. In the latest legal battle facing the embattled President, the DA has filed papers in the Western Cape High Court. The party wants the conduct of Zuma and Deputy Speaker Lechesa Tsenoli, who presided over a National Assembly question-and-answer session, declared unlawful and unconstitutional, notes a [Business Day](#) report. The party also wants the court to direct Zuma to answer the question in writing within five days. DA leader Mmusi Maimane asked Zuma during the question-and-answer session in the National Assembly two weeks ago for the total amount of all legal costs incurred by the Presidency for the 783 counts of fraud, corruption and racketeering against him. In the most recent court papers, DA federal executive chair James Selfe said **it was estimated that Zuma's legal fees exceeded R10m, with the matter heard in court no fewer than six times over eight years.** 'It appears that it is the public purse that has borne all or most of these costs involved, rather than the President in his personal capacity,' Selfe said. When Zuma was asked the question in Parliament, he said the 'litigation was not at the instance of the President, but was initiated by the political party' and he had defended it as he was entitled to.

Besides taking the PAIA route, Maimane also plans to lay a complaint with the Public Protector after noting 'serious discrepancies' in Zuma's declaration records. According to a [Polity](#) report, Maimane revealed that the register of the President's interests did not contain any disclosures of alleged funding of the President's birthday parties in 2015 and 2016, by the Bosasa group, to the estimated value of R3.5m. **The declaration also did not mention any income or benefits received in relation to the non-security upgrades at Nkandla.** Asked whether there were any records of gifts from the controversial Gupta family, Maimane said he found nothing on the family. 'What I have seen today cements what I, like most South Africans already know – that President Jacob Zuma shows utter disregard for the law, and has at every turn sought to undermine the people of South Africa for his own personal gain,' stated Maimane.

Opposition parties want journalist and author Jacques Pauw to provide the authorities with proof Zuma received a R1m a month salary from Moodley. The parties were responding to Maimane's visit to the Union Buildings yesterday, notes a report in [The Mercury](#). In his book Pauw alleged the payments made Moodley Zuma's 'boss'. 'Someone is lying to us (over the R1m a month) and I doubt that it is Pauw,' said Maimane. UDM leader Bantu Holomisa warned that if no proof was submitted, the matter would fizzle out. **The onus is on Pauw and others to provide proof that the President had received a R1m salary from Moodley.** Zuma denied being paid by Moodley,' Holomisa said. The IFP's Narend Singh said if Pauw or anybody could produce tangible evidence that the allegations were true, the party would write to the Speaker and ask that Zuma be held in contempt of Parliament. COPE leader Mosioua Lekota said the party supported the DA's call to gain access to Royal Security's employment records for 2009 and a Public Protector investigation into the alleged breach of the Executive Ethics Code. Advocate Paul Hoffman, the director of rights group Accountability Now, said the Public Protector's investigations should yield results. 'The most efficient way to find out if any details have been omitted is to leave investigations to the Public Protector, whose job it is to protect the public from maladministration.' He said that they could also approach the courts to assist in gaining access to the financial records of Moodley's company.