

Zuma used state funds for Shaik trial – DA papers

Former President Jacob Zuma used state funds to ensure his financial adviser Schabir Shaik did not implicate him during his trial for corruption. A **Sunday Tribune** report says this information is contained in court papers filed by the Democratic Alliance in the Gauteng High Court (Pretoria) where the party is demanding answers from President Cyril Ramaphosa, who has until tomorrow to respond. According to the papers, the state paid more than R1m to allow Zuma to monitor the proceedings in Shaik's trial. The decision to pay was made despite the fact that Zuma was not an accused or a state witness in that trial. According to documents before the High Court, Advocate Lindi Vilakazi, then-legal and executive services in the Presidency, advised that Zuma's legal costs be paid by the state because 'his (Mr Zuma's) interests and the interests of the Presidency need to be protected'. He also urged the Presidency to brief its media liaison officers in an anticipated media backlash on such an instruction for counsel in the Shaik matter. **'It is now apparent that the state paid a sum of R1 020 930.40 towards Zuma's legal costs in the Shaik matter. Of this amount, R912 207.85 was paid towards counsel fees and R108 724.56 was paid towards attorneys' fees.** Further, it is clear from the fax (in the documents) that the attorneys' fees are the costs of Zuma's private attorney, Ms J Mohamed, (who was paid R77 148.98) and Woodhead Bigby & Irving Inc (who was paid R31 573.58),' according to a DA supplementary affidavit. The DA demanded that Ramaphosa advise: 'On what legal basis did the state pay for the costs of Mr Zuma's private attorneys? Who took the decision and when was this decision taken?'