

Sex, bribes and video tapes ...

When it comes to sexual promiscuity, former President Jacob Zuma raised the bar to dizzy heights. But **Legalbrief** reports that many other prominent political leaders have been forced to defend their extramarital activities, including his successor Cyril Ramaphosa who was accused of having a number of affairs (after a failed last-minute court bid to gag the media allegations in 2017). For the record, Ramaphosa conceded that he did have an extramarital affair, but warned that the claims 'extended far beyond an attempt at political smear'. What makes the current scandal involving Deputy Finance Minister David Masondo more troubling is that **he stands accused of using his influence and state resources to settle a personal score with his ex-mistress.**

The dramatic arrest of the woman accused of demanding a R300 000 bribe to stop harassing Masondo has become murkier due to a traumatic abortion, and his offer to pay her the money for psychological treatment. An **amaBhungane** investigation notes that Masondo is accused of using his influence and state resources to settle a personal score with his ex-mistress by having her arrested for extortion. **WhatsApp messages between the politician and the 30-year-old woman, who asked not to be named, suggest that it was he who first offered money because he 'wanted peace'.** Masondo, who is married and a father of two, did not want his relatives involved nor to have the woman contact his wife. The woman has also complained to the Health Professions Council of SA (HPCSA) and separately to the police about the gynaecologist whom the covert couple consulted to manage the termination. The woman was arrested outside her home in northern Johannesburg on 17 August when she accepted a bag of cash from men she understood were representing Masondo but were actually undercover police. She spent the weekend behind bars. 'David having me ... thrown in jail for nothing was one of the most violent acts I have experienced ... It will stay with me for the rest of my life,' she told **amaBhungane**, which has seen cellphone footage of the arrest. A report on the **News24** site notes that Hawks spokesperson Captain Ndivhuwo Mulamu said the sting was authorised by a Director of Public Prosecutions 'as per strict procedures' and that 'we do not take sides, we simply investigate the facts'.

The DA intends to lodge a complaint with Busisiwe Mkhwebane to investigate the matter. A Hawks spokesperson could not confirm the operation to **Fin24** and referred queries to the NPA, which would not comment. Neither Treasury nor the Presidency have responded on whether action will be taken by either of the authorities, but the DA has put out a statement making it clear that it intends to refer the incident to the Public Protector for further investigation. 'If Masondo did in fact use his influence and abuse his position, **it would be in breach of the Executive Members' Ethics Act**, and he should be investigated for such. The DA will refer this incident to the Public Protector for further investigation,' DA MP and finance spokesperson Dion George said.

Masondo yesterday labelled the allegations 'cunning, spiteful and bogus'. A statement by JP Louw, issued on behalf of Masondo, says that 'whilst keen to set the record straight, Dr Masondo has been advised by his lawyer to avoid commenting on the specifics of the matter as **it could undermine criminal investigations against the said woman**'. A report on the **News24** site notes that the statement also says that the reporting and 'claims made currently in the public domain are largely based on information opportunistically adjusted to suit an untruth. 'It seems the hope is to use the court of public opinion and exploit the current climate where, justifiably, the country is immersed with the sickening scourge of violence and discrimination against women,' it added.