

## Now Public Protector goes after Gordhan

A complaint against Public Enterprises Minister Pravin Gordhan – lodged two years ago by a member of former President Jacob Zuma's team – is being investigated by Public Protector Busisiwe Mkhwebane, who has subpoenaed Gordhan to appear before her next Wednesday, notes [Legalbrief](#). A [Business Day](#) report says the investigation relates to the early retirement package offered to former SARS Deputy Commissioner Ivan Pillay in 2010. Gordhan has informed Justice Raymond Zondo, chair of the state capture Commission of Inquiry, about the Public Protector's investigation saying **this was part of the 'misuse and abuse of public powers for suspicious objectives'**. According to Gordhan's statement, the complaint against him was lodged on 18 November 2016 by Lebogang Hoveka, then a speechwriter in Zuma's office. This was a month after Thuli Madonsela's term as Public Protector ended and Mkhwebane took office. It was also three weeks after former National Director of Public Prosecutions Shaun Abrahams withdrew fraud charges against Gordhan, Pillay and former SARS Commissioner Oupa Magashula regarding the retirement package, observes [Business Day](#). It notes it is not clear why Mkhwebane is set to interview Gordhan only at this point. 'Yes, the Public Protector subpoenaed and is investigating allegations of impropriety against Minister Gordhan. It has been alleged that the Minister approved Mr Pillay's retirement and bought off his pension balance irregularly and later allowed him to be re-employed by SARS,' spokesperson Oupa Segalwe reportedly told the newspaper. Segalwe added he was not at liberty to disclose the identity of the complainant. Presidential spokesperson Khusela Diko confirmed that Hoveka was still employed in the Presidency but said he was now attached to the office of the Deputy President.

*In his statement to the inquiry*, Gordhan expressed concern about intimidation, harassment and racist abuse against those appearing before the Zondo Commission, notes the [Business Day](#) report. 'People, including myself, who are appearing before the commission continue to be subjected to harassment and racist abuse in frivolous and vexatious litigation, in the media and on social media,' Gordhan said. Regarding the Public Protector's subpoena, Gordhan said this was the same issue for which he was charged criminally in 2016. NPA spokesperson Luvuo Mfaku said there was no criminal case pending against Gordhan relating to Pillay's retirement package. Gordhan said in his statement he believed the Public Protector's investigation was an abuse of public powers. **'I believe that the fight back is aimed at countering the work done this year by public servants and political office bearers to "recapture" the state and deliver on the constitutional mandate,'** he said. He added the commission should consider releasing interim reports or measures that could expose and help put a stop to ongoing malfeasance.