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Ethics Body Finds Zuma Innocent in Gifts Saga

Landers said the code provided for hearings if facts were in dispute, if the investigation was inconclusive or if the registrar of members' interests was unable to make a recommendation.

None of these circumstances existed and "the committee decided that hearings were not needed". Landers said there were five votes against the majority committee view.

After the meeting, DA committee members Errol Moorcroft and Hendrik Schmidt said: "The DA strongly rejects the majority view of the committee that Zuma be cleared of all charges with regard to the alleged nondeclaration of benefits.

"The loans and financial agreements constitute substantial financial benefits, which the deputy president failed to declare. He is therefore, in our view, in contravention of the parliamentary code of ethics.

"The documents with which the committee dealt reflected a most unusual set of financial circumstances, which raised serious questions of credibility. There were, for example, serious contradictions, which called for further investigation.

"The minority view was that it was essential for the affected parties to be required to give evidence before the committee to explain these contradictions. This was rejected by the majority," the DA said.

Landers said the charges that there were five loans that were actually gifts were dismissed as in each case there was a contract

with a specified interest rate. In one case the bill was sent to a Mr K Zuma and not to the deputy president, Landers said.

"In respect of the allegation that the deputy president lobbied for remuneration, the code defines remuneration as receipts or benefits in cash or kind. The information before the committee does not support the allegation that the deputy president received remuneration. The charge was accordingly dismissed," Landers said.

He stressed that the committee's decision was only a recommendation, still to be confirmed by the National Assembly.

The African Christian Democratic Party, whose chief whip Louis Green was suspended for publicly questioning documents before the committee, rejected the decision, saying the outcome was predictable.

With acknowledgement to the Business Day.

http://www.armsdeal-vpo.co.za/articles05/ethics_body.html
