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Buthelezi to write Nafcoc tell-all book despite Hlongwane threat

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A threatening legal letter from Reverend Khesane Hlongwane won't stop Khaya Buthelezi from writing a tell-all book about the National African Federated Chamber of Commerce (Nafcoc).

"I'm continuing with the book. I am currently garnering financial support from [businessman Patrice] Motsepe and current Nafcoc leadership to defend any legal challenge," Buthelezi told City Press this week.

"We are halfway through writing the book," he added.

Buthelezi served as the head of communications at Nafcoc.

Late last month, Hlongwane instructed Werksmans Attorneys director Dewald van den Berg to write Buthelezi a letter in response to an opinion piece written by the latter, which appeared in City Press.

City Press has a copy of the Werksmans letter.

Van den Berg said in the letter that the article contained "various false and/or defamatory statements, and/or innuendo".

"It is stated in the article of and concerning our client and Michael Leaf that they would each have raked in 'more than R40 million in 2009'. This statement was made in relation to a transaction involving Tsogo Sun and where R1.7 billion was paid out to Nafcoc's investment arm, Nafhold.

"You created innuendo in the article, that there was something untoward about the payment received by the client in 2009. This innuendo is denied. The aforesaid payment was a dividend received by our client.

"It is stated in the article of and concerning the so-called Hlongwane faction, under the leadership of our client, that it launched 'a wide-ranging forensic audit whose findings remain a mystery to this day'. It is denied that the findings of the audit were a mystery. The findings were openly discussed and even discussed to the relevant authorities."

According to the letter, Buthelezi's article stated that he was co-authoring a book, which presents "intimate details of the Nafcoc BEE transaction".

"We are instructed to demand from you ... that you provide our client with a written undertaking by or before January 14 2019, that you will not publish any false and/or defamatory statements and/or innuendo of/ or concerning our client," the letter said.

"Should you fail to comply with this demand, our client reserves his right to institute proceedings against you for, inter alia, defamation - claiming such damages as he may have suffered as a result of your unlawful conduct."

In response, Buthelezi said earlier this month in an email to Van den Berg that: "In the spirit of freedom of speech and expression as enshrined in the Constitution ... [Hlongwane's] side of the story will be captured accurately and fairly as the book seeks to reflect the truth of what transpired and not favour sides or factions in the Nafcoc incessant battles."

Buthelezi said this week that there had been no reply yet to his email.