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THIS DAY



Likely board chairperson reviewed ANC candidates for next year's election

Battle for heart of SABC begins

ANGELA QUINTAL

CAPE TOWN — Accusations of a blatant conflict of interests have arisen over the likely appointment of Eddie Funde, a communications consultant, as chairperson of the new SABC board.

Funde is a consultant for the department of communications and the chairperson of the ANC's "review of public representatives committee".

Opposition parties in parliament said yesterday that Funde's likely appointment showed the ruling ANC intended filling the new SABC board with its lackeys.

A heated battle for the heart of the SABC will play out in parliament early next month when its communications committee meets to recommend 12 new board members for the public broadcaster.

The list of nominees includes several controversial figures, including the publisher Thami Mazwai, the lawyer Christine Qunta and Funde.

Politicians say it has been apparent for a while that there are political moves to get rid of Vincent Maphai who as chairperson of the board has stood up to the government and has defended the independence of the national broadcaster.

Suzanne Vos, an IFP MP, said it was clear the ANC wanted to pack the board "with compliant party hacks".

"They are recycling people," she said referring to several candidates on the list who have served on government bodies. "[The ANC] would not recycle them if they didn't find them to be user friendly."

Candidates Funde and Noluthando Gosa were both controversial members of the former South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority.

Funde's review committee is responsible for auditing the performance of ANC MPs who will be put on the party's list of candidates for next year's election. The review took place while public interviews were held for the board.

Kgaogelo Lekgoro (ANC), chairperson of parliament's communications committee,



RULERS OF THE RICHTERSVELD: Eksteenfontein gangsters Darius, Ralton and Ryan (left to right) who call themselves the Zappaboyz.

Zappaboyz wait for the riches to roll in

STEPHAN HOFSTATTER

EKSTEENFONTEIN, Richtersveld — Darius, Ralton and Ryan call themselves the Zappaboyz and must still get used to their changed conditions.

"We rule the Richtersveld," says Ryan, hiding his *papsak*, a bag of cheap white wine, as a police van cruises past. "And now we're going to be rich."

Unemployed high-school dropout Ryan Farmer, 18, lives in one of four impoverished Northern Cape villages that won a constitutional court battle two weeks ago to have their diamond-rich ancestral land returned to them, along with its mineral rights.

Like the other villages — Sanddrif, Kuboes and Lekkersing — Eksteenfontein has hardly benefited from the fortune in diamond revenue flowing from the region into the state's coffers.

The town of about 1 000 even lacked electricity until four years ago. Shoddily-built matchbox houses, some abandoned half built, dot the barren surrounding slopes where scrawny goats in makeshift enclosures nibble on withered bushes.

The only water source is a borehole, which issues a tepid brackish stream that flows through the village.