

Niehaus Got Free Holiday, Has No Degree: Reports

Written by Rudi Prinsloo

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Former ANC spokesman Carl Niehaus does not have a doctor's degree in theology as claimed and allegedly got a R100,000 holiday to Mauritius for free, two newspapers reported on Tuesday.

According to Beeld newspaper, Niehaus did not get a doctor's degree in theology from the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands, as he had claimed. This was during his stint as South Africa's ambassador in Den Haag.

"I can inform you that Mr Carl Niehaus did not attain a doctor's degree in theology at the University of Utrecht," a university representative informed Beeld.

Niehaus' CV on the LitNet website states that he received his "doctorate" in theology summa cum laude from the University of Utrecht while he was ambassador.

Beeld reported that a journalist from its sister paper, Die Burger, last year asked Niehaus to clarify if he should be addressed as sir or doctor, to which he replied: "It does not really matter, but it is doctor."

According to another news report on Tuesday, Niehaus allegedly got the owner of an East London travel agency to pay upfront for a R100,000 holiday for himself and his family to Mauritius, and then never paid up.

"He got a free holiday and I lost my Christmas bonus," Let's Travel owner Cheryl Clur told The Star newspaper.

Niehaus allegedly approached her six years ago and played on her sympathies by saying he had had cancer.

"He told me he had been ill with leukaemia, had chemotherapy and wanted a holiday for his wife and two children. He played on my emotions with his illness."

When Niehaus returned from the holiday, Clur tried in vain to get him to pay up. He only paid her back about R20,000.

"When I read the SMS he sent to the people that he owed money to, published in the Sunday Times, it was like *deja vu*."

On Friday, the ANC held a press briefing confirming Niehaus' resignation after the Mail and Guardian reported allegations of fraud against Niehaus, most of which he admitted to in an interview with the paper.

The Sunday Times reported that Niehaus was facing eviction from his R45,000 a month Midrand home after apparently owing his landlord over R300,000. The paper published text

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messages allegedly sent by Niehaus to landlord Eric Corbishley, in which he blamed the ANC's "serious organisation challenges" for payment delays.

Meanwhile, the SA Institute of Race Relations warned that fraud and corruption within the African National Congress posed a threat to the rule of law in the country, Business Day reported.

"That the ANC was aware of the corrupt dealings of the man they appointed as their spokesperson to convey their election manifesto promise to act against corruption is beyond scandalous," the institute's deputy CEO Frans Cronje was quoted as saying.

"When the ruling party shows a disregard for the rule of law, that same disregard will begin to manifest itself in government."

Source : Sapa /th/fg

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