

Fraud Charges Laid Against Niehaus

Written by Rudi Prinsloo
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The Independent Democrats on Sunday laid charges of fraud against former ANC spokesperson Carl Niehaus, they said in a statement.

"The ID decided to lay the charge against Niehaus after he admitted to the Mail and Guardian that he had forged signatures while he was chief executive of the Gauteng Economic Development Agency (Geda) in an attempt to secure a loan," said Rose Gudhluza, ID chairperson in Gauteng.

Gauteng police spokesman Superintendent Eugene Opperman confirmed that a case against Niehaus was opened at the Johannesburg Central police station.

"The case was opened so it must be investigated," he said.

The Mail and Guardian on Friday reported that Niehaus was alleged to have forged signatures of senior Gauteng officials, including former finance MEC and current premier, Paul Mashatile while he was the chief executive of Geda.

The Mail and Guardian reported that the letter was an attempt to secure a loan from a businessman who had wanted favourable conditions related to Johannesburg property deals. He also admitted to having received R70,000 from murdered mining entrepreneur Brett Kebble.

The Mail and Guardian report said that Niehaus' financial problems were caused by his "extravagant" lifestyle.

Following the Mail and Guardian article on Friday, Niehaus offered to resign from his position but the ruling party has made it known that Niehaus will be re-deployed to another position within the ANC.

Party secretary-general Gwede Mantashe said: "We emphasise that he is a cadre of the movement who suffered a great deal for the ANC but that is no justification to do wrong... It is the responsibility of the movement to counsel cadres and facilitate them."

"Activists can't just be thrown in the dustbin saying he or she has outgrown their usefulness."

This, according to Gudhluza, was a "complete erosion of the values and vision that the party (ANC) fought for in the struggle against apartheid".

"Other business people and politicians have gone to jail and faced charges because of the ID's no-tolerance approach towards fraud and corruption and we cannot stand idly by while Niehaus is forgiven and redeployed by the ANC.

"People are no longer in positions of power to serve the nation and to make sure that they achieve the vision and values of the struggle.

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They are there to enrich themselves... the ANC has lost its soul," she said.

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