

# Shamila Batohi is the new NDPP

Career Advocate Shamila Batohi has been appointed as the new National Director of Public Prosecutions (NDPP).



Image: [@PresidencyZA on Twitter](#)

Batohi will commence her duties in February 2019 after serving her notice as Senior Legal Advisor at the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The announcement was made by President Cyril Ramaphosa on Tuesday following a gruelling interview process that was a culmination of a Constitutional Court directive in August for the appointment of a new NDPP within 90 days.

The court had highlighted the severe challenges that have confronted the National Prosecuting Authority in recent years, including leadership instability and a decline in public confidence in the institution.

Addressing the media, President Ramaphosa said Batohi's appointment was a response to the state of dysfunctionality and deficiencies in the NPA that were identified by the court.

"I am confident that Adv Batohi possesses all the attributes of a capable NDPP. Throughout her extensive and distinguished career, and in the course of the selection process, she has shown herself to be a fit and proper person."

The President said the NDPP occupies a vital position in the country's democracy, and makes an essential contribution to upholding the rule of law and ensuring the efficiency and integrity of law enforcement.

"At this moment in our history, as we address matters that South Africans are most concerned about – such as state capture, corruption and widespread crime – our country needs a National Prosecuting Authority that is above reproach in the performance of its mandate and that enjoys the confidence of the public.

"The NDPP must ensure that the [NPA] exercises its functions without fear, favour or prejudice and should not be beholden to any vested interests, whether in politics, in business or elsewhere. The NDPP needs to be able to take decisions independently and impartially," he said.

After the Constitutional Court ruling, President Ramaphosa decided to depart from previous practice of appointing the NDPP and sought the assistance of a panel of individuals from the legal fraternity and Chapter 9 institutions in recommending suitable candidates.

The panel was led by Energy Minister Jeff Radebe, as chairperson, and Auditor General Kimi Makwethu, South African Human Rights Commission Chairperson Bongani Majola, Jaap Cilliers from the General Council of the Bar of South Africa, Richard Scott from the Law Society, Lutendo Sigogo from the Black Lawyers Association, Lawrence Manye from the Advocates for Transformation and Mvuzo Nyotesi from the National Association of Democratic Lawyers.

Following a process of nominations, shortlisting and interviews that were open to the media, the advisory panel proposed five candidates for the NDPP position.

Batohi began her career as a junior prosecutor in the Chatsworth magistrate's court in 1986 and steadily rose through the ranks to become the Director of Public Prosecutions in KwaZulu-Natal.

She was seconded to the Investigation Task Unit established by President Nelson Mandela in 1995 and later served as the first regional head of the Directorate of Special Operations based in KwaZulu-Natal.

For much of the last decade, she has served as a Senior Legal Advisor to the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

"Despite the many challenges the NPA has faced in the past, we know that there are women and men of great ability, experience and commitment within the NPA who are dedicated to doing their job and doing it well," said President Ramaphosa.

"It is our collective responsibility to ensure that the conditions exist for them to effectively serve the cause of justice and to meet the great expectations that the South African people have of them."

Embracing the challenge, Batohi thanked the President for appointing her and the interview panel for the recommendation.

"I accept with gratitude the opportunity to serve as the NDPP. My only obligation is to serve the country with humility and dignity and to the best of my ability," she said.

She defined her appointment as a historic moment for women in the country, saying it is a recognition by the President that the role of women in the pursuit of equality and justice is important.

"The President and, by proxy, the people, have bestowed a lot of confidence in me and the least I can do is to reciprocate that confidence," she said.

She added that her leadership would seek to work with the different sectors of society in an effort to promote justice. Building a harmonious NPA also ranked amongst her primary objectives.

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