

SAHRC calls on Zuma to extend commission deadline

The SA Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) on Thursday (22 August) called on President Jacob Zuma to extend the deadline of the Farlam Commission of Inquiry.



"Decisive and procedural changes need to be made to enable the commission to fulfil its duties," Michelle le Roux, for the SAHRC, told the Farlam Commission sitting in Centurion.

Parties met on Wednesday (21 August) to discuss how to co-operate and proceed fully at the inquiry within the specified time. Zuma has extended the deadline for the commission to October.

"The looming October deadline is one reason why change is also necessary at the moment," Le Roux said.

Evidence-leaders head Geoff Budlender lodged an application on behalf of the parties that suggested several changes to the commission's procedures. "At the current rate of progress, we will not complete the task at hand within the time afforded," Budlender said.

Proposals included that witnesses called to testify present a statement setting out their evidence in detail and then give short oral evidence. Another proposal was that evidence-leaders ensure the evidence of a party not represented at the commission be put to witnesses giving evidence.

Commission chairman, retired Judge Ian Farlam, noted the application as being on record. "We will consider the application, but we will not be able to make a ruling today [Thursday]," he said.

The commission is investigating the deaths of 44 people killed during strike-related unrest at Lonmin's platinum mining operations at Marikana, near Rustenburg in North West, in August last year.

Police shot dead 34 people - almost all striking mineworkers - on 16 August last year, while trying to disperse and disarm them. Ten people, including two police officers and two security guards, were killed in the preceding week.

Source: Sapa via I-Net Bridge

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