

ABT Telecoms slams R265m tender report by *City Press*

ABT Telecoms has issued a statement in response to a *City Press* article with the headline '[Premier's office probes R265m telecoms tender](#)'.



The article mentions an alleged irregular appointment of a five-year tender contract worth R265m to ABT. It also mentions that Public Works appointed the company to render telecommunications on 76 sites of the Mpumalanga government and more. However, it is alleged that the province's telecommunications have been down since Kwa Mahlaba Connect handed operations over to ABT on 30 October 2020.

ABT Telecoms said the following as a response:

*“ The allegations that were raised in these articles cannot go unchallenged. Especially in light of the fact that the matter is sub-judice. It is important to note that **City Press** articles has extracts out of an affidavit solely by Kwa-Mahlaba Connect and has not taken extracts from the State's affidavit, nor ABT Telecoms - thus making the story one-sided. ”*

Thula Nkumane of ABT Telecoms says: "The articles inexplicably omitted to explain the alleged irregularities around this appointment. Neither did they provide the readers with any tangible proof of actual or perceived irregularity."

Nkumane further explained that ABT does not have any politicians beholden to it; nor does it engage in business with any politically exposed people.

"In the normal course of doing business, ABT Telecoms submits proposals to both the private and public sectors. ABT Telecoms conducts its business above board in the spirit of solving societal problems, driving innovation and achieving commercial success. The company does not have any politicians beholden to it; nor does it engage in business with any politically exposed people," says Nkumane.

A supposed refusal to handover to ABT

The statements also claim that the articles blatantly blame ABT Telecoms as being responsible for lack of telecommunications services after being awarded the contract to provide these services to the Mpumalanga Provincial Government.

"The articles do not explain that Kwa-Mahlaba Connect, the former service provider, refused to do a handover to ABT. They refused to hand over the State's telephone numbers in the range of 013, 766, 0000 and 9999 to ABT Telecoms to facilitate a seamless continuation of telecommunication services to Government offices and facilities," says Nkumane.

Nkumane also addressed the claim that ABT Telecoms lacks the capacity and infrastructure to provide telecommunications to the provincial government.

"The articles display a poor understanding of the telecommunications industry and how it works. ABT Telecoms has built telecoms infrastructure for Mpumalanga without a glitch. Over and above this contract, ABT has built telecommunications infrastructure in the Free State and KZN- thus rendering the argument around capacity nonsensical."

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