

Michael Donen to head up inquiry into decuplets story

Veteran anti-apartheid lawyer, advocate and acting judge, Michael Donen SC, has been appointed by Independent Media to chair its external inquiry into the decuplets story that was published in the *Pretoria News* at the beginning of June.



Advocate Michael Donen SC

Since breaking the news of the miracle birth of the 10 babies, the story has garnered international exposure and local censure, with many decrying the news as fake. Piet Rampedi, the editor who exclusively broke the story, maintains that Gosiame Sithole was pregnant with multiple babies, and believes his story still holds.

However, the story has become mired in controversy, conflicting accounts, and contradictory evidence, with Independent Media's reputation also under the spotlight. Consequently, the news organisation has launched several measures to uncover the facts behind the story.

One of those actions is an independently led inquiry, which will now be chaired by Donen.

Donen is well-placed to lead this inquiry, having had experience leading other inquiries in the past, particularly his appointment by President Thabo Mbeki to head the Donen Commission of Inquiry into the Oil for Food Programme in Iraq.

His impeccable reputation spanning a legal career of more than three decades, specialising in human rights, epitomises integrity, fairness, impartiality, and intellectual rigour.

Executive chairman of Independent Media, Dr Iqbal Survé, in appointing Donen to head up the inquiry said: “We are very pleased that Michael will be overseeing this important inquiry. As he has done for every step of his remarkable career, he will do what is right, not what is easy and we hope that having him as the lead, will also instil the necessary public confidence in the process that must unfold to get to the truth in this matter.”

Donen commented that he is looking forward to investigating the situation in question and attempting to clear up the confusion, which appears to exist at present.

The inquiry is part of a three-pronged action plan put in place by Independent Media, that includes Independent Media’s Press Council and Press Ombudsman, as well as a separate investigation of the decuplets story led by Independent Media’s Investigations Editor, Sizwe Dlamini. Independent Media will publicly release all findings and recommendations on completion of all inquiries and investigations.

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