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| **MEDIA STATEMENT** **COMMITTEE FOR SECTION 194 ENQUIRY HEARS EVIDENCE ON VREDE DAIRY INVESTIGATION** **Parliament, Wednesday, 27 August 2022 –** The Committee for Section 194 Enquiry into the Public Protector (PP) Adv Busisiwe Mkhwebane’s fitness to hold office today resumed its hearings after a week break, with evidence from a witness, Mr Sphelo Samuel, regarding the Vrede Dairy investigation. Mr Samuel who works in the Free State Office of the Public Protector told the committee that he worked under the previous PP and the current one.  The investigation into the Vrede Dairy started during the term of the former PP, Adv Thuli Madonsela. He said Adv Madonsela was unhappy with the provisional Vrede Dairy report and requested him to investigate the role of politicians in the matter. However, Adv Madonsela’s term of office ended before the completion of the investigation. The committee heard that attempts were allegedly made by Adv Mkhwebane, as the new PP to ensure that no adverse findings against politicians were contained in the report. This included findings against the former Premier of the Free State, Mr Ace Magashule and the former Free State MEC for Agriculture Mr Mosebenzi Zwane. Mr Samuel told the committee that he succumbed to Adv Mkhwebane’s directive. A revised report which Mr Samuel was involved in, had not been limited to politicians failing to take disciplinary action only. He said both the former Premier and the former Agriculture MEC were implicated in the transactions and Mr Samuel concluded that they were “culpable”. He made findings that Mr Magashule and Mr Zwane should be held liable because they had overall responsibility.  “In that report I basically disobeyed the directive of the Public Protector that we should not make findings against politicians," said Samuel. He emphasized that he felt very strongly that there should be findings against them. According to his evidence, Mr Samuel was also concerned about legal cost in the Office that was escalating and he made enquiries about the fact that the Office was getting more and more involved in litigation. He said that had negatively affected other programmes of the Office in the process. He told the committee that he looked into the finances and noted that R10 million which was budgeted was topped up with R6 million which was ring-fenced for legal fees in the middle of the financial year. Mr Samuel said that things got worse in the 2019/20 financial year as the expenditure for legal fees and other professional fees in the Office of the PP increased from just over R17 million which was the budget of the Office in the previous financial year, rocketed to R47.2 million. “That was an astonishing increase” said Mr Samuels.Mr Samuel said community outreach programmes that were conducted by the PP were significantly reduced. He added that the PP’s Office reduced its targets for community outreach engagements as a way of ensuring that it still met them.He further stated that it was objectionable that PP staff were constantly forced to account for their investigations and were threatened with adverse consequences if they failed to do so and that had an adverse impact on their morale. He told the committee that later he received a letter which he said “friendly requested me to resign”.Committee Chairperson Mr Qubudile Dyantyi said the committee noted the response by Adv Dali Mpofu on behalf of the PP, that in reference to a letter sent to President Cyril Ramaphosa to testify before the enquiry, the request was declined. Mr Dyantyi indicated that the committee will continue with Mr Samuel tomorrow.  The enquiry is hybrid and can be followed live on Parliament’s media platforms. Committee documents can be found on its page on [Committee for Section 194 Enquiry - Parliament of South Africa](https://parliament.us15.list-manage.com/track/click?u=174940c63c5e06b60f5650bea&id=bdaa2399e8&e=da105e4f6a) **ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMITTEE FOR SECTION 194 ENQUIRY, MR QUBUDILE DYANTYI.** For media enquiries or interviews, please contact the committee’s Media Officer:**Name: Rajaa Azzakani (Ms)****Tel: 021 403 8437****Cell: 081 703 9542****E-mail:** razzakani@parliament.gov.za To keep up to date with the work of Parliament, please go to the daily Parliamentary Papers:[Parliamentary Programme](https://parliament.us15.list-manage.com/track/click?u=174940c63c5e06b60f5650bea&id=bc121d4a89&e=da105e4f6a), [Order Papers](https://parliament.us15.list-manage.com/track/click?u=174940c63c5e06b60f5650bea&id=34b8889b22&e=da105e4f6a), [Minutes of Proceedings](https://parliament.us15.list-manage.com/track/click?u=174940c63c5e06b60f5650bea&id=68c39be593&e=da105e4f6a), [ATCs](https://parliament.us15.list-manage.com/track/click?u=174940c63c5e06b60f5650bea&id=055e8fccbf&e=da105e4f6a), [Question Papers](https://parliament.us15.list-manage.com/track/click?u=174940c63c5e06b60f5650bea&id=fb89560f80&e=da105e4f6a), [Internal Question Papers](https://parliament.us15.list-manage.com/track/click?u=174940c63c5e06b60f5650bea&id=93635a66f2&e=da105e4f6a). To access your Parliament online press control (Ctrl) and simultaneously click one of the icons below:

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