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Media Statement

Note: Please attribute this statement solely to the Office of the Chief Justice (OCJ) as a Government Department and not the Chief Justice of the Republic of South Africa or the Judiciary.

On 13 May 2025, the High Court of South Africa Gauteng Local Division, Pretoria, handed down judgment dismissing an intervention application lodged by former managers (intervening party) of the Office of the Chief Justice (OCJ).

The intervening party lodged an application to be joined in Part B of the review application lodged by the OCJ on 13 August 2023 which concerns the self-review of procurement of CaseLines from Thomson Reuters (UK) in May 2022.

The matter was heard by the Court on 12 May 2025 and the judgment handed down electronically. In handing down judgment, the Court noted:

“The entire application for intervention is predicated on what are contended to be the false allegations and the apprehension that the court hearing the review and deciding it may well make findings against the applicants during its consideration and ultimate decision of the matter.” (at paragraph 7).

“In consequence of the grounds which the applicants assert cast their conduct in a negative light, they say that they ought to be given leave to intervene to protect their *‘rights to dignity and right to be heard.’*” (at paragraph 9)

In their application, the intervening party had made allegations calling into question the honesty and integrity of the Secretary General of the OCJ who had deposed to the affidavits on its behalf in the review proceedings. In that regard, the OCJ had applied to strike out the contents of a significant number of paragraphs of the founding affidavit which it regards as scandalous and vexatious. The Court noted as follows in this regard:



“... On the conspectus of the allegations, none of them advance the case for intervention or for that matter the review.” (at paragraph 17)

“Such allegations appear to have been made with the sole purpose of humiliating, demeaning and bringing the former Secretary General into disrepute by suggesting that she was somehow involved with or abetted impropriety. There is no evidence to support this at all.” (at paragraph 18)

“I am persuaded that the allegations made in the paragraphs in question are scandalous and vexatious and are to be struck out.” (at paragraph 20)

In the result, the Court dismissed the application for intervention. The Court further ordered that the ‘scandalous and vexatious’ allegations made by the first applicant in their founding affidavit be struck out.

The OCJ had further sought a punitive costs order against the applicants in relation to the ‘scandalous and vexatious’ allegations made by the first applicant in their founding affidavit. The Court agreed that a punitive costs order was warranted and ordered the first, second, third and fourth applicants to pay the respondent’s costs on the scale as between attorney and own client, including costs of two counsels who represented the OCJ in this application.

The full judgment is attached for ease of reference.

The OCJ welcomes the judgment of the Court and looks forward to having its self-review matter against Thomson Reuters heard and brought to finality. The date of set-down is 27 May 2025.

Ends.

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Issued by the Office of the Chief Justice

