



JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION

MEDIA STATEMENT

JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION'S DECISION ON A COMPLAINT LODGED BY MR THOZAMILE SEMEKAZI AGAINST JUDGE BELINDA HARTLE OF THE EASTERN CAPE DIVISION OF THE HIGH COURT

[1] Following the meeting of the Judicial Service Commission (Commission), excluding the members designated by the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces on 5 March 2026, the parties were informed, by the Secretariat of the Judicial Conduct Committee (JCC), that the Commission had resolved to request the Chief Justice to appoint a Judicial Conduct Tribunal (JCT) in terms of sections 19 and 21 of the Judicial Service Commission Act, 1994 (JSC Act) to enquire into allegations of incapacity, gross incompetence, and gross misconduct against Judge Hartle. Subsequently, the parties were invited to make written submissions to the Commission on whether the Commission should advise the President that Judge Hartle's suspension is desirable under section 19(4) of the JSC Act, read with section 177(3) of the Constitution, and the conditions of such suspension.

[2] The Commission, excluding the members designated by the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces, held a meeting on 28 April 2026 to consider the parties' written submissions. After considering the submissions of the parties, the Commission resolved that it is desirable that Judge Hartle be suspended from office in terms of section 177(3) of the Constitution, with the condition that she is allowed to finalise her partly heard matters and reserved judgments during the period of her suspension.

Furthermore, the Commission has directed that the Head of Court in the Eastern Cape Division of the High Court take reasonable measures to minimise interaction between Judge Hartle and Mr Semekazi during the period of suspension. Judge Hartle's suspension will endure until the complaint against her has been finalised.

Issued by the Secretariat of the Judicial Service Commission

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