

## Mutorwa's NAC director removal branded illegal

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**Sisa Namandje**



**Beverley  
Gawanas-Vugs**



**John Mutorwa**

Mutorwa's NAC director removal branded illegal

**LAWYER Sisa Namandje said he will file urgent court papers today to challenge the decision by works minister John Mutorwa to fire a former Namibia Airports Company director.**

Mutorwa removed Beverley Gawanas-Vugs from the NAC board last week, but she only learnt about the sacking through a media statement. Namandje wrote to Mutorwa on Friday, giving the minister an ultimatum to reinstate Gawanas-Vugs by 17h00 that day, or face a court challenge. The lawyer confirmed to *The Namibian* yesterday that he will file court papers today to defend Gawanas-Vugs.

"The public, abusive and yet unlawful removal of our client lacks any element of fair dealing and simple civility on the part of the minister," Namandje said.

Apart from the fact that the minister acted unlawfully, he did not display appropriate concern to the reputational consequences on Gawanas-Vugs, the lawyer said. Gawanas-Vugs, an accountant, was lauded by president Hage Geingob last year for fighting corruption at the NAC.

Namandje said he will approach the court to get a temporary order suspending the implementation of Mutorwa's decision, pending the finalisation of the main application to declare the decision null and void. The lawyer wrote to Mutorwa last week, stating that the removal of Gawanas-Vugs was illegal, and that the minister had no powers to do so.

"We have properly considered the matter, including the provisions of the Namibia Airports Company Act, which does not give the minister the right to remove directors," said Namandje.

He added that Gawanas-Vugs was not given "reasonable and fair notice of her removal, and was further not given a fair and reasonable opportunity to make representations as to why she cannot be removed" as a board member of the NAC.

Works minister John Mutorwa told *The Namibian* yesterday that the matter is in the hands of government lawyers. He, however, insisted that he and the works ministry, as the appointing authority, are going to defend the matter in the courts if necessary.

"Reinstatement is not an option at this moment," he added. Mutorwa told *The Namibian* last week that he had reasons for removing her.

"I just removed her. I have my reasons to remove her. After extensive consultations, my ultimate decision was to remove her," he said, adding that he cannot disclose his reasons for removing Gawanas-Vugs.

The NAC is a national agency tasked with managing eight national airports countrywide, but it has been a battleground between technocrats and politicians over the awarding of tenders worth billion of dollars. The outspoken Gawanas-Vugs was known to reject pressure from politicians and a clique of technocrats in the works ministry who pushed for tenders.

The lack of transparency and sudden removal of Gawanas-Vugs comes at a time when the NAC is set to award multibillion-dollar contracts, including the upcoming upgrading of the Hosea Kutako International Airport, with a loan from the Chinese government.

Mutorwa announced last week that he appointed businessman Leake Hangala onto the NAC board.

Hangala told *The Namibian* yesterday that he is ready to take up his new role as NAC director and chairperson. "I have not yet gone to the office of the NAC. I have to be briefed," he said, adding that the public expects the issues around the NAC to be resolved, with the support of the media.

Hangala was part of the Namibian delegation which accompanied Geingob to China this year. He went there twice as part of the delegation. He insisted that his business trips to China were about his private businesses, and not airports. "I never, ever had discussions about airports in China. The NAC had their own delegation there," he said