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Bonginkosi Madikizela File photo: INLSA

Cape DA leader calls Knysna mayor's removal a 'coup d'etat'

By Dominic Adriaanse  Jun 8, 2018



Cape Town - DA Western Cape leader Bonginkosi Madikizela has likened the booting of Knysna Executive Mayor Eleanore Bouw-Spies to a coup d'etat, saying the DA councillors who voted in favour of the ANC's motion of no confidence did so out of personal interest.

Madikizela was responding to questions following an interview on CapeTalk radio, where he accused the DA councillors, including newly elected Mayor Mark Willemse, of colluding with the opposition.

He said they would be reprimanded, after never having voiced their unhappiness in the mayor with the DA leadership.

The party's leadership would visit the Eden District town to establish the facts.

However, according to Knysna activist Mike Hampton, Madikizela has reacted "appallingly" to the crisis in Knysna, and had lied to the media and the public that he was unaware of problems with the former mayor.

"Madikizela's latest comments don't stand alone. On May 27 this year, Madikezela tripped himself up badly on Facebook, denying the DA's responsibility to investigate and claiming my allegations were 'without substance'.

"He did so before on the Facebook page of Mawande Jara, radio station manager for Radio Zibonele.

"Madikizela did everything to avoid me in the comment threads, making statements to others that equated to an unbelievable 'it's not my fault'. He obviously also avoided photos of the evidence-of-corruption package I sent him in January this year."

In response, Madikizela said: "I still maintain these allegations are baseless because none of the law enforcement agencies took them seriously enough to investigate. That is what Mike Hampton was also saying.

"The difference between us and other parties is that we hold our public representatives accountable; that should be applauded. You don't see this in other parties."

In response to the vote in favour of ousting Bouw-Spies, he said, a conscience vote must be in the interest of the voters, not personal interest.

The mayor was voted out at a special council meeting late on Wednesday. The motion was tabled by the ANC, citing Bouw-Spies's failure to perform her duties.

DA councillor and Bouw-Spies's former deputy, Peter Myers, confirmed that he and Willemse were the only two of 10 DA councillors who had remained during the vote.

"The other eight walked out of council. We voted by hand and the Speaker voted against the motion of no confidence. We understand that the DA leadership is on their way to Knysna, and we welcome it as this would be the start of charting a way forward to the benefit of Knysna," Myers said.

Knysna ANC chief whip Titi Gombo said the marathon meeting on Wednesday was a fiasco, and demonstrated the DA's inability to govern.

"Our motion to remove (the mayor) suggests that as the opposition party, we cannot watch whilst the mayor fails to provide leadership," she said, adding Bouw-Spies's removal proved it was not only the ANC that had lost confidence in her leadership.

Knysna municipality spokesperson Chumisa Khalawe said the new executive mayor was still settling into office and would prepare a statement in due course.

Bouw-Spies did not respond to questions before deadline.

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