



## Nasionale Nuusbrieff / National Newsletter 26B/2018

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### SAOU REACTION TO FBSAOU

#### THE SMEAR CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE SAOU HAS ESCALATED TO NEW DIMENSIONS SAOU MEMBERS MUST BE ON THEIR GUARD

This National Newsletter is directed to SAOU members on the authority of the National Standing Committee which is comprised of the President and the nine Provincial Chair Persons. It is presented in a question-and-answer format to ensure that specific aspects are clearly highlighted.

1. Is the SAOU aware of a petition by a group of concerned members (FBSAOU)?

The SAOU is indeed aware of the group known as the Forum of Concerned SAOU members. Extensive correspondence has already been exchanged with them and there has been response to each and every enquiry received from them. The letter from Mr Burger in which he raises certain objections and complaints against the elected leaders, in his capacity as one of the spokespersons for Club 42 (and now also the FBSAOU), has been made available in its entirety to the Honourable, Judge Hartzenberg. The question that automatically arises is why this group waited until after the closing date for the tabling of complaints, (25 May 2018) before proceeding with the establishment of the FBSAOU? The only conclusion that must unfortunately be drawn from this latest attempt is that it cannot be taken in good faith and that it does not have the best interests of the SAOU at heart.

2. Is an auditor an integral part of the investigation?

As stated above, Judge Hartzenberg is a highly respected judge in legal circles. He will not tolerate any irregularities of whatever nature, and was appointed to thoroughly investigate every allegation made by Mr Pashut and the concerned members. Given that some of the allegations refer to financial irregularities, Judge Hartzenberg insisted on the appointment of a highly experienced forensic auditor who has already been busy for several weeks with his in-depth investigation.

3. What is envisaged with the judge's report on his independent investigation?

The expectation is that the investigation will be completed within the following two months where after the report and recommendations will be referred to the National Executive Council (NEC), the highest authority between the three-yearly congresses. The NEC will consider appropriate further measures following a thorough evaluation of the report. It is also expected that the report will be available on the SAOU's website.

4. Is there merit in the request for a Special Congress?

The cart is being put before the horse. Judge Hartzenberg, in cooperation with an experienced forensic auditor, is in the process of investigating each and every allegation, thoroughly. The Standing Committee is committed to driving the judge's report to its logical conclusion. The National Standing Committee and every Provincial Standing Committee and members of the Provincial Executive Councils are legally

elected structures that acquit themselves throughout, with commitment and distinction. Should the judge's report justify it, a Special Congress will be arranged without serious destabilisation of the SAOU.

5. It has been claimed that the full-time President of the SAOU "receives an income of R1.4 million." Is this figure correct?

His "alleged income" is absolutely false. This allegation is sent into the world with only one purpose in mind: To besmirch the good name and reputation of the President. The President has agreed to have the full details of his compensation package made available by the SAOU in order to counteract the false claims that have been made.

The President receives the following compensation:

- A salary from the Mpumalanga Department of Education as if he was still a school principal.
- As a result of his election as President he forfeits the following income and benefits that he would have received had he not been elected President-
  - His hostel allowance as resident hostel master;
  - His Section 38A compensation received from the Governing Body;
  - Residence on the school grounds;
  - Meals from the hostel kitchens.

There is a standing decision by the Standing Committee of the SAOU and implemented over many years (and which consequently applied to previous Presidents) that states that an elected President should not be in a lesser financial position following his election to the post of President than he was before his election to that post.

The SAOU Standing Committee calculated the total lost allowances incurred by the President as a result of his election. The losses amount to **R539 000**. He also has the use of an SAOU pool car and has already travelled more than 80,000 kms during the last 15 months in the execution of his official duties.

6. Is the compensation of the President and other senior employees morally justifiable?

Arising from the answer given to the above question, the Standing Committee judges it to be absolutely morally justifiable that the full-time President should be compensated for the actual loss of income resulting from his acceptance of the office of full-time President of the SAOU.

If the extent and complexity of the post, its decisive influence on education as a whole as well as the President's personal sacrifices are taken into account, then the SAOU component of his compensation is totally defensible.

The President spends on average three nights a week away from home in pursuit of his official duties and works over weekends in preparation for the meetings scheduled for the following week. It would be a crying shame if the Standing Committee did not see to the proper financial well-being of its President. In actual fact, the President is in precisely the same financial position he was in before he accepted the post of President.

In regard to the compensation of the senior employees of the SAOU, the Standing Committee can assure you that the compensation was not determined lightly. It is based on the objective recommendations of the highly accredited external firm of manpower consultants, PE Corporate Services, and their comparisons with the compensation packages of other unions regarding comparable posts. In that regard too, the Standing Committee handled its responsibilities accountably and therefore rejects any suggestion of irregularity or self-enrichment. The Standing Committee respects the privacy of its employees and for that reason compensation is not a matter for public discussion.

7. OGOD court-case in 2017

It is a fact that the Standing Committee of the SAOU was heavily opposed to the application by OGO to have religion prohibited in schools. It was precisely for that reason that the SAOU applied to be admitted as an *amicus curiae* (*friend of the court*), in order to oppose OGO's application. After receiving advice

from a leading senior advocate who specialises in constitutional court cases it appeared that the SAOU's intended arguments were not legally attainable, and based on the advice of the senior advocate the Standing Committee decided to withdraw from further involvement. In retrospect, the decision was a wise one not only because of the legal costs that were saved, but also because the advocate's advice was proved correct in the face of the judgement handed down regarding OGOD's application.

8. Negative Publicity

The most recent reports in the Rapport newspaper are the result of the sustained smear campaign that Mr Pashut is using to sow seeds of suspicion and uncertainty among members of the SAOU. In conversations with Mr Pashut he made it clear that unless he was paid an amount of R10 million he would do everything in his power to bring the SAOU into disrepute. This latest campaign emanates directly from that statement.

9. In Conclusion

Members need to be aware of the fact that there are powers that are working to do damage to the SAOU. Do not be misled by this reality. Your elected leaders are working tirelessly to protect and promote the interests of the SAOU. Thus, when you are confronted by the so-called "concerned members" (FBSAOU), consider the content of this letter and act in the best interests of the SAOU by not participating in the smear campaign.

The SAOU is the union on which you can rely!