

Press Council expels SA Jewish Report

First-ever expulsion of a member after refusal to comply with Press Council rulings

The South African Jewish Report has been expelled from the Press Council of South Africa (PCSA) with immediate effect after refusing to obey rulings from the Acting Press Ombud and the PCSA Chair of Appeals, Judge Bernard Ngoepe.

It is the first time that the Press Council has expelled a member.

Press Council Chair Judge Phillip Levinsohn said the decision was taken after lengthy correspondence and after the SA Jewish Report had refused to obey the rulings against it.

“The SA Jewish Report appealed the ruling by Acting Ombud Johan Retief in the complaint, *SA BDS Coalition and GIWUSA v SA Jewish Report*, but their application for leave to appeal was dismissed by Judge Ngoepe,” Judge Levinsohn said. “We spent time and effort corresponding with the SA Jewish Report in an attempt to resolve the issue. They then refused to publish the ruling against them. SA Jewish Report also abandoned a second complaint, *SA BDS Coalition vs SA Jewish Report*, after losing another application for leave to appeal by Judge Ngoepe.”

He added: “The SA Jewish Report then attempted to withdraw from the Press Council rather than publish the rulings. You cannot do that.

“It is a great pity that we have had to expel them, but we cannot tolerate a member of the Press Council wilfully refusing to obey rulings of the Press Ombud and the Chair of Appeals.

“The Press Council is a voluntary, co-regulatory, public-dominated body which, *inter alia*, mediates and adjudicates complaints against its members in terms of the Press Code.

“It is there to ensure ethical, fair, journalism. Those who join the PCSA commit to being bound by, and to publish, rulings of the Press Ombud and the Press Council’s appeals bodies. Parties who are dissatisfied with Press Ombuds’ rulings have the right to take them on appeal to our Appeals Panel, headed by an eminent, retired Judge, and if still unhappy can take the process on judicial review.

“What our member publications cannot do is simply refuse to publish rulings against them. Compliance by members is essential. To refuse undermines the Press Council and is unfair to the complainants.”

* The PCSA rulings are available at <https://presscouncil.org.za/Ruling?page=1>

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