

Government investigating Bushiris' escape

Government has reiterated its commitment to investigating and swiftly extraditing fugitive evangelical couple, Shepard and Mary Bushiri, who daringly escaped from the country while facing criminal charges.



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In a statement, government said it would investigate the matter and use all the legal instruments to bring back the couple to South Africa to face criminal charges.

The Bushiris were earlier this month released on R200,000 bail each for charges relating to theft, money laundering and fraud in connection with an alleged R100 million investment scheme.

Bail conditions included them not travelling beyond Gauteng and the North West. They were also expected to report to a police station twice a week, on Mondays and Fridays.

Following Sunday newspaper reports detailing how the couple was allegedly smuggled out of country, government said the story by the *Sunday Independent* made “false claims and assertions” from “unnamed sources”.

“This story sought to embarrass and implicate the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Dr Naledi Pandor, and unnamed Ministers in crimes and conspiracy, for which the Sunday Independent has produced absolutely no evidence and will not be able to substantiate,” said Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) Director-General, Phumla Williams, in the statement.

The paper published an unsubstantiated allegation about Lesotho having been an escape route used by the Bushiris to leave South Africa.

Williams said if the publication wishes to serve the national interest and ensure that justice is done, it is obliged to report observed crimes to the nearest police station.

“In fact, government encourages all South Africans, who are in possession of information about crimes being committed, to report that to law enforcement agencies, regardless of the status of the person who committed such a crime,” she said.

Williams said government remains committed to keeping South Africans informed on progress at the appropriate time.

“Government cautions the public in South Africa and elsewhere to treat news coverage on this matter with caution and circumspection, in view of baseless reports that emerged this past week.”

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