

** Afrirent's latest responses have been redacted to exclude information that is irrelevant to the story. We have also included editorial responses to certain claims made by Afrirent which we believe to be factually incorrect.*

Dear Micah,

Attribute all the remarks to Afrirent.

Over the past few months, we have spent considerable time and effort responding to all your questions... What we were able to demonstrate is, regrettably, *Amabhungane*, being given wrong information about Afrirent's contracts with the Department of Rural Development and the City of Johannesburg ("CoJ"). *[AmaBungane at all phases of our research put detailed questions and allegations to Afrirent in order for us to fully interrogate what our sources were telling us. Afrirent failed to demonstrate that we were relying on incorrect information and refused to supply us with proof that it claimed would disprove the evidence we have. -ed]*

...All that *Amabhungane* has done so far is to create a suspicion that there was something untoward in the decision by the CoJ to appoint Afrirent and "... leave it to the readers to make up their minds" as your article stated of 29 November 2019. In the process, Afrirent's reputation is impugned, with serious financial consequences. For instance, ABSA has withdrawn its R1 billion facility and some original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) being reluctant to supply Afrirent with vehicles.

It is therefore important that we once more reiterate our view, as confirmed by an independent forensic report conducted by the CoJ, that there was no wrongdoing by Afrirent in relation to how the fleet management contract was awarded to us. The report confirms that none of the CoJ officials involved in the decision-making process were instructed or coerced into appointing Afrirent.... *[The report does not clear Afrirent of wrongdoing. It states that "according to interviews conducted with the majority of the role players as indicated above decisions taken regarding the utilisation of the Regulation 32 process was by Officials of the City and they were not pressured influenced politically". As we explore in an upcoming article, the report was hamstrung by its terms of reference and, as the report itself notes, investigators were unable to properly interrogate the role of Afrirent -ed].*

...Despite factual evidence placed before *Amabhungane*, it appears you have, without foundation, concluded that, although the CoJ did not rely on the existing contract between Afrirent and the Department of Rural Development when appointing Afrirent, Afrirent has done something untoward.

We, therefore, do not understand the relevance of business transactions between Afrirent and service providers in the Department of Rural Development contract. As we have said, Afrirent has a 3-year contract to deliver farming equipment in Limpopo, Eastern Cape and KZN with the Department of Rural Development. This has no bearing on the CoJ contract. It is unclear to us how you would conclude that Mahuna did "little work", because the recipients were "only aware of Afrirent's representatives". Of course, Mahuna did the work on the basis of a contract they had with Afrirent. We have asked, to no avail, that we be presented with evidence that the payments to Mahuna were "kickbacks to the EFF" as you claim. We reiterate that this claim is strenuously denied and is utterly false. Afrirent has not made any payments to the EFF. It is unfair to ask us for comment on "detailed information" from the Department you refer, as we not privy to it and cannot confirm its veracity. Suffice to say during the investigation, Afrirent gave the CoJ detailed information regarding the contract with Mahuna including the scope of works. *[The report states: "GFIS requested and were not provided with the contracts between Mahuna and Afrirent and therefore we could not ascertain that there was a business relationship between the companies although this was confirmed by the CEO of Afrirent." And "GFIS requested and we were not provided*

with the scope of work, the invoices and the sites for which Mahuna was contracted to perform services, by Afrirent, as such we could not confirm the assertion that payments made to Mahuna were for services rendered” -ed]....

The contract with the Department was awarded in 2017 and immediately started developing an implementation plan to ensure readiness for the project and its in anticipation of an order from the Department of Rural Development. Given the nature of the work, we cannot only start looking for service providers at the instance when the orders arrive. This would leave us grossly unprepared. Arrangements are made well ahead of time.

Regarding *Amabhungane*'s conclusion that Afrirent's CEO Senzo Tsabedze appears to have been obfuscating in his testimony to the CoJ investigators, and that the discrepancy in the payment dates is that result of an attempt to make them appear unconnected to the CoJ tender, your conclusion is inappropriate and incorrect...

...In respect of Santaclara, as we have indicated before, perhaps we may not have a presence in the marketplace similar to some of our competitors, but Afrirent is a sizable company and has many service providers across the country. *Amabhungane* expects Afrirent to have information about whether its service providers pay taxes or what they do with the money received from Afrirent for services rendered or who are they associated with politically.

This is simply impossible, and is not required of us. We are free to use whichever service providers we wish, and we are equally free to sell or rent vehicles to whomever we wish. Afrirent is not aware of any "EFF links" to Santaclara. But importantly, Afrirent is not required to ascertain in advance whether any service provider or customer has any "links" to any political party. The said entity or its owner/s can respond for themselves. If the service providers deliver the services which are required from them, in terms of a proper and legally valid commercial agreement, we will pay them.

Afrirent has been in existence for more than 15 years. It is the nature our business to render fleet management and related services to clients. We have relationships with several fleet service providers and acquire services from them as and when the need arises. We rent out vehicles to our clients, which they use at their discretion. Our requirement is that vehicles rented from us be used for the purpose they were built and designed for.

Therefore, it is incorrect to say that we rented vehicles on behalf of EFF. Vehicles were rented from us and the client who rented the vehicles from us has paid for the services and we have proof in this regard. We wish to reiterate that we never paid money to the EFF to secure tenders, or in exchange for any favour whatsoever.

With regard to Vukani, Afrirent bought tractors and farming equipment from our farming equipment suppliers for the Rural Development contract. As we previously said, we have not donated a tractor to the EFF.

Given the manner in which *Amabhungane* has dealt with this matter, we request that this response be published in full for the benefit of the readers so that we avoid information being used to suit *Amabhungane*'s agenda.