

Iqbal Surve threatens to sue Times Media Group over 'defamatory' article

Controversial businessperson and media boss Iqbal Surve, and his companies — Independent Media, Africa News Agency and Sekunjalo Investment Holdings — have threatened the Times Media Group with legal action if it does not remove what they say is a "defamatory" article.



Iqbal Survé.

Picture: [Financial Mail](#)

The parties were referring to an article published on the Financial Mail and the BusinessLive website titled, Breaking the news: is Iqbal stripping Independent's assets?

In a letter to Financial Mail editor Rob Rose and BusinessLive editor Ray Hartley on Wednesday, their lawyer, Selwyn Hockey, of Webber Wentzel, demanded that the article be removed, and that a retraction and apology be published in all Times Media Group publications that carried the article.

Hockey said the apology should be published within three business days from the date of the letter.

"The continued availability of the impugning article on public platforms will serve to further impair and damage our client's reputation and should be removed immediately.

"Failure so to act will aggravate the harm cause to our client," said Hockey, writing in four separate letters from each client.

He also demanded that Times Media Group "cease and desist its continuous publication of defamatory articles pertaining to our client".

The article in question focused on how Iqbal Surve was possibly stripping the profitable arms out of Independent Media, a move that could be detrimental to shareholders — including government pensioners.

Hockey said the article had a "significant amount of untrue and defamatory" statements.

"The impugning article was clearly written with malice and with intention to defame our client," he said. "The impugning article has (as was the intention of the writer and publishers), and will have ,the effect of impairing our client's reputation, resulting in our client suffering significant damages..."

The Financial Mail on Wednesday said it was standing by its story.

"We published this story because we believe it to be true and of compelling public interest. Independent Group was, after all, bought with the assistance of the Public Investment Corporation, using government employees' pension money," Rose said.

"So any action that would negatively affect that investment is obviously in the public interest. We also gave all the parties plenty of time to respond to our questions, but they failed to do so."

Source: BDpro

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