

AMI's Solanki to go on trial

Death threats, fraud and dodgy medicine will take centre stage in the trial of a Zimbabwean-based doctor accused of stealing from the company he once headed.

By [Werner Swart](#) 4 Nov 2013



Dr Vivek Solanki to go on trial. Image: Digital Art
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Dr Vivek Solanki, the former chief of African Medical Investments (AMI), was arrested in Kempton Park recently after fleeing to Zimbabwe almost three years ago shortly after a warrant for his arrest was issued.

A bizarre tale of greed and counter accusations unfold in sensational claims in affidavits by Solanki and his accusers.

Solanki said senior company executives threatened his wife and child and that he would "disappear in a box". He is out on bail, and expected back in court towards the end of this month to face over 150 counts of fraud and theft.

AMI is owned by controversial former England cricketer-turned-businessman Phil Edmonds and South African-born Andre Groves.

Two forensic audits by Deloitte and PwC show how AMI and its clinic at OR Tambo International Airport had no control over its finances and how cash for vaccines allegedly found its way into Solanki's pocket.

The audits also revealed how more than R600,000 for construction and "soft furnishings" at the company's boutique hotels across Africa, was allegedly spent on renovations at Solanki's house.

Audit recommends charges

The audits recommended that, in the light of the "prima facie" evidence further criminal and civil action should be taken against Solanki.

The audit says there were no financial systems in place and the company had to rely on an auditor to reconstruct statements and invoices.

The Sunday Times has seen a transcript of an interview a forensic auditor had with the former manager of Solanki's clinic at OR Tambo, Wessel Roets, during which he admitted bringing in yellow fever vaccines from Dakar that were not registered with the Medicine Control Council.

Roets claimed the vaccine, bought cheaply in Dakar, was Solanki's main source of income and produced a healthy profit as it cost US\$2 but patients were charged US\$90 a dose.

Asked whether the illegally imported vaccine was dangerous, Roets replied: "No, it's not like it would kill anybody."

Roets said the clinic administered about 1,000 vaccines a month, calling the business a "gold mine".

The lucrative operation was bust, however, when an Australian doctor arriving in South Africa from Kenya wrote down the serial number on the vaccine and found it was in the country illegally.

This was reported to the Australian embassy, whose officials took up the matter with local authorities.

Source: Business Times via I-Net Bridge

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