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Political party funding: politicians for sale

Zabalaza

August 2002

Donations by the wealthy to political parties and politicians are common practice in South Africa and elsewhere. In order to fight elections, parties raise money from private sources. And you can be sure that these private funders expect their monies worth.

This issue has been made very clear by the recent scandal surrounding German fugitive Jurgen Harksen, who allegedly donated large sums to the Democratic Alliance (DA) – allegedly to prevent his extradition to Germany on fraud charges.

Even the ANC has received vast sums from the most questionable sources over the past ten years.

Party coffers got a boost of \$50 million in 1990 from the absolute monarch King Fahd of Saudi Arabia in 1990. General Sani Abacha of Nigeria coughed up 2.6 million pounds in 1994, and a further \$50 million in 1995. Malaysian President Mahathir Mohamed donated \$50 million.

And Mohammed Suharto, the notorious Indonesian ruler, gave \$60 million. Of course, we all know that it is pure coincidence that this thug – who came to power on a mound of

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bodies, including 500,000 Indonesian Communist Party members – received the South African state’s highest award (the Order of Good Hope) from Mandela in 1998.

None of these funders donate money to the DA or the ANC out of the goodness of their hearts. Instead, they expect favours and special treatment.

This is just one of many ways that the rich maintain an iron grip on the fraud called parliamentary democracy.