

CIVIC LEADER AWARDED R5 000 IN DEFAMATION CASE

THE LEADER MARCH 05, 1999 By Sashni Pather

A Durban civic leader and metro councillor was this week awarded R5 000 in his defamation action against the secretary-general of the Islamic Propagation Centre, Mr. Yousuf Deedat.

Mr. Sayed-Iqbal Mohamed, chairman of the Organisation of Civic Rights, had claimed R150 000 for damages.

The action was sparked by a report in which Mr. Deedat had made certain allegations regarding the use of funds collected by the OCR and called upon the department of welfare to undertake an investigation.

Mr. Deedat had said Mr. Mohamed had also used these funds to "advance his own personal objectives" and not those of the OCR.

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Mr. Justice Neville Page said in the High Court, Durban, on Monday that Mr. Deedat had deliberately created an artificial dispute about the receipt in order to equip himself with grounds for a complaint to the department of welfare.

The judge said he found Mr. Deedat's conduct in concocting the charges was with the express intention of discrediting Mr. Mohamed and described it as "reprehensible".

"Mr. Mohamed is a person who enjoys a fairly high degree of publicity and whose activities depend upon the goodwill of the public. Claims of such a nature will render him vulnerable to imputations of improper conduct which will have an adverse effect on his standing."

Mr. Justice Page said there was no evidence to suggest that Mr. Mohamed was guilty of "improper conduct".

He added Mr. Mohamed's activities were philanthropic in nature and motivated by the highest of principles.