

‘Peacemaker’ bishop’s fate still undecided

September 29 2012 at 03:42pm

By Thabiso Thakali [Comment on this story](#)

Johannesburg - The fate of Marikana peacemaker, Bishop Jo Seoka now lies in the hands of a committee of bishops asked to follow up recommendations of a task team that investigated his troubled Pretoria Diocese.

Seoka – who is also the president of the SA Council of Churches – was expected to learn of his fitness to hold office this week at the SA Synod of Bishops, but the decision was deferred until another committee had considered the report.

The bishop, who was at the centre of wage negotiations between Lonmin management and striking Marikana miners, has been accused by some in his diocese of being autocratic and of financial mismanagement of R500 000 of Diocesan Trust funds.

Seoka has previously denied all the allegations to this newspaper, saying he had not “stolen anything and I am not a thief”.

Following the allegations and ructions that split the diocese for more than a year, the synod, led by Cape Town Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, set up an investigation team to find out the “root causes of the discord”.

This week, the report was tabled before the synod but no final decision was reached.

“At their meeting earlier this week, the synod of bishops received the report of the task team,” said Sarah Rowland Jones, research adviser to Archbishop Makgoba.

“The report was thoroughly discussed and a committee of bishops is now following up the decisions reached by the synod of bishops. The synod of bishops’ response will be communicated to the concerned parties once this week’s series of meetings has been concluded.”

The Saturday Star was reliably told that the task team had compiled a “damning” report.

And before the synod meeting this week, speculation and anxiety gripped the Anglican community, with some parishioners calling for decisive pronouncements on the impasse that has “tainted not only the diocese but the entire Anglican church”.

A senior leader in the Anglican church community said yesterday the decision on the Pretoria Diocese saga was now “long overdue”.

Another parishioner said the synod had decided to defer the recommendations of the task team to another committee to ensure that they had “a watertight case should their decision be challenged in court by those it did not favour”.

The parties at the centre of the discord ended up in the Pretoria High Court in May to ask for the court to order the opening of the Pretoria Cathedral after Seoka had closed it amid the ructions.

The court encouraged the parties to reach an agreement over the holding of Sunday services, which they eventually did.

Saturday Star

<http://www.iol.co.za/news/special-features/mining-crisis/peacemaker-bishop-s-fate-still-undecided-1.1392641#.VCEmnxacxfg>