

THE HEARING OF THE ASSAULT CASE WILL START ON SEPTEMBER 19

S.Africa model challenges Grace Mugabe's immunity

SOUTH AFRICA
Johannesburg

A South African model who was allegedly attacked by Zimbabwe's First Lady has filed court papers, challenging the government's decision to grant Grace Mugabe diplomatic immunity, a lawyer said yesterday.

The wife of President Robert Mugabe allegedly attacked a 20-year-old model, Gabriella Engels, with an electrical extension cord at a hotel in Johannesburg, where the couple's two sons were staying.

The attack left Engels with cuts on her head and forehead. She has filed an assault charge against the 52-year-old Grace Mugabe.

South Africa's foreign affairs ministry over the weekend said it had granted Mugabe immunity, allowing her to leave the country.

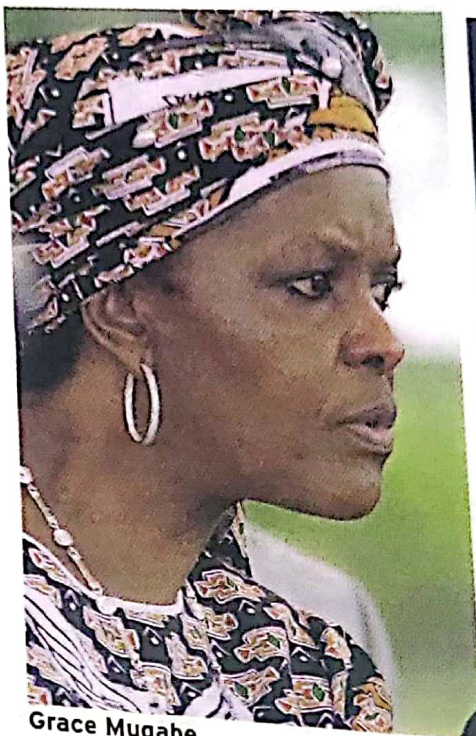
Engels and AfriForum, a civil rights group which helps victims of crime, filed an injunction asking the court to annul the minister's decision.

"The (foreign affairs) minister misinterpreted the law. She applied the wrong principles," AfriForum lawyer Willie Spies told AFP.

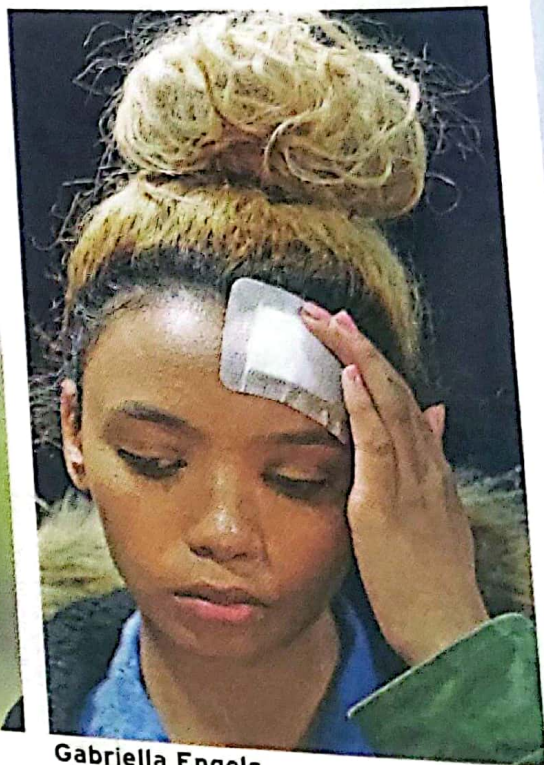
They are seeking an order to set aside the minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane's decision "recognising the immunities and privileges" of Grace Mugabe, according to court documents seen by AFP.

They are also asking the court to declare that the diplomatic immunity decision "does not confer immunity from prosecution".

A hearing into the case will start on



Grace Mugabe



Gabriella Engels

September 19, Spies said.

Grace Mugabe was supposed to have reported to the police to make a statement about the alleged incident, but she did not.

Police minister Fikile Mbalula then said "a red alert" had been sent out to border police, and "she is not somebody who has been running away".

However, Mugabe flew out of South Africa on a pre-dawn flight on a presidential jet on Sunday. Hours later, the foreign ministry announced that it had

granted her immunity.

On Wednesday, South African lawmakers heckled Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa as he answered a question in parliament on the Grace Mugabe debacle.

He said the decision to grant her immunity was taken in line with "internationally-recognised immunity regulations" and admitted it was "the first time we have utilised this type of convention".

AFP

'No mood for change'

Top
land

INDIA

New De

India's S
constitu
jeopardi
over a b

Privac
and the
people

But t
in the
hailed

"The
judges

"It is
from
allow

The
issue
biom
and

Pr
Aad
win

"It
priv
the

A
ber
B
nu

pa
C
rig

'S
T
"

s
I
v
C