

# Being called Gupta insulting but not hate speech – experts

**Nivashni Nair**

---

WHAT is in a name? A lot when you are called a Gupta.

Experts yesterday said referring to a South African Indian as a Gupta may not be illegal but could be regarded as an insult.

This follows several posts on social media in which Indians complained about being called Guptas, the surname of the controversial family closely linked to President Jacob Zuma.

A Port Elizabeth man, who has since removed the post, claimed that a traffic officer, who called him a Gupta, could not understand why he took offence.

“He said he called all the Indians

at work Guptas and they laugh about it so he couldn't understand why I was angry.”

University of KwaZulu-Natal academic specialist in participatory democracy Imraan Buccus said being called a Gupta would be an insult in the South African context.

“The name has come to signify corruption and rampant looting of the public purse,” he said.

Constitutional law expert Pierre de Vos said it was a racial generalisation but “I would be surprised if it's in any way illegal. It's not defamatory [or] hate speech.”

The EFF, which has declared war on the Gupta family, said it was offensive to “reduce all Indians, even Indians from India, to the Guptas”.