# Sentebale chair criticises Prince Harry's toxic brand amidst charity turmoil



Dr Sophie Chandauka, the chair of Sentebale, the charity co-founded by Prince Harry, has launched a scathing critique of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, labelling their brand “toxic” and asserting that it has negatively affected the charity's operations. In a revealing interview with the Financial Times, she expressed her concerns about the impact of the Sussexes' controversy on the ability to secure new donors and senior hires within the organisation.

Chandauka disclosed that she first sensed tension with Prince Harry approximately one year ago, particularly when she was asked to defend Meghan Markle against unfavourable press coverage — a request she declined. Her refusal to step down as chair amid mounting pressure from trustees led to an unprecedented fallout, culminating in Prince Harry quitting Sentebale last week in solidarity with the disgruntled trustees. This group of trustees resigned citing a breakdown of relations with Chandauka that they believed was irreparable.

In her interview, Dr Chandauka stated, "The number one risk for this organisation was the toxicity of its lead patron's brand." She argued that the controversies surrounding Prince Harry since his relocation to the United States have hindered efforts to diversify funding sources and recruit top talent. "When you start to interview people, they're asking questions about... these mixed messages around the patron," she elaborated.

The tensions reached a point where Chandauka accused Prince Harry and his co-founder, Prince Seeiso of Lesotho, of attempting to “force a failure” of the charity only to later position themselves as its saviours. Despite this, she made it clear that her commitment to Sentebale was unwavering, stating emphatically, "The team is resolved that Sentebale will live on, with or without you."

Sentebale, established in 2006 to assist children orphaned by AIDS in southern Africa in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales, has faced an internal crisis that has reverberated through the charity community. In a statement last week, they suggested that the contributions of those "in the field" should take precedence over the board’s proceedings — a declaration that has further stoked the flames of the dispute.

Dr Chandauka's allegations against Sentebale’s trustees have included claims of bullying, sexism, and racism, asserting that the charity's governance structure is no longer suitable in today's climate, particularly following the global focus on diversity and inclusion stemming from the Black Lives Matter movement. "The way the organisation had been set up in 2006, was no longer appropriate in 2023," she claimed.

Responding to allegations of creating a toxic work environment, Dr Chandauka maintained that it was she who suffered from disrespect, intimidation, and misogyny during her tenure. Some trustees, including Kelello Lerotholi, publicly refuted her claims, insisting that no such behaviour occurred in meetings they attended. Baroness Lynda Chalker raised concerns about Chandauka's leadership style, describing it as "almost dictatorial" and indicative of the discord within the organisation.

The origins of the conflict have become a matter of contention, with differing perspectives emerging. Whereas Dr Chandauka traces the start of friction to April 2024, others suggest that the issues at hand are rooted in deeper, unresolved conflicts regarding leadership and governance.

The Charity Commission has confirmed its awareness of concerns surrounding Sentebale's governance and is currently evaluating the situation to determine appropriate regulatory responses.

As the drama unfolds, representatives of Prince Harry have vehemently denied any intention to orchestrate a collapse of the charity for the purpose of rescue. Instead, they point to significant breakdowns in relationships within the organisation. In response to Chandauka’s defiant stance, she has proclaimed, "I will not be intimidated. I must stand for something," emphasising her commitment to the charity despite the turmoil.

As the situation develops, the future of Sentebale and its governance remains uncertain, with the implications of these internal disputes expected to resonate within the charitable sector.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.cosmopolitan.com/entertainment/celebs/a64295131/prince-harry-sentebale-drama/> - This article supports the claim that Prince Harry has resigned from Sentebale amid significant internal conflicts and allegations of poor governance. The chair, Dr. Sophie Chandauka, has raised concerns about abuse of power and other issues within the charity.
* <https://www.celebitchy.com/915615/sentebale_trustee_i_quit_because_of_sophie_chandaukas_dictatorial_style/> - This piece corroborates the description of Dr. Sophie Chandauka's leadership style as 'almost dictatorial' and highlights the controversy surrounding her management of Sentebale, which led to the mass resignation of trustees.
* <https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/officers/Sr4gsq0QkO68mGNZi2jj5iYcWGw/appointments> - This page provides details on Dr. Sophie Chandauka's professional background, including her appointment as Chair of the Board at Sentebale in July 2023, demonstrating her established role within the organization.
* <https://news.google.com/search?q=Sentebale+conflict+charity+commission> - Search results from news outlets confirm that the UK Charity Commission is aware of and assessing the governance issues at Sentebale, implying regulatory scrutiny amidst ongoing internal disputes.
* <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/baroness-chalker-sentebale-resignation-dictatorial-leadership-l2bsz7jw6> - This article quotes Baroness Lynda Chalker, a former trustee, criticizing Dr. Chandauka's leadership style and providing insight into why she and others resigned from Sentebale.