

Countdown to protector's findings on Nkandla

March 31 target to complete probe

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PUBLIC Protector Thuli Madonsela said yesterday her investigation into the R206 million spent on upgrading President Jacob Zuma's home in Nkandla would most likely be completed by the end of March.

Madonsela said her office had only begun working more on the investigation this year as she did not have an investigator available last year.

The investigation forms part of probes she hopes to conclude by the end of the financial year, and "would not be hampered" by an internal Public Works report into the upgrades.

"We are on track with Nkandla. We are aiming to conclude it by the 31st of March if everything goes according to plan.

"We have only started to do more now at the beginning of this year because we didn't have an investigator with free hands," said Madonsela.

The Public Works report would not hamper her own investigation though she would request it from Public Works Minister Thulas Nxesi, she said.

Nxesi last month confirmed that R206m had been spent on security upgrades to Nkandla, but cleared Zuma of any wrongdoing, saying the president was not involved in any way in the project to upgrade security at his home.

Nxesi also refused to release the entire internal report, citing national security and Nkandla having been declared a national key point.

According to Nxesi, the investigation had identified irregularities in the appointment of service providers and consultants for the project.

Meanwhile, Madonsela also released the findings of her finalised investigations, one of which slammed the Department of Justice for failing to protect a whistle-blower against victimisation and harassment by her colleagues.

This, after the whistle-blower had reported allegations of corruption at the Masters Office in Kwazulu-Natal where she had been employed.

She was subsequently harassed by those implicated in her allegations.

According to Madonsela, the department had failed to comply with sections of the Protected Disclosure Act, which required it to protect the whistle-blower against occupational detriment.



Public Protector Thuli Madonsela briefing the media on her finalised probes.

PICTURE: THOBILE MATHONSI

Madonsela said this amounted to maladministration.

The woman's subsequent dismissal from work resulted in the complainant suffering enormous prejudice, including foreclosure of her house, exacerbated health problems and cancellation of her medical aid.

She said her children had also been traumatised by the situation, and described the treatment of the whistle-blower as not being in line with the values of human dignity as provided for in the constitution.

Madonsela recommended the whistle-blower be reinstated with her full salary, backdated to March 2010, when she was dismissed from her work.

Madonsela also announced that she was relocating some of her offices to optimise the use of her resources.

This would see the Mabopane office relocating to Germiston, and the office in Vryburg in the North West moving to Klerksdorp.

"We will be opening another office in Limpopo, which will be based in Thohoyandou, because we currently have only one office in the province for 5.4 million people.

"Some of the money has already been received from the National Treasury for this," she said.

Her office has also launched its social media accounts on Twitter and Facebook in to reach more young people and professionals.

"We are also setting up a fully-fledged call centre.

"We have a toll-free number, but there is only one person on the other side of the phone attending to these calls," she said.

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