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# Protector's probe into R206m Nkandla upgrade on track

**MOGOMOTSI MAGOME**

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 next month.

Madonsela said her office had focused on the probe this year as she did not have an investigator available during last year.

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

"We are on track with Nkandla.

"We are aiming to conclude it by March 31, 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," she added.

According to Madonsela, the public works report would not hamper her own investigation, though she would request it from Public Works Minister Thulas Nxesi.

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

He also refused to release



**FOCUSED:** Public Protector Thuli Madonsela is aiming to complete the R206 million Nkandla upgrade probe by March 31.

PICTURE: THOBILE MATHONSI

the entire internal report, citing national security and Nkandla having been declared a national key point.

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

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

This comes after the whistleblower had reported allegations of corruption at the Master's Office in KwaZulu-Natal, where she had been employed, and 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.

Madonsela said this amounted to maladministration, and her subsequent dismissal from work resulted in the complainant suffering enormous prejudice, including foreclosure on her house, exacerbated health problems and cancellation of her medical aid.

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

She recommended that 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 in order to optimise the use of her resources.

This would see the Mabopane office relocating to Germiston, and the office at Vryburg in 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.