

# The Star

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## Too many questions

**S**HAUWN Mpisane, the Durban businesswoman accused of both tax evasion and tender fraud, appeared in court yesterday to face the latest in a series of charges.

The day before, the Asset Forfeiture Unit swooped on the luxury house she shares with her husband S'bu, a former metro police officer. The unit seized assets worth R140 million, including a staggering 62 luxury cars.

It is a breathtaking haul of assets, perhaps unprecedented even in a country such as ours where ostentatious wealth is neither new nor even all that remarkable.

Irrespective of the outcome of the current court case or Shauwn's previous criminal record for fraud, it is surprising that there has never been a lifestyle audit on the La Lucia couple before.

S'bu Mpisane was able to report for duty as a lowly traffic officer earning R15 000 a month in a luxury sports car worth several million rand without anyone instituting an investigation of his lifestyle.

No one denies him the right to possess such a vehicle, nor his wife to amass the assets she has and the couple to live in the opulence they do.

The question we need answered is how it was paid for, because S'bu obviously could never even afford to put tyres on one of the cars on his salary, never mind all 62 vehicles. And if the money was rightfully earned, was it duly taxed?

The rapid and inexplicable accumulation of great wealth is often suggestive of nefarious practices. This has to be thoroughly investigated, and any guilty parties must be prosecuted and jailed.

Corruption, especially by tenderpreneurs, is a 21st century scourge casting an ineradicable shadow over our country. We have too many cases, involving some very senior politicians, where assets and expenditure simply cannot be explained away in light of their official salaries.

We need transparency. We need honesty, but most of all we need accountability.

The corrupt need to be put behind bars and their ill-gotten gains redirected to those who need them most: the poor and the desperate.