

Advances in state's anti-corruption campaign

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IT'S BEEN a good run for the government's anti-corruption fight in the key public works and home affairs departments.

Public works next week will act against two officials following the outcome of the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) probe of irregularities in the Preto-

ria portfolio, which includes presidential and ministerial residences. The Sunday Independent has learnt.

This comes in the wake of the dismissal of three public works officials, including a deputy director-general, for accepting benefits from service providers.

And in home affairs seven immigra-

tion officials in the Free State were suspended, and appeared in court, this week, confirmed home affairs Free State head Bonakele Mayekiso.

The immigration officials stationed at the border to Lesotho had accepted bribes and stamped passports of those who had overstayed their time in South Africa so they could cross the border, rather than face penalties, he told Inde-

pendent Newspapers, adding it was the second such recent crackdown: two weeks ago 20

officials were suspended.

Public works this week confirmed former deputy director-general Richard Samuel was dismissed for receiving benefits from a service provider and failing to disclose that his children

received bursaries from a service provider. Two junior officials were dismissed for receiving benefits from service providers to influence tenders.

Two of the three remaining disciplinary proceedings – against a former acting director-general and the property management head – have been finalised and recommendations are pending.

The disciplinary process against the third remaining official remains under way, the senior public works official confirmed.

Of the 40 SIU investigations, 23 were completed, it emerged this week during Public Works Minister Thulas Nxesi's budget speech.

He said the prestige portfolio was now under "firm control", reporting directly to the director-general. While investigations into the Pretoria spending had been completed, investigations had moved to Cape Town where R100 million was spent on renovating 11 houses.

However, the public works report on the R206m spend on President Jacob Zuma's Nkandla homestead would remain classified – Parliament was still considering establishing an ad hoc committee to discuss it behind closed doors – even as the department was co-operating with the public protector's probe.

Meanwhile, Economic Development Minister Ebrahim Patel announced during his budget vote that all of the six main construction companies had "confessed" and were participating in an inquiry into collusion over the 2010 World Cup stadiums. The probe identified 300 cases of irregular and illegal behaviour by the private sector on projects worth an estimated R47 billion.

This week Public Service and Administration Minister Lindiwe Sisulu told MPs the fight against corruption remained a priority. "Any level of corruption is completely unacceptable as a people, as a government," she said. "It should not happen to us as a people. We struggled too much to become bogged down in matters of unethical conduct."