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Jail for dodgy officials

Sisulu cracks down on public servants who do business with government

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PUBLIC servants who ignore a soon-to-be implemented law that prohibits them from doing business with the government will be fired and could be jailed for up to a year.

This was revealed by Public Service and Administration Minister Lindiwe Sisulu yesterday ahead of the debate on her budget vote.

Sisulu is also gunning for companies. She wants to blacklist and ban firms that bribe civil servants from government deals for up to 10 years.

Sisulu said amendments to the Public Service Act — which would bar civil servants from tendering for state contracts — have been approved by the cabinet and would soon be tabled in parliament.

"We want to send out a particular message to the private sector ... where we find that the corrupter is in the private sector, we want to make sure that the full wrath of the law is brought on that particular company," she said.

"That company will be blacklisted for 10 years and we would make sure that a number of other attendant consequences would be attached to this ... our experience is that the corrupter has the financial muscle to corrupt the public servant."

> 'We want to send out a message to the private sector'

Former National Prosecuting Authority head Menzi Simelane, who is now Sisulu's legal adviser, said: "Non-compliance with the legislation is grounds for immediate dismissal.

"It will constitute misconduct, for which the official will be charged. There's also a proposal in the legislation that affected officials can be fined or be sentenced to a term of imprisonment not exceeding a year, but as soon as the bill is passed we would be immediately looking at increasing those sentences," he said.

Sisulu's push to bar government employees from doing business with the government follows similar calls by the Public Service Commission and the National Planning Commission, which have both identified public service corruption as one of the main impediments to national development.

The issue of public servants benefiting from government procurements has been under the spotlight since 2010, when the auditor-general revealed that tender worth more than R624-million wen to companies with links to publi servants, their spouse or family.

● Sisulu said her department wa aiming to trim the public servic wage bill by at least R8-billion in th next three years by eliminatin unfunded posts in the government

In Limpopo 47 570 unfunde posts were found to exist in fiv departments, which have bee placed under national governmen administration.

● Former chief justice Sandil Ngcobo has been appointed chai man of the SA Public Servic Remuneration Commission, whic reviews the salaries of teacher nurses and policemen.

The formation of the commissio was announced by President Jaco Zuma in February in his State of th Nation speech.