WAR OF WORDS BETWEEN ANC AND PUBLIC PROTECTOR CONTINUES

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THE ANC yesterday accused public protector Thuli Madonsela of using the Nhlanhla affair to cover up a pattern of leaks from her office.

In a stinging rebuke to comments made by Madonsela at a press briefing held outside Pretoria yesterday, ANC spokesperson Jackson Mthembu said that the party welcomed an acknowledgement by Madonsela that the ANC had every right to be gravely concerned with the leaks regarding her investigation into the security upgrade at Nhlanhla and other investigations undertaken by her office before they are finalised.

"We have stated in our statement that these leaks, that have become a regular feature in recent times, have the effect of not only undermining and prejudicing the integrity and the work of the public protector’s office, but also harming the image and the standing of those who are being investigated," Mthembu said.

Madonsela said she had nothing to benefit from the leaking of draft provisional reports and exonerated her staff members from doing the same.

The war of words between Madonsela and the ruling party over the Nhlanhla report was ratcheted up a gear when she accused the party’s secretary-general, Gwede Mantashe, of peddling “untruths about her”.

An embattled Madonsela also hit out at ANC deputy secretary-general Jesse Duarte for “implying that I am a bad person”.

She said it was misguided for Mantashe to state that she was delaying the release of the report into President Jacob Zuma’s Nhlanhla homestead.

"We were waiting for a list of names of security experts to consult and we only got that list from the Minister of Police at the end of business yesterday," she said.

Madonsela said the final report on her probe into the security upgrades at Nklandla would be released by the second week of January.

"If we are able to expedite things, then we may release the report before Christmas," she said.

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