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# Nkandla man sues over 'unfair dismissal'

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The lieutenant general who signed off on the construction of a helipad and a clinic at President Jacob Zuma's Nkandla home has taken early retirement.

Vejay Ramlakan, the former surgeon-general and head of corporate services in the defence force, "is out of the system", defence force head General Solly Shoke confirmed last week.

"There may, however, still be some legal issues," Shoke said, but would not elaborate.

However, City Press' sister newspaper, Rapport, learnt that Ramlakan, who used to be Nelson Mandela's doctor, had indicated to the department of defence that he was planning to sue it for unfair dismissal.

This after the defence force confirmed in November last year that Shoke had asked Ramlakan to provide written reasons for why he should not be dismissed.

Ramlakan hit back, saying he was not going to take early retirement for his involvement in the overspending on the upgrades at Nkandla, but as part of "normal career planning".

There is now also a dispute about whether the R11.9 million spent on the clinic, the R10 million on the helipad and a portion of the R126 million spent on housing for military personnel should be paid for by the defence department.

The department of public works has passed the account for these upgrades to the defence force.

An investigation by the defence force found that



**Vejay Ramlakan**

Ramlakan did not have the necessary delegated authority to become involved in the Nkandla project.

Ramlakan's defence was apparently that no one in the defence force had questioned the spending during the construction process.

Rapport confirmed on the SA National Defence Force's Persol system over the past week that Ramlakan officially went on early retirement with a full pension

at the end of February. However, his office at defence force headquarters remains unchanged, while some of his personal administrative staff members are still at their posts.

Shoke said a suitable replacement would be appointed in due course.

Ramlakan has now moved to Durban.

When Rapport contacted him for comment this week, he refused to speak and hung up.

Absa had earlier obtained a default judgment against him for an outstanding mortgage on his house in Pretoria amounting to R1.2 million.

Public Protector Thuli Madonsela found in her Nkandla report that there had been an urgent need for a clinic, housing and a helipad for the community around Nkandla.

But she could not find any reasons for why they had to be constructed at President Zuma's private residence instead of in another area where the rest of the community could have benefited from them.

According to Ramlakan's testimony given to her, he had simply compiled a wish list that was to be considered by the department of public works.

The clinic is still not complete and stands unused and empty, without any medical equipment.

Madonsela found that Ramlakan's actions constituted inappropriate maladministration because they violated the provisions of the Constitution, the Public Finance Management Act, Treasury regulations and the prescriptions dealing with his area of responsibility. -

**Rapport**