

More money for JZ to pay back

It is becoming blindingly obvious that there are two distinct criteria being applied to the channelling of public funding: a chasm along the highly criticised colonial lines where the perceptions of power are administered along a them-and-us divide.

The highly contentious issue of the security upgrades at President Jacob Zuma's private estate at Nkandla stubbornly continues to join the ongoing debate on his fitness to lead a nation battered by a weakening economy and the creep of international contempt towards South Africa's governance.

The last security upgrade cost taxpayers R246 million and caused then public prosecutor Thuli Madonsela to urge that some of the more flippant "essential" work on Nkandla was unnecessary and should have been for the president's personal account. The Constitutional Court found that Zuma had failed to uphold the constitution regarding the money spent on his private home, giving rise to the chant "pay back the money", popularised in parliament by the Economic Freedom Fighters and adopted into the SA lexicon.

Now, it has emerged, although reports were hastily denied by Zuma and Presidency spokesperson Bongani Ngqulunga, that yet more public money is to be poured into a refurbishment of Nkandla. But there appears to be some substance to the reports if the observations by Police Minister Fikile Mbalula and the remark from public works chief director for legal services Barnie Ntlou that "the process has just started" are to be given any credence.

"We are forced to do that," said Ntlou of further work on Nkandla. "We can't allow a presidential residence to become dilapidated."

While it would be facetious to suggest Zuma be forced to move to Orange Farm or Khayelitsha, Nkandla remains the president's private residence.