

Nkandla official 'too sick'

SIHLE MAVUSO

SIBUSISO Chonco, one of the 10 Department of Public Works officials to be disciplined for the costly upgrade of President Jacob Zuma's home in Nkandla is expected to appear before a disciplinary committee today even though he is said to be sick.

Chonco was to be the first official to be hauled over the coals yesterday but sent a sick note. However, Advocate Jabulani Khuzwayo, chair of the DC panel instructed his lawyer to ensure that his client be present at the hearing today.

He will be publicly grilled for two days at the hearing in Durban, which is seeking to discipline the department's employees for their role in appointing architect Misenhle Makhanya as the principal agent on the Nkandla upgrades.

Chonco's lawyer, Adriaan Moodley, was instructed to call him while the committee adjourned for an hour.



Misenhle Makhanya

He went out and made a long call and came back. Thereafter the hearing was adjourned to today.

Moodley said the committee would prejudice Chonco if it continued without him. He'd called for the hearing to be postponed until his client was well enough to be physically present as he alone can defend himself properly against the misconduct charges.

"The only person who can take this forum into their confidence is the accused employee himself," Moodley said in trying to convince Khuzwayo.

Chonco's sick note showed that he was suffering from depression struggling to concentrate and relied on medication. The note booked him off sick until this Saturday. After closely scrutinising the medical note presented on behalf of Chonco by Moodley, Khuzwayo, remained unmoved.

The officials are facing charges of maladministration, failing to follow procurement procedures and negligence.

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