

# Tender flaw of world cup proportions

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REMEMBER when the Fifa World Cup came to South Africa in June 2010, when we became the first country on African soil to host the event and everyone was caught up in the euphoria?

That was when a tender described as “abnormal, hush and rush” by a senior investigator of the Special Investigative Unit was awarded to Money Mine 310 CC to upgrade President Jacob Zuma’s Nkandla homestead.

According to SUI chief investigator, Christian Legwabe, public works officials committed a lot of fouls when awarding the R6.1 million tender for security upgrades of the main house, perimeter fence, a bunker and surrounding rondavels.

Now, Legwabe, who has more than 12 years experience, wants to

red-card the implicated officials. The upgrades were done, he said, because “the president was not safe”, according to SAPS and a State Security Agency assessment of the house.

“When I compare the final product (Nkandla) to the value for money, I am not satisfied,” Legwabe said.

Initially, Legwabe said the tender was meant to be R3m and he was perplexed how it ballooned.

He is convinced that processes were not followed.

But Jayshree Pardesi, a senior assistant director in the Key Accounts Management (KAM) at the Department of Public Works and one of 11 officials crying foul, was not going out without a fight. She pleaded not guilty to the charge of misconduct.

Dragging on for years, the disciplinary hearing of the officials resumed in Durban this week.

Chairperson of the disciplinary hearing, advocate Thulani Khuzwayo, wanted to end the contest.

“We have to reach a conclusion at some point,” he said when he adjourned the matter to August 31.

Legwabe, after investigating, found that the process prior to the awarding of the tender was flawed.

Money Mine is owned by businesswoman Pamela Mfeka. She was allegedly “anointed” by Zuma to do the upgrades to his home.

When the tender was awarded, Money Mine had already started renovations a year earlier, at his request. Now the government wants to recoup the wasted money.

Zuma paid R7.8m for unduly benefiting from the upgrades.

Despite the SIU pointing at public works officials, some believed these employees were “scapegoats”, subsequently dubbed “fall guys”.