

BONGANI HANS

KING Goodwill Zwelithini has claimed that millions allocated for the refurbishment of his palace at Ingwavuma in northern KwaZulu-Natal were squandered by workers who did a shoddy job.

During the opening of the legislature in Pietermaritzburg this week, the king requested Economic Development MEC Sihle Zikalala, Premier Willies Mchunu and Public Works MEC Ravi Pillay to send a team of their officials to the Machwebeni Palace in Ingwavuma to

assess the work done last year.

This is one of eight palaces belonging to the king. The others are eNyokeni, KwaDlamahlahla, KwaKhangela, KwaKhethomthandayo, Lindizulu, KwaNobamba and Ondini.

It was reported that the KZN government had spent R15 million renovating the palaces in the 2012/13 financial year. The following financial year,

another R20m was allocated for the overall maintenance of the royal household infrastructure.

The king said the quality of the work was not worth the R10m which the KZN government had allocated for the refurbishment.

“The money spent there does not even amount to R7 million. The money was stolen.”

He also complained about the quality of material that had

been used. “When I’m sleeping on a windy night, I can hear something flapping inside. And it is terrible when it is cold.

“The house I built for myself in Osuthu Palace is far better, because I can sleep in peace.”

He said he would make time to accompany the team to show them the shoddy workmanship.

“I know where the Zululand government stopped the construction and where the

KwaZulu-Natal government took over and ended,” he said.

The king said the money was not allocated to reconstruction of the palace from scratch. “It was just a refurbishment.

“But even today that work is not equal to the R10 million I was told about.”

The king said he raised the matter with Parliament last year. “The curtains don’t even have linings. The bedrooms are

bad. My wives (queens) can tell you all about it.

“No one spoke to me about the palace refurbishment.”

Mchunu’s spokesperson Thami Ngidi said the premier’s office had noted the king’s concerns. “As far as I am aware, there is no investigation by the office of the premier. The relevant department is Public Works,” said Ngidi.

Pillay’s spokesperson Mbu-

lelo Baloyi said the MEC’s office had not been aware of the condition of the palace.

Baloyi said departmental officials from the North Coast region, who are responsible for the Ingwavuma area, said they were not involved in the work.

“It was the responsibility of the Department of the Royal Household when the premier was Senzo Mchunu. We were not involved,” said Baloyi.



‘I CAN’T SLEEP’: King Goodwill said. And nor can the queens.