

Fired IDT board members take minister to court

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PUBLIC Works Minister Thulas Nxesi is locked in a legal battle with the Independent Development Trust (IDT) after he fired its board over allegations of corruption.

This is after the former chairperson and deputy chairperson of the trust gave themselves exorbitant fee increases. The monthly chairman's fees went up from R32 000 to R54 000. This is an increase from R392 000 annually to R654 000. The deputy chairman's fee went up to R458 000 a year. In court papers, Nxesi lashed out at the former board and accuses it of not acting on serious allegations of corruption.

The trust was recently in the news for failing to build the house of late struggle icon Winnie Madikizela-Mandela in Brandfort after being given R3 million. The IDT said it spent R592 000 on the project.

It was also reported recently the IDT failed to act on a forensic report to recoup R100m on a corruption-rigged project in KwaZulu-Natal.

Nxesi fired the board last month but it has taken him to court to review the decision. The matter will be heard in the High Court this week.

Nxesi said forensic reports showed rampant corruption in the entity, but no action was taken since last year July.

"It is also correct that the IDT's objective is to benefit the poor.

"Corruption, maladministration and the other concerns arising from, among other things, forensic reports frustrate the important constitutional objectives of socio-economic development.

"Hence, the importance of reconstituting the board of trustees whose submissions to me confirmed that they have indeed not implemented the recommendations of the forensic reports that disciplinary steps be instituted against individuals implicated in serious allegations suggesting inter alia corruption.

"It is telling that the applicants should not have disclosed the forensic reports to the court," Nxesi said.

Nxesi said he had every right to fire board chairperson Nhlanhla Ngubane, his deputy Alan Baloyi and other members of the board.

However, he retained other board members. Ngubane was given a retainer fee increase of R54 000.

He slammed them for this exorbitant increase in their fees.