

# Fear stalks whistleblower

No cop protection  
for man who  
exposed corruption  
in PMB and Howick

CLIVE NDOU

A PIETERMARITZBURG-BASED whistleblower who exposed corruption that ate millions of rands still has no police protection months after a threat assessment indicated that hitmen were after him.

Thabiso Zulu (36), who gave an explosive account of corruption across the KZN's municipalities and provincial government departments during the Mxeneke commission, which was established to investigate political killings, has now resorted to sleeping at multiple locations to elude hitmen.

"At times I just use my instincts and change my location, and in some instances people working in the intelligence sector alert me when they get wind of any plots to assassinate me."

"I'm always on the move," he said. The *Witness* is in possession of a letter from the Office of the Public Protector, which for the last few weeks had been trying to pressure the police to offer Zulu protection, confirming that threat assessments by police intelligence and the State Security Agency (SSA) have shown him to be at risk.

However, despite the outcome of the assessments, which were conducted early this year, Zulu is yet to receive police protection.

"I'm still waiting, so far I haven't heard anything from the police," he said.

Last year Zulu blew the whistle on a joint community work programme between the national Public Works Department and the Department of Trade and Industry.

Following information provided by Zulu, it was discovered that an Mmandeni councillor, colluding with local NGOs, had been defrauding the programme by using ghost workers to claim funds from the Public Works Department.

"They would hire about 30 people from the community but then claim to have hired more. The project was meant to assist the unemployed but there would be many instances where you would find that people that the NGOs claimed to have hired were in fact already employed elsewhere," he said.

President Cyril Ramaphosa has since signed a proclamation authorising the Special Investigative Unit (SIU) to investigate the Public Works Department.

Information supplied by Zulu in March resulted in the arrest of 15 people for fraud and corruption committed at the Howick traffic licensing centre.

The suspects, who included driver's licence examiners, were arrested by members of the Hawks for issuing fraudulent driver's and learner licences.

"There are many people that I know personally and some of whom I have worked with in exposing corruption who had been killed."

"So, when the assessment came positive, I was not surprised."

"I have known all along that there are some people who don't like what I'm doing and would want to see me dead," he said.

A former ANC Youth League (ANCYL) Harry Gwala regional secretary, Zulu worked closely with former ANC leader Sindiso Magaga, who died after being shot by unknown people in uMzantsiweni last year.

Zulu made headlines when, at Magaga's funeral, he revealed that the deceased was killed because he had evidence of corruption committed by councillors at the Mzimkhulu Municipality.

"We worked closely with Magaga and served in the ANCYL regional leadership structure. He hated corruption and when he got killed there was no doubt in my mind that he was being silenced," he said.

Threats on Zulu's life come at a time when political killings, some suspected to be linked to corruption at municipalities in the province, are on the rise, with five assassinations having taken place in the last six weeks.

National police spokesperson Brigadier Vishnu Naidoo referred Zulu to KZN police.

However, provincial spokesperson, Captain Nqobile Gwala, said Zulu should go to the Hawks.

Hawks spokesperson Brigadier Maududi could not be reached for comment.

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