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Nxesi blames lapse in system for ministerial rent arrears

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Public Works Minister Thulas Nxesi says members of the executive are 'fully committed' to paying rent for their official residences.

CAPE TOWN - Public Works Minister Thulas Nxesi has blamed a lapse in the system as the reason why the rent on a number of ministerial residences is in arrears, in some cases, for longer than three months.

In a reply to a Democratic Alliance (DA) parliamentary question, Nxesi confirms there are ministerial rent defaulters, but says he doesn't want to give the amount owing because Public Works officials are still verifying the figure.

Nxesi says members of the executive are "fully committed" to paying rent for their official residences and says what needs to be addressed is the "systemic gap" he says led to mounting arrears for certain ministerial homes.

DA MP Malcolm Figg isn't satisfied with Nxesi's response: "Not at all... because we, as public representatives, especially ministers, should set an example."

Nxesi's written reply gives no details about which ministers owe rent or the amounts involved. He says it would be premature for him to release unverified figures now as officials are busy verifying the amounts owing.

Figg says it's unacceptable that well-paid ministers should fall into arrears. "When ordinary South Africans don't pay their rent, they get kicked out of their houses." A Public Works Department official was not available to comment.

(Edited by Zamangwane Shange)