

Concerns about courts' poor infrastructure

HOSEYA JUBASE

CHAIRPERSON of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Public Works, Humphrey Mmemezi, has described the Mthatha Magistrate's Court parking station and the Mthatha High Court infrastructure as "risky and embarrassing".

Mmemezi was addressing the media, at the Mthatha Stadium during a portfolio committee oversight intervention to some of the Public Works buildings around Mthatha last week Tuesday.

Mmemezi said, at the magistrate's court, officials were sharing parking with accused criminals. He said there is no safety at all.

"When you look at the size of that building, which was built years ago under the apartheid regime, it is difficult to accommodate all the employees. There's no parking and the building was never meant for the current intake," said Mmemezi.

He added that the people and departments occupying the Public Works building must not forget their duties to maintain and keep an amount in their own budget for the maintenance of these buildings every year.

"Our focus is at the magistrate's court because it was damaged after a fire broke out in September 2017," said Mmemezi.

He said there are possibilities of relocating the Mthatha Magistrate's Court to another area in the near future due to the condition of the building and availability of space.

"We are here to ensure that the Public Works Department is following its own annual plans, which it presents when it reports to the parliamentary committee.

"In terms of our duties, we not only deal with the passing of laws but also with the oversight of parliament. We follow the money that we are passing to various provinces



so we are here after identifying problems in the Mthatha High Court, Magistrate's Court and Greenville Village, also known as KwaMpuku," said Mmemezi.

"We identified the problems after some of the people wrote to us informing us about these situations. When Public Works is not doing its work, people are aware that there's a portfolio committee responsible for these oversights, and they immediately write to us," he said.

Mmemezi said these follow-up visits came after the portfolio committee visited the Mthatha Magistrate's and High Court between September 11 and 15 last year.

"At the time the committee was not satisfied with conditions of either of these state assets or the conditions that people who worked there were operating under. The

↑ **The Mthatha Magistrate's Court.**

PHOTOS:HOSEYA JUBASE

→ **Eastern Cape Portfolio Committee chairperson Phumeza Mpushe and national Portfolio Committee chairperson Humphrey Mmemezi.**



High Court was in dire need of infrastructural intervention and the employees needed to know what could be done to improve the standard.

"We are here to check whether the contractors were paid or not.

"As we speak contractors are busy refurbishing outside the Mthatha High Court building and inside the Mthatha Magistrate's Court building. The total refurbishment cost for the two courts is estimated at R130 million," said Mmemezi.