

Ministers have a rich uncle – or aunt– in the furniture business



Huracãn owners Yasmyne Reddy, Nqobile Makhanya and Jennifer Janse van Vuuren.

By **MZILIKAZI wa AFRIKA**

● A bed worth more than R100,000, a dining room suite worth more than a small car, bedside lamps costing more than R6,000.

These are just some of the items of furniture for ministers’ official homes.

Officials of public works, the department assigned the job of caring for the homes, have revealed that a small company is charging huge amounts for the furniture.

The Sunday Times has learnt that the officials sent an anonymous letter to the Public Service Commission (PSC) and parliament’s committee on public accounts asking it to investigate the multimillion-rand deal that

was done with Huracãn Procurement, Marketing and Distribution for the furniture.

The revelations come after the department admitted to parliament this week it had three houses in Cape Town kitted out with braai areas costing a total of R500,000.

An invoice submitted to the department from Huracãn for one minister’s house in Johannesburg, which the Sunday Times has seen, totalled more than R2m for furniture and included:

- R100,800 for a dining room rug;
- Four scatter cushions for a child’s bedroom at R861 each, R3,444 in total;
- R25,200 for a child’s bed headboard; and

● R18,900 for a guest room chair.

Documents drawn up by officials also give details of the cost to furnish a minister’s house in Pretoria.

It includes:

- A mahogany dining table for R84,000;
- 10 chairs for R157,000 in total;
- R63,000 for a mahogany king-size bed;
- R44,100 for two three-drawer mahogany pedestals;
- R25,200 for a mattress;
- R27,300 for a mahogany dressing table;
- R17,850 for a dressing-table mirror; and
- R5,250 for a mahogany dressing-table chair.

Other costs for the bedroom, including lamps, TV stands and rugs, are included.

Huracãn is owned by Jennifer Janse van Vuuren and Yasmyne Reddy. A third director, Nqobile Makhanya, was appointed in December.

The three women declined to respond to detailed questions sent to them on Friday about the deal on Friday.

“As you appreciate, we are not able to comment on Huracãn Procurement, Marketing and Distribution’s contract with the department of public works due to the confidentiality limitations therein,” Janse van Vuuren said in an e-mail.

This week public works director-general Sam Vukela told Scopa that the department had spent more than R30m in buying five houses.

The houses included one in Pretoria worth R9m. This was in spite of the department having more than 100 other houses in its asset register.

Former police minister Fikile Mbalula said he had been due to move into one of the houses that the department had bought for R6.3m. He had not yet moved in by the time

he was axed as minister. The reason for the delay had been bickering by public work over the furniture for the house, he said.

It is not known who is staying in the house, although the department has confirmed that it is occupied by a minister.

Public works spokesperson Reggie Ngcobo said Huracãn had been “appointed as the turnkey company for provision of furniture and related services” following an open tender.

The company has been paid R4.3m to date.

“There is [an] anonymous letter sent to the committee on public accounts and the PSC asking them to investigate this deal. We suspect that it is one letter sent to the two institutions,” Ngcobo said.

Committee on public accounts chairperson Themba Godi yesterday told the Sunday Times that department officials had been summoned to parliament again on Wednesday. They would be asked about the contract with Huracãn, among other issues.

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