

■ FACELIFT

Upgrades to Ramaphosa, Mabuza houses

Taxpayers have coughed up more than R7m for security, electrical repairs, refurbishments at official residences

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THE official residences of both President Cyril Ramaphosa, Mahlamba Ndlopfu Pretoria, and the Oliver Tambo House for his deputy David Mabuza have received a facelift.

Both houses have had their security systems repaired and faulty electricity fixed.

The refurbishments to the two houses were made since the duo took up the top positions in the country after former president Jacob Zuma was forced to step down.

And taxpayers have coughed up more than R7 million towards upgrading these two of the five presidential houses.

This was revealed by Public Works Minister Thulas Nxesi in a

written reply to the EFF's Leigh-Ann Mathys.

Mathys had enquired about the amount spent by the Public Works Department on upgrades to the homes of Ramaphosa and Mabuza since they took office in February.

In his reply, Nxesi said the repairs made at the Mahlamba Ndlopfu official residence included a leaking roof, gutters and downpipes.

Nxesi also said the residence formerly called Libertas until Nelson Mandela renamed it in 1995 when he moved in, had also needed paintwork to the walls inside and outside.

The repairs on paintwork, he said, extended to areas where water damage was identified as well as "ailing" existing plumbing systems.

Nxesi also said the faulty electrical

systems, including the existing security system, were also repaired.

"The total cost for the repairs was R7 314 514, he said.

Nxesi hastened to add that "no works were registered for the Cape Town presidential residence".

He also revealed that the department had also conducted repairs to the existing security system, including the faulty electrical system at Mabuza's Oliver Tambo official residence.

"The cost of the repairs amounted to R856 000.

"No works were registered at the Cape Town official residence of the deputy president," Nxesi said in his reply.

Mathys did not immediately comment but referred questions to EFF communications manager Sixolise Gcilishe who could not be reached as

her cellphone went unanswered.

The renovations at the two presidential residences come months after the Department of Public Works pumped in a further R10m to revamp the J.L. Dube presidential house in Durban which was condemned as unfit for habitation in 2006.

The department had initially allocated R40m while Zuma was the head of state after it was damaged by floods at the time.

The Public Works Department has undertaken repairs at both Mahlamba Ndlopfu and Oliver Tambo House over the years.

In 2014, Nxesi's predecessor Nkosi-nathi Nhleko had in a written reply to a parliamentary question said R586 854 was spent on refurbishments at Mahlamba Ndlopfu in 2010/11.

A total of R312 263 was spent on

refurbishments at Oliver Tambo House in 2011/12. A further R296 063 was spent in 2013/14.

In 2011, former public works minister Gwen Mahlangu-Nkabinde halted upgrades to the presidential homes and offices, as well as to the Bryntirion estate in Pretoria.

This was after a written reply to a parliamentary question at the time, which said a new dressing room and sauna were part of the interior renovations to Mahlamba Ndlopfu, estimated at a cost of about R169m.

Media reports said maintenance had to be done to the security system. This included improving escape routes and the installation of an electronic surveillance system.

The expenditure was later revised to R7m.