Publication: Citizen (Johannesburg Edition) Date: Wednesday, October 03, 2018

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## 'Dodgy jobs', lack of skills

## PUBLIC WORKS: CONFIDENTIAL REPORT DETAILS SERIOUS PROBLEMS IN DEPARTMENT

**Employees** 

responsible

for leasing

not

qualified'

» Minister Nxesi asked for probe of at least 684 'tainted' posts, irregularities.

## Charles Cilliers

confidential report sent to Public Works Minister Thulas Nxesi on Friday, detailing all the current allegations of corruption in the department under investigation, poses serious questions about the state of the department, which appears to be awash in appointment and procurement irregularities.

The lack of skilled and qualified appointees casts further doubt on its competence among those who have to use its buildings and consider their safety to be a matter of life and death.

under investigation.

The report was accompanied by a signed letter to Nxesi from Public Service Commission (PSC) chairperson RK Sizani, promising to keep Nxesi in the loop on ongoing investigations.

The oldest complaint dates from November 2016, with the most recent from last month.

Nxesi himselfrequestinvestigation of his department in June, related to 684 posts at public works that were allegedly tainted by irregularities. Minister Ayanda Dlodlo's department of public service and administra-

tion did not have the resources to handle the matter – according to the PSC - and asked the PSC to review the appointments. It began to look into it in July.

The PSC has already investigated an anonymous complaint According to the report, nearly from November 2016, that in-700 irregular appointments are cludes an allegation that most of

the employees responsible for leasing and acquisition at public works do not have the required qualifications.

"The current stats indicate there are about 50 employees in leasing [of whom] less than 10% are in possession of qualifications [an appropriate degree], about

70% have irrelevant qualifications and 20% have Grade

[only]," reads the complaint.

These staff members are responsible for negotiating and sourcing accommodation for government departments, which raised eyebrows this weekend

after the Sunday Times reported that ministers are allowed to pay as little as R1 200 a month for lavish multimillion-rand apartments in Cape Town, while other state workers can snap up rentals for even less. Cape Town mayor Patricia de Lille described the deals as "ridiculous".

A further allegation that the PSC was asked to investigate was that the minister in 2014 or 2015 attempted to create an organisational structure that included 28 deputy directors-general, which the department of public service and administration is believed to have rejected as being "excessive".

Public works spokesperson

Sabelo Mali confirmed receipt of The Citizen's questions about how public works is dealing with appointment and procurement problems, which will be dealt with in a follow-up article.

"As I indicated to you, some questions are HR-related and as such will need more time to respond." - charlesc@citizen.co.za

## info

- This week, correctional services staff and members of the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (Popcru) vowed to rather sit outside the Poyntons Building in Pretoria as they refuse to believe it is safe to work in.
- City of Tshwane mayor Solly Msimanga shut down the property due to a "serious breach" in fire and emergency evacuation regulations earlier this month.
- When asked for comment on the numerous allegations against public works, Popcru's Richard Mamabolo told The

Citizen the department should have done far more by now to create a portfolio of buildings owned and maintained by the department that would have made the need to hire buildings from service providers unnecessary. "That would have saved the state a lot of money and aided with accountability."

▶ The National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (Nehawu) confirmed to The Citizen that it was being included in the PSC's investigation of the "684 posts".