

# Three years later: Roux costly lease with public works drags

By **THABO MOKONE**

● The department of public works has forked out more than R56m on an unlawful lease for a Pretoria CBD building that tenants says is unsafe, with “bricks falling off”.

The contract to lease 144 Madi-ba Street for the Independent Po-lice Investigative Directorate (Ipid) was declared unlawful in 2015 by the high court in Pretoria.

But three years later the lease, with controversial property owner Roux Shabangu, is still in force. The high court said Shabangu fronted for a white busi-nessman in what was supposed to be a

BEE deal.

The matter came to light last week when MPs on the standing committee on public ac-counts interrogated the government’s prestige property portfolio.



**Moses Dlamini**

Ipid spokesman Moses Dlamini told the Sunday Times that public works was paying the landlord more than R1.5m a month, against the directorate’s wishes, for a building that contravenes the Occu-pational Health and Safety Act. A two-year effort to find alternative accom-modation “collapsed under suspi-cious circumstances”, he said.

“Ipid took a decision to stop paying public works in 2017 as this would constitute irreg-

## In Numbers

**R56m**

The amount spent on the lease to house Ipid

**3**

The number of years since a court ruling declared the lease unlawful



**This unsafe, unsightly building on Madiba Street in Pretoria houses the Independent Police Investigative Directorate.**

Picture: Supplied

ular expenditure,” said Dlamini. “We are, however, aware that public works continues to pay the landlord for the invalid lease.

“Some of [the building’s] many problems include bricks falling off, no escape routes; no windows in some offices, and lifts not working. Of the three lifts, only one works at any given time – until it also stops.”

Dlamini said when Ipid asked to find its own accommodation after public works twice failed to do so, the department said it would provide a new building by December. “Procurement processes were initiated by public works on two occasions, in 2016 and 2017. However, alternative accommodation has still not been secured for the Ipid. The two tender processes collapsed under suspi-

cious circumstances,” said Dlamini.

Public works spokesperson Thami Mchunu said the high court ruling com-pelled the department to pay the landlord “as long as there is occupation of the premises”.

He confirmed that R56m had been spent so far on an unlawful contract.

Attempts to find alternative accommoda-tion for Ipid had failed because the depart-ment could not find “suitable” options, he said. This year “we requested Ipid to start with new procurement processes. The client also had new needs,” said Mchunu.

He said two officials responsible for the lease were fired and another resigned while a disciplinary process was under way.