

■ F R A U D

Council official, two others bust for ‘ghost’ payments

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THREE men, including an eThekweni Municipality official, who allegedly defrauded the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) by creating ghost employees and inflating salaries were arrested by the Hawks this week.

City official Andile Shangase, 37, his relative Bongani Shangase, 45, and friend Musawenkosi Mthethwa, 31, were arrested by the Hawks National Clean Audit Task Team and appeared

on charges of fraud in the Durban Commercial Crimes Court on Wednesday.

Andile Shangase who works as a facilitator in the city’s Safer Cities department allegedly recruited various people and presented them to the municipality as legitimate EPWP workers. A report by the City Integrity and Investigations Unit (CIU) revealed that he allegedly facilitated the opening of bank accounts under the individuals names to receive EPWP salaries.

The report alleged that the official kept the bank cards and PIN codes of people and subsequently withdrew money from their accounts.

The EPWP programme is meant to provide temporary jobs to unemployed people and they are paid a monthly stipend, usually at a rate of about R130 per day. However, it is alleged that the ghost employees were paid higher daily rates, ranging from R511 to R2 090 per day. There was no evidence of any work done.

The State alleges the trio received in

excess of R100 000 through payments made to accounts of ghost employees of the city’s EPWP programme.

Magistrate Christobale Mazibuko granted the three accused R3 000 bail.

The case has been postponed to February .

Hawks spokesperson, Brigadier Hangwani Mulaudzi said another city official implicated is on the run and a warrant of arrest has been issued.

“We will arrest him very soon,” he said. “Police made contact with him and he has not handed himself

in. There’s a national clean audit task team that has taken over and is dealing with corruption at the municipality, we believe there’s a bigger picture in these cases and more arrests will be made,” said Mulaudzi.

The CIU forensic report implicated at least three other officials and recommended disciplinary action against them.

The report found that more than R1.2 million had been fraudulently paid to ghost employees in one month alone, with no duties performed.



BONGANI, back left, and Andile Shangase, front right, were charged with fraud for allegedly defrauding the eThekweni Municipality EPWP programme. | SIPHELELE BUTHELEZI