

Trio appear in court for alleged ghost payments

The crackdown by the Hawks of eThekweni Municipality officials involved in alleged fraud has commenced.

Last week three accused who allegedly defrauded the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) by making ghost payments appeared in the Durban Commercial Crimes Court. City employee Andile Shangase, his relative Bongani Shangase, and a friend, Musawenkosi Mthethwa, were each granted R 3 000 bail by Magistrate Christobale Mazibuko.

The trio were arrested on Wednesday by the Hawks National Clean Audit Task Team.

Shangase works as a

facilitator in the city's safer cities department.

He allegedly recruited various people and presented them to the municipality as legitimate EPWP workers. A report by the City's Integrity and Investigations Unit (CIU) revealed that he allegedly facilitated the opening of bank accounts under the individuals' names to receive EPWP salaries.

The EPWP programme is meant to provide temporary jobs for 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 R2090

per day. There was apparently no 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. 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.

"He was supposed to hand himself over to detectives but failed to do so. The Hawks will execute the warrant of arrest. There's a bigger picture of corruption. More arrests will follow in due course" he said.