

## ■ LEASE AGREEMENTS

# My removal was a plot: Cele

**KUBEN CHETTY**

Regional political editor

POLICE Minister Bheki Cele said yesterday his removal from the office of national police commissioner in 2012 had been orchestrated several months prior to his axing.

He said he had been informed two months before his appointment that there was a target on his back.

Last week, the North Gauteng High Court dismissed the findings of an inquiry which was used by former president Jacob Zuma to sack Cele as national police commissioner.

The inquiry was initiated by Zuma after the public protector found in 2011 that Cele's involvement in deals to acquire police office space in the run-up to the 2010 World Cup was "improper, unlawful, and amounted to maladministration".

Then public protector Thuli Madonsela tabled two reports concerning two lease agreements in Pretoria and Durban worth more than R1.7 billion that the SAPS wanted to sign with businessman Roux Shabangu between March and July 2010.

Inquiry chairperson Judge Jake Molloi concluded in 2012, that the evidence "proved abundantly that there was a questionable relationship between the national commissioner and Shabangu, and between Shabangu and Public Works officials who facilitated the lease agreements".

According to last week's court order, the inquiry report had since been "reviewed and set aside".

Yesterday, Cele said his removal had had nothing to do with his work or the lease agreement.

"Some people did brief me and told me I was not going to finish my term, and that was two months before I started the job.

"I did not believe those who said I would be removed from my position. When it happened, it happened.

"Somebody had to find a way of doing it."

Cele said he had been tainted by the accusations and it took a seven-year court battle for him to clear his name.

"I was not fooled. I was angry. It hurt, but as a disciplined member of the ANC I had to deal with it, but I say now, and I will always say, I will never leave the ANC for any reason."

Cele said a building (Telkom Towers in Pretoria), which was selected during the tenure of the acting commissioner, also had problems.

"Some of those who were in those offices, including the new commissioner, have left the new building. I have a major problem with this as a lot of money has been paid and the building is not habitable."

Cele said he was meant to be based in this building, but he had refused to move his offices until a building safety certificate was issued.

*See Page 5*