

Ramaphosa gives SIU green light for several probes

Sahra, Sassa, education, public works and health claims under spotlight

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The Special Investigating Unit (SIU) is investigating possible corruption and maladministration around procurement in the upgrading of the gravesites of liberation giants Steve Biko and Robert Sobukwe.

President Cyril Ramaphosa signed a proclamation on Friday, paving the way for the SIU to probe South African Heritage Resources Agency (Sahra) board members and employees for alleged maladministration and corruption that took place from January 2013.

Provincial spokespersons referred questions about the proclamations to their seniors or simply said they would not be able to comment at this stage.

Ramaphosa also gave the SIU the green light to continue with its probe of medico-legal claims and broadened its mandate to include health claims made in Gauteng, as well as maladministration around claims related to wrongful arrests carried out by the SAPS.

The SIU will also investigate alleged fraudulent activities in the provincial South African Social Security Agency (Sassa), provincial departments of education and public works.

Central to the SIU investigation into Sahra are the payments and the procurement of service providers in relation to "improvements" carried out on the following busts, museums



CYRIL RAMAPHOSA

and graves:

- Delville Wood National Memorial and Museum;
- O R Tambo House in London;
- O R Tambo bust in Cuba;
- Graves of Zacharia Mahabane, James Moroka, Biko and Sobukwe, among others.

Sahra spokesperson Yazeed Sadien could not be reached for comment.

Ramaphosa also amended his proclamation of the SIU investigation into medico-legal claims against the Eastern Cape health department.

Health spokesperson Sizwe Kupelo said he was trying to contact the relevant official, but had not responded at the time of writing.

The Eastern Cape has reportedly lost more than R20bn over two decades on medico-legal claims.

Ramaphosa also referred a case of "serious maladministration in connection with the

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affairs" at Sassa.

The SIU will probe unauthorised, irregular or fruitless and wasteful expenditure in relation to:

- The fleet management of Sassa in the Eastern Cape;
- Fuel and card management of Sassa in the Eastern Cape and in KwaZulu-Natal; and
- Asset management of Sassa in the Eastern Cape.

The investigation will also look at "the refurbishment of Sassa offices within the Eastern Cape region" in terms of the local office improvement project, as well as services procured from a cleaning company.

Sassa provincial spokesperson Luzuko Qina referred questions to national spokesperson Kgomotso Diseko, who did not respond.

Ramaphosa ordered the SIU to investigate allegations of serious maladministration; intentional or negligent loss of public money; improper conduct by officials in the departments of education and public works between 2012 and July 2019.

The SIU will zero in on the procurement of prefabricated mobile classrooms, labs and water tanks at schools.

Public works spokesperson Vuyokazi Mbanjwa said: "The department has not yet received the proclamation. However, it will co-operate with the investigation."

Education spokesperson Malibongwe Mtima said when department officials were pointed to in probes of this nature, questions were referred to the premier's office.

Premier's office spokesperson Mvusiwekhaya Sicwetsha could not be reached for comment.