

■ CORRUPTION

De Lille vows to repair court facilities

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THE Department of Public Works will be hunting down more than 3 500 employees for “stealing” money meant to maintain and rebuild courts, Minister Patricia de Lille has said.

De Lille told journalists the department had failed to deliver on its mandate largely due to corruption.

She said the decision was taken following her meetings with Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng, regional court managers and the department’s regional managers.

De Lille said in an effort to ensure members of the public no longer found government buildings in an unsatisfactory condition, with ablution facilities not working and dilapidated and unsafe buildings, the department had launched a new programme aimed at court repairs and maintenance.

According to her, members of the public regularly complain about the state of the courts.

“The Chief Justice cited various cases which demonstrated the dire impact the lack of repairs and maintenance has on the public, their safety and the administering of justice.

“I’ve been told that he received calls from colleagues at Durban courts who were stuck in lifts, with another incident where someone was able to walk into the building with a gun and shoot his wife and brother-in-law.”

Other incidents De Lille listed included a leaking roof at the Constitutional Court, and some courts where accused persons had to stand not far from presiding officers and witnesses.

Many parents avoid the maintenance courts due to the lack of privacy, similarly with those seeking protection orders, she said.

De Lille said that to date investigations by the Special Investigative Unit (SIU) had found more than 300 companies set up by people within the department.

“There are 3 570 officials with an interest in entities and who are still employed in the department, with no record of a declaration or permission being granted.

“I am making this public because the days of this department funding corruption are coming to an end. I have told officials that it is not worth their while to lose their job for a quick buck rather than doing an honest day’s work.”

She said the department would also be looking at what had been stalling the refurbishment of the old Pretoria Magistrate’s Court and the building of another court in Mamelodi.

The Pretoria Magistrate’s Court has been closed since October 27, 2010, after it was gutted by fire.



THE Pretoria Magistrate’s Court was destroyed by fire in 2010 and has yet to be refurbished. | **JACQUES NAUDE** African News Agency (ANA)