

# Protector puts Nxesi on notice about investigation

## Anonymous complaint alleges jobs for pals, lovers

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● A senior cabinet minister is under investigation by the public protector amid allegations that he irregularly appointed 18 political allies to cushy government jobs, including five women said to be in romantic affairs with him.

The investigation is laid out in a 10-page letter sent to employment & labour minister Thulas Nxesi by public protector Busisiwe Mkhwebane a fortnight ago and acknowledged this week.

In the letter Mkhwebane informs Nxesi that she is probing “irregular appointments, nepotism and irregular procurement” allegations levelled against him by a former staff member.

According to the document, Nxesi – a former public works minister – hired Clive Mtshisa as the department of public works’ deputy director-general of corporate services, which comes with a minimum annual package of R1.5m, “in order to manage the deployment of SACP members”.

Mtshisa was deployed to “also ensure that tenders are awarded to service providers with links to the SACP”.

Nxesi, who is the national deputy chair of the SACP, also served as the general secretary of teachers’ union Sadtu before becoming public works minister first in 2011 and again in 2018.

Mtshisa is a former deputy chair of Sadtu in Gauteng.

According to the anonymous complaint filed in March this year, Mtshisa and other senior figures at public works went on to appoint 17 top SACP members and Nxesi allies to senior managerial positions such as deputy directors-general, chief directors (who earn R1.2m a year) and directors of supply chain management, a departmental division in charge of dishing out multi-million-rand tenders.

The document also states that the appointments were not advertised, and in some cases proper internal processes were not followed. One chief director was employed to his position “because he is the husband to the daughter of minister [of higher education, science & technology Blade] Nzimande”, and others did not have the requisite qualifications.

Nzimande serves as general secretary of the SACP.

The document says that irregular appointments went ahead despite objections from public works director-general Sam Vukela.

It alleges that when a complaint was filed with the Public Service Commission (PSC), “it was never investigated as it was handled by Mrs [Phumelele] Ntombela-Nzimande”, a PSC commissioner and wife of the higher education minister.

When the story was first reported by AfricaNews24-7 in August, the PSC said Ntombela-Nzimande was not involved in the complaint.

Ntombela-Nzimande said yesterday:

“I cannot imagine anyone saying something like that about another constitutional body without checking facts. If it is true that the public protector has recycled fake news, then her problems have stopped being legal, they are a health issue, honestly. She now needs assistance from health practitioners, I’m sorry.

“I do not know all those people I am said to have been meant to investigate. I have absolutely nothing to do with public works, it is not my cluster department. The public protector could not have possibly written something like that without verifying with the PSC, unless she is not well.”

She said it was malicious for people to question her for being the wife of the minister.

Mkhwebane’s spokesperson, Oupa Segalwe, on Friday confirmed the in-



**Labour minister Thulas Nxesi.**



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vestigation.

“The letter is authentic. The public protector is investigating the matter,” said Segalwe.

Mkhwebane is also investigating Nxesi for allegedly promoting and appointing at least five female staff members to senior positions in Cape Town, the Eastern Cape and Pretoria “after they provided sexual favours to you”, her letter to Nxesi says.

It says the Eastern Cape woman had been facing charges after awarding a tender to her husband, but the investigation was quashed, “allegedly because she was having an affair with yourself”.

Nxesi’s spokesman Sabelo Mali yesterday confirmed “receipt of allegations from the office of the PP from an anonymous source, however the minister will respond accordingly when he applies his mind from his overseas trip”.

Mtshisa has declined to comment while the SACP has dismissed the allegations against Nxesi and Nzimande.

Vukela had not responded to requests for comment at the time of going to print despite asking for questions to be sent to him.