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Title: Mkhwebane can stay on in luxury estate if she pays R11,000 rent

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pend it.
tomorrow (Thursday).
been done.
Members are advised not
court would decide.

Mkhwebane can stay on in luxury estate — if she pays R11,000 rent

Suspended public protector Busisiwe Mkhwebane has lost her free stay at an exclusive estate in Pretoria, which was funded with taxpayer money.

If she wants to continue living there, she can enter into a private lease agreement at her own expense, the public protector's office says.

In a statement, the institution said it had served notice to the public works department last month about its intention to terminate the lease.

"This was done to rectify the obligation of who bears the financial costs of advocate

Mkhwebane's accommodation, in line with the relevant applicable institutional policy as well as her conditions of service," it said.

"The institution confirms it started looking into this issue before advocate Mkhwebane was placed on suspension, due to media inquiries and reports on the matter.

"The process to rectify has been fully communicated to advocate Mkhwebane.

"The decision is in line with what was initially intended by the arrangement."

The public protector's office



NOTICE SERVED: Suspended public protector Busisiwe Mkhwebane will have to pay rent herself if she wants to continue living in a luxury ministerial estate

Picture: RUVAN BOSHOFF

stressed: "Advocate Mkhwebane is not being evicted from the residence, as she may continue to occupy the residence, should she elect to do so, in her personal capacity

and at her own cost."

DA MP Dion George said Mkhwebane had been living rent-free within the Bryntirion Estate, which includes ministerial residences, since

February 2017. After she was suspended earlier this year, she relocated to another taxpayer-funded property, a luxurious three-bedroom duplex adjacent to Bryntirion, for which the office of the public protector paid R11,000 in monthly rent," he disclosed.

Meanwhile, a Section 194 inquiry into Mkhwebane's fitness to hold office was set to resume yesterday, though she has filed papers in the Western Cape High Court challenging the chair's refusal to recuse himself.

The amount spent by the public protector's office on litigation and legal opinions has led to a public outcry.

The office said in Tuesday's statement it was reviewing its systems, "which include those relating to procurement of legal services".

"We wish to assure the people of SA that we are acting within the parameters of the law in every action being taken.

"As an institution entrusted with ensuring accountability in state affairs, we too remain accountable." — *TimesLIVE*

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