



**Publication:** Star, The (Early Edition) - Main  
**Title:** EC premier called out for fraud  
**Publish date:** 26 May 2023  
**Page:** 2

**Reach:** 27257  
**AVE:**R 69460.78  
**Author:** Lehlohonolo Mashigo

RAMAPHOSA ALLY

# EC premier called out for fraud

LEHLOHONOLO MASHIGO  
lehlohonolo.mashigo@intl.co.za

EASTERN Cape Premier Oscar Mabuyane has been accused of academic fraud involving a former University of Fort Hare professor.

After escaping a 2021 report by the Public Protector's Office that found that Mabuyane and the then Eastern Cape head of public works, Babalo Madikizela, criminally benefited from a portion of the R1.1 million of Mbizana municipal funds meant for Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's memorial service, Mabuyane is in the spotlight again, this time for alleged academic fraud.

According to reports at the time, suspended Public Protector Busisiwe Mkhwebane instituted a probe after Buffalo City metro resident Xolile Mashukuca lodged a complaint in July 2019 following media reports about the misappropriation of amounts totalling R2m and R1m with alleged assistance of businessman Lonwabo Bam.

It has been reported in the media that sources have said the National Prosecuting Authority is dragging its



EASTERN Cape Premier Oscar Mabuyane. | BHEKI RADEBE

feet on charging Mabuyane.

The close ally of President Cyril Ramaphosa is now involved in another controversial academic fraud allegation.

Mabuyane was outed by a Special Investigating Unit report which claimed he used former University of

Fort Hare professor, Edwin Ijeoma, and a team of ghostwriters to help with his Master's proposal, despite not having an Honours degree.

This has prompted political parties like the DA to call on his party, the ANC, to conduct an internal audit of all its public representatives with

degrees obtained from the University of Fort Hare since 2013.

"The infiltration of ANC politicians at institutions of higher learning is a blatant disregard for meaningful transformation in the sector, as well as disregarding the sacrifices made daily by students who want to better their lives through education and break the cycle of poverty," said the DA in a statement.

Political newbies, Rise Mzansi's leader Songezo Zibi said Mabuyane had to step down.

Zibi said Mabuyane could not be trusted to lead the fight against corruption when he was implicated in such a shameful act of corruption himself.

"The people of the Eastern Cape must never forget this moment where it was shown that while their hard-working children adhere to the rules and work hard to obtain their qualifications, powerful people like Mabuyane cut corners and use their positions to gain what they do not deserve," added Zibi.

ActionSA Eastern Cape provincial chairperson Athol Trollip has also come out guns blazing against

Mabuyane, saying the degree fraud allegations reinforced ActionSA's belief that Mabuyane was not fit to serve as Eastern Cape premier as he has perpetually used his office for personal gain.

"It is not the first time that Premier Mabuyane's unethical conduct has exposed his lack of integrity expected of a leader of a provincial government. In January, we bemoaned the fact that the premier managed to evade investigation into how he improperly benefited from money that was misappropriated from the Winnie Madikizela Local Municipality," he said.

Trollip then said Mabuyane was clearly not the leader the people of the Eastern Cape deserved and needed.

Speaking to *The Star's* sister publication, *The Cape Times*, spokesperson for the premier, Zuko Godlimpi, said Mabuyane was admitted and registered at the university to study for his degree and was further allocated his supervisor, Ijeoma, by the institution until his suspension.

He added that issues around his research schedules, presentations, and feedback were handled by the two university administrators.