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FINANCIAL MISCONDUCT CLAIMS

Claims top crime boss vanished amid property scandal probe

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THE SAPS and Police Ministry say they are not aware of the disappearance of Major-General Philani Lushaba, the chief financial officer of the SAPS Crime Intelligence unit, who allegedly vanished as the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) was preparing to question him about his involvement in financial misconduct linked to over a multi-million Rand property scandal.

The unit allegedly spent more than R45 million on irregular property purchases without proper approvals, triggering an investigation by the Inspector-General of Intelligence (IGI).

The DA said Lushaba failed to report for duty on Friday and was unreachable.

The party said Lushaba's disappearance followed closely on the conclusion of an investigation by IGI into unlawful property acquisitions by the unit.

However, both the Police Ministry's spokesperson Kamogelo Mogotsi, and SAPS spokesperson Athlenda Mathe, said they are not aware of Lushaba's disappearance. *Independent Media* also reached out to Lushaba and he answered his phone but declined to comment.

"I think you should know where to direct inquiries in the SAPS," he said.

NPA spokesperson, Mthunzi Mhaga, did not respond to a request for comment.

Yesterday, DA member of Parliament, Dianne Kohler Barnard, said the party had asked about Lushaba's whereabouts and had heard nothing in response.

At the centre of the scandal are two expensive acquisitions – a R22.7m Pretoria boutique hotel and a R22.8m Durban commercial property, allegedly approved by Lushaba and Crime Intelligence head Maj-Gen Dumisani Khumalo without Treasury or Public Works oversight.

"The scale of spending, the lack of transparency, and the irregular process raise serious questions about possible corruption and abuse of public funds," said Barnard.

Barnard said that the DA has submitted urgent parliamentary questions to the Minister of Police to determine the contents of the IGI's report and to establish whether further misconduct has been uncovered.

Barnard said the party would also write to the chairperson of the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence to demand that the SAPS leadership, including Crime Intelligence's top officials, be summoned to account before Parliament.

"The IGI's report must now serve as a turning point. Without urgent action to remove corrupt elements from senior management, there can be no hope of restoring credibility to SAPS' intelligence function – or protecting South Africans from organised crime and criminal capture," said Barnard, adding that law enforcement must treat this matter with the urgency it deserves.

Lushaba is not new to controversy. He lost his state firearm and laptop after he was allegedly robbed by a sex worker in 2022.

Barnard said the SAPS Crime Intelligence division has a long, troubling record of corruption.

"For too long, this vital unit has been plagued by looting, political interference, and lawlessness."

The division has also suffered from repeated leadership instability, internal leaks and operation failures.

This was highlighted in a parliamentary committee in March, where issues of persistent political interference and resource mismanagement were raised as weakening the division's ability to combat crime.