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SHODDY WORK

# KZN Public Works plans to blacklist six contractors

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THE KwaZulu-Natal Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) is in the process of blacklisting six contractors.

Four of the contractors are working for the KZN Department of Education and two for the Department of Health.

The contractors whose names have not been released will be restricted from doing work due to:

- Abandoned site.
- Poor workmanship.
- Poor project scoping and costing.
- Inadequate experience of human resources on-site.
- Poor cash flow management.

The DPWI announced that it was reining in errant contractors.

Martin Meyer, MEC of the DPWI, was addressing a motion by the IFP MPL, Petros Msimango, during a sitting of the KZN Legislature this week.

Msimango was concerned that shoddy work by incompetent contractors who are awarded government tenders is prevalent in KZN.

He called for the rigorous vetting processes to eliminate corruption in the awarding of tenders.

He also urged the government to recover public funds lost to corruption through incompetent contractors, adding that the government should name, shame, and prosecute corrupt officials colluding with service providers in state contracts.

Emmanuel Mthethwa, an uMkhonto weSizwe Party MPL, said the legislature must acknowledge the rot that has seeped into the tender system.

He mentioned a sports complex that had not been finished for 15 years.

MKP is in favour of Msimango's resolution, he stated. In order to obtain equipment and loans, he continued, the government needs to establish a contractor development fund.

"The state must investigate the entrepreneurs to expose the real owners, not just the black faces on black economic empowerment covers. The government must be held accountable for poor contract management," he said.

Satishrai Bhanprakash, IFP MPL, said this issue lies at the heart of service delivery in KZN.

"The motion is a blueprint for change. We not only endorse it, but to strengthen it with practical resolve. The scourge of incompetent contractors has become a stain on this province's development. No more back-room deals."

He said blacklisting was not enough and one must attack the root cause, which is corruption and a broken procurement system.

Meyer stated that when the government constructs a clinic or school in rural uMzinyathi, it should match the quality of those built in KZN's metro areas or more affluent suburbs

He said there is a small minority of contractors who are not honest, who do not provide good quality work, and who do not put the people first.

He stated that the DPWI aims to avoid partnering with contractors who take money and abandon the site with minimal work completed, as well as those who misrepresent their skills or the professionals they employ.

"It infuriates me when I go to a project that is on its second or even third contractor. It means the project is running over time and budget. The days of certain individuals acting in their own best interests, rather than those of the people, or taking the department for a ride, are over.

"Some of the suggestions raised during a contractors' imbizo have already been instituted, including addressing the matter of late payment. We have paid more than R500 million to contractors over the last few months for work completed," Meyer said.



MARTIN Meyer is the MEC for the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure in KwaZulu-Natal. | Supplied