



Publication: Citizen, The (Daily) - Main
Title: Mafia in with politicians
Publish date: 09 Jul 2026
Page: 5

Reach: 21822
AVE: R 96184.43
Author: Roy Cokayne



HARSH REALITY. Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure Dean Macpherson says government cannot normalise the behaviour of people who set up construction companies that don't build anything. Picture: Gallo Images

'Mafia in with politicians'

MINISTER: ALSO LINKS TO BUILDING COMPANIES

➔ **Construction projects worth about R63 billion had been disrupted, says Macpherson.**

Roy Cokayne

Moneyweb

There are definitely links between the activities of the construction mafia and some political parties, says Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure Dean Macpherson.

There is also evidence that criminals have infiltrated construction companies, while links have emerged between some government officials and some construction site disruption cases, but action is quickly taken against these officials, he said.

Macpherson said he attended a court case where an alleged construction mafia individual who had been arrested was supported by busloads – not minibuses – of people wearing the shirt of a particular political party and trying to pressure the court into giving the individual bail.

The government cannot normalise the behaviour of people who set up construction companies that don't build anything, yet provide security services that are not security services; providing construction services that are not construction services, Macpherson said.

"They are nothing other than shells to extract money."

He added that SA's construction sites must be places of work, dignity, delivery, investment and growth – not places of fear, criminal control or where politically connected syndicates decide who may build, who may work and who must pay.

Two years ago, the construction mafia had become one of the greatest threats to infrastructure delivery and investment in SA, but that story has changed.

"Since then, we have taken the fight directly to these networks through the Construction Summit, the Durban Declaration, stronger coordination with [the SA Police Service], Treasury, the [Construction Industry Development Board], public entities and industry stakeholders, better reporting, faster response, and stronger consequence management."

A total of 52 contractors have been blacklisted since September last year, compared to only two in the previous two years, with a further batch of contractors currently under review as the government continues its declared war on the construction mafia, Macpherson said.

Construction disruptions in KwaZulu-Natal, historically regarded as the hot-spot of construction mafia activity, have fallen from more than 60 a month to fewer than 10, he added.

Progress has been achieved since the signing of the Durban Declaration in November 2024, with more than 770 cases of construction-related extortion and intimidation reported since then, resulting in 241 arrests and 176 convictions.

Macpherson said the widely cited figure remains that more than 180 infrastructure and construction projects worth about R63 billion had been disrupted, delayed or affected by construction-mafia activity in the years leading up to the government's intervention in November 2024.

Those figures represent roads not built, schools delayed, water projects disrupted, public buildings stalled, private investment lost, workers sent home and communities left waiting, he said.

"This fight is far from over," he added, noting that recent disruptions in Gauteng, including in Randfontein and the Vaal Region, show that risks remain.

"But they also show that the response system is now working differently."

"In those cases, incidents were escalated through the provincial priority crimes committee of the police; stakeholders responded; affected groups were engaged; and sites were stabilised without allowing the disruptions to spiral into prolonged stoppages."

This fight is far from over

