

MEDIA STATEMENT:

Security Upgrade of the President's Nkandla Residence

TW Nxesi, Minister of Public Works

14 November 2012

As Minister of Public Works it is incumbent upon me to clarify the Department's role and position in regard to the security upgrade of the President's residence at Nkandla. There are two aspects to the issue: the security of the President and accountability for public funds.

The security upgrade was undertaken by the Department of Public Works in terms of the National Key Points Act. This piece of legislation provides for the declaration of certain places as National Key Points whenever it is considered necessary for the safety of the Republic or in the public interest.

This declaration was made on the basis of a security risk assessment undertaken by a team drawn from the Departments of Defence, Police and State Security. There is nothing unusual about making such a determination which has been applied in respect of residences of past Heads of State. That security assessment still stands and therefore it remains the responsibility of Public Works to complete and implement the project at hand.

I have also said that where public funds are involved, there must be accountability, transparency and value for money. My Department has already requested the Auditor-General to conduct an audit in respect of all projects classified as "Prestige" – the first time that such a step has been undertaken by Public Works.

In response to concerns about the cost of the security upgrade at the Nkandla residence, the Department has established a Task Team of professionals with legal, financial management control, auditing, security, physical protection and construction and maintenance expertise.

This Task Team will conduct a preliminary investigation into aspects of procedural integrity, over-pricing and general supply chain prescripts.

At the same time, the Department will give its full support to any investigation conducted by authorised state institutions.

These steps have been taken in order to establish the facts which will form the basis for swift and decisive action should such investigation point to illegal, corrupt or irregular activities. Wrong-doers will be held to account.

I will not pre-empt the findings of these investigations, nor will I act on the basis of speculation.

The Department of Public Works is committed to applying state resources in an accountable and transparent way which gives effect to its constitutional imperatives.

Issued by Thulas Nxesi, Minister of Public Works