

PRESS STATEMENT ON SECURITY PROJECT NKANDLA FROM THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Security Project at Nkandla has raised enormous public interest. Although it is not the standard practice to comment on the security arrangements of dignitaries, it is now clear that certain parties will continue to make allegations about this project unless these serious misperceptions are refuted with facts. We are cognizant of the fact that by discussing some of these security arrangements openly, we endanger the very same security.

The Government has decided to give as many details as the maintenance of sound security arrangements allows.

At the outset we would like to state that the developments at Nkandla are by no means unique and are part of works undertaken and being undertaken at various security sites like Houghton, Qunu, Union Buildings, Tuynhuis, Parliament and King's House.

When President Zuma was elected President, it was a requirement understood by all that the security would have to be beefed up at places of high security risk. An expert team representing the Departments of Police Service, Defence (and Military Veterans) and State Security reviewed the circumstances surrounding our principal and addressed all shortcomings. As part of meeting international standards for the security of dignitaries, plans were drawn up and implemented. As part of this process, new capacity was requested for Nkandla, in and surrounding the private residence of President Zuma.

The approach to providing security at the Nkandla high risk area was based on a frank assessment of the security threat there and the requirements of the security forces. The security threat analysis pointed to a deep rural area in which there was basically none of the services we all take for granted in an urban area. The water supply was erratic with it being available for hours at a time and only for a few days of the week. There was no waterborne sewage. The Eskom pylons and the mountainous area made access by air (helicopter) hazardous. The steep terrain and the surrounding cliffs and mountains make any form of transport difficult in bad weather. The roads to the area were muddy and required good 4 x 4 driving skills and suitable vehicles.

Given that the area is on the leeward side of the surrounding escarpment and is generally dryer than surrounding areas, the threat of fire was high.

The security forces would need to be accommodated locally as a 24/7/365 service was required with force levels varying based on the current threat. The poor or non-existent roads would need to be improved.

It was noted that the venue was the location of many diverse type of functions. There were meetings of heads of state, cabinet ministers, other high risk dignitaries, local communities, provincial and national government and many foreign and local other categories of dignitaries.

It was decided that the following principles would be adhered:

1. The residence of the President is a private residence which has been declared as a National Key Point (as are all other presidential residences). Our responsibility to protect should not unduly interfere in the privacy of the principal's household.
2. The security forces and other government employees would have to be accommodated locally. To base them themselves at the nearest town, Eshowe, was impractical. Parking for security vehicles would also be needed.
3. The security provision should be able to deal with any level of threat and be able to escalate to the level required.
4. Clear separation must be made of expenses that are for the private account of the principal and that which arose from the state's duty to provide appropriate security.
5. Instead of continuing to land in local veld, there should be proper helipads to allow for day and night landings with statutory approval for the safety features.
6. The health care provision should allow for proper health care to all government officials deployed on site (President and approved dependants, military, security) and the constitutional imperative to not turn away any health emergency by health care workers. Given the threat level, there should be adequate capacity to maximize medical interventions in the "golden first hour" of trauma management.
7. Occupational and environmental health requirements such as working conditions, food and water safety, proper refuse management were to be provided for relevant government employees.
8. Sufficient garaging was to be provided for.
9. Aircrew pavilion was to be provided for air force personnel to allow for standard inter flight rest areas.
10. Military and police assets were to be properly safeguarded.
11. Any new capacity should benefit the local community in the short term to the extent possible and then maximized when the principal was no longer President, for example, the clinic and security compound.

12. The President would continue to receive state support when no longer President and this must be factored in as with other retired Presidents.

These principles, among others, resulted in the following measures to satisfy the requirements of the security forces.

1. The reinforcing of barriers
2. The erection of high security fences
3. The provision of local fire fighting capability for the helipads
4. The creation of safe havens as with other sites all over the country
5. The relocation of pylons to allow a clear access flight path
6. Roads constructions in and around the precincts
7. The building of a security compound to house security and support staff
8. Improving and rendering the water safe
9. The provision of waterborne sewage systems
10. The provision of an air crew pavilion
11. The provision of a clinic in a lower security area to allow for both dignitary care and later conversion to part of the community health service in the area
12. Security guard houses and stations
13. Security systems for all areas
14. The provisions of interim accommodation arrangements with Park homes etc. while the construction was on-going.
15. Earthworks and barriers erection

We are pleased to announce that, although there were a few hiccups, as would be expected with this high security project and the difficult local circumstances, that most of the state requirements have been met. We have taken special care to allocate expenses to private and public entities, as appropriate.

Lastly, this government required changes were effected whilst the President was himself effecting, a major upgrade to his residence on his own private account.

Issued by the Departments of Public Works, in consultation with Safety and Security, Defence and Military Veterans and South African Police Service