



public works
& infrastructure

Department:
Public Works and Infrastructure
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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MEDIA STATEMENT

MINISTER SIHLE ZIKALALA TAKES STRONG ACTION TO RESOLVE PROCUREMENT PRACTICES ON STATE PROPERTIES OCCUPIED BY PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES

Department of Public Works and Infrastructure Minister Sihle Zikalala has demanded strong action and explanation on some of the questionable procurement-related expenditure for the maintenance of houses occupied by public representatives.

Minister Zikalala is to appoint a three man panel comprising of senior legal practitioner and experts with vast experience in government procurement processes, to investigate procurement practices that involve a kitchen refurbishment to the tune of R1,4million and curtains procured to the value of R54 000 and a fumigation at a cost of R240 000.

The Minister wants to get to the bottom of what at face value appears to be hugely inflated prices. “President Cyril Ramaphosa, has directed us as Ministers, to, under no circumstances tolerate wasteful or any excessive, unreasonable or potentially corrupt practices” said Minister Zikalala.

This puts a stain on the public Representatives and portray them as if they have sanctioned such procurement. We have a duty to lead by example and set the right tone in spending public monies. We are alive to the reality that everyone is facing a financial squeeze because of the rise in the cost of living. We therefore we need to ensure that we take good care of public money.”

“Our procurement legislative regime is very clear and it excludes participation of elected representatives in matters of procurement. The panel will look into the pricing practices,

procurement related to maintenance and do comparisons. As government we are not prepared to defend the indefensible but we will exercise our strong oversight to clean up this area which is unfairly discrediting public officials” said Minister Zikalala.

The costs on some of these items are not justifiable and smacks of mischief by service providers who seem to have identified the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure as a milking cow.

Minister Sihle Zikalala believes that the time has come to clean up the maintenance programme on government properties.

“We need to stem any perception or allegation of wrong doing associated with the maintenance of state properties. The unfortunate part is that these actions lead to the amplification of the narrative which seeks to discredit the leadership of government. This year we expect it to be worse as it will go from cars, to generators, to staff. Misrepresentations will arise under the pretence of a constructive narrative. These are not the private properties of public representatives but they are state assets, many of which are very old and require maintenance. However, all this should be reasonable and costs justifiable. Those directed by the citizens to work and respond to their needs must have resources and proper tools of trade but this must be provided in a more prudent manner”.

The Minister is also working on a new proposal to be taken through all government decision making bodies which will resolve such issues and protect the integrity of government. Some of these interventions will be presented on Tuesday 23 May 2023 when the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure presents its budget vote.

“We wish to assure the public that there is no political principal who is involved with the excessive finishes and all of us as government abhors any excessive conduct with taxpayers’ money especially at this time when we are deploying resources to core services.

The Minister will inform the President around the steps the Department is taking to investigate and root out questionable procurement practices associated with the maintenance of government properties.

ENDS

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