

2 SUNDAY TRIBUNE NEWS SEPTEMBER 7 2003

2

Exposed: KZN's crooked politicians

Unprocedural

The report was the outcome of an investigation into the management of the provincial legislature called by Cronje's board, as it believed the legislature was not being managed properly.

The investigation found there were unprocedural appointments, abuse of motor vehicles, poor administration of the Legislative Assembly flats in Ulundi and unauthorised purchases of furniture for the flats. Employees were receiving both home owner's and accommodation allowances, and subsistence and travel payments were made to some who were not entitled to them. There was also excessive use of cellphones.

Other allegations in the report were that Mzimela's contract had not been approved by the parliamentary Executive Board. Although dated November 10, 1998, the start of employment is reflected as March 1, 1995, on the contract. Mzimela was employed at an annual salary of R581 852.

Mkhize's contract, which was also not approved by the Executive Board, was dated June 23, 1997, although the start of employment is reflected as March 18, 1996, says the report.

2 SUNDAY TRIBUNE NEWS SEPTEMBER 7 2003

Exposed: KZN's crooked politicians

THABO MASEMOLA

WIDESPREAD corruption, abuse of public funds, poor administration and unprocedural appointments are alleged in a shocking report compiled by the KwaZulu-Natal Auditor-General into the efficiency of the province's legislature.

In perhaps the harshest verdict yet, Auditor-General Barry Wheeler has described management of the country's largest province as "a mess".

Now heads are expected to roll as the report - held under wraps for almost 18 months - has been handed to the officials and politicians fingered, to respond to. It was only made public this week after being leaked to the *Sunday Tribune*.

A witchhunt is also believed to be under way to determine how the *Sunday Tribune* got possession of the Wheeler dossier - the result of investigations that took two years ending last March.

In the first move towards establishing their guilt, or otherwise, two senior officials, Legislature Secretary Robert Mzimela and his deputy, Joe Mkhize, have been suspended and face disciplinary hearings. Wheeler alleged that there were irregularities in the signing of their contracts.

According to ANC Chief Whip Ina Cronje, 27 resolutions adopted by the Parliamentary Executive Board - which oversees the running of the legislature - after the submission of the report, were given to attorneys for further investigation. The lawyers said some of the resolutions could be dealt with internally by the legislature.

Cronje expressed regret that the report had been leaked. She said it had not been released because the board wanted to avoid "a trial by media".

His annual remuneration package was R475 684.

Other senior members accused of wrongdoing include Speaker Bonga Mdlotshe (IFP), Deputy Speaker Willie Mchunu (ANC) and Leader of the House Blessed Gwala (IFP).

Cronje said: "After receiving the report the Executive Board put together a special subcommittee. We worked through the report and, as a result, formulated 27 resolutions for action. Those resolutions were handed to attorneys. But some cannot be acted on by the attorneys and will be handled internally."

"On the advice of attorneys, whom we brought in to depoliticise this issue, we decided on confidentiality to avoid a trial by media... We could not distribute the report before giving those implicated a chance to state their side of the story," she said.

Gwala said he had explained his position when the matter first arose last year.

"This matter first came out through people who were bent on my political assassination. I explained that at the time as Leader of the House, as reflected on the manual, unlimited free (cellphone) units were one of my privileges. The rules have since changed and limitations put in place."

Mchunu would not comment and threatened legal action against the *Sunday Tribune*.

"You should know the parliamentary rules, since this document is still confidential," he said.

Numerous attempts to get a comment from Speaker Mdlotshe were unsuccessful.

SEE PAGE 6