

President Zuma says govt did not pay for his house

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CAPE TOWN: President Jacob Zuma has told Members of Parliament that his family, and not government, paid for his private home in Nkandla, KwaZulu-Natal.



"My residence in Nkandla has been paid for by the Zuma family. All the buildings and every room we use in that residence, was built by ourselves as a family and not by government. I have never asked government to build a home for me, and it has not done so," said Zuma on Thursday, 15 November 2012.

He labelled as a lie reports that government had built his home.

"The house being paraded on television as being built by government is not true. The Zuma family has built its own home for its own comfort. I'm happy that the investigations are taking place."

The President said his name was being used wrongly and that his family was being undermined. "I feel very aggrieved," Zuma said.

He said that some of the recent actions and statements regarding the matter had made a laughing stock of his family and that he took exception to this.

The President was answering a question in the National Assembly on Thursday posed to him by the leader of the opposition on whether he had instructed the Minister of Public Works to cease all building on his Nkandla home, pending the outcome of an investigation announced by the Public Protector.

Giving a history of his homestead, Zuma said that his two houses had been burnt down on two occasions at a time of political unrest in KwaZulu-Natal.

When times had normalized, he had taken out a bond to rebuild his home. He was still paying off this bond. "I engaged the bank. I'm still paying a bond on the first phase of my home."

The Zuma family had decided in its own time to upgrade the homestead, of which there were two.

He said a distinction should be drawn between work which he had mandated and initiated at his home, as opposed to the security enhancement undertaken by government.

"On the basis of a security risk assessment undertaken by a team drawn from the Departments of Defence and Military Veterans, Police and State Security, I was approached to allow security upgrades to be made to my Nkandla residence. I was advised that the security upgrades were indeed necessary in terms of the National Key Points Act 102 of 1980.

"Therefore, all the security enhancements that have been undertaken by the Department of Public Works at my residence in Nkandla have been part of these security requirements. Any other construction undertaken by government, outside the perimeter of my home, such as the accommodation for government security personnel, is not part of my residence."

Zuma pledged to co-operate with any agency instructed to undertake official investigations into his house, adding that he would not try to pre-empt the outcome.

"I fully support these investigations. We will not preempt the outcome of these investigations or respond to speculation at this stage. We must respect the institutions that are investigating, and the processes that have been started," he said.

The President said should the investigations unearth wrongdoing of any kind, "the necessary actions will be taken, as we have done in respect of irregularity in other instances".

The Minister of Public Works, Thulas Nxesi, has established a task team of experts to investigate whether supply chain procedures were properly followed by the department in carrying out these security upgrades.

The minister has also instructed the department to cooperate with investigations by any other authorised agency.

The Auditor-General has also been requested to audit all classified prestige projects.

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