

Zuma must have hacking claims investigated: Zille

According to Democratic Alliance leader Helen Zille, President Jacob Zuma must establish an independent commission of inquiry into allegations that state security agencies hacked people's phones. "Government agents are abusing their power to spy on individuals without permission from a judge as required by law," said Zille.

According to an article in the *Mail & Guardian*, state intelligence agency employees could easily intercept cellphone conversations, text messages and emails without a judge or inspecting authority ever knowing they had done so. "This is a threat to the constitutional rights of every South African," said Zille, adding that she had written to Zuma requesting an inquiry headed by a retired judge.

"We have long believed," she added, "that cadres deployed to state intelligence agencies are abusing their power to wage external and internal political battles." Zille said she met with then Intelligence Minister Ronnie Kasrils in 2008 when it became clear that her phone had been illegally tapped. "Kasrils memorably told me that, although there had been no formal instruction to intercept my communications, he could not guarantee that it was not taking place informally." She said a police officer later contacted her and handed over tapes of conversations of hers which had been analysed.

As far as an inquiry is concerned, it should focus on, among other things, whether there were insufficient checks and balances to protect people's privacy, why inspecting authorities were failing to detect illegal interceptions and whether private investigators were accessing communications through contacts in the state intelligence agencies. Zille said that Zuma had a conflict of interest in the matter as he was helped to power by illegal phone hacking and the abuse of state intelligence agencies.

Read the [full article](http://www.timeslive.co.za) on www.timeslive.co.za.