

JSCI concludes investigation into Phala Phala theft matter

Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence (JSCI) report, has exonerated State Security Deputy Minister, Zizi Kodwa, of any transgression in the department's role in the Phala Phala game farm theft matter.



Image source: pixelbliss – [123RF.com](https://www.123RF.com)

This came after National Assembly Speaker Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula on 5 August requested the JSCI to investigate specific allegations.

These included:

- “that the Deputy Minister in The Presidency responsible for State Security knew about the Phala Phala robbery and opted to keep the matter a state secret, rather than reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities. It has also been alleged that Kodwa accompanied Major General Wally Rhooode, the head of the Presidential Protection Unit, during secret interactions between the South African and Namibian authorities; and
- that reports emerged that a secret Crime Intelligence Fund was used to finance the undercover operations, which traced the thieves, with the goal of recovering the stolen money. It has been alleged that almost R2 million a month from this fund was spent to send an elite special task force to guard President Ramaphosa's private game farm. Should this be true, this would constitute a flagrant abuse of our taxpayer's money”.

Informed by section 3 (h) of the Intelligence Services Oversight Act 40 of 1994 which states that the committee may “consider and make recommendations regarding any matter falling within the purview of this Act and referred to it by the President, the Minister or Parliament”, Schedule B of the Rules of the JSCI, and its established procedures.

The JSCI ensured that the matter was handled with the appropriate urgency, given its importance and the associated public interest, and the JSCI considered the matter.

During interactions with the JSCI, Deputy Minister Kodwa denied having prior knowledge of the alleged matter and all allegations against him.

The Committee said that SAPS National Commissioner General Fannie Masemola, stated that no funds from the South African Police Service Crime Intelligence (SAPS-CI) Secret Services Account were utilised in relation to the theft at Phala Phala.

The committee found that there was no independently verifiable information to support the allegations against Kodwa and the use of funds from the Secret Services Account of SAPS-CI, Parliament said in a statement on Tuesday.

Committee Chairperson Jerome Maake said the investigation was conducted in terms of the oversight mandate of the committee as set out in the Constitution and in the Act.

Parliament said whilst the matter was considered in line with the relevant legal framework, however, it does not have any bearing on any other organ of state currently engaged with the same matter.

“The JSCI’s findings should not be construed as an endorsement or exoneration of any of the affected parties in the Phala Phala game farm theft,” read the statement.

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