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# Committee unlikely to probe Mbalula spy claim

DENNIS CRUYWAGEN

PARLIAMENT'S police portfolio committee is unlikely to investigate allegations that Fikile Mbalula was among a group of four Cabinet ministers being monitored by police crime intelligence and the Hawks.

Sources said, yesterday the joint standing committee on intelligence would be the appropriate parliamentary oversight body to investigate.

In claims made at the weekend, Mbalula alleged that the monitoring was part of Project Wonder.

Yesterday the DA said it had noted with concern the revelations of continued interference in police operations by suspended heads of the SAPS, crime intelligence and the Hawks through an alleged clandestine intelligence operation called Project Wonder.

"The reported participation of operatives in these agencies in this project, specifically the illegal monitoring of

Cabinet ministers and their support staff, diverts attention away from the real task of fighting crime and shows how the chickens are coming home to roost after years of political interference and capture of the police service," said DA MP Zakhele Mbhele said in a statement.

The DA would also write to the chairperson of the portfolio committee on police to summon Maj-Gen King Ngcobo as the acting head of crime intelligence, to brief Parliament on what his division

would do to clamp down on rogue crime intelligence officers who were suspected of participating in Project Wonder.

However, sources said that this was unlikely to happen because intelligence did not fall under the police portfolio committee.

If there were to be an oversight role investigation it would have to be done by the joint intelligence standing committee, which does its business behind closed doors.

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# Warders won't walk to work

## TRANSPORT WAS AVAILED BUT STOPPED ON SATURDAY RESULTING IN THE PICKET

ELFAS TORBERA

PRISON warders at Rooigrond Prison refused to walk to work yesterday and reported for duty at the area commissioner's office instead.

They complained that management failed to avail transport that was supposed to ferry them from Mahikeng town to the prison, 19km away.

Last week, about 50 warders walked all the distance in protest and it appears their efforts had borne fruits.

From Tuesday to Friday, transport was availed but that stopped on Saturday up to yesterday, resulting in the picket at the Correctional Services offices in town.

"We decided to gather at the area commissioner's office because we are not sure what transpired in their meeting on Friday that could possibly have caused this problem of us not having transport again. The battle is for us as workers because we can't trust even those who represent us," said one official, who did not want to be named.

Officials argue that since the community safety and transport management department decided to close tick spots in Mahikeng, it has become difficult for them to get transport to work in the morning.

Regional chairperson of Popcrui, Kebone Metsi said that the union's patience with the Correctional Services

management was running thin.

"As a union, we now face a crisis because our members no longer trust us, they can't believe what we tell them because there is a feeling we are in cahoots with management, which is wrong. This issue has to be resolved now because it has been dragging for far too long," he said.

Metsi said a meeting on Friday had not yielded positive results but there was hope that transport that had been made available last week would continue while a permanent solution is arranged.

"The problem started at the weekend when there was no transport and that extended to today (Monday). We still call on the management to use the bus that is parked at the prison there to transport workers," he said.

Rooigrond Prison houses more than 1800 inmates and has about 580 warders who work on a shift basis.

Spokesperson for the Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North West region Tshidi Mapole said that the absence of officials from duty hugely affects the normal operations.

"We need all the staff on a daily basis because it means that if they are absent, we have to use those on standby, which is not ideal," she said.

Mapole said that a permanent solution would be found to the Rooigrond Prison problem very soon.

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