

Cops told to isolate PIs

STYMIED: HAWKS, SAPS HAVE GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH PRIVATE SLEUTHS

➔ **A directive sent when Ntlemeza was the Hawks boss puts several urgent investigations at risk.**

Amanda Watson

While embarrassed police are trying to work out who broke into the office of the Directorate of Priority Crime Investigation (the Hawks), some sources who could help with information may have to do it under the table.

A directive signed off by former Hawks head Lieutenant-General Mthandazo "Berning" Ntlemeza warns that SA Police Service or Hawks members who assist private investigators risk "criminal, as well as disciplinary action taken against them", which may get in the way of police using every available resource.

The memo was sent to divisional commissioners, provincial commissioners and heads, component and section heads, deputy national commissioners and even the then acting national commissioner, Lieutenant-General Khomotso Phahlane, and recently brought to the attention of the private investigation industry.

"Officials are hereby sensitised that this type of conduct constitutes fraud, theft, unauthorised usage of state resources and ... corruption as contemplated under Chapter 2 of the Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act," Ntlemeza wrote.

It's uncertain how Ntlemeza

arrived at his definition of a legitimate interaction between a registered private investigator and an official, as the quoted section deals with bribery of a police official in exchange for information.

Private investigators are required by law to be registered with the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority after a strict vetting process in terms of Act 56 of 2001, said Chad Thomas of IRS Forensic Investigations. "Failure to be registered constitutes a criminal offence."

Thomas said it was frustrating not receiving cooperation from certain police members. "Independent investigation organisations and Saps should share a symbiotic relationship when it comes to the sharing of information. Many whistleblowers are wary of approaching state law enforcement agencies and prefer to approach independent organisations with information about fraud and corruption.

"It is imperative in the fight against crime that all responsible and registered investigators work together."

Thomas said he had a generally good relationship with state law enforcement agencies.

"However, some Saps stations, units and members have advised us that they cannot cooperate with us due to a supposed standing order preventing cooperation with private investigators.

"We have never had sight of this instruction and have not been afforded the correct forum to address this," said Thomas.

Police have failed to respond to repeated e-mails requesting information and a response.

Private investigator Paul

Saps or Hawks members who assist private investigators are risking 'criminal, as well as disciplinary action taken against them'.

Mthandazo Ntlemeza
Former Hawks head



OUT. Former Hawks boss Mthandazo Ntlemeza during his term told S that cooperation with PIs was not allowed. Picture: Gallo Images

O'Sullivan said: "Section 70 of the Police Services Act makes it an offence for a police official to divulge private information, so the thing must be done very carefully, or it can prejudice an otherwise good prosecution.

"Unfortunately, private investigators have a reputation for 'ing' information from cops paying cops to push investigation in a certain direction, which is only unethical, but a criminal offence." - amandaw@citizen.co



Hawks stung over theft at headquarters

CALLYN MARKS

THE Hawks yesterday came under fire when they had to explain before the parliamentary portfolio committee how security was breached in the offices.

Early this week unknown persons broke into the elite crime fighting body's head offices in Silverton, Pretoria, and stole laptops containing crucial information.

Acting Hawks boss Lt-Gen Yolisa Maleka was asked to explain the circumstances around the security breach.

"The committee finds it difficult to comprehend how this burglary occurred in an office that has a responsibility to fight organised and serious crimes.

"There's a lot at stake here and we want the acting head to brief the committee about this serious breach," Francois Beukman, the chairperson of the committee, said.

Hawks spokesperson Brig Hangwani Mulaudzi said the elite crime-fighting team is working overtime to establish who was behind the burglary at their headquarters.

"It is worrisome when such a breach occurs, especially given the types of computers which were stolen and the offices from which they were stolen.

"To get to the specific offices requires access cards. You don't just walk in and open the door or window," Mulaudzi said.

Mulaudzi said there were no leads as yet, however the Hawks were going above and beyond to find the criminals responsible. The information stolen was confidential and contained records of people's employment among other sensitive information.

Deputy Minister of Police Bongani Mkongi has also said that it would be a mistake to dismiss a potential link between this burglary and a similar incident at Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng's office earlier this year.

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Hawks arrest zama-zamas
Hawks 105.

THE DIRECTORATE for Priority Crime Investigation (Hawks) said yesterday they had arrested six men aged between 24 and 35 at the Kusasaletu gold mine in Carletonville for corruption, illegal dealing in precious metals, possession of gold and theft.

Located about 90km from Joburg, near the border of Gauteng and North West, Kusasaletu is owned by JSE-listed Harmony Gold.

The Hawks said they had received a tip-off about illegal activities underground at the mine.

The illegal miners were alleged to have been operating underground since November. They were arrested as they tried to make their way out of the mine just before midnight on Wednesday.

Captain Tlangelani Rikhotso said a security guard at the mine was arrested along with the illegal miners – zama-zamas – for allegedly accepting bribes.

“In exchange, he allegedly promised to keep mum about the illegal activities taking place underground and further promised to offer protection to the illegal miners.” – ANA