

Mashatile scrutinised

COMPLAINTS: LINKED TO MULTIMILLION-RAND CORRUPTION CLAIMS

» Allegations may influence public trust in govt's ability to combat graft – analyst.

Thando Nondywana

Allegations of wrongdoing have cast a shadow over Deputy President Paul Mashatile's tenure, prompting parliament to demand answers – sooner rather than later.

The allegations, coupled with his alleged associations with figures embroiled in corruption scandals, have thrust Mashatile into the spotlight.

Mashatile has until Thursday to answer to parliament's ethics committee on the corruption allegations against him.

Political analyst and North-West University professor Dr Synman Motloung said the recent allegations against Mashatile and other prominent figures underscore the growing demand for transparency, accountability and ethical leadership in the South African political landscape.

"We've seen politicians dismiss the allegations as attempts by third forces, trivialising the moment when they should be accountable. It is a concern and we have seen this with the appeal by the speaker of parliament recently," he said.

"These allegations of corruption paint a bleak picture of the state of governance in SA and it proves how low the bar of personal culpability and accountability is in South African politics."

The Democratic Alliance (DA) lodged a complaint to parliament's joint committee on ethics and members' interests for a breach of the members' Code of Conduct by Mashatile. It also formally lodged criminal charges against him in February.

On Thursday, DA chief whip Siviwe Gwarube requested that Mashatile respond to the allega-



UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT. Allegations of wrongdoing against Deputy President Paul Mashatile have cast a shadow over him, with the DA having lodged criminal charges against the ANC leader. Picture: Gallo Images

tions in parliament.

Motloung warned the allegations could influence public trust in the government's ability to combat corruption effectively.

Motloung said this can be seen in the many scandals embroiling government figures that have caused public uproar in calls against corruption. "Members of the public who are not ANC may lose all confidence in the ANC being an instrument to eradicate corruption.

"It seems that the ANC is at the centre of most public sector corruption scandals, leading to one accepting what President [Cyril] Ramaphosa said about the ANC being accused number one.

"This means one would expect a government under another party to put up a meaningful fight against corruption," he said.

A series of exposes linked Mashatile to multimillion-rand corruption scandals.

The allegations involve properties in Cape Town and Johannesburg valued at millions of rands and a web of nepotism involving his son-in-law.

"The deputy president is the second-most powerful position in the state and he is also a high-ranking figure within the ANC. That also may dent ANC's fortunes going into these elections,"

said political analyst Thobani Zikalala.

"If you have an ANC deputy president who may be in line as a possible successor to the sitting president, then these allegations are likely to raise questions and doubts around that name."

Zikalala said that, although

the nature and timing of the allegation remained questionable, it remains imperative for the party to take the public into confidence about the allegations.

"The party will need to execute using all its internal processes but unfortunately, its integrity committee has shown to not have a serious bite as envisioned by the public in what the ANC presented the integrity commission to be."

Corruption Watch director Karam Singh said the unfolding saga reflected on the broader issues of integrity and ethical governance within government.

He said it shone a glaring light on the imperative of restoring public confidence in political leadership. "The levels of trust between the people and government are at an all-time low and there is very little faith that our leadership acts above reproach... and in the best interest of the country."

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ANC's integrity committee has shown not to have serious bite