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Nkandla report crafted to exonerate President Zuma

The release of Police Minister Nathi Nhleko's Nkandla report yesterday, and its conclusion that President Zuma is cleared of all obligation to pay back any of the costs associated with the upgrade of his personal home, was met with dismay by Corruption Watch. It highlights the current trend that allows, if not encourages, our leaders to act with impunity.

It further demonstrates a continual failure to hold our leaders accountable, most often at the expense of taxpayers, in spite of recommendations from institutions established to safeguard the very rights and interests of the general public.

David Lewis, executive director of Corruption Watch said: "We are dismayed, but not surprised by the report and its conclusions. The report was commissioned by the president, the very person implicated in the scandal, from someone who owes his position to the self-same president. The report has no credibility and it will not bring closure to this whole sordid episode."

The Nhleko report cannot stand against the report prepared by the public protector, Lewis said, which is a "constitutionally empowered body led by a person of unimpeachable integrity and independence".

Lewis added that the cover-up is proving predictably destructive of key institutions. "We have the spectre of another key minister having to protect his president by making a public laughing stock of himself by attaching his name and his high office to palpably ridiculous conclusions. We have what is effectively an attempt to discredit the Office of the Public Protector. And no doubt we will soon witness another humiliating spectacle when this doctored report is placed before a parliamentary committee."

The pressure will continue because the truth is already evident to so many ordinary South Africans, Lewis concluded.

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