

# A Rolls Royce paid with shoddy houses

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Building contractor Mabongi "Shauwn" Mpisane had just turned 22 when she was registered as a shareholder in a company that would eventually bag several huge government contracts. To date the company, Zikhulise Cleaning, Maintenance and Transport, has been awarded about R500m worth of municipal and provincial government tenders to build low-cost houses, schools and renovate hospitals.

Deeds records show that Mpisane's company was founded in 1997 by her late mother, Dumazile Flora Mkhize, an eThekweni ANC councillor who sat on several committees, including the economic development committee, in the eThekweni council.

Mpisane's lawyer, Themba Mjoli, could not be reached to explain Mkhize's role in Zikhulise Cleaning, Maintenance and Transport.

DA caucus leader Tex Collins, who has been an eThekweni councillor since 1996, said he was convinced that Mkhize's stature within the ANC helped in securing contracts for the controversial company.

He said: "There is no doubt that her profile in the ANC was instrumental" in bagging the company the deals.

## Houses sub-standard, unsafe; demolished

Zikhulise Cleaning, Maintenance and Transport built one of its first major housing projects, 277 houses in Lamontville, south of Durban, after being awarded a R10m tender by the municipality and the provincial housing department.

Some of the houses were later declared unsafe and demolished.

Mkhize was still listed as a shareholder in the company's register at the time the Lamontville tender was awarded. She resigned from the company a month later, in February 2004.

By the time Mkhize died, in 2008, the municipality had awarded the company in excess of R100m in contracts, mostly to build low-cost houses.

Today Mpisane, 37, is the sole director of the company, which has been the subject of several investigations - for building "shoddy" houses - by the National Home Builders Registration Council, and forensic investigations into alleged tender irregularities.

Last year a forensic report compiled by auditors Ngubane & Company recommended that the eThekweni municipality investigate contracts awarded to Mpisane's company, and 34 other contractors.

The report followed an investigation into R3.5bn worth of contracts awarded to various contractors over 10 years.

Mpisane's huge earnings from construction contracts have afforded her several luxury properties, including a R15m, three-storey home in La Lucia, one of Durban's most sought-after northern suburbs, and a fleet of exotic cars that includes a black Rolls-Royce Ghost, worth an estimated R8m.

Source: *Sunday Times* via I-Net Bridge

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