

Minister Sisulu has nothing to show after 421 days at the helm of Water and Sanitation

By Leon Basson MP - DA Shadow Minister of Water and Sanitation

Voorsitter,

Op 16 Junie 2019 het ek Minister Lindiwe Sisulu gewaarsku dat Water en Sanitasie in die ICU is met 'n toksiese Nomvula Mokonyane virus wat die departement besmet het tot in sy fundamente.

Minister Sisulu, today is 421 days that you are in charge of Water and Sanitation.

- 421 days and you have not appointed a Director-General.
- 421 days and you failed to eradicate the filthy, undignified bucket toilets.
- 421 days and only 13 of the 138 officials have been dismissed after they have been found guilty of corruption, fraud and maladministration.

Chairperson, corruption relates to R16 billion in irregular expenditure and R 1.7 billion in fruitless and wasteful expenditure.

Minister, and your reaction on this, and I quote: *"I found this department bankrupt upon taking it over."*

You continue by putting the blame on your predecessors and ANC cadres, Nomvula Mokonyane and Gugile Nkwinti.

Minister, it's your President and the ANC that appointed them.

It's the ANC that created this mess.

However, Minister, I must agree with you on one thing; the department is bankrupt, but unfortunately, I don't see any changes in the 421 days of your leadership.

I recall that in October 2016 when pressure was building up against Nomvula Mokonyane's interference in the running of the department, she sidestepped difficult questions by appointing the Motau Task Team to investigate the department.

What happened to this report, as it was never tabled in Parliament.

Minister, 4 years later we see you follow the same route by also appointing the same person to investigate the same issues within the water sector.

This seems like another smokescreen.

The DA is fighting against corruption while's the ANC is only talking and talking.

- No action;
- No one jailed in the last 6 years, costing taxpayers billions.

The combined efforts of whistleblowers, investigative journalists, the Auditor-General and the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) have begun to address many of the issues raised in the report commissioned by South Africa's Corruption Watch and the international Water Integrity Network.

However, Chairperson, although some officials have resigned and others face internal disciplinary action, there have been few serious consequences. This raises questions about the effectiveness of these actions.

The corruption report *Money down the drain* details corruption and gross mismanagement not only in the department but across the whole sector, including municipalities.

And the result:

- Dry taps;
- Dirty water;
- Delayed projects; and
- Massive escalation of project costs.

We have seen how water tankers cause taps to run dry in many places in South Africa. For some people, emergencies that require tanker transport are an opportunity and create dangerous situations, like in 2014 when 3 people were killed during protests in Mothutlung, a community nearby Brits in the North West.

The water supply failed after alleged sabotage of the pumps to enrich the private owners of water tankers who had paid kickbacks to municipal officials to cut the supply.

We see this practice every day all over South Africa.

Minister, this is only one example of how corruption in the water sector has put water security of households, and the entire country, at risk.

Chairperson, 119 days of Covid-19 lockdown brought out the true situation of our water crisis. It revealed the access to reliable safe water to vulnerable communities are not available and people can't find water to wash their hands.

It is evident that resources are denied to communities because of mismanagement and corruption.

Minister, you and the ANC failed to address water shortages in communities all over the country.

Die lewering van 17 000 watertenks teen 'n koste van meer as R300 miljoen aan kwesbare gemeenskappe is niks anders as vrugtelose uitgawes as die watertenks nie konstant vol water gehou word nie.

Voorsitter, die DA daag Minister Sisulu uit om te verduidelik hoe gemeenskappe hul self moet beskerm teen die Covid-19 virus, as haar department watertenks lewer aan korrupte ANC munisipaliteite wat nie die vermoë het om dit reg te instaleer nie en dan ook nie seker maak dat dit vol water gehou word nie.

It's criminal to put faith in ANC municipalities to service water tanks now when they have been failing to do so for more than 25 years.

- In Mbizana in the Eastern Cape emergency tanks are dry;
- Clinics in Port Elizabeth do not have water and patients had to be turned away;
- Areas in Moretele, North West, have not received any assistance with water tanks while many villages struggle without water.

The department continues with interventions in these municipalities when they can't even do the basics in filling up water tanks.

Chairperson, Minister Sisulu likes to remind us of her state intelligence credentials, when she served as Minister of Intelligence.

She furthermore claims that she is an "*intelligence officer of the highest rank*", yet she fails to use this intelligence to protect the people against corrupt municipalities not delivering the basic needs of water.

South Africa is moving to a peak in Covid-19 cases, and people are complaining of empty water tanks all over the country making the emergency water programme nothing but a "dry run" exercise.

Minister, the buck stops with you to fix this mess.

No more talking. No more arrogance.

It's your responsibility to sort out this mess created by the ANC.

I thank you.