



## **Debate on Vote 33: Human Settlements 2 July 2025**

“Corruption has wounded our democracy and shaken people’s faith in our institutions. If corruption is not arrested, the greatest damage will not be in the funds stolen, the jobs lost, or the services not delivered. The greatest damage will be to the belief in democracy itself,” These words spoken by President Cyril Ramaphosa while delivering a keynote address at the 2023 National Dialogue on Anti-Corruption in Boksburg.

Today we are forced to pause on these very words and ask ourselves how seriously we can take them as a nation. What will be clear at the end of this debate is that we are all going to pay, the South African public is going to pay if don’t attack the disease of corruption destroying this department head on.

Today we will hear from members of this house that things are not that bad, services are somewhat improving, and people are somehow getting back their dignity.

Tell that to the people of Nigel in Ekurhuleni whose houses have been sold by municipal officials.

Tell that to the people of Johannesburg whose title deeds are collecting dust at the City of Johannesburg’s Deeds Office.

Tell that to the people of Stillwater in the Northern Cape whose house collapsed after 10 days after they were built.

Tell that to the people of Joe Slovo Informal settlement in the Eastern Cape who have been flooded and will have to wait 3 months to housed.

Tell that to ooGogo bethu like Sarah Mathatswana who is 78. She lives in a dilapidated rondavel in Makhado, Limpopo and I quote she said “One day this house will fall on me, Whenever I apply for an RDP house, they either do not respond or they tell me stories”. What answers does this house have for her?

Towns are drowning before us and we are honestly going to stand here and lament victories that do not speak to tangible change. People are dying without the promise espoused in section 26 of the Constitution. People are dying waiting for a government that has failed to deliver.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of April 2025 the DA wrote to the Minister because it was fast becoming clear that the department is in freefall:

- The CEO of the National Home Builders Registration Council (NHBC) was suspended
- The National Housing Finance Corporation (NHFC) CEO is under investigation for misuse of funds and irregular leases, while the board’s term has quietly expired;
- The Social Housing Regulatory Authority’s (SHRA) CEO and CFO have been terminated,
- Community Schemes Ombud Services (CSOS) Chief Ombud resigned amid a corruption probe.
- HDA is under investigation by the SIU for corruption.



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There is clearly a catastrophic collapse of governance across several housing entities under the Department of Human Settlements. This dysfunction seems to be deepening under the watch of senior officials and political heads in the department. This situation directly impacts South Africans as the dysfunction within these housing entities undermines the delivery of affordable housing, essential regulation, and financial support for homeowners.

I want to shift gears to corruption. On the 26th of August 2024, then Minister of Justice, the Minister was accused of having received a “loan” of R575 600 from Gundo Wealth Solutions while Mayor of Polokwane, a company directly linked to the unlawful investments of municipal funds into the now-completely-looted VBS Mutual Bank.

You would think that in response to this that the President would have long shown Simelane the door – but no, he asked for a report he then sat on three months. Even after sustained DA pressure, the President lacked the courage to act, and instead decided to dump Simelane at Human Settlements. It seems that the President does not at all take issue with the fact that a person accused of corruption sits in his cabinet with billions of rands in her budget.

With millions of South Africans living without the dignity of having a home, the Department of Human Settlements is not the President’s dumping ground for cadres.

The Democratic Alliance will always support the granting of funds to house the vulnerable, at the same time fast-tracking jobs and growth to give many more South Africans the dignity of being able to buy and own their own homes. And although this budget and department have many challenges to face, it would under normal circumstances be supported. It is not all doom and gloom. We see a marginal increase in transfers to upgrade housing and an increase in finance-linked subsidies to support first-time buyers – welcome developments for a critical department in building a capable and ethical state.

But with an executive head the likes of Minister Simelane, it makes no difference what the budget looks like. Yesterday we revealed that the criminal investigation against the Minister into corruption is underway, following charges laid by the DA. When the Minister at the helm cannot be trusted with a cent of taxpayer funds, how are we supposed to tell the public that their interests are protected and cared for?

Minister Simelane cannot be trusted with a single rand – let alone 33 billion of them.

As President Ramaphosa said “Corruption has wounded our democracy and shaken people’s faith in our institutions. If corruption is not arrested, the greatest damage will not be in the funds stolen, the jobs lost, or the services not delivered. The greatest damage will be to the belief in democracy itself”.

Mr President, if you won’t clean up government, the DA will. For the sake of every South African.

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