

## R6m bribe bid for Mthatha stadium deal

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AN EAST London-based construction company says it was asked for a R6million bribe for it to be awarded the R500m contract to build the 2010 World Cup stadium in Mthatha.

This bribe claim was revealed in a report compiled by Gonubie private investigator Christian Botha, who identified two people who allegedly approached Rumdel Construction with an offer to secure the contract for the company.



The men asked that the money be paid by Rumdel into a number of different bank accounts.

Rumdel Construction's Dean Townsend, who confirmed to the Daily Dispatch that two people had approached his company in January asking for the R6m bribe, would not comment further.

He said he feared for the safety of his workers in the Mthatha area.

Botha's report, dated February 26, also linked a senior municipal official, who served on the tender adjudication committee, with the two people.

The official has since been put on three months' special leave by King Sabata Dalindyebo (KSD) Municipality's municipal manager Monde Tom.

It was not clear why he had been placed on special leave.

Rumdel has already completed the first earthworks phase of the construction project and has also been awarded work on the final phase.

The bribery approach to Rumdel was made prior to the announcement that it had secured the contract.

Tom yesterday confirmed the existence of Botha's report.

He also said he was aware it linked a senior official with the two people who allegedly sought a bribe from the contractor. Tom said he knew who the municipal official was.

Asked whether he or any other municipal official had discussed the allegations with the member of the adjudication committee mentioned in the report, Tom said: "No, as the report was inconclusive."

Tom, however, said the content of the report had been noted. “Other investigations are under way and perhaps may link in one way or other.”

He added that the matter would definitely be dealt with in full by the municipality.

UWP Consulting engineers’ Stephen Richter, whose company oversees the construction of the stadium, said his director in Mthatha, Mondli Dlulane, was in contact with Tom regarding the issue.

“As far as I am aware KSD has taken some action,” said Richter.

Botha and an auditing firm had initially been asked by Tom to monitor the procurement process to ensure it was done properly.

Following the bribery allegations, Botha, who would not comment further, was again approached by Tom to further investigate the allegations.

According to Botha’s report, Rumdel furnished him with the cellphone numbers of two people who allegedly made the bribery requests .

During his investigation, he identified the two people and their identity numbers.

Company searches on them revealed they were also joint directors in two companies – a security and an investment firm.

Botha’s report also stated that Dlulane had informed him that, on one occasion, a member of the adjudication committee had asked him to arrange construction work on the Mthatha stadium complex for a company, which is also linked – on a different ID number – to one of the two people.

Phone records obtained by Botha revealed numerous calls between the municipal official and the two people during the time the alleged bribery offer had been made.

When approached by the Dispatch, one of the two people denied any knowledge of Rumdel or the bribery allegations.

When contacted, the senior municipal official mentioned in the report told the Dispatch that Tom did not give him specific reasons why he had been placed on special leave.

“All he said was that there were certain things he wanted to investigate in my department.”

Although the official said that he knew the two people mentioned in Botha’s report, he did not know anything about any alleged bribery offer. He added that he had not seen Botha’s report. -

By EDDIE BOTHA, Investigations Editor