

# Eastern Cape mayor and speaker under investigation for fraud

They are accused of misusing the Sakhisizwe Local Municipality's fuel card

18 November 2024 | By [Nombulelo Damba-Hendrik](#)

- **The mayor and speaker of Sakhisizwe Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape are being investigated by police following allegations that they misused the council's petrol card.**
- **It is alleged that in November 2022 the mayor filled her personal vehicle three times, totalling R5,000, with the municipality fuel card.**
- **Meanwhile the speaker told officials that she got verbal permission from the CFO to use the card to fill her personal vehicle.**
- **The Municipal Public Accounts Committee resolved to have the speaker pay back the money.**
- **A community-based organisation called, the Xhalanga Civic Platform, has filed criminal charges against the two officials for misusing public funds.**

Eastern Cape police are investigating fraud charges against Sakhisizwe Local Municipality Mayor Boniswa Ponoshe and Speaker Nomzamo Mkati, following allegations that the pair misused the municipal fuel card.

Sakhisizwe is a small and mostly rural municipality with nine wards. It is situated in the outskirts of northern Eastern Cape, with two main towns, Cala and Khowa (formerly known as Elliot)..

The charges against Ponoshe and Mkati were brought by Bulelani Bunyonyo, convenor at the Xhalanga Civic Platform, a community-based organisation established to keep officials accountable in the Chris Hani District.

Bunyonyo told GroundUp that while they were alerted to the alleged incidents of fraud over a year ago, they wanted to give the municipality time to take action and hold the two officials accountable. But, he says, not enough has been done to prevent it from happening again.

The mayor's docket has been transferred from Cala police station to an investigating officer at Mount Ayliff (eMaXesibeni) police station, SAPS spokesperson Namhla Mdleleni confirmed this week.

According to documents seen by GroundUp, it is alleged that in November 2022 Ponoshe's personal vehicle was filled three times, totalling R5,000, using the municipality fuel card while travelling between Komani and eMaXesibeni.

GroundUp contacted Ponoshe for comment but she hung up on us.

Regarding the case against the speaker, it is alleged that Mkati had used a municipal fuel card for her private vehicle between October and December 2022. Bonyongo said the matter was reported to council by the fleet management unit as part of fleet fuel quarter 2 report.

Mkati also refused to comment.

The Municipal Public Accounts Committee (MPAC) was then tasked with investigating the allegations. In a special meeting in October 2023, Mkati was ordered to pay back the money, and ordered "other implicated officials" to be sent for a disciplinary hearing.

The estimated amount Mkati was to pay back amounted to about R9,000, according to our source in the municipality, but we have been unable to confirm this.

"As community members we are taking a stand and fighting for what is ours. There's a lot of fraud and corruption happening in our municipality. Service providers work without contracts, service delivery is bad and projects are left unfinished."

"The mayor and speaker are not the only ones misusing municipal funds. More cases will be opened. SAPS is our last hope to shape up our leaders so they can start working," Bunyonyo said.

"We are of the view that poor leadership is the main source of Sakhisizwe service delivery challenges," said Bunyonyo.

MPAC member Aviwe Mpakane (DA) said he is aware of the allegations against Ponoshe and Mkati. But said the committee was only requested to interrogate Mkati at the time.

"When this thing started, it was an ANC fight. I picked up that there were two more fuel cards that were misused. I asked why only one person was being interviewed. Unfortunately, I was the only one questioning that," he said.

He said Mkati told the committee that she had a verbal agreement with the then director of corporate and current fleet manager, where she was allowed to use the fuel card for her personal car because the municipal vehicle was allegedly at the mechanic.

"She did pay back the money as ordered by the council," he said.

Cooperative Governance MEC Zolile Williams's spokesperson Pheello Oliphant said that no formal complaint has been received but confirmed that they got a WhatsApp message from the Xhalanga Civic Platform.

MPAC chairperson Lulama Tulelo and municipal manager Sibongile Sotshongaye did not respond to our questions sent on 11 November.