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AFRICA/SOUTH AFRICA - The Bishops: "President, give an explanation of the excessive expenditure on the renovation of your house with public money"

Johannesburg (Agenzia Fides) - The Bishops of South Africa have criticized President Jacob Zuma's decision not to respond "promptly and comprehensively" to Public Protector Thuli Madonsela's report on the expenditure incurred from public money to renovate his private residence in Nkandla. "The provisions of the Executive Members' Ethics Act are equally clear – the President must report to the National Assembly on what action he plans to take within 14 days of receiving the report. Instead, Mr Zuma has chosen to ignore his legal and ethical responsibility to Parliament and to the nation", said a statement sent to Fides Agency, signed by His Exc. Mgr. Stephen Brislin, Archbishop of Cape Town and the President of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference.
"The findings of the Public Protector's enquiry are perfectly clear – there was excessive expenditure on the security upgrades, and millions of rands of taxpayers' money was spent on private items that should have been paid for by the President himself" the statement said.
The excessive costs of what should have only been work to strengthen the security measures of the holiday residence of the President (to which are then added "improvements" including a swimming pool and an amphitheater), have caused dismay in the Country.
The Public Protector's Office has been appointed to investigate. Ms Madonsela released a 450-page report titled "Secure in Comfort" which states that restructuring costs went from 27 million to 246 million Rands.
"Millions of our people continue to live in poverty and that many lack even rudimentary housing or shelter. This makes it all the more scandalous that nearly a quarter of a billion rands could be spent on the security and comfort of one citizen", the statement concluded. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 04/04/2014)

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