

ACTis provides risk analysis and early intervention recommendations against state capture and corruption in South African government institutions

PUBLIC ENTITY

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Ports Regulator of South Africa

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About the Institution

The Ports Regulator of South Africa (Ports Regulator) regulates eight major ports operated by the Transnet National Ports Authority. It oversees pricing, tariffs and service standards to ensure that South Africa’s ports function fairly, efficiently and without discrimination. It reports to the Minister of Transport, and the accounting authority is the Board. The Ports Regulator’s expenditure for 2024/25 was R41m.¹

The Ports Regulator will be absorbed into the Transport Economic Regulator (TER) established under the Economic Regulation of Transport Amendment Act, which was signed into law on 3 March 2026.² Once fully operational, the TER will consolidate economic regulation across all transport modes, including road, rail, ports and aviation, and is intended to improve competition and efficiency.³

Flag Status

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
								
Improper appointments	Co-opting key functions	Climate of fear or favour	Corrupt awards	Financial malpractice	Obstructing accountability	Manipulating perceptions	Private gain	Shadow network

ISS Analysis

- ACTis has raised one flag for the Ports Regulator and placed three under monitoring.
 - Actions – and failure to act – by former Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mukondeleli Mulaudzi, the current Board and former Minister of Transport Sindisiwe Chikunga compromised the governance and stability of the Ports Regulator. Lack of accountability and a climate of fear protected those implicated in misconduct and corruption within the institution.
- Irregular contracts, financial malpractices and staff who engaged in corruption or unethical behaviour may be inherited by the new TER. Addressing these issues as the new institution takes shape will be important to prevent the perpetuation of fault lines for corruption.
 - Many of the ports that the Ports Regulator is responsible for have been in a state of prolonged crisis. A 2026 World Bank report on global ports ranked Cape Town as the worst-performing in the world for operational efficiency, with Durban ranked the third lowest.⁴



Flag raised



Flag lowered



Under monitoring

Findings

Flag #1

Improper Appointments



The flag is being monitored because a previous senior employee was implicated in misconduct but not removed.

- In January 2026, the Ports Regulator announced the departure of their CEO, Mukondeleli Johanna Mulaudzi.⁵ In 2023, the Board at the time commissioned a forensic investigation into Mulaudzi's conduct after complaints from members of the Board, fellow executives and staff. The investigation reportedly found that Mulaudzi had manipulated the interview process for a senior management position to favour Grace Mahlodi Senyatsi, with whom she had a prior relationship. Senyatsi remains at the Ports Regulator as Manager of Industry Development. The investigation also found that Mulaudzi failed to report wasteful and irregular expenditure on two contracts and bullied staff members. The Board suspended her on 23 August 2023, citing a loss of confidence in her leadership following the forensic report's findings. Sindisiwe Chikunga, who was Minister of Transport at the time, reportedly ignored the Board's request for a consultation to inform her of their decision to suspend Mulaudzi. On 31 August 2023, then Minister Chikunga decided not to renew the Board's term, which had finished. In October 2023, the newly appointed Board, chaired by Aubrey Ngcobo, rescinded the previous Board's decision to pursue Mulaudzi's dismissal without providing justification.⁶ Ngcobo was nominated by Mulaudzi to the Road Accident Fund's Board in 2019, before either worked at the Ports Regulator, suggesting a prior relationship.⁷ Langa Dlamini, who was previously Executive Manager of Legal, was appointed acting CEO following Mulaudzi's departure.⁸

Flag #3

Climate of Fear or Favour



The flag is raised due to reports of widespread bullying and high resignation and vacancy rates.

- The 2023 forensic investigation commissioned by the old Board reportedly found that former CEO Mulaudzi bullied and micromanaged employees at all levels, including occasions when she attended and directed meetings not within her remit.⁹ It also found a breakdown of trust between employees and the CEO, as well as the then-board and the CEO.¹⁰



Flag raised



Flag lowered



Under monitoring

- After Mulaudzi's suspension was rescinded by the new Board in October 2023, 11 senior staff members departed between late 2023 and 2025, representing about 40% of the total staff complement.¹¹ The Ports Regulator's 2024/25 annual report noted that the current staff complement is 27, less than half of the 60 positions approved by the Minister of Transport.¹²

Flag #4

Corrupt Awards



The flag is being monitored for a pattern in which irregular contract awards are ignored.

- Two contracts were reportedly flagged for potential irregularities in the 2023 forensic investigation. One of the companies had billed the Ports Regulator for services not rendered and had illegally duplicated invoices.¹³ According to the report, Mulaudzi ignored these irregularities and other contraventions of the Public Finance Management Act.¹⁴

Flag #6

Obstructing Accountability



The flag is being monitored because the Board did not hold a senior executive accountable for alleged misconduct.

- The new Board did not hold the former CEO accountable for the misconduct alleged and detailed in the 2023 forensic investigation report. Despite public exposure in the media, there is also no indication that the forensic findings have been referred to law enforcement.¹⁵



Flag raised



Flag lowered



Under monitoring

Recommended Actions

	DUTY BEARER	ACTION(S)	ASSOCIATED FLAGS
1.	Minister of Transport	Rigorously assess any individuals being considered for appointment to the Board of the new Transport Economic Regulator.	Flag #1: Improper Appointments
2.	The Ports Regulator of South Africa	Refer the findings of the 2023 forensic report to the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) for further investigation.	Flag #4: Corrupt Awards
3.	Transport Economic Regulator	- Ensure that staff joining the TER from the Ports Regulator were not implicated in the 2023 forensic report. - Refer the findings of the 2023 forensic report to the SIU or, where there is potential criminality, to the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation.	Flag #1: Improper Appointments Flag #4: Corrupt Awards
4.	Special Investigating Unit	Request a Presidential Proclamation to investigate the contracts flagged for potential irregularities by the 2023 forensic report.	Flag #4: Corrupt Awards
5.	Portfolio Committee on Transport	Demand the Minister and Director-General of Transport scrutinise whether the Ports Regulator has addressed the findings of the 2023 forensic report commissioned by the previous Board and implemented the report's recommendations.	Flag #1: Improper Appointments Flag #3: Climate of Fear or Favour Flag #4: Corrupt Awards Flag #6: Obstructing Accountability



Flag raised



Flag lowered



Under monitoring

The 9 Flags

Flag #1

Improper Appointments

Improper appointments, dismissals or failure to remove individuals in senior positions may be used to drive a corrupt agenda.

Flag #2

Co-opting Key Functions

Informal control may be established over critical functions within the institution to abuse them.

Flag #3

Climate of Fear or Favour

The working culture favours loyalty over duty; alignment with a corrupt agenda is rewarded, and resistance is punished.

Flag #4

Corrupt Awards

Contracts, licences, partnerships, loans and/or investments may be awarded irregularly and repeatedly benefit the same actors.

Flag #5

Financial Malpractice

The institution's financial management practices may be abused to advance a corrupt agenda.

Flag #6

Obstructing Accountability

The institution's internal operations might be deliberately obscured to hide potential misconduct.

Flag #7

Manipulating Perceptions

A public narrative that frames misconduct as innocence may be promoted.

Flag #8

Private Gain

Illicit gains may be distributed to benefit the same actors.

Flag #9

Shadow Network

The same public and private actors may collude to gain control over an institution's assets and functions, benefiting repeatedly.

About ACTis

What is ACTis?

The Anti-Corruption Tracker Information System is an initiative of the Anti-Corruption and Accountability Project at the Institute for Security Studies. It provides analysis on corruption and state capture in South Africa, to inform early intervention and enforcement. It utilises a system of indicators and an AI-driven data-collection and analysis tool, validated by human experts. It identifies risks within individual government institutions and produces actionable recommendations to address them, with a view to disrupting patterns of state capture and corruption.

Findings are shared directly with government and other duty-bearers, civil society organisations, the media and the public, empowering authorities to intervene, strengthening accountability, and enabling citizens activism.

Links to ACTis Information:

Further project information may be found at the following links:

[Terms and Definitions](#)

[Project Methodology and Analytical Framework](#)

[About the Anti-Corruption and Accountability project](#)

[About the Institute for Security Studies](#)

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Flag raised



Flag lowered



Under monitoring

References

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- ² Economic Regulation of Transport Amendment Act 10 of 2025.
- ³ South African Government, Economic Regulation of Transport Act 6 of 2024 (English / isiZulu), <https://www.gov.za/documents/acts/economic-regulation-transport-act-6-2024-english-isizulu-11-jun-2024>.
- ⁴ News24, Cape Town takes title of worst port in the world as Durban improves, 14 June 2026, <https://www.news24.com/business/economy/cape-town-takes-title-of-worst-port-in-the-world-as-durban-improves-20260614-0887>.
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- ⁶ News24, Ports Regulator's new board ignored recommendation to fire CEO. No one wants to say why, 10 May 2024, <https://www.news24.com/business/economy/ports-regulators-new-board-ignored-recommendation-to-fire-ceo-no-one-wants-to-say-why-20240510>.
- ⁷ Government Gazette, List of nominations received in response to the invitation to serve on the board of the Road Accident Fund (RAF), 4 March 2019, <https://archive.opengazettes.org.za/archive/ZA/2019/government-gazette-ZA-vol-645-no-42274-dated-2019-03-04.pdf>.
- ⁸ Ports Regulator of South Africa, Performance Plan 2026/27, https://static.pmg.org.za/APP_PRSA_25_MARCH_2026_FINAL_AA_003_-_final_25.03.2026.pdf, pp. 8–10.
- ⁹ Details of this micromanagement included the CEO not trusting the staff with basic tasks and 'harassing staff members'. In one example, she reportedly bought her own vacuum cleaner to the office to demonstrate to the cleaner how it should be used. See: News24, Amid SA Port Meltdown questions remain over the regulator's CEO, 24 April 2024, <https://www.news24.com/business/economy/amid-sa-port-meltdown-questions-remain-over-the-regulators-ceo-20240424>.
- ¹⁰ News24, Amid SA Port Meltdown questions remain over the regulator's CEO, 24 April 2024, <https://www.news24.com/business/economy/amid-sa-port-meltdown-questions-remain-over-the-regulators-ceo-20240424>.
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Flag raised



Flag lowered



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