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## **Provincial revenue wasted could have built 400 schools**

Over 400 schools could have been built with the R24.8bn of unauthorised, irregular, wasteful, and fruitless expenditure by provinces recently revealed in the Auditor-General's latest reports. The South African Institute of Race Relations has calculated how else the Government could have spent this money.

For R24.8bn the Government could have done any one of the following:

- educated 2.5 million public school pupils for a year, or 20% of our total public school pupil population;
- paid for 1.2 million university student places, 1.3 times the current number of students enrolled in public universities;
- paid for 7.4 million child support grants for one year, the equivalent of 70% of children currently receiving the grant;
- paid for 1.7 million old age pensions for one year, the equivalent of 65% of people currently receiving an old age pension;
- funded the total water and sanitation infrastructure budget for one year;
- built 550 new prisons (based on the cost of one recently built in Kimberley for R45m);
- built over 400 new schools (based on the cost per school in Gauteng of R60m);
- built around 460 000 new RDP houses, which could house just over a quarter of all households currently living in informal dwellings; or
- built 24 new children's hospitals (based on the estimated cost of the new Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital of R1bn).

Lucy Holborn, research manager at the Institute, said, 'We have become so inured to seeing examples of corruption and wasteful expenditure running into millions and billions of rand that it is easy to forget quite how much money this really is and what could be done with it.'

'To put it in terms that some of our politicians might better relate to, this money could pay the presidential salary (at its current rate) for over 9 000 years; it could pay the annual cost of catering for all national departments 125 times over; or it could build 120 Nkandlas,' she said.

Ms Holborn also noted that the amount does not include unauthorised, irregular, wasteful, and fruitless expenditure by national departments or public enterprises.

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