

Zille: NIA tapped my phone

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Cape Town - Western Cape Premier Helen Zille said she believed that her phone calls had been monitored by the National Intelligence Agency since as far back as when she was mayor of Cape Town, The New Age reported on Wednesday.

She also said she was unsure of whether it had stopped. "It's common cause that all my phones were tapped and my phone conversations monitored – but I am still not able to get an answer from the NIA as to whether my calls are being monitored or not," Zille said in the Western Cape legislature.

Zille was responding to a question from the ANC's Lynn Brown, the leader of the official opposition in the province. Brown asked whether provincial officials' confidential emails were being viewed by "designated officials" in the Western Cape government. Looking shocked, Zille responded: "Whether or not anybody's email is being scrutinised and whether the person is doing it anyway in the department, I'm not in a position to say."

The New Age reported that Zille would find out details of the "system and issue" raised by Brown.

The newspaper reported the premier as saying: "I and this government respect the constitutional right to privacy and I wish I could say the same for the central government that has in the past abused all institutions, that should have been impartially defending people's rights and upholding the rule of law - and not internal battles within the ANC and also battles between the ANC and its opponents."

In 2008, claims surfaced in the media about the NIA spying on ex ANC members who were planning a breakaway party.

At the time, Zille called for an investigation into the government department.