

# 'Land fraud' lawyers get R50 000 bail

THE Pretoria regional court yesterday granted two lawyers, who allegedly defrauded the Johannesburg City Council of millions of rand, bail of R50 000 each.

Pretoria-based lawyer Peet Viljoen, his co-accused Johannesburg lawyer Edwin Risimate Maringa, and three women face two charges of racketeering and 29 of fraud, involving an estimated R39 million.

The men were arrested by the Hawks on the night of August 12.

Dorah Madiso, a property manager at the Johannesburg Property Company (JPC), was arrested later.

The next morning, two of Viljoen's employees, Ronel van Vuuren, 43, and Anelene van der Berg, 49, reported to the Brooklyn police station and were arrested.

The women were earlier granted bail, but the state objected to bail for the two lawyers, fearing they might intimidate witnesses.

Investigating officer Captain Jan Judeel earlier told the court that a syndicate identified property of the

Johannesburg City Council's JPC and created fraudulent documents that these properties had been sold to a company in which Maringa had a 100 percent shareholding, or a close corporation in which his office assistant Wayne Ernest Africa was the only director. Africa was fired after it became known he had turned state witness.

Judeel testified that payment for the property went into Viljoen's legal firm's trust account and that he acted as conveyancer attorney.

Accomplices at the Pretoria deeds office then transferred the property to the seller in a fraudulent manner.

The market value of the properties was more than R100 million.

Judeel testified that people at the deeds office and the Johannesburg City Council might also be arrested.

Handing down his decision on bail yesterday, magistrate Adriaan Bekker said that there was no factual basis to believe Africa would be intimidated.

The case was postponed to September 20. - Sapa



**IN CHARGE: Minister Jeff Radebe**

