

SACC Welcomes the Resignation by President Jacob Zuma

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Bishop Malusi Mpumlwana

The South African Council of Churches (SACC) welcomes the decision as announced by President Jacob Zuma last night, 14 February 2018, to resign as President of the Republic of South Africa. The resignation is a step towards unburdening the country of a presidency that has been followed by controversy from the very beginning.

President Zuma has consistently said that he does not know what he has done, “*wenzi uZuma*”. Even in his formal resignation statement, he said he has not been told why he has to resign. It is remarkable that President Zuma has not absorbed the reasons that many have put forward in their calls for his resignation. The SACC may have been one of the first organisations to recommend in April 2016, that he should resign, following the Nkandla judgement by the Constitutional Court of March 31, 2016.

Perhaps the reasons that SACC advanced at that time may be helpful in bringing closure to his concerns. The Constitutional Court ruled that Mr Zuma’s conduct was unlawful, and inconsistent with what was required of him by the constitution. This was the primary cardinal reason requiring of the President to resign. This cardinal consideration was sufficient for the President to step down with great dignity as a man who honours the Constitution and the Rule of Law. There was no need for all the subsequent noise that has consumed and polarised society.

Secondly, it seems the President or some acting on his behalf, orchestrated through government and Parliament, the defence of his illegal refusal to comply with the Public Protector’s remedial action to pay a portion of the Nkandla expenses. For how could it be, that all the state institutions had the same wrong interpretation of the law? The President’s lawyers, the lawyers of the National Assembly, and those of the Minister of Police? In biblical terms we say he caused the nation through its public representatives to sin.

These observations predate the SACC findings in the Unburdening Panel Report, that pointed to trends of inappropriate control of State systems through a power-elite that is pivoted around the President, through a network of relationships, and thereby systematically siphoning out the assets of the State. These matters are now the subject of the Judicial Enquiry into State Capture, including the suggestion that the President may have outsourced to the Gupta Brothers, the responsibility of selecting cabinet ministers. This is apart from the current indictments over the Vrede Dairy Farm, associated with the public funds gifted to the Gupta wedding party that landed at the Waterkloof Airforce Base, a national asset that the President as Commander in Chief is supposed to protect. All of these issues have brought opprobrium to, and have undermined the person and office of the President.

The ANC leadership may fail to itemise many of these as they indeed failed to challenge these deeds when they should have. We hope that they have now learned and will join in the effort to promote a clean government.



Even though he remained oblivious of the reasons for his need to resign, President Zuma was gracious in his resignation, through his important call that no life should be lost in his name, as a result of his recall and resignation. It is the hope of the SACC that at such times of differing opinions, the spirit of mutual respect, motivated by the hopes for a reconciled and corruption free South Africa, will prevail.

Bishop Mpumlwana is General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches (SACC).

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