

PRESIDENT JG ZUMA ADDRESS TO THE NATION

Ipelegeng Centre, Soweto

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My fellow South African citizens and members of the local and international media.

The African National Congress, the oldest liberation movement in the African continent, is globally recognised as one of the greatest liberation movements of our time. It was a mighty force that led the struggle for freedom against one of the most evil and cruel regimes, and inspired many liberation movements in the continent and beyond.

This organisation was established by great leaders, who are regarded as forward thinkers and brave pioneers of this country. The objective was clear. It was to liberate the black people, and Africans in particular, transform their lives and also establish a South Africa that equally belongs to all who live in it. Black people had been turned into semi-slaves and semi-colonial subjects in the land of their forefathers by oppressors who came from

faraway lands, causing severe marginalisation over many centuries.

After much reflection, it truly saddens me that the ANC of today is not the once great movement that we loved and were prepared to lay down our lives for.

Due to infiltration and failure of leadership, the ANC has been reduced to an organisation that is hardly respected by those that it swore to liberate, serve and protect. Having engaged with many people from many different walks of life, more especially those who have placed their faith in the ANC to transform their lives, it is clear that they are disappointed. They are very critical of the manner in which the ANC has been conducting itself as a political party governing their country in recent years, more especially under the current leadership.

For over a century the ANC leadership had always treated its members and supporters with utmost respect and prioritised listening to them more than listening to themselves. An open channel of communication from the ground up had always been the core practice of the organisation and had helped to maintain a strong connection with the people. A healthy relationship

between the leadership of the ANC and its members at all levels demonstrated the character of being an organisation of the people, by the people and for the people. It is for such reasons that many of us initially joined the ANC, and believed so deeply in its mission that we were prepared to sacrifice our lives. Many indeed paid the supreme sacrifice and lost their lives in the process of fighting for our freedom.

The ANC that I know always prioritised recruiting new members and continuously sought to build and maintain a powerful structure. The ANC I know was never focused more on expelling members without implementing proper processes to establish if such action was appropriate. The ANC I know gave its members and supporters a home and empowered them with clear policies to undertake the tasks it delegated to them in pursuit of the mission to transform lives. To be a member of this much respected organisation was an honour and instilled a sense of pride in members. This encouraged members to be proactive in executing the mission of transforming the lives of the people. In the process, the organisation produced some of the best cadres and visionary leaders who earned the respect of the people of this country and many more beyond our borders.

I also personally benefited from the movement's investment in its members and leaders. As a long-standing member of this mighty organisation, I spent the greater part of my life going through rigorous training and political education that shaped me to be what I am today. I have been an active member of the ANC for 64 years and have been trusted with and undertaken many tasks allocated to me by my leaders at different levels within the organisation. I have served as a volunteer of the ANC.

I have been a member of the ANC Youth League. I have also been trusted to hold a number of positions throughout the period of my membership. I have also served in the military wing of the ANC, Umkhonto We Sizwe, where my commanders assigned me a number of tasks that I saw through. In these various positions I carried out all the tasks and instructions I was entrusted with no matter how difficult and dangerous some of the assignments may have been. I was equally ready to die if need be. There is not a single task that I did not execute to the best of my ability. I have always put the ANC first, before any other personal interests in pursuit of the greater goal of liberation. I was loyal to the organisation then, and I remain a loyal servant of the ANC to this day.

I have served my organisation under different conditions and circumstances. I joined the ANC, in 1958 before it was banned in 1960 and when it was banned, I also served the organisation underground. I was arrested and served 90 days detention without trial. I was on trial with other comrades for 3 months and served 10 years on Robben Island. I was exiled from my home country for 14 and a half years. During all this time, I remained loyal and true to my comrades and leaders. We were truly disciplined members of the ANC, not in slogan but in reality.

During those years on Robben Island, I can proudly say that the level of obedience and discipline was at its highest. During my time on Robben Island, I held the position of leading the political committee which was responsible for political education. After my release, within the following 1 year and 11 months, I was appointed as the underground secretary of the then Natal province and thereafter left the country to go into exile under the instruction of my organisation.

I later ascended to the position of commander within MK and was also elected as a leader of the ANC. Having faithfully served this organisation from my youth until now, I have a concise understanding of how the organisation works, on its own and also

with the Alliance partners. I hold a very deep commitment to my organisation. I have always been ready to serve the ANC at any level and my track record reflects that. I truly believe in the mandate of the ANC and I will continue to serve my organisation. I will die a member of the ANC.

Precisely because of my deep understanding and belief in the ANC I deeply feel the pain and disappointment of witnessing this powerful organisation being reduced to an organisation that has introduced practices that are foreign to its character and mission. Some of the foreign behaviour and displays have led to the public losing confidence in the capabilities of the organisation and losing faith and respect for its leadership. Due to these unfortunate developments, many people are vocalising their mistrust in the organisation to the extent that they are threatening not to vote for the ANC in the upcoming elections.

This organisation was trusted by friends and foes. The people of this country looked forward to engaging and interacting with the ANC. Many looked up to the ANC as a forward-thinking organisation and as the real liberator of the oppressed. As a result of this, this organisation attracted persons of all classes, races and ages to join in carrying out its noble mission. However, in

recent years many members and supporters of the organisation have reached a point where they have publicly come forth to express their difficulty with understanding and accepting the manner in which the organisation is being run by the current leadership.

The organisation that I have served for over six decades under trying conditions has changed into an organisation that we no longer recognise. This organisation is now being led by some leaders who are behaving in an un-ANC manner that does not reflect the true character and mission of the organisation.

This has led me to identify the need to rescue our organisation from this un-ANC behaviour. There is an overwhelming and growing number of cadres who have raised similar concerns about the current manner in which the organisation is being led. Others have unsuccessfully tried to express their concerns and were robbed of the opportunity to express themselves in the appropriate arena of the ANC national conference. When I was the President of the ANC dissenting voices were never silenced as in the present. Even the Zuma Must Fall brigade were free to express themselves.

It has become clear that this organisation is no longer the organisation we grew up knowing. It is for this very reason that those of us who will never forsake or abandon the ANC, feel it necessary that we undertake a process to rescue the ANC from the wrong hands, bring it back to the people and restore its former glory.

Given the death of democratically elected structures of the ANC, the role of money in determining electoral outcomes since the CR17 scandal of blatant white monopoly capture of the organisation and the suspected fraudulent manipulation of conference outcomes, I have full sympathy with those comrades who believe that the ANC can no longer be saved from within its non-existent structures.

Something more bold, creative and dramatic needs to be done by those who love the real ANC. Some have resigned and cited valid reasons for doing so. Others have not renewed their membership. Other ANC members have even told me that they keep their membership but vote for other progressive parties. All this has resulted in the rapid decline of the ANC in successive elections. It is now widely expected that the ANC will lose the national election for the first time since 1994. This follows its 46% loss of the 2021

local government elections under the present leadership which should have served as a wake up call. This seems like a deliberate plot to kill the ANC.

I have been left with no alternative, as a faithful servant of this organisation that I love and believe in but to do something to correct the wrongs within the organisation so that we can restore the confidence of the public in the vision of the ANC and regain their trust and support. We need to rescue the ANC and bring it back to the organisation that we know, love and trust. This requires drastic action.

Before stating what it is that we are going to do to rescue and restore the real ANC vision, let me tabulate a few of the current pressing issues on which I base my distrust of the current ANC of Ramaphosa as a proxy of White Monoploy Capital, which must be distinguished from the real ANC.

Firstly, the ANC kept quiet when the powers of the President were taken away in the appointment of the Chair of the Commission on so-called State Capture. This symbolised an opportunistic amendment of the Constitution of South Africa.

Secondly, the ANC kept quiet when it became clear that the 2017 national conference and the position of President had been stolen or bought by forces outside of the organisation for an amount ranging between the R300 million, which the President admitted under oath, and the estimated R1 billion or more, found by the Public Protector in her BOSASA report in which Ramaphosa was fingered.

Thirdly, the turning point for me was the misguided statement made by the ANC President, that the ANC is Accused Number 1 for Corruption in South Africa. Neither the leadership of the ANC in the NEC nor the membership at the most recent national conference saw the need to challenge or change that incorrect statement.

Fourthly, the ANC expelled its Secretary-General using the selective application of the so-called step-aside rule but will now allow the President who is also facing criminal charges to top its list for the next election.

Fifthly, the ANC stood idle when 400 black people were massacred in KwaZulu Natal following the avoidable July 2021

unrest caused by the Constitutional Court and Mr Raymond Zondo due to my imprisonment without trial under the ANC of Ramaphosa.

Sixthly, the last straw was when, due to the Public Protector's 31 questions in the investigation of the Phalaphala scandal, she was suspended and then impeached by the ANC, DA and Freedom Front working together. I have now been told that the ANC of Ramaphosa has decided to vote in favour of the impeachment of Judge President Hlophe and Judge Motata. The ANC of Ramaphosa has declared war against progressive black professionals and intellectuals.

Lastly, the ANC of Ramaphosa has plunged the country into darkness with loadshedding which has ruined the economy. This could have been easily avoided by keeping the best management which successfully prevented loadshedding and adopting nuclear energy many years ago. Today we are told that nuclear power has suddenly become affordable.

These are just some of the key reasons for my answer to the question: "***What is to be done?***"

Some ANC leaders have asked me to campaign for the ANC in the 2024 elections. For the reasons I have stated and many others that I will share with the public in the coming months, I have decided that I cannot and will not campaign for the ANC of Ramaphosa in 2024. My conscience will not allow me to lie to the people of South Africa and to pretend that the ANC of Ramaphosa is the ANC of Luthuli, Tambo and Mandela. It is not the ANC that I joined and went to jail for. In this regard I fully agree with other former leaders like Comrade Thabo Mbeki and others that it would be a betrayal to campaign for the ANC of Ramaphosa.

However, I also believe that it is not enough to withdraw from the ANC campaign which will lead our people to more misery, poverty, racism, unemployment, deepening loadshedding and a government led by sellouts and apartheid collaborators. It is also our duty to guide our people on what to do in order to save our revolution from its enemies and to achieve the society envisaged in the Freedom Charter.

I therefore wish to announce that in 2024, I will vote for the Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK) Party. It has already been registered with the IEC with my knowledge and blessings, in response to various pleas expressed to me by some religious leaders,

traditional leaders, former combatants and other leaders in society. I call on all South Africans to join me in taking the important step and to vote for the MK Party and any other progressive party which seeks total liberation and the return of our land to its rightful owners, the African people. The task ahead requires young and older leaders alike to pull in the same direction. No single organisation can pull us out of the present crisis. We require the same spirit of unity which saw us defeating the monster of Apartheid.

In the past few months, I have held several meetings with leaders of our people across the spectrum including about 10 registered progressive political parties, with the aim of fostering the much needed unity of the historically oppressed and dispossessed in South Africa. We are also discussing the formation of a Patriotic Front and a voting bloc after the people's victory in the 2024 election to pursue a minimum consensus programme of no more than 10 points of agreement to get us out of the present crisis, which is in the process of being formulated. The single aim is to steer the ship of total liberation from colonialism back on course by uniting Africans across the country, the African continent and the African diaspora behind the battle for land, justice and radical transformation towards economic

freedom. There can never be reconciliation without socio-economic justice and equality.

To explain the necessity for taking these steps and in particular for choosing the vehicle of Umkhonto We Sizwe Party in pursuing our freedom from the present capture by white monopoly capital and the enemies of our people operating among us, I can only quote the founding statement of Umkhonto we Sizwe on 16 December 1961:

"The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices: submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa. We shall not submit and we have no choice but to hit back by all means within our power in defence of our future and our freedom."

The statement was true on 16 December 1961 and it is also true on 16 December 2023. The new people's war starts from today. The only crucial difference is that instead of the bullet, this time we will use the ballot. This was made possible by the supreme sacrifices made by many freedom fighters in the past 400 years in the years of resistance across the length and breadth of this land, starting with the heroism of the Khoisan leader David Stuurman

and culminating in the democratic breakthrough of 1994. Throughout that history our people and their leaders were prepared for any consequences in the pursuit of freedom including death itself. At this historical juncture there is once again no alternative but to pick up the spear of the nation, Umkhonto We Sizwe in defence of our people and in pursuit of a peaceful revolution for a radical change. The status quo cannot be allowed to prevail or to get even worse.

Today my mission is only to announce the way forward. The formal launch of the MK Party and the announcement of its interim leadership and party lists will be done in the early part of 2024. At that stage we will also report back to the nation on any progress in the discussions around much needed black unity and the Patriotic Front discussions. Due to the toxic atmosphere caused by our captured media, judiciary and the other arms of the state, it was necessary to conduct these discussions underground. We will soon be ready to share the details with the nation.

No force can defeat a people's thirst for freedom!

I thank you!

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