

OPINION

The Times

It's time Zuma axed non-performing cabinet ministers

PRESIDENT Jacob Zuma has ordered the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation to look into the shocking conditions in which thousands of pupils in Eastern Cape, especially in rural areas, are schooled.

Last week this newspaper exposed the government's continuing failure to provide quality education, the poor being especially disadvantaged.

But, according to Zuma's office, the president will wait for Minister for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Collins Chabane to advise him on how to improve the situation in Eastern Cape. This hesitancy falls far short of what is expected of him as president.

He should be cracking the whip over Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga and her Public Works counterpart, Thulas Nxesi, for their dismal failure to deliver on their mandates.

He should be asking the two ministers difficult questions and demanding concrete answers instead of dithering while Chabane compiles yet another report.

The shocking state of some of our schools, especially in rural and black areas, will be an indictment of this government for as long as ministers are not held responsible for their inaction.

The freedom that many died for demands that — after almost 20 years of liberation — we should not be talking of schools that have a teacher-to-pupil ratio of up to 1:100.

If South Africa is to undo the damage inflicted by apartheid, and by the non-delivery of services such as education by its current leadership, Zuma will have to fire ministers who fail to deliver.

It is discouraging and worrying that the ANC Women's League, headed by the selfsame Motshekga, raised its voice not in defence of poor black children taught in collapsing "classrooms" but to protect the dignity of the education minister.

Quality education is more important than "underwear politics".

Education is more important than 'underwear politics'