

Gordhan, Jonas shown the door

President Jacob Zuma last night made 20 changes to his executive

By **Natasha Marrian, Carol Paton and Genevieve Quintal**

The country is set to wake up to a new finance minister after President Jacob Zuma effected a far-reaching cabinet reshuffle, with Malusi Gigaba replacing Pravin Gordhan.

Late last night, it was confirmed that Gigaba would replace Gordhan and ANC MP Sifiso Buthelezi would replace Mcebisi Jonas as deputy finance minister.

The rand went down 3% from R12.80 to R13.35 when the news broke. It could weaken further when the news sinks in today.

The move follows a meeting of the ANC's top six last night at which Zuma informed them of his decision.

Gordhan's removal is set to have far-reaching consequences for Zuma and the ANC – Gigaba is seen as a close ally of the president and is among his loyalists in the current cabinet. But there was not

much detail as the Presidency was expected to make a special announcement late last night.

Zuma stepped back from his initial pick for finance minister at the request of his top five colleagues in the ANC.

His initial choice was former Eskom boss Brian Molefe.

When the top six meeting concluded, it is understood that nine ministers and six deputy ministers would be shifted by Zuma.

Gordhan was not told late last night that he had been replaced.

The party's top leaders were summoned to see Zuma at his residence in Pretoria late last night after he informed them that he was intent on removing Gordhan and Jonas.

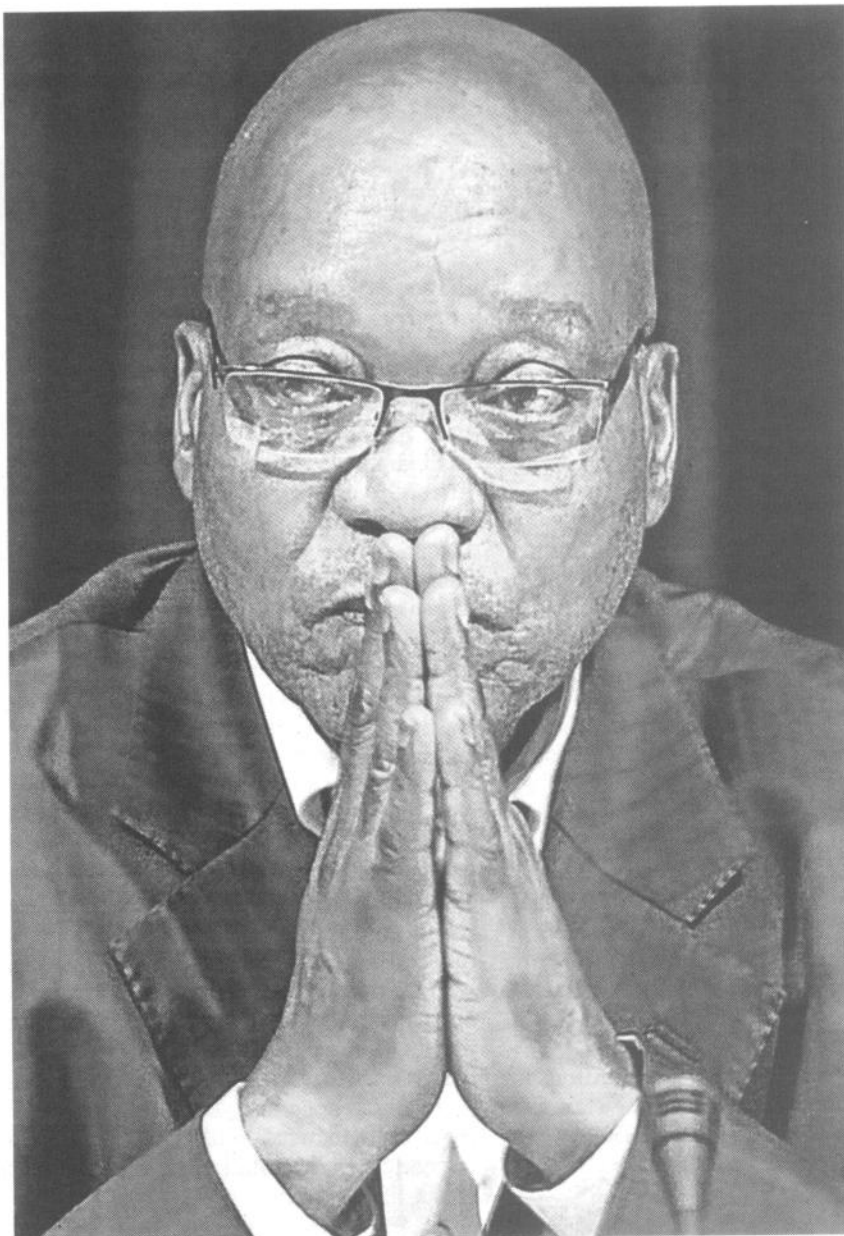
At an earlier tense meeting of the top-six officials on Monday, Zuma faced an open revolt from Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa, secretary-general Gwede Mantashe and treasurer-general Zweli Mkhize.

The party's top leaders agreed that Zuma should report back to them on Monday, after they disagreed with his selection of Molefe.

They had also told Zuma that a reshuffle would have to be more widespread as there were poor performing ministers in the cabinet who had to be shifted.

Zuma had for three days delayed his planned reshuffle, but his move last night could be an

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President Jacob Zuma fired several members of his executive at an announcement in Pretoria last night. / KEVIN SUTHERLAND

indication that he has made a decision on the various objections raised.

Zuma effected the move despite pressure piling on him.

The SACP confirmed earlier yesterday that the president had used a document claiming to emanate from international intelligence to justify his recall of Gordhan from an international investor road show and to motivate the reshuffle.

SACP second deputy general secretary Solly Mapaila said his party had disagreed with Zuma.

Mapaila described the use of the so-called intelligence report as "pathetic".

"We should not be treated like children. Really?" he

asked.

Former finance minister Nhlanhla Nene was fired in December 2015, also on the strength of a bogus intelligence dossier called "Project Spider Web". This cost the country more than R89-billion.

Mapaila said: "A developing country like ours cannot afford to lose more than R89-billion in the period of a month ... if people take decisions that cause this, they must be held accountable for their actions."

Meanwhile, the EFF has approached the Constitutional Court, seeking Zuma's removal from office.

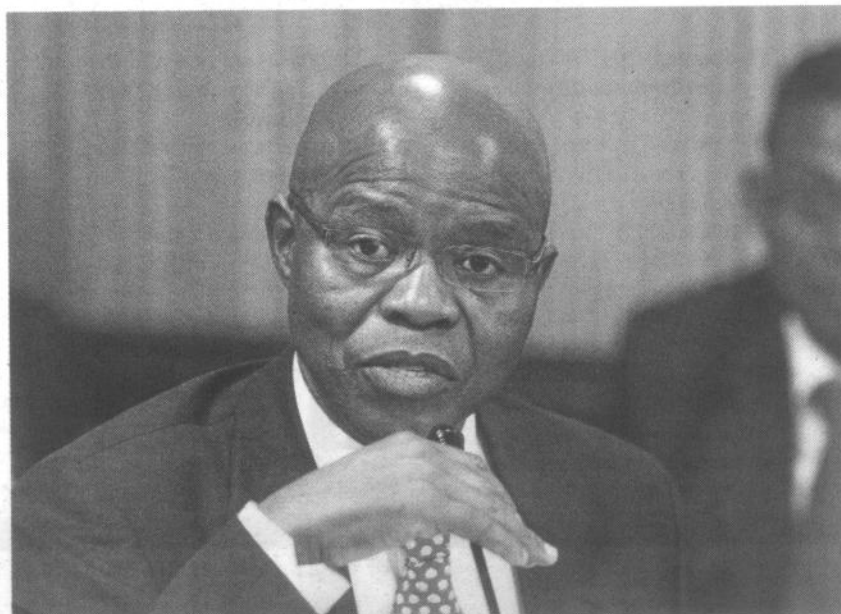
The ConCourt left it to parliament to act on Zuma's use of state funds to improve his Nkandla home.

The EFF also wants the Constitutional Court to direct the National Assembly to put processes and mechanisms in place to hold Zuma accountable, and order it to establish a committee in parliament or any other independent mechanism to conduct an investigation into the president's conduct.

Cope and UDM have joined the EFF's motion.

Newly formed labour federation the South African Federation of Trade Unions held a crisis meeting this week and decided to "occupy" the National Treasury should Gordhan and his team be removed.

The Democratic Alliance said yesterday it would table another motion of no confidence in Zuma.



Sifiso Buthelezi is the new deputy finance minister. / TREVOR SAMSON