

CABINET BLOODBATH

Zuma ^{The Star Pg1, 3/3/17} makes sweeping changes, and rand takes dive

PRESIDENT Jacob Zuma has appointed 10 new ministers and 10 deputy ministers following one of the biggest culls of a cabinet since the advent of democracy.

And the worst kept secret of the past week is also out: Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan and his deputy Mcebisi Jonas have been axed. But while it was speculated that Brian Molefe could take the finance minister position, it was revealed after midnight by the Presidency that now-former Home Affairs Minister Malusi Gigaba would be taking up the lofty mantle.

Replacing Gigaba, who was widely felt to have excelled in his position at Home Affairs, is Professor Hlengiwe Mkhize.

In another move, Sports Minister Fikile Mbalula was redeployed as the minister of police.

In his statement, Zuma said: "I have decided to make changes to the national executive in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness. The changes bring some younger MPs and women into the national executive in order to benefit from their energy, experience and expertise.

"I have directed the new ministers and deputy ministers to work tirelessly with their colleagues to bring about radical socio-economic transformation and to ensure that the promise of a better life for the poor and the working class becomes a reality."

Ministers who have been shown the door include Gordhan, Derek Hanekom, Dipuo Peters and Tina Joemat-Pettersson.

Zuma's reshuffle followed two days of high drama, when most of the media were reporting that the tide had turned against the president, and that he was close to being asked to step down.

It followed an extraordinary week in which the president instructed Gordhan to return from an international investor trip in London. He also ordered Deputy Finance Minister Mcebisi Jonas to cancel his trip, raising speculation that both would be ousted.

Yesterday, the SACP claimed at a press conference they had been told by Zuma on Monday that he was replacing Gordhan and Jonas.

Gordhan's shafting was confirmed shortly before 11pm. The rand took an immediate knock.

The announcement may have been delayed by Ahmed Kathrada's funeral, but attitudes hardened when former president Kgalema Motlanthe used his eulogy to quote from a letter Kathrada had written to Zuma, urging him to step down.

Last night a source close to the Presidency told The Star Zuma was "as entrenched in the position (of president) as he has even been".

The fact that he had been able to make significant changes showed how strong he still was in the party, the source said. He had thrown down the gauntlet to those who wanted him out.

The reshuffle is a clear sign that in recent days, the battle for the soul of the ANC has moved into overdrive, with the president moving decisively to strengthen his hand.

At the time of publication, only a few parties had reacted to the massive reshuffle.

"President Zuma's decision to fire Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan and his deputy Mcebisi Jonas should be a rallying call for all South Africans to stand together and defend our hard-won constitu-

tional democracy," said DA leader Mmusi Maimane.

"The president has again shown he has no interest in our beloved country's future – or the 9 million South Africans who are unemployed. He has bowed to the whims of those who are determined to enrich themselves at the expense of the poor and jobless. This is an act of complete state capture," he said.

The UDM's Bantu Holomisa declared the reshuffle an "April Fool's joke", and said Gigaba's repositioning as minister of finance was "because of his clear association with the Gupta family".

"President Zuma is strengthening his hold on cabinet with the appointment of Sifiso Buthelezi as

Gigaba's deputy and it won't be surprising if people start dismissing these two as indunas from the palace whose main objective would be to facilitate the further looting of resources. The fact that the rand tanked yesterday evening, even before President Zuma made any announcement, is a sign that South Africa is in for a rough ride in the next few days, up until it is clear what the new minister of finance plans to do," said Holomisa.

The Save South Africa campaign called on South Africans to protest Zuma's decision by gathering at the National Treasury at 10am today "to show objection to this Gupta-inspired coup", naming the new initiative #OccupyTreasury.

DEPUTY MINISTERS

1. Deputy Minister of Public Service and Administration, Dipuo Letsatsi-Duba
2. Deputy Minister of Finance, Sifiso Buthelezi
3. Deputy Minister of Public Enterprises, Ben Martins
4. Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture, Maggie Sotyu
5. Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry, Gratitude Magwanishe
6. Deputy Minister of Communications, Thandi Mahambehlala,
7. Deputy Minister of Tourism, Elizabeth Thabethe
8. Deputy Minister of Police, Bongani Mkongi
9. Deputy Minister of Telecommunications and Postal Services, Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams
10. Deputy Minister of Small Business Development, Nomathemba November.