

# Zuma to face ANC top brass

President will meet  
colleagues who have  
slated him for reshuffle

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**A**S PRESIDENT Jacob Zuma faces mounting pressure to resign over his firing of Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan and his deputy Mcebisi Jonas over an alleged intelligence report, chief whip Jackson Mthembu admitted the country was in a crisis but said it would be dealt with internally.

All eyes are on the weekly meeting today of the ANC "Top Six" executive members, who are said to be deeply divided over the firing.

Mthembu said that with the "crisis facing us today", the ANC leadership would be able to address it and give direction.

"That's what the people of South Africa expect. It's a matter of importance. It's on the agenda of ANC structures," he said.

"I'm quite convinced they will meet and deal with the crisis facing South Africa."

He was briefing the media in Joburg yesterday, when he presented a discussion document on communications and the battle of ideas, ahead of the ANC national policy conference in June.

Mthembu, who is chairperson of the ANC national executive sub-committee on communications, refused to dwell much on Zuma's decision to fire five ministers and two deputies in the dead of night on Thursday.

Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa, ANC secretary-general Gwede Mantashe and treasurer-general Zweli Mkhize have publicly distanced themselves from and criticised Zuma's decision to fire Gordhan and Jonas over the Operation Checkmate intelligence report.

The Ahmed Kathrada and Nelson Mandela foundations, the SACP and some within the ANC also want Zuma to step down over the axing of Gordhan and Jonas.

This was on the basis of a "very unintelligent intelligence report" that the two men were planning to use the international investment roadshows to the UK and US to mobilise the financial markets against the government.

On Saturday, Gordhan rubbished the allegation.

Meanwhile, Speaker of the National Assembly Baleka Mbete is preparing to deal with requests by the EFF and DA for the president to be impeached.

Yesterday, Mbete returned to the country after cancelling her work trip to Bangladesh, where she led a multiparty delegation to the 136th session of the International Parliamentary Union. She cited urgency as her reason for coming back.

"The constitution clearly stipulates what should happen should the motion of no-confidence be

carried out. Our people are looking to Parliament to play its part. South Africans are expecting the institute of democracy to demonstrate decisive leadership. I, therefore, assure all South Africans that this legislative arm of the state will rise to the occasion. We understand the seriousness of the matter," she said.

Mbete said she would hold consultations with Mthembu and determine if Parliament can reconvene within a reasonable time.

Mbete has ruled out the possibility of secret ballots in the votes set to be passed in the motion of no-confidence, saying only vast pressure from MPs would sway the rules.

And, while she has been previously criticised for protecting Zuma, Mbete came out guns blazing yesterday, saying "show me the proof".

"What would be of great interest to me is if members of the media would go into detail about the protection of the president. How does it exactly manifest, because if it was De Klerk, would we play by the same rules? This is an accusation that has been thrown to the point where I am interested where members of the media see this protection from," she said.

Addressing delegates at the SACP Cape Town metro regional congress, the party's national deputy chairperson and recently appointed Sports Minister Thulas Nxesi spoke out against state capture under Zuma.

He said the upcoming process to elect the next leaders of the ANC would see branches being bought wholesale, and membership lists manipulated to disqualify those who would not be used as voting cattle at the party's national conference. While the SACP objected to the manner of Zuma's recent cabinet reshuffle, Nxesi said the party would not "run ahead of the masses".

"We must make sure that we move with the masses in whatever decisions are taken. That's why we say we are going to consult with the democratic organisations, the mass democratic movement, not just the (tripartite) alliance, because the alliance is neutered."

Nxesi said it was preposterous that Gordhan, a former Umkhonto weSizwe operative, would mobilise the world against the government.

"Comrades, corruption is killing us. It pits comrades against comrades, it demoralises the many honest and committed public servants... and it is at the root of all the wrong things that beset the ANC," said Nxesi.

Meanwhile, civil society organisations have called on the public to protest in a mass march, with many expected to converge on Pretoria's Church Square today.

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