

Charge the crooked to straighten out SA

SA does not have a Jacob Zuma problem; it has an ANC problem. The governing party's corruption and patronage machine is now so entrenched that it threatens SA's nonracial democratic project, democratic institutions and social cohesion.

When President Jacob Zuma was elected leader of the ANC in 2007, he was a criminal suspect facing 783 charges of corruption. A decade later, he remains a criminal suspect. But this has not stopped him from using his power at the helm of the ANC to create a shadow state made up of what can only be described as a criminal syndicate.

The stream of Gupta e-mail leaks has shown how Zuma, aided by his trusted lieutenants and other hangers-on, have "repurposed" the state, stealing billions of rand from Transnet, Eskom and other state-owned companies.

All of this has been facilitated by cabinet



PALESA MORUDU

ministers, ANC structures, the party's parliamentary majority, its deployees at state-owned companies and the unspoken ties of loyalty that bind the former liberation movement.

The report *Betrayal of the Promise: How SA is being Stolen*, released by a collaborating group of academics, explains: "At the nexus of this symbiosis are a handful of the same individuals and companies connected ... to the Gupta-Zuma family. The way it is strategically coordinated constitutes the shadow state.

"Well-placed individuals located in the most significant centres of state power make decisions about what happens in the constitutional state.

"Those who ... resist the

agenda in one way or another are systematically removed ... placed under tremendous pressure, or hounded out by trumped-up charges and dubious intelligence reports. This is the world where deniability is valued, culpability is distributed and where trust is maintained through mutually binding fear."

For Zuma's enterprise to succeed, he needed to ensure that most of the ANC's leadership would also serve the interests of the family from Uttar Pradesh. Luckily for Brother Ajay, Brother Atul and Brother Rajesh, ANC leaders come cheap.

Because of the Gupta e-mail leaks, we know the sons of Zuma's key ally, Free State Premier Ace Magashule, are captured by the Guptas in the same way as the First Son. We also know the Guptas win and dined Zuma's pals in Dubai. These are the people Zuma relies on to provide him with political cover when he gets a bit of pressure from the national executive committee.

Zuma and his allies may

have control of the governing party, the prosecuting authorities and police, but they do not have control over the unfolding scandal. Everyone and everything associated with Zuma's criminal syndicate is contaminated by the stench of corruption.

Political cover by his national executive committee comrades and increasingly incoherent ramblings by the ANC secretary-general cannot disguise the fact that Zuma presides over a rotten state, that a host of cabinet ministers have facilitated the spread of the cancer and that the Cabinet is increasingly being seen as illegitimate.

The ANC is feeling the heat. Some in the party hope a judicial commission of inquiry will solve its political problem. Others pray a miracle at the party's December conference will usher in the "good guys". But no commission or conference will remove the cancer because it has spread too far in the governing party and has destroyed the capacity of the state.

The election of Deputy

President Cyril Ramaphosa as the new ANC leader will not solve the problem. Despite efforts by his public relations handlers to clean up the bloody stain of Marikana in the public's mind, Ramaphosa will never erase the association of his billionaire persona with the murder of dozens of platinum miners.

Additionally, the idea that Ramaphosa will ensure criminal charges are laid against his comrades is laughable — and his campaign is led by the South African Communist Party that engineered Zuma's ascent to power. Communist Party deputy general secretary Jeremy Cronin now wants us to forget their role in propping

**NO COMMISSION OR
CONFERENCE WILL
REMOVE THE
CANCER BECAUSE IT
HAS SPREAD TOO FAR
AND HAS DESTROYED
THE CAPACITY OF
THE STATE**

up Zuma's shadow criminal state, while he and his comrades retain their positions and perks in Cabinet. Who is fooling who?

The ANC is politically exhausted as a force for progressive change. There are thousands in the party with enormous capacity and integrity and it is painful for them to accept that the movement that encapsulated so many dreams is dead.

SA is left with few options. The first and most urgent is to demand that criminal charges are laid against dozens of members of the government and the parastatals and their private-sector collaborators. The second is to continue with a sustained mass campaign to force the criminals to resign and to call for electoral reforms that will bring power back to the electorate.

The last is that we must vote a new government into power in 2019. And then begin rebuilding the country that was promised in 1994.

● Morudu writes from Cape Town.