

Three MPs' lives threatened, Mentor alleges

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In addition to the outspoken Makhosi Khoza, three other women ANC MPs have allegedly had their lives threatened after calling for a conscience vote on the motion of no confidence against President Jacob Zuma.

Vytjie Mentor, a former ANC MP and chairwoman of the public enterprises committee, made the allegation on Thursday, while addressing the Cape Town Press Club and talking about her new book, *Holy Cows*. The book gives an account of her career as an ANC MP, a time tinged by allegations of sexual harassment and corruption.

Mentor said intimidation was rife among Zuma supporters in the ANC. She shot back to public prominence in 2016 when she came out and said that she had been offered a cabinet post by the Guptas. Mentor deposed an affidavit to this effect to former public protector Thuli Madonsela as part of the state of capture investigation.

Khoza has complained that she received arson threats and threats against her life and that of her daughter.

She believed it was right to

expect ANC MPs to vote with their conscience on the motion of no confidence.

"I am cautious of discussing how certain MPs will or won't vote. Just touching the topic with some of them could mean I am trying to influence them.

"We are all saying, we put it on their conscience to do the right thing," Mentor said. She said she had been in contact with Khoza about her "dire security situation" with a view of providing some comfort to her.

She had faith in the police, Mentor said, but was wary of the idea of police officers serving as security personnel.

"I don't wish to cast aspersions and say they won't be protected. I am reluctant to take up state protection, because I feel like I may die at the hands of the people I would expect to protect me," she said.

"I know the thugs that are trying to intimidate me but I would be lying if I said I knew who is intimidating MPs over the vote. I know three woman MPs, other than Khoza, who are being intimidated," she said.

Police Minister Fikile Mbalula recently likened ANC MPs who wished to exercise a conscience vote to suicide bombers – a comment that has drawn criticism and has been taken as a thinly veiled threat against the party's MPs.

Former SACP deputy general secretary and ANC MP Jeremy Cronin said the ball was in Speaker Baleka Mbete's court, but that Mbalula's remarks came close to intimidation.

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