

# ANC is mafiosos' paradise



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**T**he dismissal of higher education minister Nobuhle Nkabane does not herald the "new dawn" President Cyril Ramaphosa promised in 2018. He hasn't suddenly found courage to deal with miscreants.

Ramaphosa was bowing to pressure from the DA, which threatened to withhold support for budget items in parliament if he did not act against certain ministers.

The initial list included Human Settlements Minister Thembu Simelane and deputy minister David Mahlobo. But for now, Nkabane's removal is enough for the budget to proceed.

Ramaphosa acted just in time, with the Appropriations Bill scheduled to be voted on tomorrow.

If this Bill were to fail, the budget would be held up. Government departments would run out of money. Salaries wouldn't be paid.

Given the scale of corruption in the ANC, Nkabane is small fry. She lied to parliament, which is a criminal offence.

And her falsified nominations for section education and training authority boards were dishonest but Simelane has a worse track record, with links to the VBS scandal. Mahlobo features at length in the report of the Zondo commission of inquiry into state capture.

Known to be former president Jacob Zuma's "bagman", he should not be in government.

Neither he nor Simelane or others are likely to be sacrificed, because corruption is embedded in the ANC.

This is evident in allegations against the chief whip of the Johannesburg council, ANC councillor Sithembiso Zungu.

He is accused of using construction mafia tactics to disrupt a R135 million school-building project in Lehae in Johannesburg south.

In 2019, Zungu was reportedly sentenced to two months' imprisonment for violating a court interdict barring him from disrupting construction on a housing project.

Construction mafia, masquerading as business forums, use intimidation to extort money from those who are awarded tenders. The going rate is 30%, in exchange for which they do nothing useful. When I encounter them in my ward, the police are called.

Not so in Zungu's ward 122. According to *News24*, he chaired a local business forum before becoming a councillor. His positions as an ANC branch chair, zone 2 secretary, ward 122 councillor and Johannesburg council chief whip tell us much about the party's priorities.

The ANC knew his history as a business forum chair – and all that entails – when they selected him as ward councillor candidate in 2021. By elevating him to chief whip of council, they seem to have endorsed extortion.

Business mafia extortion is a massive issue nationally. In 2023 *amaBhungane* said construction mafia were "characterised by entrepreneurial violence, links to the criminal underworld and to the ANC's radical economic transformation faction".

Since last year, it has been a top priority for DA Public Works and Infrastructure Minister Dean Macpherson.

In March, he said 745 construction-related extortion cases had been reported and 240 arrests made since November 2024.

Even if Ramaphosa were a saint with the courage of a braveheart, he would not be able to clean up the ANC. But he is no brave saint.

He is a timid, BEE-made billionaire who stashes foreign currency in his furniture.

For mafiosos, ANC remains a haven of Absolutely No Consequences.