

## **Civil society and labour join forces to fight corruption and issue appeal for inclusive coalition to reject all corruption**

### **Massive marches planned to the union buildings and parliament on Wednesday 19 August**

On 27 May 2015 President Jacob Zuma misused the Presidency's budget vote in Parliament to laugh off the issue of Nkandla. He tried to make fools of the opposition parties and civil society organizations that have expressed outrage of the abuse of public funds and power. On May 28, just a day later, Police Minister Nathi Nhleko released his 'report' into what amount the President should repay of R246 million of public funds spent on his residence in Nkandla. His report sought to make fools of the whole nation.

But we are not fools.

We call this corruption denialism.

South Africa is engulfed by an epidemic of corruption. Private companies and individuals are corrupting the fabric of South

Africa. A war room to fight corruption is expected to be led by the President. But instead it seems that corruption is now endemic in the office of the President, infects parts of the Cabinet and spreads throughout government, businesses, trade unions and NGOs. It must be stopped.

Corruption denialism by the ANC leadership is permitting the diversion of billions of rands away from the delivery of public services to the poor and into hands of the elite.

- Corruption is causing massive levels of unemployment and poverty, collapsing hospital services.
- Corruption takes textbooks away from learners and denies them basic infrastructure such as toilets or desks.
- Corruption is a common thread that runs across the E-tolls, Eskom and other parastatals. It contributes to electricity black-outs, xenophobia, it infected the construction of football stadiums and toll roads.

The denialist response of our government to corruption is a symptom of a refusal to accept public accountability. It is part of a pattern of abuse of power.

The defence of corruption is undermining our Constitution and the chapter 9 institutions, particularly the Public Protector, who are supposed to protect it.

President Zuma, the government and the ANC leadership seem to think that they can get away with this abuse of power and that people will do nothing. They are wrong.

On June 12<sup>th</sup> 2015 a historic first meeting took place between eight unions and 29 civil society organisations.

The meeting resolved:

1. To build an inclusive people's alliance against corruption and for social justice. In coming days and weeks we will be approaching all trade unions, business organisations and faiths to become part of this alliance.
2. To organise a massive march to the Union Buildings and Parliament to coincide with the time when the Parliamentary committee report on the Nhleko report is presented to the National Assembly. These marches will demonstrate a South Africa united in its total rejection of corruption.

3. To form a representative steering committee to co-ordinate the marches, raise funds and broaden the alliance. Initial members of the Anti-corruption committee include:
  - a. Oya Hazel Gumede, OUTA
  - b. Mark Heywood, SECTION27
  - c. Irvin Jim, NUMSA
  - d. Plaatjie Mashego, Unemployment Secretariat (Southern Africa)
  - e. Tshepo Motsepe, Equal Education
  - f. Thuli Ngubane, Awethu
  - g. Dinga Sikwebu, United Front
  - h. Zwelinzima Vavi, former General Secretary, COSATU

Today, June 16<sup>th</sup>, is the 39<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the Soweto uprising. Yet tragically, the sacrifices of the young people of 1976 are being desecrated by corruption. That is why we are calling on all people in South Africa who support the Constitution's vision of equality and social justice, to get ready to take part in the biggest march in South African history.

For more information please phone Castro Ngobese on 083 627 5197 or Patrick Craven on 061 636 6057 or Oya Gumede on 082 444 9468

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