

Zwelinzima Vavi statement on the public death threat from Lulamile Jack

I have taken note of the death threats made by a certain Lulamile Jack, reported to be Deputy chairperson of Limpopo Umkhonto Wesizwe Military Veterans Association. The media quoted him saying "you must go tell him that comrade Lulamile Jack, the former body guard of Chris Hani, will kill him for betraying COSATU".

I am not shocked at all that such a statement has been made. This is regrettably a reflection of the state of affairs in our beloved country. It is a political environment that prevails that allows the likes to spew that venom and death threats assured that nothing will ever happen to him. Only yesterday - 14 April 2015 - we woke up to the news that yet another trade unionist, Chris Nkosi, the Gauteng SATAWU Regional Secretary, had been killed after he received death threats. The house of SATAWU President, June Dube, was petrol bombed in the early hours of the 14 April 2015, he too has been receiving death threats. Last year Xolani Banisi an activist of SAMWU and whistle blower from Bloemfontein was killed. A few months later in the same year, 2014, Mbuyiselwa Mnguni, CEPPWAWU Free State Regional chairperson and a COSATU local chairperson for Sasolburg was found floating in the Vaal dam after he disappeared for more than a week. NUMSA offices have been vandalized on many occasions since its special congress held in December 2013. Three NUMSA stewards were killed in Isithebe also last year. To date no single person has been brought to book for committing these crimes.

South Africans will recall that I made a statement on the 1 April 2015 following my illegal dismissal by the CEC on the 30 March 2015. In the statement I said the following:

" At the level of our mass formations, virtually all democratic structures have been blunted or hollowed out as instruments of popular power. The youth- worker axis, which drove popular struggles of the 1970's and 80's, has been reduced to a pale shadow of its former self, with the taming of the youth movement. The women's, civic and rural peoples movements have to a large extent been co-opted or blunted to such an extent that they no longer have real impact.

The last powerful mass weapon in the hands of working people is the democratic trade union movement, which is now being targeted for domestication, and co-option to serve the agenda of powerful interests. While workers thought they were struggling for the soul of the ANC, a hidden agenda was being hatched by forces hostile to the working class, to capture the soul of COSATU.

This implosion is not only affecting organisations of civil society. It is also eating away at a range of state structures and constitutional bodies. We see an implosion across the board, affecting everything from state owned enterprises such as SABC, SAA, Eskom, SARS, Parliament, the SAP, Intelligence, the NPA and so on. Much of this reflects the drive of a predatory elite to exercise control over all areas of society, to advance their narrow agenda of accumulation and control. Its unprincipled abuse of power is increasingly infecting all institutions of state, as well as civil society organisations, including the trade unions.

This is a deliberate political game to hollow out all organs of peoples power, and institutions which are supposed to hold leaders to account.

If we don't combat this abuse of power, it will take us irreversibly towards a society in which there is no accountability. A society which is run by a failed state.

The COSATU crisis is a symptom of this broader crisis. We are seeing the impact of an unchecked kleptocracy, driven by a particular brand of predatory and parasitic capitalism, which is wreaking havoc inside and outside the trade unions. The cancer of corruption is the most extreme expression of this disease.

While this is a very sad day, the working class needs to respond decisively to this challenge. This is why we are saying "Don't mourn, mobilise!"

The death threats are part and parcel of a political agenda to achieve the goal of domesticating, blunting, hollow out and co-opt the organs of people power together with all institutions of our hard won democracy. The people driving this agenda will stop at nothing including committing murder.

Already a culture of impunity exists. I received a death threat in June 2010 and I reported the matter to the then police commissioner and Minister of Police. I am still waiting this day for a response. Barely a week after I was reelected in 2012, the Acting Head of Crime Intelligence Chris Ngcobo told me that there is a plot to poison and or assassinate me from Iran intelligence operating in South Africa. I reported this to the Inspector General for Intelligence who is suppose to be an ombudsman. Nothing ever came out of that. In around May and August 2013, Sidumo Dlamini circulated a fake intelligence report making all manner of allegations to the fact that I am agent of American agenda to topple all governments led by liberation movements throughout the African continent. Nothing came out of this complain. In August 2013 I laid a charge of extortion against a lady who initially claimed she was raped by me. The evidence of extortion was overwhelming. Today nothing ever happened.

I am convinced if I was to issue that kind of threat against anyone in that fashion I would have been arrested by now. Lulamile Jack won't be arrested and he will not face any consequences for issuing that threat precisely because of the political environment that exists. The culture of impunity has developed. Many whistle blowers have been killed in Mpumalanga, KwaZulu Natal, North West and Free State. No one has been held accountable. If this is allowed to continue we will find ourselves not only in a predatory and kleptocratic state but in barbarism in which the rule of law will only exist in statute books.