



URGENT MEDIA RELEASE

ISSUED BY DIAKONIA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Our country is being crucified by corruption

The decision by the Director of the NPA not to continue with the prosecution of Mr Jacob Zuma is indeed a sad one – especially in the light of the fact the prosecution team itself had recommended that the prosecution be continued.

It is of particular concern again that - not for the first time in our country's young history of aspiring towards democracy - someone who is alleged to have committed a crime has not been afforded their day in court. Not exposing the truth will haunt us for generations to come. Our country and its people deserve to know the truth; we have proven in the past that the truth sets us free.

Responding to the NPA's statement, deputy vice-chairperson of Diakonia, Revd Ian Booth said: "Today justice has been undone. Unfortunately, once again, the prosecutorial process has been so tainted that someone who they (the NPA) were sure was guilty, will never be found either guilty or innocent. Mr Zuma has not been acquitted. This is not about the person – we do not reject Mr Zuma – we do, however, have serious concerns about the processes. If Mr Zuma is innocent, as he claims, then he should surely want to be proven so by a court and not by a political compromise."

Methodist Bishop Mike Vorster responded saying "it is sad that a political solution has substituted a judicial process. This type of stain (allegations of corruption etc.) sticking to a prominent political leader in a country is not unique to South Africa. It is just sad that it has happened here as well – I was hoping that we would be better than that. It is a challenge to us that we need to continuously improve our systems of checks and balances when it comes to people in leadership. We need to work harder to make our country more just." He also questioned the timing of the NPA's statement, doubting whether it was coincidental that these findings were made public so close to the time of the national elections. "I feel a bit like Archbishop Tutu – I do like Mr Zuma – I just feel he has surrounded himself with bad advisors over the years. I am not surprised by the NPA's statement – but the taint will never leave us now."

The Council is particularly concerned that the failure to expose the truth, irrespective of what this might entail and who might be implicated, will haunt this country for generations to come. Our country is plagued by corruption at every level, as has been proven in many cases thus far. Most recently we have seen further evidence of cover-ups in the Travelgate saga, and it is a sad indictment on the society we are trying to build when our political leadership is embroiled in one case of corruption after another. Every alleged

case of corruption should be investigated and pursued through the courts of law if we are to stamp out this evil.

Bishop Barry Wood, OMI, Chairperson of Diakonia Council of Churches, responded to the NPA's statement by noting that "our country's leadership has been preoccupied with the Zuma case for years now, at the expense of good governance and at great expense to the poor and vulnerable within our society. We feel strongly that our political leadership needs a fresh injection of honesty and integrity and transparency at every level, with a renewed commitment to eradicating corruption and those who would corrupt others in their greed and abuse of positions of power.

Diakonia Council of Churches will be holding its annual Good Friday Service on 10 April at the Durban Exhibition Centre starting at 5.15am. This service will be addressed by Prof Tinyiko Maluleke, President of the SACC and a respected political analyst. The theme of the service will be "Crucified by Corruption". The recently launched book "Pilgrimage of Hope" will be on sale after the service. For more information call (031) 310 3500.
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