

Mmusi Maimane: Our people's lives matter, Mr President

Madam Speaker
Honourable Members
Good afternoon
Goeie middag
Bagaetsho
Dumelang

As a former President once said: I am an African.

And so I was proud that yesterday, across this great continent, we celebrated Africa Day, a day that serves to commemorate the founding of the Organisation of African Unity in 1963.

Africa Day symbolises the emancipation of the African continent, and the struggle to see it elevated out of poverty and affirm itself as an equal player in the global economy.

As an African, I believe in the future of this continent and this country. I believe we can succeed if more people find their voices, and then make the right choices.

The DA has a vision for a South African society that shares a common belief in the values of freedom, fairness and opportunity.

A vision to build a democratic state supported by the institutions given birth from our Constitution.

We are fighting for the day when an inclusive economy will offer the same opportunities to all South Africans regardless of the circumstances of their birth.

This is the dream that leaders like Nelson Mandela fought for, but we still have a great deal of work to do to achieve it.

It should make all of us angry that, over the past five years, our economy has grown at less than 2%.

Despite our position as a global trading hub, our BRICS membership, and our vast pool of natural resources, one in three South Africans cannot find a job.

Honourable Speaker, this is a human disaster on a global scale.

Think about it: an entire generation of young black South Africans are not only unemployed but unemployable.

Many are turning to crime because they don't have the opportunity to earn an honest living.

Many are abusing alcohol and drugs because it is their only means of escape.

The dreams they once had now elude them. Life is reduced to mere survival.

If we want to be an African success story, these are the people we must fight for.

Indeed, our Constitution guarantees rights and freedoms for all our people.

But I don't see much evidence that our government cares about the people.

All I see is a government that cares about itself.

A government that enriches itself.

A government that abuses its power to protect itself.

The Marikana tragedy shows just how the President and his cronies have protected themselves at the expense of the poor.

Almost three years after 34 miners were brutally gunned down on 16 August 2012, the public is still waiting for answers.

Honourable Speaker, when exactly will the President make the findings of the Farlam Commission of Inquiry public?

Every minute that passes without this report being made public cheapens the lives of every person massacred at Marikana. The miners, their families, the lives of all South Africans are diminished by the President's delay.

We have just celebrated Africa Day, Mr President. But by withholding this report you are telling us that the lives of black workers are cheap.

Honourable President, I believe that black lives, like all lives, matter.

If we are to take our place amongst the world's successful nations, we must send out a signal that all are equal before the law.

Those responsible for the atrocities at Marikana should be fired and jailed.

So why, Mr President, have you not released the Marikana Report? The report belongs to all South Africans, it is not yours to do what you like with.

Your delay makes us wonder about which members of your inner circle you are trying to protect. Tell us, Mr President, whose reputations matter more than the lives lost at Marikana?

Is it Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa, who chose his words carefully but deliberately when he called for "concomitant action" to bring the strike to an end in order to protect his personal interest in the mine?

Or former Police Minister Nathi Mthethwa and National Police Commissioner Riah Phiyega, who allegedly acted under political pressure and wielded their influence to subdue the miners using any means necessary?

These questions demand answers. We can never bring those miners back, but we can help their families get some closure. And we can get to the truth.

Mr President, today I call on you to let the truth be known. Let justice take its course, even if it means that some of your closest allies are implicated.

I make this call knowing that you have a track-record of dodging accountability, and a history of protecting those closest to you.

We saw this at Nkandla, where R246 million in public funds were used to build you a presidential palace while millions are without homes.

Instead of facing up to the charges, you dismissed the Public Protector's findings and used your party's majority in this National Assembly to whitewash the ad hoc Committee's report.

Honourable Speaker, more than a year after the Public Protector released her report, the President is yet to repay a single cent for the undue benefit he received through the lavish upgrades to his private home.

And we are still waiting for the report by the Police Minister on the President's liability, despite your assurances that it should have been submitted to Parliament last week.

Through it all, the members on my right sit in silence, fearful of biting the hand that feeds them.

You know as well as I do that President Zuma is the reason your party is losing votes.

Your support for him is killing you.

Like chickens voting for Colonel Sanders.

But it is not you I am worried about.

What troubles me is your silence when millions are wasted on luxuries while our children go hungry.

You sat silently when millions of rands were spent earlier this month to charter not one, but two additional private jets to bring the President home from Russia.

You are silent when the President announced an inquiry into the National Director of Public Prosecutions when the National Prosecuting Authority got too close to investigating him and those close to him. He then killed that inquiry to pave the way to get rid of Mxolisi Nxasana with a golden handshake.

And you sat silently when the President appointed his former advisor to head up the Independent Electoral Commission – the institution tasked with free and fair elections.

Our dream at the dawn of our democracy was for a government that serves all the people instead of a minority. That government should always serve the will of the people, and never the will of one person.

But ask yourselves this: are the majority of South Africans better off with President Zuma?

Honourable Members,

The time has come for all South Africans to be honest and admit that our progress toward an inclusive economy has stalled.

The time has come to be honest about the collapse of our economy under President Zuma.

The time has come to reject the broken promises from this broken man. The more jobs he promises, the less we believe him.

The time has come to reject Black Economic Empowerment that only empowers the rich. We want BEE that creates jobs for all South Africans, not an already connected few.

And the time has come to fight for equal access to education for all. No more excuses for mud schools and lack of textbooks. And no more deserving students left behind for financial reasons.

Honourable Speaker, Apartheid was a system that destroyed our lives and our livelihoods. It was a system that told you where to live and who to marry. A system that said your worth was determined by the colour of your skin.

We beat that system and we are never going back.

It is a matter of fact that South Africa today is better than it was back then. But this does not mean we must settle for what we have got.

We cannot accept crony enrichment.

We cannot allow the lives of young people to be destroyed by joblessness and substance abuse.

And we can never allow the massacre of mineworkers to be covered up.

Every day that we fail to hold our government to a higher standard, we are failing in our duty to the South African people.

We must hold ourselves to a much higher standard than Apartheid. We need to measure ourselves against the South Africa we know we can be.

And this is why the DA is fighting for a better tomorrow. It is why we are working hard to implement our vision of a South Africa where there is freedom, fairness and opportunity. For all.

I thank you.

Michael Cardo: The emperor in the “imperial presidency” has no clothes

Madam Speaker

Honourable President and Deputy President, Honourable Ministers and Deputy Minister in the Presidency

Honourable Members

In 1973, the historian Arthur Schlesinger published his ground-breaking work entitled *The Imperial Presidency*.

He argued that the American presidency was out of control. He showed how, over time, the presidency had come to exceed the constitutional limits of its power.

Today, in South Africa, we sit with an imperial presidency.

The emperor-president has too much power.

As Deputy Chief Justice Dikgang Moseneke has noted, there is “a remarkable concentration of the President’s powers of appointment”.

To give a few examples:

- The President appoints all judges on advice from the Judicial Service Commission, and acting judges in consultation with the chief justice.
- The President directly appoints the Chief Justice and the Deputy Chief Justice, and the judge presidents of other courts.
- The President appoints the heads of key public oversight institutions, including the national director of public prosecutions, the public protector, the auditor-general, members of the South African Human Rights Commission, the Commission for Gender Equality, and the Electoral Commission on recommendation from the National Assembly. He may remove members of chapter 9 bodies on specified grounds.
- The President appoints the governor of the Reserve Bank and members of the Finance and Fiscal Commission.
- The President appoints commissioners of the Public Service Commission, the head of the defence force and the military command of the defence force, the head of the police, and the head of the intelligence service.
- The President appoints Commissions of Inquiry.
- And the President appoints the boards of public entities such as the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), commissioners of the South African Revenue Service (SARS) as well as all ambassadors.

Of course, the President must have the executive authority to make appointments. But, increasingly, the President’s powers of appointment are being abused for political ends. They are being abused in a way that the drafters of our finely balanced Constitution could not have foretold.

Too often, instead of appointing the most capable, the President appoints the most pliable. Instead of putting his country first, the President puts his cronies first. Instead of using his power to build institutions, the President uses it to break them down.

It is why we have a broken National Prosecuting Authority that cannot prosecute the President without fear or favour.

It is why we have a broken revenue service that refuses to investigate the fringe tax benefits from Nkandla, the emperor's palace of corruption built with taxpayers' money.

It is why we have a broken Special Investigating Unit, a broken Hawks, and a broken SAPS.

In fact, there seems to be no end of institutions that the President is *not* willing to break in order to protect himself and his friends, and to shore up the imperial presidency.

Now, the President has trained his sights on the Electoral Commission.

Last month, after Parliament was railroaded, the President appointed his close friend Vuma Mashinini as an electoral commissioner.

Instead of "Bring me *umshini wami*", the President seems to have changed his cry to "Bring me *uMashinini wami*".

Mr Mashinini has been employed in the Presidency since 2010, raking in millions of Rands as a "special advisor" to the President.

And now he is earmarked for the top job at the Electoral Commission. But after all these years of being in the pound seats of the emperor's carriage, we have to doubt whether Mr Mashinini can be independent and non-partisan when the ANC loses elections, as it increasingly will, *starting with the local government elections next year!*

Speaker, the time has come for a constitutional review of the President's powers of appointment and removal.

Now, we may have an imperial presidency, but we also have an emperor with no clothes.

The President likes to don the robes of the National Development Plan (NDP). But they are see-through. And what we see is the red petticoats of Messrs. Davies and Patel, and the other loony lefties who hold the Presidency and the economy in a corset-like vice-grip.

In fact, the NDP lies discarded on the dressing-room floor while the New Growth Path, the Industrial Policy Action Plan, and a whole host of statist policy, law and regulations – all of which went out of ideological fashion decades ago – are paraded around in all their ragged tatteredness.

Speaker, the Presidency sits at the apex of government. It directs all government business. It leads the coordination, planning and monitoring of government policies and programmes. It is responsible for integrated planning and policy coherence.

But we have no policy coordination and no policy coherence. And what monitoring there is, is inadequate.

A few weeks ago in Parliament, the Statistician-General, Mr Pali Lehohla (also appointed by the President, incidentally) told the Standing Committee on Finance that we still don't have a set of indicators to measure progress on the NDP.

He said: "The goals and targets in the NDP are clear but the methods and indicators to inform progress [are] woefully inadequate. The absence of an evidence framework undermines the credibility of good intentions and actions."

Three years after the Plan was adopted, and all this government can offer us on the NDP are good intentions.

Truly, the emperor has no clothes.

The Presidency, through a dedicated Deputy Ministry, is also responsible for co-ordinating youth development, which it does via a transfer to Vote 8.

Overall, the National Youth Development Agency (the NYDA) consumes 57% of that budget vote.

This makes no sense.

The NYDA has a history of fraud, corruption, and irregular and wasteful expenditure. And yet every year we entrust it with millions of taxpayers' hard-earned Rands.

It spends R186 million of its R409 million grant on salaries. That is over 45 per cent of its available resources on feeding a bloated bureaucracy, *not* providing opportunities for the youth.

We are constantly being promised that the wage bill is going to be slashed, pending the outcome of an "organizational review".

In July last year, in his response to this very budget debate, the Deputy Minister in the Presidency Buti Manamela claimed: “We are turning the corner in supporting the NYDA, and we hope that, in a couple of months, we will be announcing the fact it has reduced its wage bill significantly”.

That was 10 months ago, and nothing has changed. I hope the Deputy Minister will be able to update us with good news today.

Speaker, we have a youth unemployment crisis on our hands. Youth account for 67% of the unemployed.

Yet in 2015/16, the NYDA will spend only roughly one third of what it does on salaries on its two flagship programmes: “Economic Participation” and “Education and Skills Development”.

What, in fact, has the NYDA done to foster economic participation and develop youth skills?

We know what it hasn’t done, because its latest Annual Report revealed that in 2013/14, the NYDA enrolled only 19% of targeted youth in its much-vaunted Matric Rewrite programme.

This programme aims to give learners a second opportunity to pass.

Well, clearly, the NYDA doesn’t know its pass from its elbow, because it also underachieved by 42% its target of supporting 100 000 young people through job-preparedness programmes.

The time has come to close down the NYDA. Let us channel its budget into a real youth wage subsidy (not a watered-down Employment Tax Incentive), into structured youth development programmes, and into bursaries for educational opportunities.

And, finally, let us scale back the imperial presidency, especially the President’s powers of appointment.

The emperor needs to co-ordinate his policy wardrobe with greater uniformity and better judgment in future. If he doesn’t, not only will his wardrobe be threadbare, but the emperor will stand bare before an unforgiving world, and the legacy of his imperial presidency will hang by a thread.

I thank you.

Sejamothopo Motau: Zuma presides over one of the most bloated Cabinets in the world

President Jacob Zuma presides over one of the most bloated Cabinets in the world with 35 ministers and 37 deputy ministers – a total of 74 ministers and their deputies. This is fertile ground for very costly ANC-style cadre deployment extravagance.

The negative consequences of this ill-considered massive executive structure are there for all to see: an astronomical public service wage bill that grows every year.

Given the latest 7 percent wage increase, the price-tag is set to balloon to around R500 billion a year for about 1.3 million public servants.

However, there is very little to show for this huge expenditure as productivity continues to deteriorate resulting in ever-increasing service delivery protests from angry, frustrated communities around the country.

The DA believes that the President can abolish a third of the Ministries and save the country billions of Rand.

The President is also among the highest paid presidents and prime ministers in the world with a salary package of just over R3 million a year.

This budget provides R3.1 million for the salary of the President and R2.6 million for the salary of the Deputy President for this financial year. These amounts are set to rise to R3.3 million and R2.8 million in 2016/17 and to R3.4 million and R2.9 million in 2017/18, respectively.

A whopping R94.4 million has been allocated for travel and subsistence for the President and the Deputy President for the financial year. These amounts increase to R110.4 million in 2015/16 and to R118.3 in 2016/17.

These costs are far too high and very hard to justify in the face of the huge and clearly unsustainable public sector wage bill.

In a country with more than 8 million unemployed people and millions of citizens and foreign nationals who reportedly go to bed hungry every night, people would expect the President to be more than sensitive about how budgets allocated to this Vote are employed.

Regrettably, this is not always the case.

President Zuma does not seem to appreciate the very dire financial constraints under which the South African economy is labouring. Consequently, he is employing every trick in the book to avoid the consequences for the personal benefits he accrued at his private residence at Nkandla.

The President seems to have convinced himself that it is OK for the state to spend R250 million on his private home as if National Treasury is a bottomless pit of money; a fat piggy bank for his personal use.

Nkandla is conspicuous consumption of the worst kind, and is criminally irresponsible.

This wanton waste of money is grossly unfair on the hard-pressed tax payers and the millions of poor, jobless and homeless people of this country.

Recently, the President again showed his apparent callousness regarding the care-free use of state money when the presidential jet, Inkwazi, developed a technical fault on his latest trip to Russia.

No expense was spared to get the President home:

- A Boeing Business Jet was routed from Dubai to Moscow to fly the President to Pretoria but the plane was not used;
- A Bombardier Challenger 605, which was based in Moscow, was eventually used to transport the President to Pretoria; and
- Ministers and officials, stranded in the city, had to use commercial flights from Moscow to Johannesburg.

Meanwhile, Inkwazi made it home safely after just an additional fuel stop on the way back to South Africa.

This trip has probably cost the country hundreds of thousands of Rand, if not millions of Rand, in fruitless and wasteful expenditure.

The DA has asked parliamentary questions in this regard and we keenly await the President's response.

However, given the President's track record when it comes to spending the nation's resources, I do not believe this is something he will be worried about. After all, it's the state's money that is being squandered.

Such extravagance is grossly unfair on the poor people of this country.

Consequently, the DA wonders how much of the R516.1 million appropriated for this Budget Vote will end up as fruitless and wasteful expenditure by the end of the financial year.

We would also like to know why the President seems to have developed a keen taste for Russian cuisine, given the number of his visits to that country in recent months.

Meanwhile, Parliament has 40 budget votes to consider during these EPCs. Two Ministers are the executive authorities for six of them simply because there are so many; a direct consequence of the large number of Ministries:

Minister in the Presidency for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation is the executive authority for Votes 1, 8 and 12; and the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services is responsible for Votes 18, 21 and 22.

This clustering has impacted negatively on parliament's portfolio committee oversight mechanism through the formation of hybrid portfolio committees. We now know through experience that this arrangement puts unnecessary constraints on the oversight capabilities of MPs who are members of these committees.

This is the case for MPs who serve on the portfolio committee for Public Service and Administration as well as Performance Monitoring and Evaluation.

This situation is untenable and must be reviewed.

The budget shows that R64.3 million has been set aside for support services to the President for this financial year, increasing to R75.8 million in 2016/17. For the Deputy President, the amounts are R51.6 million and R60.1 million, respectively.

Thus, for this financial year, R115.9 million has been allocated to support the President and the Deputy President.

While support services are essential to the running of the offices of the President and Deputy President, more stringent budgeting and reductions wherever possible should be made to prevent exorbitant and unnecessary extravagance.

This ANC-dominated Parliament, as has been the case in previous parliaments, will subsequently rubberstamp the budget allocations and the wanton spending can continue at the pleasure of the President.

This, Honourable Members, is grossly unfair on the millions of South Africans who have to wallow daily in joblessness, homelessness and helplessness.

However, the people of South Africa should never lose hope; the DA is on the march and will stop this rot and set things right when we take over the government of this country. Time is of the essence!

Honourable Chair, there are some ANC members in this House who seem to believe that members of the DA are committing a crime when we raise questions about the very serious national problem that is Nkandla.

They seem to labour under a psychopathic fixation to protect President Zuma from accountability at all costs.

Well, I have got news for them: Holding the President and his executive accountable is our job and responsibility. The voters of this country expect that of us.

Nkandla will not go away until the issue is resolved to the satisfaction of the majority of the people of this country.

The ill-advised people will fail in their misguided attempts to defend the indefensible.

Their shameful and irrational attempts to vilify and discredit the Public Protector and her office will fail. On Nkandla, as I have said before: The buck stops with President Zuma!