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## **Pityana says it's a disgrace that Zuma hasn't been removed from office**

Save South Africa convenor Siphon Pityana has described President Jacob Zuma as “a stain on South Africa’s history” – and says it is “a disgrace” that the ANC has not already removed him from office.

Pityana made the remarks in a Bram Fischer memorial lecture delivered at Oxford University in the United Kingdom today.

“The ANC chose Jacob Zuma as its President in 2007, fully aware of his shady and unscrupulous character. After all, with a long list of corruption and racketeering charges hanging over his head, and widely publicized allegations of rape and sexual assault, his lack of a moral compass was hardly a state secret.

“Less than two years later, he moved into the Union Buildings and took control of the Republic. He has manipulated country and party to his own ends ever since.

“That he remains President of the country today – despite the growing catalogue of crimes of which he stands accused -- is a stain on our nation’s history. That the ANC – the party of Luthuli, Tambo and Mandela -- has not only not moved decisively to recall him, but has unscrupulously defended him, is a disgrace from which it may never recover.

“Few of us would have imagined that a leader of the ANC could single-handedly sabotage the efforts to advance the development of our state, uplift our people after decades of repression under apartheid and centuries of colonial subjugation. But he appears to have done just that.

“The Zuma regime has turned the ANC into a political party hostile to South Africa’s constitution,” he said. “If we are to search for positives of Zuma’s tenure, it might be that he has done more than anyone else to vindicate South Africa’s choice of a true constitutional democracy as our preferred system of government.

“Anything short of that, and we would already be another failed state.”

Pityana said Zuma has embarked on “a looting spree that runs parallel to the activities intended to undermine state institutions”.

“Like termites determinedly gnawing at the base of a tree, the state capture project has destabilised the country, its economy and our very sovereignty. Our search for sustainable answers to reverse racially skewed ownership patterns and income inequality has been discredited as these policies have been repeatedly exploited to pursue corrupt ends.

“South Africans have experienced all manner of thievery, evil and corruption in the past. And yet we are collectively open-mouthed at the scale of theft and chiselling that is being revealed as the relationship between Zuma and the Gupta family is laid bare each day in our media.

“State capture is no longer an obscure abstract social science concept -- it has been brought to life in terrifying detail.”

Referring to the role of the Gupta family, he said: “They realise the importance of ensuring that pliable people are placed in key portfolios and posts in state companies, to ensure the spigots are opened ever wider, diverting the flood of state resources away from the many, and into the coffers of the few.

“These shoe-salesmen-turned-captors of our state gossip about their decisions even before allowing their captured President the courtesy of making them public in his biannual cabinet reshuffle.

“In the same vein, when incumbent ministers or officials don’t deliver to Gupta expectations, the family does the firing. The announcement from the Presidency that follows is a mere formality.”

Pityana added: “The thieves have gone about their work, safe in the knowledge that the critical institutions that should hold public representatives to account have been hollowed out. With the president of the ANC in their pocket, their effective control of both the ruling party and government was sealed.

“But they’re no longer sleeping easy. South Africans – including loyal ANC voters – have realised with great resentment and anger that power has been handed to a criminal syndicate. The nation’s sovereignty has been auctioned to a modest bidder. And civil society is starting to fight back.

“In large measure, as a direct result of the state capture project, civil society has truly been awakened – to defend our democracy, to protest against excesses, and to remind our leaders that we are a nation that has experience with people’s power, and we are prepared to use it.

“We are making maximum use of the space provided by the Constitution, and forcing accountability from people who prefer to hide in the shadows. What we are seeing is People’s Power in action. And it’s working.

“We intend to build on this momentum. We are determined to strengthen this countervailing force of people’s power into a formidable political centre that those in power will ignore at their own peril.

“The ANC’s Elective Conference in December is important. But it is not our Waterloo. Civil society will be there, stronger than ever before, whatever the outcome.

“Whoever emerges victorious must know we are demanding that those in leadership positions must govern with integrity and respect. We are demanding that a corrupt President must be removed, not just from leading the ANC, but even more importantly the country – and with immediate effect.

“We are demanding the immediate removal of corrupt cabinet ministers and a comprehensive clean-out of corrupt government departments, state-owned companies and businesses.

“We are repeating, again and again, that there must be accountability for wrongdoing and people must serve time in jail for breaking the law.”

- Pityana’s full speech is available on the Save South Africa website [www.savesouthafrica.org](http://www.savesouthafrica.org)