



19 July 2019

### **Zondo Commission – Zuma supporters in fine form, demand equal treatment for all witnesses**

After a meeting between Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo, the commission's counsel and Zuma's counsel in the chairperson's chambers, all parties reached common ground for Zuma to continue giving evidence before the commission. This was after he had earlier said, through his lawyers, that he was withdrawing.

Zuma's counsel cited unfair treatment by the commission towards their client, and the decision to withdraw was met by jubilant sounds from the former president's supporters as they rose in song. The section of Zuma's supporters included former SABC COO Hlaudi Motsoeneng, former North West premier and ANC provincial secretary Supra Mahumapelo, former communications minister Faith Muthambi, and former minister of finance Des van Rooyen.

The singing from Zuma's supporters continued outside the venue with struggle songs and lyrics such as "uPravin bekengekho emzabalazweni, uRamaphosa bekengekho emzabalazweni", meaning "Pravin was not part of the struggle; Ramaphosa too was not part of the struggle". Pravin Gordhan, who is now minister of public enterprises, came before the commission to testify about how he and others faced death threats during his tenure as finance minister. President Cyril Ramaphosa succeeded Jacob Zuma after the latter resigned in February 2018 under immense pressure from the public and from within the ANC.

Supporters, while singing outside the venue, expressed their support for the father of "radical economic transformation". Echoing Zuma's counsel, they claimed he is being treated unfairly by the commission. Different structures within the ANC came out to support Zuma and assembled at the nearby Pieter Roos Park as they waited for Zuma to address them after the adjournment of the proceedings.

"The revolution is fully behind our comrade president Jacob Zuma, we are fully behind him as a matter of principle because we understand this is a man who has portrayed and shown himself as a true revolutionary of this country," said one man identified as Bafana and representing Gauteng. "This is the man that has been pursued for reasons only known to those representing white monopoly capital... his only sin is that he brought about free education for our people."

One man representing North West added that as a province they have always been against the *Zuma must fall* campaign and the *Supra must fall* campaign, and their presence at the commission is to continue supporting the former president. "All of us must be subjected to the same treatment...the public protector has announced about issues regarding [Ramaphosa] and we are saying the same treatment must apply."

A representative from Zuma's home province of KwaZulu-Natal informed the crowd that they are on a mission to defend him against unfair persecution and the spies of the apartheid government that are

still in operation within the ANC. He also called for the ANC to establish an inquiry to expose those spies.

A group of Zuma supporters went even further to show their dissatisfaction with the commission when they took down a banner depicting *Hands off Zondo commission* and replaced it with their own written *Unbroken, unbreakable. Radical economic transformation forces.*

The supporters have also vowed to occupy the commission whenever Zuma appears before it to show their full support.

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