

## **'Zuma has disappointed us and set a bad example for others'**

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By Angelique Serrao

THERE has been widespread condemnation of President Jacob Zuma following media reports that he has not declared all of his business interests.

Political analysts have come out strongly against the president of the ANC, with some expressing disappointment and disillusion at the example set by the president.

The Sunday Independent reported yesterday that Zuma had not declared his private financial interests, assets and liabilities even though he has to according to the law.

Presidency spokesman Vincent Magwenya said the president felt he did not need to declare and had asked his legal team to look into whether he does need to declare his assets.

Zuma was not the only member of the ANC to be under fire at the weekend. City Press reported that ANC Youth League president Julius Malema had not paid personal taxes or any taxes for his companies, some of which have received millions of rands in tender deals in Limpopo.

Derek Luyt from the Public Service Accountability Monitor said he was astonished that these two issues were even up for debate in South Africa.

"There is no issue, there is no debate. According to the law, you have to declare your interests and you have to pay your taxes. If you don't, you have to face the consequences. It doesn't matter who you are," Luyt said.

"The constitution in South Africa says everyone is equal before the law."

Luyt said there had been calls for transparency and accountability for many years, but the problem was that "people are transparent with what they want to be transparent with".

He said he found it unacceptable that any politician, regardless of their position, could even begin to believe that not declaring their interests was acceptable.

"Even if it does not break any laws, which it does, it is immoral and unethical," he said.

He said he believed all politicians should put their business interests into a blind trust. That way, it cut out all issues of a conflict of interest.

"If you don't like that, then don't be a politician; go into business," Luyt said.

Thabo Koole from the Economic Service for Socio-Economic Transformation said he felt disappointed by the way the president and Malema were acting.

"It's really unfortunate that they don't want to be transparent. This kind of thing hampers the skilled and economic opportunities available for the marginalised in our society," he said.

Koole said Zuma's not declaring his business interests showed he was indeed involved in business.

"If he was transparent, then he would welcome a declaration of his interests.

"By not doing so, it makes it look like he has something to hide. The least he could do as a leader is show accountability and responsibility. He is really disappointing us," he added.

Koole said that in taking part in business, the president was not being sensitive to the needs of the poor.

"It just perpetuates the system that only the elite will continue to benefit. The implication is that wealth will only go to the social elite who are linked to the ruling party," Koole said.

Both the DA and the Independent Democrats have criticised Zuma and Malema. The DA's Athol Trollip said both men appeared to be trying to bend the law to suit their own interests.

"If Malema has not submitted tax returns... then he should pay up his taxes immediately or be prosecuted for tax evasion," Trollip said.

He also called for a forensic audit to be conducted into the tenders Malema's companies had been awarded.

The DA said they were worried that by not following the law, the two men were undermining the constitution.

The ID's Patricia de Lille said the country faced a bleak future "if these are the kinds of leaders we are grooming".