

## Opposition Says Justice System In Trouble

Written by Rudi Prinsloo  
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Opposition parties said on Monday the National Prosecuting Authority's (NPA) decision to drop charges against ANC president Jacob Zuma marked a victory of politics over justice.

The Democratic Alliance vowed not to let the matter rest, while the United Democratic Movement called the widely expected withdrawal of charges the culmination of a campaign by the African National Congress to reduce South Africa to a banana republic.

"It is a shameful day in our country's history," UDM leader Bantu Holomisa said.

"People must brace themselves, our justice system is crumbling. To remedy this situation the voters need to express their disgust at the polls.

"This is the culmination of the campaign of the dodgy characters in the ANC to reduce this country to a banana republic -- people must remember that a vast number of NEC (national executive council) members have faced or are facing charges," Holomisa said.

The justice system had been sacrificed on the altar of political expedience, he added, and called on senior NPA staff to resign.

"It is a bad day for the NPA. Contrary to their desire to ingratiate themselves with the incoming executive, it would be far better for the leadership of the NPA to vacate their positions, because they will never be trusted again by the average South African."

DA leader Helen Zille said the NPA had been manipulated by the Zuma faction within the ANC and indicated her party was considering the possibility of a private prosecution.

"We are not going to let the matter lie down. We are consulting for legal advice," Zille told reporters outside the NPA office in Pretoria, where delighted ANC supporters waved Zuma posters.

The Congress of the People's presidential candidate, Mvume Dandala, said the NPA's allegations of behind-the-scenes manipulation of the case by allies of former president Thabo Mbeki needed to be tested in court.

"The confidence in the justice system has been eroded," said Dandala.

Mbeki's spokesman Mukoni Ratshitanga said he did not want to comment on the decision.

"The NPA came to a determination as the body -- by law -- which is supposed to make such a decision, and made a decision," Ratshitanga said..

Former NPA head Bulelani Ngcuka, who was portrayed at the NPA's press conference as

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having conspired with former Scorpions boss Leonard McCarthy about the timing of the charges against Zuma, did not respond to calls on Monday.

The ANC was due to hold a press conference later in the day to react to the announcement. In the meanwhile, small groups of party supporters celebrated on the streets of Johannesburg, Durban and Port Elizabeth.

The ANC spokesman in the Eastern Cape, Mcebisi Jonas, said a special celebration was planned when Zuma visited Mthatha on Tuesday and Port Alfred on Wednesday.

"The people in the Eastern Cape are elated at this decision," Jonas said.

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