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● Protector behaving as if she were superior to constitution

● Targeting Zuma, treating him as her personal project



Jessie Duarte, deputy secretary-general of the ANC
PICTURE: MATTHEWS BALOYI

ANC FLAYS THULI



Public Protector Thuli Madonsela
PICTURE: DUMISANI SIBEKO

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THE SPAT between the ANC and Public Protector Thuli Madonsela over the Nkandla report escalated yesterday, with accusations and counter-accusations flying between the warring parties.

In the latest broadside on the public protector's office yesterday, the ANC accused Madonsela of being a populist behaving as if she were superior to the constitution and Parliament.

The ANC went as far as saying Madonsela was targeting President Jacob Zuma and treating him as her personal project, instead of dealing with the Nkandla saga through the relevant institutions.

The party blamed Madonsela for the breakdown between the ANC and her office.

"We believe where differences have arisen, it's because of the attitude of the public protector. She behaves as if she is superior to the constitution and Parliament of SA."

"We are very concerned that the public protector is very populist," ANC deputy secretary-general Jessie Duarte said yesterday.

Duarte, addressing journalists in Joburg along with secretary-general Gwede Mantashe, was referring to Madonsela's decision to write a letter to Zuma expressing her dissatisfaction with his response to her Nkandla report.

Earlier, Mantashe suggested that Madonsela was targeting Zuma in her investigations.

"The biggest worry is about the public protector treating the president of the Republic as her personal project instead of dealing with the matter institutionally."

"The NWC (national working committee) holds the view that the public protector's office is not above the constitution and the laws of the country, and cannot therefore be seen to be operating above these," Mantashe said.

He also accused Madonsela of

“The public protector must get out of the political space”

behaving like a political institution and criticised her for her statements accusing senior ANC members of leaking her letter.

"Once the public protector begins to behave as a political institution, there is trouble. The public protector must get out of the political space," he said, referring to some of the statements Madonsela has made.

"Of major concern, among other unfortunate actions in her conduct, has been the public

protector going on roadshows, including international trips, where she speaks on matters that are still under process and the outcome not known.

"Unavoidably, the country is cast in a bad light... Her intention to discredit the ANC and its leadership in government has been consistent."

The ANC also berated Madonsela for what it said was a history of leaks in her office.

The party urged the public protector to reveal the senior ANC member she accused of leaking her correspondence to Zuma as well as the one she alleged was a drug dealer.

"This corrosive sense of (an) ANC which doesn't play the game by the rules is not right," Duarte said.

The ANC also questioned the timing of Madonsela's letter to Zuma, saying it had coincided with the disruptive behaviour in Parliament by the EFF.

"The NWC also noted the coincidence of the public protector writing the letter to the president on the same day that the EFF disrupted Parliament. The question they pose is the same."

"Even more curious is that some MPs claim to have seen the public protector in the parliamentary precinct on the same day. Without accusing anybody, the tight coordination of this offensive is interesting."

BABALO NDENZE

UNDER-fire Public Protector Thuli Madonsela has taken to the internet to voice her frustrations with the ruling party.

Madonsela's Twitter page was a hive of activity yesterday afternoon.

In a series of tweets, she expressed her frustration about the recent attacks on her office by the ANC leadership in Luthuli House as well as the ruling party caucus in Parliament.

Under the hashtag #constitutionalism, Madonsela said South Africans should face the truth that "what's embarrassing the country are attempts to subvert the rule of law & not administrative scrutiny".

"We are in trouble when politicians meddle in the investigation processes and leak documents then cry foul," she tweeted.

The public protector said that if all South Africans respected the constitution and the law, "there would be no crisis".

She said her office was the only "constitutional institution given the power to take appropriate remedial action".

"Can someone please say how exactly is the deepening of

accountability weakening parliamentary democracy?" asked Madonsela.

On Monday, the public protector said she noted with "deep concern" the "extraordinary and unwarranted attacks" on her person and office by the ANC, the office of its chief whip Stone Sizani, its alliance partner the SACP and the ANC Women's League following the "unfortunate leak" and publishing of her confidential letter to President Jacob Zuma.

She blamed the leak on a senior ANC politician.

“Attempts to subvert rule of law are embarrassing”

"The public protector calls on the parties to respect the constitution and allow her to execute her duties without fear or favour."

"She wishes to remind the parties that she exercises her powers in terms of the constitution, which powers are to investigate, report and take appropriate remedial action."

Sizani said his office had noted Madonsela's response to the party's criticism of her decision.

"We vehemently reject her wild and baseless accusation that we don't respect the constitution and that we are interfering in her lawful duties," said Sizani.

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POLICE are investigating the conduct of the Sophiatown police station after alleged negligence by its officers resulted in a woman being set on fire.

The investigation comes more than nine months after the gruesome murder, as the woman's family struggle to cope.

Brenda Hedges lived for more than a decade with her daughters,

SAPS 'failed' burnt woman

Lucille and Cecilia Schaper, Cecilia's husband Roeland Bosman, and the couple's five children in Newlands.

All three women were granted protection orders against Bosman because of years of physical and emotional abuse, but police allegedly failed to respond to the complaints from the family about

further attacks from Bosman.

Last November, Bosman allegedly arrived at the family's home, poured petrol on his invalid mother-in-law and set her on fire in front of one of his children.

Hedges died the next day, and Bosman was arrested a few days later on a charge of murder.

Provincial police have confirmed that a proper internal investigation is now under way.

"Poor service delivery, rudeness and arrogant attitudes by SAPS members is not acceptable," said provincial police spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Lungelo Dlamini. "It is the constitutional

right of victims of crime to report any abuse of power and poor service delivery.

"Cecilia and Lucille's allegations are considered very serious. The provincial inspectorate has ordered a thorough investigation of these allegations and an internal investigation will be conducted by the station commander of Sophiatown."

Bosman had two other pending cases against him. **FULL STORY ON PAGE 16**

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