28 August 2020

Dear Mr President

Cc: Secretary-General : African National Congress
Cc: National Chairperson of the African National Congress

Mr President Ramaphosa, as one of the members of the ANC, I have also received your open letter, written to all members of the ANC. This is indeed an unusual act by the leader of our movement. Given the nature and seriousness of the matters raised in your letter, I have decided to take an unusual decision to respond to your letter, in writing, which is something I am not used to because I normally favour engaging in a discussion within our structures, rather than writing a letter.

Mr President, like other members of the African National Congress ("the ANC") I received and read your letter of 23 August 2020. Although I write in my capacity as an ordinary member of the ANC, I am mindful of the fact that as the former President of the ANC, it may be unprecedented that I write a letter of this nature. However, I am of the firm view that the issues you raise in your letter are indeed serious and deserve our attention as members of the ANC.
Mr President, I address this private letter to you, as the President of the ANC, and request that you share it with the entire leadership as well as structures of our movement. I do not seek to address my own President and organization through the media or public letters as that would be foreign to the well-established culture of the ANC. I write it, not to attack your person, but to engage in constructive and honest debate that our movement always encourages. I also hope that my letter will be kept as an internal communication directed at the leadership and the entire membership.

In your letter, in which you state what you view as “one of the greatest challenges since the advent of democracy”, you regrettably place the scourge of corruption right at the door-step of ordinary members of the ANC, most of whom are the urban and rural poor working class people, who have never abused state resources. In their numbers, they live in abject poverty waiting for the ever elusive better life for all, you and I promised them.

You are correct, Mr President, that corruption is one of the issues to be confronted head-on. Your letter correctly points out that “What has caused the greatest outrage is that there are private sector companies and individuals (including civil servants) who have exploited a grave medical, social and economic crisis to wrong-fully enrich themselves.” You proceed to state, again correctly, that “This is an unforgivable betrayal for millions of South Africans
who are being negatively affected by the impact of COVID-19, experiencing hunger daily, hopelessness and joblessness.”

None of us can fault you for stating that such conduct is indeed contemptuous of our efforts to pursue the historic mission of the ANC, which is to defend and advance the rights of African people and our stated objective of the National Democratic Revolution, the liberation of black people in general and Africans in particular. None of us can differ with you that our 54th National Conference in December 2017 decried the increase in corruption in South Africa and undertook to confront it.

Our movement was indeed correct, to assess, as it always does, the threats that confront the ANC, the objective and subjective conditions that prevail within our nascent democracy as well as the motive forces, we as cadres of the movement must understand in order to advance the historic mission of the ANC and the promise of a better life for all.

It is not the above obvious serious issues with which I take issue, for they are indeed matters that our movement, as the leader of society, should deal with. as they threaten the ANC's great efforts and diminish its credibility in the eyes of our people, most of whom look up to the ANC to deliver the promised better life for all. It is indeed a blemish on society, the credibility of the ANC and by extension, on the legitimacy of the anti-apartheid struggle.
However, Mr President your letter is fundamentally flawed in several respects and plays right into the hands of those who seek to destroy the ANC and build from its ashes a counter-revolutionary party under the guise of fighting corruption. I am certain that this is not your intention, Mr President. Apart from the fact that your letter betrays a lack of understanding of how the leadership of the ANC should communicate with its structures. It is absolutely unjustified to attribute to the entire ANC and its ordinary members, misconduct of a few individuals that have access to state power and its resources as well as ANC leadership positions.

Mr President, by stating that the ANC stands as "...Accused No. 1" in respect of the charge of corruption, you implicate thousands of innocent members of the ANC who continue to face hunger and dehumanizing poverty and have never benefitted from corruption. You proceed to say the ANC should bury its' head in shame.

Mr President, this statement that you make is not helpful to the ANC, in my respectful view. For all intents and purposes, it can only serve to destroy the ANC, particularly if the head of the ANC pleads guilty on behalf of the ANC, and calls the ANC the accused Number 1. Your actions are unprecedented in this regard. Mr President you are indeed the first President of the ANC to stand in public and accuse the ANC of criminality and that the ANC must be the accused Number 1 as accusations of corruption mount. You are indeed the first ANC President, since its forma-
its formation in 1912, to stand in public and accuse the ANC as an organization and to say the ANC must bury its head in shame. This is a devastating statement coming from a sitting President of the organisation and Head of State. I view your letter as a diversion, a public relations exercise by which you accuse the entire ANC in order to save your own skin.

When the founders of the African National Congress gathered in Bloemfontein on the 8th of January 1912, they sought to defend the limited civil and political rights of the African people. They sought to free the African people from the bondage of colonial and white minority rule. They established for us a giant movement and a set of socio-political values that would, for decades, rise above the poor moral values of segregation, of racist laws, forced removals and the subjugation and maiming of the African people within the South African society. We cannot accuse their movement when it is us as individuals who undermine its legacy.

By accusing the ANC for acts committed by a few of its individual members, you betray Pixley ka Isaka Seme, Sol Plaatjie, John Langalibalele Dube, Rev Rubusana, Chief Albert Luthuli, Dr Alfred Xhuma, Dr Moroka and all those who assembled on 8 January 1912 to form this glorious movement called ANC. You write, for your own desires to plead for white validation and approval, the worst betrayal of Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki and others who sacrificed their own freedom for the ANC. With your pen, you desecrate the
graves of young men and women who lived and died cruel deaths in the hands of apartheid security forces and mercenaries. These heroes paid the highest price fighting for our freedom and in defence of the ANC. We should therefore never implicate them when we, as individuals, are accused of corruption and misconduct.

I know, Mr President, my letter will be misconstrued as an attempt to ignore the allegations levelled against me, or to attribute every failure of the ANC to you. Many, in white circles that are fond of you, and seek to minimize your errors, will fill their barrels of ink and sharpen their pens to condemn me for expressing my views. They will, through their infamous grand narrative, write a series of opinion pieces to diminish the significance of the issues I raise. In your defence, Mr President, some in the mainstream media hire opinion makers, to formulate negative stories, in order to divert attention from the issues I raise as it has happened in the past. I expect them to do so. However, they are the least of my considerations at the moment, and I do not seek validation or approval from them.

My letter does not seek to undermine you at all or to attribute every weakness or challenge facing the ANC or our state solely to you. On the contrary, I am simply requesting that each one of us must face as individuals, allegations levelled against us without implicating our movement or naming it Accused No.1 or asking it to bury its head in shame, when individuals are being challenged for their actions.
Mr President, it is unforgivable to label our rank and file members as criminals for the crimes you and those with whom you serve in the structures of the State are accused of. The ANC has thousands and thousands of members and the overwhelming majority of them are not corrupt. The overwhelming majority of them are the poorest of the poor. They cannot and should not be accused of the crimes committed by a few comrades deployed in government.

Mr President, your letter commits the cardinal error of implicating the ANC in matters that, we as leaders and those deployed in the state, must account for. To point your sharp at the entire ANC and its ordinary working class members is rather low and disappointing, to say the least. Presently formulated, your letter lends credence to the suspicion that you seek to assist those, in our own ranks, involved in the attempts to destroy the ANC in order to hand it over to be a tool of White Monopoly Capital interests.

Mr President, in all the years of persecution by the state for allegations of Arms Deal corruption and currently, the new narrative of the famous state capture, I have never implicated the ANC or its members in order to clear my name. I have faced those charges alone and have become the scapegoat as many of you continue to enjoy the riches that White Monopoly Capital continues to bless you with. I have faced those allegations alone and continue to do so in our courts in order to clear my name. It would be sacrilegious to seek to direct such accusations to thousands of ANC members or the ANC itself. I continue to carry alone
the load of what you and those who catapult you have regrettably called the "nine wasted years" and the persistent narrative of state capture that you and those to whom you have handed the ANC use to scapegoat me for all that is evil in our country. I cannot, in good conscience, attribute the weak state of our movement to you only. All of us, as leaders must take responsibility without blaming our members. Maybe, Mr President, this is the opportune time to tell our members whether during the so-called "nine wasted years" any of your companies ever did business with government (national or provincial) while you were Deputy President of our movement and the country. This would help you Mr President, to dispel this unfortunate allegation, sometimes, directed at you. It is Individuals from the ANC who must bury their heads in shame, not the ANC, our Glorious Movement.

Mr President, the ANC and the entire anti-apartheid movement always faced the threat of infiltration. At different times, during our struggle, our movement discovered spies and enemy agents, commonly called, Izimpimpi, within its ranks. However, not once was the ANC ever accused of selling out merely because there were sell-outs within its ranks. Those individuals faced the charges levelled against them and could not ask the ANC, as you do in your letter, to stand in their place as Accused No. 1 for their individual actions. It is cold comfort that later in your letter you attempt to say that you are not accusing every ANC member. It is clear that indeed you do accuse each and every member and the ANC itself for the crimes of a few deployed in the structures of the state, who may be abusing resources and betraying the revolution.
and the ANC itself for the crimes of a few deployed in the structures of the state, who may be abusing resources and betraying the revolution.

Mr President, It appears that it has become your hallmark since our 54th National Conference to divert accusations from yourself rather than to face them and clear your name. Mr President, you currently stand accused of having received almost R1 billion in donations from White Monopoly Capital just to win an internal ANC contest. The ANC has repeatedly decried this phenomenon as something foreign to its culture, policies and Constitution. We all know that such donations amounted to sacrificing the historic mission of the ANC for 30 pieces of silver. Worse still, and as a matter of fact, and with some unsurprising help from the Judgment of the North Gauteng High Court, you have sealed the record reflecting your generous donors in order for the public and ordinary members of the ANC you lead never to know the identities of those who funded your campaign to win the Presidency of our glorious movement and consequently ascend to the highest office in our land. You have done this, knowing full well that the ANC has discouraged and decried the role of money in its internal elections. This, in my view, represents a major betrayal of those who voted for you with no knowledge that their vote was going to be enhanced by the WMC donors.

Until you, Mr President and your National Executive Committee come clean to the ordinary members of our movement, your letters and statements will be construed as your attempts to appease those who, by their ill-gotten riches, catapulted you into the position you hold in our
movement. In fact, your own spokesperson stands accused of the very corruption you decry in your letter. Your own son stands accused of the same allegations. Yet, you seek to divert attention from your own office and your household as you attribute the crime of PPE corruption to the ordinary ANC members. Mr President, it maybe you that should hang your head in shame and not the members of the ANC. Mr President, the ANC is not guilty of corruption, but the individuals within the ANC are accused of corruption. Mongameli, masunganindu umbutho wabantu ngobende inyama bengayidlanga.

Mr President, your letter further pays lip-service to the resolutions of the ANC’s 54th National Conference, when in actual fact, our movement, under your leadership has been avoiding implementing resolutions on land expropriation, nationalization of the SA Reserve Bank, radical economic transformation (RET), free higher education, job creation and poverty eradication, to mention but a few.

Mr President, it would be a colossal reversal of our democratic gains if you are placing the ANC as Accused number 1. This sounds like a public relations exercise and a grand scheme that does not help to build and promote the ANC. It would be such a pity, Mr President, if under your watch, the ANC can be accused by its own leaders, instead of nurturing it.

Mr President, under your watch, the tendency, not to implement certain recommendations and decisions has been a worrying factor. For in-
stance, a Provincial Conference held in the EC in 2017, was referred to by yourself as the Festival of Chairs. There were many accusations in the Eastern Cape. The National Leadership, having received reports and complaints, took a decision to establish a Commission to investigate the conference.

It was termed, Sbu Ndebele Commission as it was led by one of our senior comrades, Sbusiso Ndebele. That Commission made specific recommendations. It appears that when the report was tabled, the leadership only noted the recommendations and took no action per the findings and recommendations, but simply noted the report. The Report continues to gather dust in Luthuli House.

Mr President, I plead with you and the entire NEC of our movement, to reflect on the issues I have raised, including the issue of corruption. I implore you to take responsibility without insulting our movement and its members, who have committed no crime of corruption as they sit waiting for the ever elusive better life for all.

Mr President, I hope my letter will be received in the constructive spirit in which it is written. I hope that our structures will get the opportunity to discuss the issues I raise. I make no claim that these are the only challenges facing our movement, or that I possess the exclusive wisdom to suggest how they should be dealt with. I am merely making a plea to our movement and our leaders to honestly confront the challenges it faces and the challenges faced by African people in our country.
YOURS COMRADELY

JACOB GEDLEYIHLEKISA MHLANGANYELWA ZUMA