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A daily compilation of local, national and international articles dealing with labour related issues

SA workers

Amcu to set wage demands for platinum sector

Reuters/EWN, 16 May 2016

JOHANNESBURG - Members of the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (Amcu) will on Thursday begin meetings to decide on pay demands for platinum companies as wage talks loom, a spokesman said on Monday.

Manzini Zungu said the union's branches would put forward their wage demands which would be consolidated at national level ahead of talks with Anglo American Platinum (Amplats), Impala Platinum and Lonmin.

The existing two-year wage deal between the companies and unions expires at the end of next month.

Platinum companies are still reeling from the effects of a record five-month strike in 2014 led by Amcu - the biggest union in the sector - when it sought a more than doubling in wages to R12,500. In the end, the workers settled for raises of around 20 percent annually.

The lengthy strike, pay increases and low commodity prices forced firms to cut thousands of jobs, sell mines and delay projects. Amplats sold off its Rustenberg mines to Sibanye Gold to focus more on its mechanised mines.

The mining firms have said that unaffordable increases could trigger job losses which are a thorny issue in South Africa, which holds local polls in August and where unemployment reached its highest level on record in the first quarter.

Lonmin's CEO Ben Magara said he did not anticipate further job cuts for now, but added conditions may change.

Zungu however said companies could not use the threat of job cuts to intimidate workers from asking for salary increases.

“In wage talks, we are going to negotiate for our members fully aware of the situation and knowing that the threat of job cuts is a lifetime threat that doesn't go away,” Zungu said.

“Our members are just looking for a living wage so that they can own houses and take kids to university.”

The National Union of Mineworkers, the second biggest union in the sector, said it had not yet started on the process to set wage demands for its members.

<http://ewn.co.za/2016/05/16/AMCU-to-set-wage-demands-for-platinum-sector>

Sadtu demands new way of allocating teachers to schools

Mkhululi Ndamase, Business Day, 16 May 2016

THE SA Democratic Teachers' Union (Sadtu) is demanding the scrapping of a system through which teachers are allocated to schools on the basis of the number of pupils registered .

Instead, it wants teachers allocated to schools based on the number of subjects offered.

This, it argues will see more teachers employed, and will improve pass results as teachers will not be overworked, this to be replaced with a system that will see more teachers being employed.

At a public meeting at the Mthatha Town Hall on Monday, the union said it wants a system that will improve the pupil teacher ratio. It described the current system as "inefficient and anti-revolutionary".

About 400 union members picketed in front of the Mthatha education district offices.

"The manner in which resources are allocated in terms of teaching personnel is in [accordance] with the number of learners we have to teach in our schools. As a result, teachers cannot cope with teaching rallies in class," Sadtu provincial task team facilitator Thabile Kunene told workers.

"We are saying this model is not assisting our schools and it must be changed because it only benefits the former model C and private schools. The department is still continuing perpetuating imbalances of the past and as a revolutionary trade union, we cannot allow that," he said.

Kunene said that, to ensure teaching was not be disrupted, the union had pulled just one teacher — a site steward — out of school to be part of the pickets throughout the province, and which he described as a building block to a bigger campaign.

Kunene said the Sadtu national executive committee will decide what further action to take when it meets from June 1-2.

He also complained of nutrition money not being deposited for schools, and said pupils were starving in schools as a result.

"I saw in Limpopo that they were using milk to put out fires when the schools were set alight. In other provinces, learners first eat breakfast before attending classes – not in this province," he said.

Kunene also raised the difference in the way in which issues in Port Elizabeth and the Transkei were treated.

He said the issues raised by Port Elizabeth northern areas parents were genuine when they closed down more than 20 schools earlier this year, but that the education department treated the former Transkei like a stepchild when it came to issues there.

"We are presiding over an ailing education system. Teachers are only taken to the northern areas in Port Elizabeth because they can close down schools, while this side of the Kei (River) we don't have schools," he charged.

Mthatha education district director Temba Dyasi said he would elevate the issues to the provincial office.

<http://www.bdlive.co.za/national/education/2016/05/16/sadtu-demands-new-way-of-allocating-teachers-to-schools>

Nehawu 'not using proper channels' to resolve labour disputes

Giovanna Gerbi, EWN, 17 May 2016

CAPE TOWN – Parliament's management says trade union National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (Nehawu) is not using the proper channels to resolve labour disputes.

Nehawu is demanding Parliament's Secretary be fired or step down for allegedly misappropriating funds while on a trip to the United Kingdom.

The union's Sthembiso Tembe also alleges workers are being victimised for participating in a strike towards the end of last year.

But Parliament's spokesperson Luzuko Jacobs says the union should be raising its concerns at the Collective Bargaining Council.

"That is aimed at predetermined outcomes which include the removal of the Secretary to Parliament. That now is beyond the scope of the bargaining council, it's beyond issues that can be engaged about as part of the resolution mechanisms, which are in place.

Tembe says Parliament's Secretary Gengezi Mgidlana must be removed from his position.

"He has contravened the principle of transparency and contravened the principle of accountability. That R1.8 million that he spent overseas should not have been spent."

South Africa

I am innocent, vows Gordhan

Carol Paton and Natasha Marrian, Business Day, 18 May 2016

FINANCE Minister Pravin Gordhan has called on all South Africans to protect the Treasury from "unrestrained attack" and says that reports of his imminent arrest amount to "intimidation and harassment" by law enforcement agencies and are being manufactured for ulterior motives.

Gordhan was responding in a statement on Tuesday night to weekend reports that he is to be arrested for "espionage" for his role in establishing an intelligence unit within the South African Revenue Service (SARS) while he was commissioner in 2007.

The gravity of his response indicates that Gordhan sees the threat of arrest as a genuine one which poses a danger not just to himself but to the Treasury in general. It also ups the ante in his battle with President Jacob Zuma over control of the Treasury and with whom he has been engaged in a covert power struggle since his re-appointment in December.

The National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) confirmed on Monday that there remained an active investigation into the unit and it had been approached by the Hawks a couple of weeks ago to provide "guidance". NPA spokesman Luvoyo Mfaku said on Monday that the NPA had not determined charges or identified individuals to be charged.

Gordhan said his lawyer would meet the Hawks and the NPA for further clarity and information.

In his statement, Gordhan makes plain his anguish and despair at the present circumstances. "The recent media reports about my arrest — imminent or not — have been extremely distressing for my family and me. I cannot believe that I am being investigated and could possibly be charged for something I am completely innocent of," he said.

In February, days before he was due to deliver his budget as finance minister, Gordhan received a list of 27 questions from the Hawks relating to the intelligence unit at SARS.

"I have answered the questions submitted by the Hawks, and have not heard from them. I was not aware of any impending charges or further investigations until the reports in the past weekend.

"It is indeed true that no one is above the law. But no one should be subjected to the manipulation of the law and agencies for ulterior motives," he said.

"Throughout my 45 years of activism, I have worked for the advancement of the ANC, our Constitution and our democratic government. I would never have thought

that individuals within the very agencies of this government would now conspire to intimidate and harass me and my family," he said.

Gordhan has on several occasions declared that he had executive authority to establish the investigative unit, and that it operated within the law while he was commissioner.

Evidence of its existence first reached the public domain after Gordhan was removed from the finance ministry in May 2014. Press reports made revelations of a "rogue" intelligence unit in SARS, which spied on politicians and ran covert operations. Several investigations have been conducted over the alleged "rogue unit" prior to a complaint being laid by SARS commissioner Tom Moyane with the Hawks in May last year.

An internal probe headed by advocate Muzi Sikhakhane and a forensic probe by KPMG both recommended further investigation into illegal activity by members of the unit. Gordhan was not interviewed by KPMG on the orders of SARS and disputes its findings, which were leaked.

An investigation was also undertaken by the inspector-general of intelligence, the outcome of which is not known and one by an advisory board, headed by retired Judge Frank Kroon, which echoed the findings of the Sikhakhane commission but conducted no interviews.

In his statement, Gordhan inferred that the "ulterior motives" of state law enforcement agencies were linked to a wider bid to gain control of the Treasury and capture state resources.

"I appeal to all South Africans to protect the National Treasury staff, who have diligently, honestly and skilfully served the national interest to the best of their ability. They are recognised worldwide for their professionalism and competence," he said.

<http://www.bdlive.co.za/national/2016/05/18/i-am-innocent-vows-gordhan>

Stop 'subversion of democracy': Gordhan's warning as Zumocracy picks up pace

Ranjeni Munusamy, Daily Maverick, 18 May 2016

Another day of violence in South Africa's Parliament, another session with President Jacob Zuma offering puzzling answers to questions on Nkandla. It could perhaps be just another day in paradise if you were deaf to the alarm bells being rung by Pravin Gordhan, Robert McBride, Anwa Dramat and Ivan Pillay about the menacing threat to our democracy. In a worrying statement, Gordhan appealed to South Africans to "protect" National Treasury staff. Meanwhile Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) leader Julius Malema has warned there will be no peace until Zuma leaves office.

As a large group of burly men who make up the parliamentary protection services filed into the National Assembly on Tuesday afternoon to muscle EFF members out of the House, another group of security officers stepped into the chamber to surround President Jacob Zuma. Although the president was not under any threat, a

protection force assembled around him just in case. Again Zuma sat impassively, shielded by this group of armed men, as elected representatives were beaten and carried out of the chamber.

It is a sign of the times. Upheaval and violence, now the essence of South African life, while the elite remain cocooned. Zuma, in particular, remains fortified while the onslaught on democracy intensifies.

As fighting and scenes of pandemonium played out in the corridors, Zuma took to the podium chuckling. Once again he seemed unperturbed by the violence that occurred, even when a Democratic Alliance (DA) MP shouted at him, "This happened because of you!"

There was a time after the Constitutional Court delivered judgment on the Nkandla matter when Zuma seemed to be on the back foot. He appeared under pressure from the chorus of voices speaking out against his violation of the Constitution and calling for him to step down.

But Zuma has clearly bounced back. When asked by DA leader Mmusi Maimane to provide proof of his bond for the Nkandla homestead, Zuma was back in performance mode, explaining that he had done nothing wrong and that he and his family paid for the buildings. He told MPs to "just keep quiet and listen", saying the only problems identified by the public protector were the five non-security features.

"These items, they represent the kraal, fowl run, swimming pool ... um, yebo ... fire pool, yes fire pool, and a waiting room and the amphitheatre. Five. They are not talking about a house that people live in with bedrooms and living rooms," Zuma said.

When asked by DA MP James Selfe what collateral he had used to get a bond, Zuma said he used a "PTO" (Permission to Occupy). It is not clear how a lease agreement was used as surety to get a bond.

Zuma regained his political footing in the ANC on the basis of the "apology" he offered the nation following the Constitutional Court judgment on Nkandla. Judging by what he said in Parliament on Tuesday, Zuma is still not apologetic about the Nkandla fiasco or the amount of taxpayers' money blown on his personal home.

And when asked about the dodgy dealings of his friends, the Guptas, Zuma was even more dismissive. "I know nothing about the business dealings of the Guptas. Why should I have a view?" he asked.

While Zuma is back in top form, seemingly impervious to the turmoil around him, the strain on Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan is intensifying. Gordhan issued a statement on Tuesday evening saying media reports about the Hawks' plans to arrest him had been "extremely distressing for my family and me".

"I cannot believe that I am being investigated and could possibly be charged for something I am completely innocent of. I have answered the questions submitted by the Hawks, and have not heard from them," Gordhan said. "It is indeed true that no one is above the law. But no one should be subjected to the manipulation of the law and agencies for ulterior motives."

The emotional toll on Gordhan was evident: “Throughout my 45 years of activism, I have worked for the advancement of the ANC, our Constitution and our democratic government. I would never have thought that individuals within the very agencies of this government would now conspire to intimidate and harass me and my family.”

He said his lawyers would be approaching the Hawks and the National Prosecuting Authority for further information and clarity about the case against him.

“The malicious rumours and accusations about ‘espionage’ activities are false and manufactured for other motives,” Gordhan said.

He also referred to a Daily Maverick report that one of the Gupta brothers had revealed at a business meeting that Gordhan was to be arrested and replaced as finance minister.

“There have also been reports of businesspeople claiming inside knowledge of or influence over state institutions. If such reports are true, that alleged conduct will undermine the integrity and honesty within the Treasury or other key institutions,” Gordhan said.

He issued a dire warning about the “unrestrained attack on honest and hardworking people and the institutions meant to strengthen our democracy.

“Millions of people will pay the price (there will be less money to relieve poverty and support job creation programmes) if this subversion of democracy is left unrestrained and unchallenged,” Gordhan said.

In the most revealing statement about the onslaught against his department, Gordhan said:

“I appeal to all South Africans to protect the National Treasury staff, who have diligently, honestly and skilfully served the national interest to the best of their ability.”

A strong declaration of support came from his former comrades Robert McBride, Anwa Dramat and Ivan Pillay. In a detailed statement on the attack against state institutions, McBride, Dramat and Pillay said there appeared to be a pattern in which government officials are removed from their positions using baseless allegations, media leaks and investigations against them.

“It appears that the pattern of questionable processes has also been applied to the recent interactions of the Hawks with the Minister of Finance,” they said.

“Corruption is the biggest threat to our constitutional democracy. This cancer has turned former comrades against each other. People who shared the same trenches in the fight for liberation are now at each other’s throats for the sake of protecting corrupt activities,” McBride, Dramat and Pillay said.

“We will continue to use our experience and expertise to investigate, fight and expose corrupt activities in the private and public sector.”

They too made a public appeal:

“We call on those in business, civil society, organised labour, NGOs and the general public who value and want to defend our constitutional democracy, to assist our efforts with legal advice and expertise and legal and financial resources.”

EFF leader Julius Malema is signalling a different method to defend South Africa’s democracy. Speaking outside Parliament after being forcibly ejected and violent bouts with parliamentary security, an enraged Malema said Zuma should never see peace for the remainder of his term.

“Zuma is not our president. The day he breached the Constitution, that’s the day he kissed the office of president goodbye... The only thing that will bring peace here is when Zuma resigns as a sign of respect to Constitutional Court and Constitution,” Malema said.

He said Zuma should not be allowed to address Parliament because he had broken his oath of office.

“You will thank us once we restore the dignity of this Parliament by removing Zuma,” Malema said. “These bouncers must know that if they bring violence, we will respond with violence. We are not scared... Anyone who manhandles us must know we have got the same capacity. No one has monopoly on violence.”

In a time of social and economic turmoil, where schools are burnt down by angry communities and violence has become routine in the House of Parliament, the warning lights are flashing about the state of our nation. Gordhan’s warning should not be treated lightly: if the subversion of our democracy is left “unrestrained and unchallenged”, millions will indeed pay the price.

This is no longer about the individuals caught in the vortex; it is about rescuing our nation before it becomes yet another tragic story on a continent constantly being destroyed and reborn. Our rebirth too is possible and hopefully it will come before so much more is destroyed.

<http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2016-05-18-stop-subversion-of-democracy-gordhans-warning-as-zumocracy-picks-up-pace/#.VzwZvE3lrIU>

Cancer of corruption has ‘turned comrades against each other’

Natasha Marrian and Franny Rabkin, Business Day, 18 May 2016

THREE senior officials ousted from the Hawks, the Independent Police Investigative Directorate (Ipid) and the South African Revenue Service (SARS) claimed on Tuesday their removal undermined the fight against corruption in the government and was about graft in tenders.

The "common thread" in their removal was a "convergence" of politically charged cases they were working on, said former acting commissioner of SARS, Ivan Pillay, suspended head of Ipid Robert McBride and Anwa Dramat who left the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (the Hawks) after he was suspended by Police Minister Nathi Nhleko.

They had all been active in the fight against corruption and were probing "individuals or entities with questionable relationships to those in public office".

McBride, Dramat and Pillay, once prominent ANC activists, said the cancer of corruption had "turned comrades against each other".

"People who shared the same trenches in the fight for liberation are now at each other's throats for the sake of protecting corrupt activities."

They said the events at their institutions — all of whose mandates included the fight against corruption — were "not unrelated". They also referred to the State Security Agency, the South African Police Service's Crime Intelligence, Denel and the National Prosecuting Authority.

A common thread was that cases under their investigation "involved individuals or entities with questionable relationships to those in public office".

The trio did not elaborate on the specific cases they were working on, but said had they been pursued to their conclusion, they would have a "significant impact on the political landscape today".

They described a similar pattern in the removals — the leak of documents and information; distortion of facts in the media; the institutions investigate and again leak information to journalists; and the accused officials are suspended and prevented from defending themselves.

Investigations are open-ended and charges changed; representations by the accused are distorted or ignored and when the investigations fail to reach conclusions, the state settles.

"It appears from this pattern that the intent is to hound officials out of institutions and destroy their credibility publicly."

Since 2014, there had been removal "in quick succession" of a number of high-ranking state officials, they said, listing six in Ipid, three from the Hawks and five from SARS.

In all the institutions, the "effective top leadership was removed and replaced" and the new officials had instituted far-reaching structural and operational changes, they said. Yet when the replacements themselves were challenged in court, the courts had consistently "found in favour of the affected officials", the trio said.

The statement followed a hearing at the Constitutional Court over whether Nhleko had the power under the Constitution to suspend and discipline the head of Ipid.

McBride was suspended in March last year on allegations that he had covered up the alleged involvement of senior Hawks officials in the unlawful renditions of four Zimbabweans.

An initial Ipid report implicated Hawks officers, but a second version appeared to exonerate them.

After defending his power to suspend and discipline Mr McBride at the high court, the minister did an about-turn when the matter went to the Constitutional Court. He

conceded that the Ipid Act was unconstitutional and that, until it was fixed, only Parliament could discipline McBride.

But on Tuesday Nhleko wanted his decision to suspend McBride to remain in force, arguing this was to avoid the "risk" of McBride returning to office and influencing witnesses.

McBride's counsel said the order already given by the high court gave Parliament 30 days to initiate a disciplinary process.

The "default position" was that a power exercised under an invalid law must be set aside, he said. Nhleko had not made out a case to warrant departing from that default position.

<http://www.bdlive.co.za/national/2016/05/18/cancer-of-corruption-has-turned-comrades-against-each-other>

A vote for the ANC is a vote for SADTU – COPE

Dennis Bloem, COPE, Politicsweb, 16 May 2016

Party says union wields such power it has been a law unto itself

The final report on the SADTU 'jobs-for-cash' scandal is out on the grapevine; but not officially released because of the inordinate pressure being exerted on the Minister of Basic Education by the teacher union. SADTU wields such considerable power in education, as well as in COSATU and in government, that it has been a law unto itself. Power, not education, is the object of its present existence. It has undue influence in government. For that reason Ministers and MEC's have to fear SADTU and not the other way round.

Education in South Africa is in trouble. Lowering of standards and the absence of quality control are combining to deny South African youth the kind of education necessary for a modern economy. Learners receive paper qualifications that are heavily discounted in the business world.

The fact that very few learners leave school with maths and science means that our country does not have the skills pool that we require to energize our economy. Young people are flooding the job market but with little success of landing a decent job. The situation is untenable.

COPE has previously drawn attention to SADTU's website. We do so once again. Sadtu's E-Voice has an entry "Vote ANC" published in 2009 and State of the Nation in 2010. That is all it communicated. As for its campaigns, it had 3 in 2008 and one in 2014. Its research submissions are limited to one in 2010 and 4 in 2011. On the events side it listed Provincial Music Festivals. Going by its Home Page, it is clearly moribund on the professional side.

SADTU only comes alive during the election period. Thereafter, it appears to be involving itself in non-educational matters such as the widely publicised 'jobs-for-cash'. It certainly does not project itself as a professional body dealing with critical

issues of education. Educational matters are not on its agenda. How different SADTU is to professional teacher organisations in other parts of the world.

According to the report the buying and selling of positions appears to be endemic in the entire educational system. The report seen by City Press appears to point to something even more sinister: there exists a "pervasive culture of fear" and "concerns about safety" in the basic education sphere in South Africa. The paper also reports that "The task team has found that in six, and possibly more, of the nine provinces, SADTU is in de facto charge of the management, administration and priorities of education there.

If our country accepts the status quo, the education system will be totally corrupted and parents will have to have deep pockets to send their children to private schools which are mushrooming everywhere.

A vote for the ANC is a vote for SADTU and the continuing destruction of education.

COPE urges South Africans to dump the ANC so that education can be wrested from the malign influence of SADTU and made to serve the children of South Africa in a way that ensures a real future for them.

<http://www.politicsweb.co.za/politics/a-vote-for-the-anc-is-a-vote-for-sadtu--cope>

ANC KZN councillor shot dead

Mpho Raborife, News24, 16 May 2016

Durban – A KwaZulu-Natal ANC councillor was killed and his wife was critically injured when their car was shot at in KwaNongoma on Monday morning.

Thami Nyembe was ambushed along Maphophoma road in Masundwini around 08:00, while driving his wife to town, ANC provincial secretary Super Zuma said.

Both were taken to a nearby hospital. Nyembe was declared dead on arrival. His wife was in a critical condition.

Zuma said party members in the region were devastated by Nyembe's death. He called for police not to rest until they found the perpetrators.

"This is a tragic loss for his family, for the ANC, the people of KwaNongoma and KwaZulu-Natal in general," Zuma said.

Four weeks ago, eThekweni ANC councillor, Zodwa Sibiyi, was shot and killed at the Glebelands Hostel in Umlazi, Durban.

<http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/anc-kzn-councillor-shot-dead-20160516>

Action against Zuma will not hurt alliance and Bhisho must cut ties with Israel: SACP

R News, 16 May 2016

People must reject the idea that if any action is taken against President Jacob Zuma, the ANC-led Tripartite Alliance, which includes the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP), will split and the Eastern Cape government should also cut ties with Israel.

These are some of the outcomes from a congress held on Sunday by the SACP Eastern Cape's Skenjana Roji District Congress at Carnegie Hall, in Gonubie in East London.

The congress was also attended by SACP Central Committee member, Mandla Makupula; PEC members, Sisimone Rakaibe, Andile Fani, Anil Pillai Kumar, Mawethu Rune. Its keynote address was from the SACP Provincial Secretary, Xolile Nqatha.

On defending deepening and advancing the NDR:

"The congress re-affirmed and committed the SACP and all genuine revolutionaries to deepen, advance and defend the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) as the direct route to socialism and not a detour. NDR is a single struggle, un-interrupted thorough going of the people`s struggles to address interrelated contradiction of national, gender and class oppression in our country," described Ludwe Mnweba, the SACP Eastern Cape's Skenjana Roji District Spokesperson, in a statement.

"We are of the firm view that the people`s organs ought to be strengthened as to deepen the participatory democracy in South Africa; The South African electorate must be active participants in their governance and development. The popular mandate given by the people must be used to deepen the NDR than only being consensus seeking in class divided society.

"The challenges facing the movement, our country and the real threat to the direction of our revolution compels us to choose between our people, ANC led movement and President Zuma, as the congress, we choose our people and the movement. We believe that the focus on supporting President Zuma is a fundamental departure from the foundations of our movement of always putting the people of the centre of the programmes and the decisions of the movement.

"We do not expect the opposition parties to support him as they never wanted him from the word go nor do we consider him to be above the organisation. As the congress we also called on all congress loving people to refuse to be imprisoned by the idea that if any action is taken against the President the ANC will split."

Internationally:

The congress also noted "with concern" the impeachment of the Brazilian President, Dilima Rouseff.

"We are of the firm view that the situation cannot be viewed outside the onslaught on the BRICS member states, as they continue to represent an alternative block to the western block. It cannot viewed outside the imperialist attempts to dislodge the people`s leader in Venezuela, Cde Nicholas Maduro," read the statement.

"It is our firm view that the attack is not on the leaders but the ideas which they serve. It is therefore important for the people's organisation in all these countries to build party to party relations going forward to build a coherent force."

The congress committed the party in the district to work tirelessly in strengthening campaigns in solidarity with the "oppressed people of Swaziland and Palestine".

"As the SACP we call upon the Eastern Cape government to cut all ties with the apartheid Israel, let us refuse receiving blood money."

Economy:

The SACP said that; "The capitalist mode of production is in crisis throughout the globe, the working class is always the ones carrying the burden and the scars of this cruel production system. In this district of ours the level of unemployment are escalating and therefore demands a prompt response from the government of the people.

"In South Africa unemployment, poverty and inequality remain structural and deep rooted; in the 18 years of democracy the property relations remain unchanged except the co-option of few black faces. The congress re-affirmed the SACP perspective of changing the dependence of South Africa on the mineral-energy finance capital, which is export orientated, as it is unsustainable."

Against this background, the congress resolved for the party to convene an urgent economic summit, which will serve to consolidate the SACP perspective on the economic transformation for the workers and the poor.

"We, the SACP are calling for intensive training on cooperatives and the development of industrial policy for infrastructure and developmental projects by Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality," the party said.

"We are calling for promotion of labour intensive through infrastructure projects and increase on infrastructure for the benefit of the workers and the poor. Our municipality working with the Provincial Government must ensure revitalization of townships in Buffalo City. We are once more calling for BCMM procurement policy, which will support local production, employment and SMME's."

On the Alliance:

The SACP recommitted itself to "work tirelessly for the unity and cohesion of our long standing revolutionary alliance".

"Ours is not only an alliance of organisations in the same geographical space of operation but an alliance of classes, it is therefore imperative for this alliance to value its unity; for its collapse will be feeding to the hands of imperialist forces. The collapse of this alliance would be a defeat of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) and the people's camp," the party said.

"It is in this context that we are deeply concerned by the deteriorating state of alliance in our district. We are of the firm view that what is contributing to the challenges in the district is the unilateral approach by the ANC leadership. The ANC

in the region does not work to unify the people's camp and that is worrying as the fundamental question is 'In whose interest?'

Local Government Elections:

Still, the SACP in the district said that it will campaign for the overwhelming victory of the African National Congress in the 2016 Local Government Elections.

"However, we wish to put in on record that our principled commitment to the movement must never be used to abuse us.

"It is in this context that the district has no faith nor confidence in what was done in the guise of the ANC Regional List Conference which had many alarming issues," the party said.

"We believe that what was held was not ANC Regional List Conference but as assertion of a cabal and a certain business cartel. It is extremely disappointing that the suspended ANC Regional Secretary was the one "running" the conference even though he was not supposed to be there.

"The conduct by the suspended regional secretary affirms that which was said by the party that his suspension was just a mere academic exercise as he remains in power and have control of the regional leadership."

Suspension of BCMM Municipal Manager:

"As the SACP, we have always looked at the suspension of the BCMM Municipal Manager in dim view as it is nothing else but opening to loot the institution for selfish interest of certain individuals.

"The tax payers are now compelled to pay two Municipal Managers for more than eight months. It is our considered view that the institution should either reinstate or charge the Municipal Manager than wastefully spending the people's money."

<http://www.rnews.co.za/article/9079/action-against-zuma-will-not-hurt-alliance-and-bhisho-must-cut-ties-with-israel-sacp>

Zuma and UK diplomats 'know nothing' of reported plot to keep ANC in power

Staff Writer, Business Day, 16 May 2016

A REPORT that the British government is working on a plan to ensure that the ANC stays in power has been roundly denied by UK diplomatic mission in Pretoria. And President Jacob Zuma's office says it knows nothing of it.

According to the report by international digital news operation Vice, the British Ministry of Defence sent military officers to the country who were required to "devise a medium term strategy, with concrete deliverables", for the ANC to retain power at the next general election.

Presidency spokesman Bongani Ngqulunga told TMG Digital that the office was not aware of the claim. He did not elaborate.

The British High Commission in Pretoria's spokeswoman Isabel Potgieter said in a statement: "The British government does not interfere in the internal political affairs of another country."

In its report, Vice said freedom of information requests revealed that last year, a group of military officers from Britain's Royal College of Defence Studies visited SA. Their assignment was to "assess the political threats to continuing ANC rule in SA", the report stated.

The ANC could not be reached for comment.

Potgieter said the British High Commission was aware of a visit by the Royal College of Defence Studies as part of their Overseas Study Tours programme, which started in SA, before going on to Kenya and Uganda.

The tour consisted of seven UK members and 11 international members participating in the course, she said.

The visit was an indication of the strength and depth of the UK/SA bilateral relationship in particular in the defence and security arena, she said.

Potgieter said during the visit to the country, officers visited Parliament for a briefing by the all-party select committee on defence, a briefing by the SA Department of Defence, focusing on national and regional security issues, as well as organisations across the private and public sector in SA including NGOs, academics, think-tanks, politicians, industry and diplomats.

<http://www.bdlive.co.za/national/2016/05/16/zuma-and-uk-diplomats-know-nothing-of-reported-plot-to-keep-anc-in-power>

ANC points finger West – claims UK, US in plot to unseat Zuma

Mpho Raborife, BizNews, News24, 17 May 2016

"One could argue conspiracy theory's become a part of everyday thinking for those with 'targets' on their backs. And it seems another variation of an event has caused alarm in the ruling party ranks. In the News24 report below ANC spokesperson Zizi Kodwa says instead of making plans to keep the party in power, Britain's Defence Ministry is planning to unseat President Jacob Zuma. And adding fuel to this fire, secretary general Gwede Mantashe, said in an interview on eNCA that the United States embassy were meeting daily to discuss regime change. But given the history of northern neighbours Zimbabwe, one can understand were the thought process is coming from – but surely not. The 'illusion' of a target on one's back can lead to

many conclusions. And one could argue the ANC should look internally before pointing fingers outside. And while the Constitutional Court ruling may seem like a distant memory, many former stalwarts have called for Zuma to resign, while 27 former Directors General only yesterday called for a public 'state capture' inquiry. And one thing's for certain, the pressure for leadership change is growing.” – Stuart Lowman

Johannesburg – Reports that Britain’s Defence Ministry is making plans to keep the ANC in power are merely an attempt to distract South Africans from its real plan to unseat President Jacob Zuma, the party said on Monday.

“We know they want to divert us from the real story,” spokesperson Zizi Kodwa told News24.

He was responding to a report by news publication VICE that a group of officials from Britain’s Royal College of Defence Studies visited South Africa last year to “assess the political threats to continuing ANC rule in South Africa”.

The officers’ task was to “devise a medium term strategy, with concrete deliverables, for the party to retain power at the next general election”.

VICE reported that the delegation visited the Johannesburg Stock Exchange and the offices of British platinum miner Lonmin.

Kodwa accused Britain and the United States of America of using undemocratic means to change a democratically elected government.

“It has done so in many other countries, working with America as part of a Western coalition, to unseat democratically elected government through undemocratic means. They are part of that agenda,” he said.

The ANC wanted answers from the British government and would approach the Department of International Relations and Co-operation to raise the issue through formal channels.

The SA National Defence Force’s Brigadier General Xolani Mabanga told News24 earlier he was unaware of the claims. If proven true, the SANDF would stay out of it as it was “above party politics”.

The UK’s Defence Ministry said the visit was “purely academic”.

This was not the first time the ANC had made such allegations.

Last week, ANC secretary general Gwede Mantashe said former liberation movements had become powerful governments, but had become targets of regime change. He was attending a meeting of former liberation movements in Zimbabwe.

According to Mantashe, not corruption, greed and lack of good governance are to blame when ppl demand regime change. Blame the West. Smh

According to eNCA, Mantashe said western powers wanted to overthrow political authorities considered inconvenient to western interests.

Speaking at an anti-racism march in Pretoria in February, he accused the US Embassy of meeting daily to advance regime change in South Africa.

Mantashe accused the embassy of taking people to the United States for six weeks and then bringing them back to South Africa and “planting” them on campuses.

<https://www.biznews.com/undictated/2016/05/17/anc-points-finger-west-claims-uk-plot-unseat-zuma/>

International

More Strike against New Labour Law

Morning Star, UK, 17 May 2016

Strikes will take place across France again today, with further stoppages planned later in the week as resistance to the government’s new labour law grows.

Lorry drivers are set to put up roadblocks around major cities and workers on the Paris metro will also walk out.

Other rail workers are expected to join them tomorrow, while air traffic controllers say they will join the fray from Thursday.

Massive waves of strikes and demonstrations have rocked France after the government, unable to get the regressive law through parliament, used article 49.3 of the constitution to issue it as a decree.

The law lengthens the working week from 35 to 46 hours, cuts statutory redundancy payments while capping those made for unfair dismissal and places new restrictions on trade union activity.

http://www.morningstaronline.co.uk/a-83ac-France-Thousands-more-strike-against-new-labour-law#.VzqmK_I9600

Comment and opinion

The indiscriminate use of leaks endangers truth

Steven Friedman, Business Day, 18 May 2016

UNDER apartheid, political news was what the government allowed us to know. Now it is what politicians and the journalists to whom they "leak" stories want us to know. In both cases, we battle to tell truth from fiction.

A report claiming that Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan faces "imminent arrest" follows the fashion among political reporters by relying on "leaks" from politicians or officials. So common has this become that most of our political news is based on leaks; a senior political reporter covered an entire ANC conference by sitting in a Johannesburg café, relying on text message leaks from politicians.

On the surface, the willingness of politicians to share confidences tells us what we would not otherwise know. But it is just as likely to mislead us. Political battles in this country are fought through leaks: politicians and officials use them to strengthen their position and weaken opponents.

They are not feeding stories to reporters because they want to increase our knowledge, but because, whether the "leaks" are true or not, they suit their agenda. Because the source of the leak is never named, they can get away with half-truths or untruths.

This might not be a problem if reporters carefully checked the information. Reporters who receive such leaked information should treat it with suspicion precisely because it comes from people trying to gain an advantage.

They are meant to check it with sources who have no axe to grind and balance it by speaking to those the leak targets. Even if the information is accurate, reporters may need to explain the context, since this can make a huge difference.

It seems likely, for example, that the Hawks want to prosecute Gordhan, but they don't make the final decision, which means that his "imminent" arrest may never happen. And, while the sources of leaks can't be named, reporters should tell their audience enough about the "leaker" to enable us to know what their motives might be.

But reporters rarely do this and so much political news is what people pushing an agenda want us to hear. A senior reporter, asked on radio a couple of days ago how reliable their sources were, replied: "Well, sources are sources, but we feel it is our duty to tell the public what they say."

Why is that a duty if you are not sure that the leaks are true?

Truth is an inevitable victim. If there is a threat to Gordhan, it is partly a result of a Sunday Times report relying on leaks that claimed South African Revenue Service officials set up a "rogue unit". It apologised after the press ombudsman found the report "inaccurate, misleading and unfair".

But leaks are not always untrue — if they were, we could ignore them. They are sometimes true and sometimes not, and we have no way of knowing which they are. Since they are often alarmist, we are being told to worry, but have no way of knowing whether the threat is real.

Addiction to leaks makes fighting corruption more difficult because we never know whether allegations are true, or politically inspired, or both. It weakens democracy because the information on which citizens form opinions is suspect.

All these problems are worsened by the role of social media, where anyone can put anything into the world, true or not, and find enough people to believe them.

What can be done to change this? First prize would be a refusal by media to publish leaks unless they are thoroughly checked, the full context is provided and the people named have replied. If that does not happen, citizens need to be far more sceptical of these reports than many of us are now.

It is useful to react to what happens, not what media say will happen. Gordhan has not been charged, the Cabinet has not been reshuffled. If either happen, there will be time to worry about them then. This makes more sense than fretting about something that may not happen.

It is best to doubt media reports based on leaks unless we know more about their source, why they were put into the world and whether we have been told the full story. If reporters won't tell us what is true and what is not, we are forced to figure that out for ourselves.

• *Friedman is director of the Centre for the Study of Democracy*

<http://www.bdlive.co.za/opinion/columnists/2016/05/18/the-indiscriminate-use-of-leaks-endangers-truth>

Marrian is simply seeking one stick after another with which to bash Cosatu

Sdumo Dlamini, Business Day, 17 May 2016

AFTER reading Natasha Marrian's column (A factional Cosatu uses workers as cannon fodder, May 12), I felt it would be irresponsible not to respond. Marrian has, over the last couple of months, taken it upon herself to write anti-Cosatu articles and I have always excused her actions by blaming sub-par reporting and the emergence of trash-talk media as a new phenomenon to attract dwindling readership.

Our public discourse is, after all, dominated by the chattering class scrutinising its own navel, and rent-a-quote commentators and columnists.

I am one of the people who will continue to passionately support and defend journalists and their right to write and publish what they want. But since Marrian has become a professional naysayer, I feel strongly that I have to exercise my right to defend the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) against the campaign of vilification and the discourse of conspiracy by her.

Lately, she has been deliberately attacking Cosatu and its current leadership for no discernible reason. We have watched her making predictions about the disintegration of Cosatu during its internal challenges. Some time ago she wrote an article saying Cosatu was feeling remorseful for expelling the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) after celebrating its expulsion at a certain hotel after doing so.

This was all cheap gossip, because Cosatu never celebrated the expulsion of Numsa, as was reflected in the media statement sent out afterwards. Cosatu also never held any celebrations in any hotel, and also never issued any remorseful statement as she claimed.

Recently, she has found another stick with which to bash Cosatu, and that is the Oakbay vs banks matter. I personally spent some time talking to her and clarifying our position on the Oakbay matter, and she does not say that in her article. I made it clear that we unapologetically participate in politics, but we are a trade union first and worker issues are our priority.

We are a responsible organisation that is committed to workers of all stripes, and we do not judge workers on the sins or the alleged faults of their employers. If we were to use that as a yardstick to measure or decide whether workers deserve our support, we would have no members. Cosatu supports workers and not only its members, as evidenced by our support for the Lily Mine workers, who belong to a non-Cosatu union.

Cosatu does not have the luxury to be politically correct about workers' livelihoods, and we will never keep quiet when we see an egregious assault on workers' rights. I always find it difficult being subjected to lectures on politics and union principles by someone who pays no price for being wrong in their own work.

Marrian only needs to fill a page of Business Day with her conspiracy theories, gossip and muddled bombast, to get paid. We are accountable to workers for the decisions we take, or fail to take, whereas she cannot claim to be representing anyone except herself and the paper she writes for.

Unions are worker organisations and our role is to defend workers and their livelihoods. We do not have the luxury of keeping political scores or working for media approval. Media ratings do not feed workers and their families.

Marrian seems to be fascinated by the political intrigues of the tripartite alliance. This is understandable — alliance politics have helped many journalists build their

careers, and the idea of alliances' Byzantine political intrigues is exciting to many. She argues that we have broken ranks with the ANC and South African Communist Party on this matter of Oakbay. These two organisations are political parties and we are a workers' federation. We owe our existence to workers. Our main concern is the threat to employees' jobs in the event that Oakbay closes down because of the banks' decisions.

There are many Cosatu detractors, some for ideological reasons and some because of personal frustrations with its resolutions and decisions. Cosatu's resolutions are for its members, and as leaders we claim the right to defend them against any consensus, any majority, anywhere, any place, anytime.

Marrrian seems to have joined those who are encouraging the speculation and myth that Cosatu is dead and is riddled with factions. There are many who have killed Cosatu using their pens and microphones, but they will be disappointed to discover that the grave they have dug for Cosatu will remain empty, because the federation is not going anywhere.

• *Dlamini is the president of the Congress of South African Trade Unions*

<http://www.bdlive.co.za/opinion/2016/05/17/marrrian-is-simply-seeking-one-stick-after-another-with-which-to-bash-cosatu>
