



South African Council of Churches

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SACC Appalled by Nhleko Nkandla Report

President Zuma's response to parliament this week has left the leadership of the South African Council of Churches appalled. Jestering about the scandalous Nkandla issue and investigation during his response to parliament was an undeniably low point in the Presidency, of which there are becoming too many. Behaving and speaking like a 'court jester' was disappointing, embarrassing and inappropriate for the head of state.

The recommendations regarding Nkandla given by the Minister of Police, Nathi Nhleko are shocking and a grave mockery of justice. We are gravely concerned about the failure of the President and the relevant ministers to accept moral and political responsibility in relation to the unjustifiably high costs of the upgrades. Having ministers defend the indefensible damages the moral integrity of the whole governing system.

Scapegoating and finger pointing has only served to highlight the lack of accountability within the ruling ranks and erode voter confidence in its government.

The review of the Public Protector's report should have been conducted by a competent independent body or arm of government and not by a minister who serves the whim of the Office being investigated. It's a sad day when the office of the Public Protector, one of the symbols of our very democracy, is reduced to an office of 'public suggestions'.

These concerns and others were raised with the ANC leadership by the SACC and we hope that a follow-up meeting will happen soon. The time has come for all citizens to unite across political, social, economic and religious persuasions to hold all of us who are in positions of influence accountable.

We will continue to pray for the government to be directed in the ways of justice, honesty, peace and dignity for all.

Released on behalf of Bishop Zipho Siwa

Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa and President of the SACC