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# ANC rejects 'dangerous' Zuma

→ In putting former president Jacob Zuma on suspension from the ANC yesterday, a party statement compared him to counter-revolutionaries, saying 'the JZ party project targets extremist instincts in our body politic and riles up a political base to foment social unrest'. The timing, said one expert, was impeccable because the ANC will now not have to deal with him until after the elections.

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# 'Rebel' JZ gets cold shoulder

**'COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY': ANC TAKES FIRST STEPS AGAINST 'REACTIONARY' EX-PRESIDENT**

➔ Polls mean party can put off disciplinary proceedings.

Lunga Simelane

In a political character assassination reminiscent of the height of the Soviet Union, the ANC suspended Jacob Zuma yesterday, labelling him a "counter-revolutionary" and a "reactionary", and it likened him to rebel leaders Jonas Savimbi of Unita in Angola and Afonso Dhlakama of Renamo in Mozambique.

A statement by the ANC's NEC, read by secretary-general Fikile Mbalula, pulled no punches in describing Zuma's conduct in recent months, after the formation of the uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) party.

"The people of South Africa and the ANC will not allow a Renamo/Unita project in our country to discredit democratic outcomes that do not favour them and use violence against the people as a bargaining tool," Mbalula said.

"This is the fundamental danger of the JZ [Jacob Zuma] party project. It targets extremist instincts in our body politic and riles up a political base to foment social unrest," Mbalula said.

"His actions reinforce the work of the primarily right-wing opponents of the national democratic revolution.

"In this regard, in assuming this reactionary public posture, former president Zuma is actively asserting himself as the figurehead of counter-revolution in South Africa today."

Mbalula said Zuma was actively impugning the integrity of the ANC and campaigned to dislodge the party from power, while



**SHOWING HIS TEETH.** ANC president Cyril Ramaphosa takes a break before delivering his opening address at the ANC NEC at Birchwood Conference Centre in Johannesburg yesterday. Picture: Nigel Sibanda

claiming he had not terminated his membership.

"This conduct is irreconcilable with the spirit of organisational discipline and letter of the ANC constitution," he said.

In December, Zuma announced he would support the MK party for the 2024 general elections because the ANC had strayed from its core values.

Mbalula said the "JZ party project" aimed to cast doubt on the ANC's entire constitutional democracy and the formation of the MK party was not an accident.

"The things Zuma has been saying are a true reflection of him

and not of the ANC," he said.

North-West University political analyst Prof André Duvenhage said, with this decision, it was clear the ANC was between a rock and a hard place.

This was the "proverbial catch-2022 scenario" the ANC was in because if the ruling party fired Zuma, it was going to pay a price.

"Then he is becoming a martyr and there will be a lot of sympathy within the ANC in favouring Jacob Zuma," he said.

"I'm not saying he is the dominant figure, but let's say hypothetically the ANC support dropped to 45% in the next election – that is including Jacob Zuma.

"Where will it stand without the Jacob Zuma factor?"

"It's not impossible that it can go below 40%, and that's absolute worst-case scenario for the ANC."

Duvenhage said the ANC at the moment was doing crisis management and when it came to suspensions, they were in between.

"They are not expelling him," he said.

"They are putting him through legal processes at the same time as they are putting other pressures on him – to pay for his legal costs and so on.

"So, they won't let him go free," he said.

"They will put pressure on him, and they will try to make his position as unattainable as possible, but with the minimum negative impact for the ANC.

"And this can be very vital, because it's clear at this point that Zuma has the ability to mobilise support on a number of levels, specifically in KwaZulu-Natal, but definitely not only in KwaZulu-Natal.

"It seems as if there are other forces aligning with Jacob Zuma.

"There are even rumours of financial support from outside, linking him to Russia and/or China.

"We are not sure if it is true, but there are powers behind Jacob Zuma.

"He is not on his own and this making him a very dangerous figure for an already weak ANC and the indecisive leadership coming from president Cyril Ramaphosa."

Another political analyst, Goodenough Mashego, said the ANC was wary of firing Zuma.

"I think it's quite useful that his dissidence happened closer to elections because the ANC leadership can claim to be busy with other things, that stop it from pursuing disciplinary proceedings," he said.

"They have suspended him and will now allow him to remain suspended while they go towards an election, because the elections are what's going to expose him if the MK party does not perform well.

"It's going to be easy for them to take those measures against him after elections, because they have lost quite significant [support] when it comes standing within the ANC and also the public as a whole."

Mashego said instituting disciplinary processes against Zuma would be decisive.

"I think they will delay those processes until way after elections, also depending on how the ANC performs and how MK party performs, especially in KZN," he said. – lungas@citizen.co.za

**What Zuma has been saying is a reflection of him**