

Late last night (30 March 2017), South Africa's embattled President, Jacob Zuma announced the reshuffling of his Cabinet and emphasised that it would "improve efficiency and effectiveness". If only this reasoning was true, especially within key Cabinet positions affected by his decision.

On the contrary, the retention of Ministers who have displayed incompetence and an inability to adequately fulfil their constitutional mandate should raise serious questions around the veracity of the President's reasoning in this regard. Unfortunately the President has increasingly illustrated that he has a disregard for sound governance and the maintenance of accountable and ethical leadership within the public service.

The appointment of Minister Faith Muthambi into the Public Service and Administration portfolio is one such illustration, while the retention of Minister Bathabile Dlamini despite her severe failure to effectively and efficiently lead the Department of Social Development is yet another. The removal of Pravin Gordhan and his Deputy, Mcebisi Jonas is perhaps the most graphic illustration of the President's unwillingness to protect and promote moral, ethical and competent leadership within his Cabinet.

These events leave the South African public with little reason to have confidence that this reshuffled Cabinet can bring about much needed social and economic transformation, especially given the varied and severe allegations against its President and certain of his close allies.

The Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM) joins the growing number of voices in South Africa that refuse to accept weak accountability by those who hold public office. The 2016 local government elections sent out a clear message to such leaders. We stand against the maligning of this country's democratic institutions. How much longer will the majority of Parliamentarians continue to be complicit in this erosion of our democracy?

In the 2017 Budget Speech, Minister Gordhan outlined that national transformation should entail ensuring that we "*strengthen democracy, and entrench open, transparent governance and the rule of law*".

Now is the time for vigilance, for increased citizen activism and engagement with Ministers and those who should serve the public good. Don't be an observer, expect more, demand more of those in leadership and who took an oath to uphold this country's Constitution.

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