

SA Primate criticises clergy for attacking the nation's Public Protector

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Archbishop Thabo Makgoba called the dirty tactics employed against the Public Protector "shameful"
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By Bellah Zulu, with additional reporting from ACSA media team

The Anglican Primate of Southern Africa has spoken out against clergy who attacked South Africa's Public Protector for suggesting that the country's president benefited unduly from state money.

The Public Protector, Thuli Madonsela, came in for the criticism from the priests the day before her report - which looked into US\$23 million-worth of spending on President Jacob Zuma's rural residence - was released.

In a statement released on March 18 to global media the Most Revd Dr Thabo Makgoba said, "We in the Churches deeply regret that certain clergy have ganged up against the Public Protector in the name of the Church. They have done so without adequate knowledge of her reports, and their intervention only serves to undermine the fight against corruption."

The Public Protector's office in South Africa is mandated by that country's constitution to, among other things, investigate, rectify and redress any improper or prejudicial conduct in state affairs while "ensuring fair, responsive and accountable public sector decision-making and service delivery."

"It is shameful to see the dirty tactics being employed by politicians against the Public Protector," the Archbishop continued. "There is clearly a co-ordinated campaign by those implicated in her reports to denigrate her office and its work, which threatens to undermine the legitimacy of an institution established and protected by our constitution."

Archbishop Makgoba instead welcomed the Public Protector's reports on corruption and mismanagement and thanked her for making the country accountable and transparent. He said her office's work "helps to develop our

democracy” and called on all civil society to join the Churches in “defending the office against the current assault.”

Last week, a group of religious leaders also attacked the Public Protector for her probes into the chief operating officer of the country’s public service and commercial broadcasting organisation, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) as well as the chairperson of the Electoral Commission.

The Public Protector in South Africa is appointed by the President, on the recommendation of the National Assembly, good qualifications and must have a reputation for honesty and integrity.

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