

Top clerics warn Zuma

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INLSA COLLECTIVE CONSCIENCE: Archbishop

Thabo Makgoba

Michelle Jones

A GROUP of prominent clerics has warned President Jacob Zuma that if leaders do not act to stop the moral decay in the country, the churches will mobilise civil society to “bring about a more healthy democracy”.

The group, including Archbishop Thabo Makgoba of Church Leaders’ Consultation, said in a letter to Zuma that South Africans yearned for new leadership to restore hope amid growing unhappiness about leaders who had lost their “moral compass”.

“During apartheid, some church leaders wrote to political leaders, but they often failed to listen to these voices,” they said. “Unfortunately we find a similar trend today, but it is our duty to speak to you even when we think you might not be listening. At this moment we believe that our democracy can be significantly improved.

“If political leaders do not take seriously what we are saying, we will continue to strengthen and support the church’s role within the civil society movements, especially those working among the poorest of our people, to bring about a more healthy democracy,” they wrote.

The correspondence was sent to Zuma and copies also sent to DA leader Helen Zille and political and economic leaders around SA, detailing the churches’ concerns about the country. The document and covering letter were signed by Makgoba, Bishop Joe Seoka of the SA Council of Churches, Rev Moss Nthla of The Evangelical Alliance of SA and Rev Edwin Arrison of Kairos Southern Africa.



Anglican Bishop Joe Seoka INL SA

The appeal has been made before the ANC's elective conference in Mangaung – which gets under way on Sunday – where the president of the party will be decided and important policy decisions made.

It comes almost a year after Kairos Southern Africa urged the ANC to come together and take decisive action to eradicate corruption, factionalism, power struggles and neglect of the poor, among others. In the latest appeal, hitting even harder, the leaders said they would be open to discussing these issues “to share our conviction that we have begun to stray from the path of building a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa”.

A letter from the Presidency confirmed the correspondence had been brought to Zuma's attention. A document, titled “The church speaks ... for such a time as this” and sent with the letter, said South Africans were not looking for a “superficial change of one self-serving political leader for another, or

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