

SOUTH AFRICA: ANC PREPARES TO ELECT NEW LEADERSHIP

By Sarah Graveline

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In this file photo taken Wednesday, July 5, 2017, former African Union Chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma looks toward Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa during their policy conference in Johannesburg, South Africa. (Source: AP Photo/Themba Hadebe, File.)

SADC TROOPS DEPLOY TO LESOTHO

By Dr. Alexander Noyes

On December 2, 2017, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) officially [launched](#) a peacekeeping mission in Lesotho. Lesotho has suffered from several bouts of political instability and violence since 2014. In June 2017, the country held an election ahead of schedule for the [third](#) time in five years, bringing a coalition led by Prime Minister Thomas Thabane's All Basotho Convention (ABC) party to power. The SADC mission, launched three months after the [assassination](#) of Lesotho's top army commander in September 2017, aims to stabilize the country and oversee the implementation of a number of institutional and security reforms. Will it succeed? [more...](#)



Part of the SADC Contingency Force. (Source: "SADC officially launches the SADC Preventive Mission in the Kingdom of Lesotho on December 2, 2017," SADC Press Release, December 2, 2017, <http://www.sadc.int/news-events/news/sadc-officially-launches-sadc-preventive-mission-kingdom-lesotho-december-2-2017/>.)

Dr. Alexander Noyes is an Adjunct Research Staff Member in the Africa Program at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

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Zuma Seemed Untouchable...

Zuma has faced allegations of misconduct for nearly as long as he has been a public figure. In 2005, he was [fired](#) from his position as deputy president over allegations of corruption. He was also charged with rape, although later [acquitted](#). In 2007, Zuma was [charged](#) with 783 counts of corruption for allegedly accepting bribes when he was deputy president. Despite the scandal, Zuma pushed out Thabo Mbeki to become the head of the ANC in 2007 and, in 2009, was elected president of South Africa after the National Prosecuting Authority [dropped](#) the corruption charges against him.

Scandal continued to follow Zuma in office. In 2016, he was found guilty of using state funds to pay for luxury upgrades to his [Nkandla](#) estate. In December 2015, Zuma announced the appointment of [David van Rooyen](#), a politician with no finance experience, to be his finance minister. He was almost immediately forced by public opinion to replace van Rooyen with, Pravin Gordhan, an experienced financial advisor. In March 2016, however, Zuma abruptly fired Gordhan, leading major credit agencies to [downgrade](#) South Africa's credit to junk status.

In November 2016, South African Public Protector Thuli Madonsela released the blockbuster "State of Capture" [report](#), which alleged that Zuma's shuffling of finance ministers was part of a larger strategy to ensure that South African government bodies were subservient to Zuma's patronage network. The report further alleged that the Gupta brothers, a family with extensive business interests in South Africa, exercised significant control over this network. The report catalyzed public frustration with Zuma's administration, which has intensified as further [media investigations](#) have provided new details of financial wrongdoing.

Thus far, Zuma has faced few repercussions for his alleged misconduct. As president, he survived eight parliamentary [votes of no confidence](#), and he maintains significant support from ANC branches in the country's North West province. This support has made his ex-wife, Dlamini-Zuma, [competitive](#) in the race for party leadership.

... But Is the Jig Up?

Since the release of the State of Capture report, however, it has become increasingly likely that Zuma will be held responsible for malfeasance. Public opinion has turned against him. In [April 2017](#), a polling firm found that his approval rating had dropped to 20 percent in urban areas and that even in the province where his support was strongest, 63 percent of respondents thought he should resign.



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Growing frustration is also reflected internationally, where the Gupta brothers' brand has become toxic. Following allegations that McKinsey and KPMG improperly interacted with Gupta-owned companies, two banks announced they would no longer work with [McKinsey](#), while [KPMG's](#) South African leadership was forced to resign. The PR firm [Bell Pottinger](#) was forced to close altogether following backlash against its racially charged campaign on behalf of the Guptas. In addition, U.S. and British governments have opened [investigations](#) into the Gupta's businesses that may limit the family's ability to move money internationally, further curtailing their political clout and financial flexibility.

Zuma is also facing increased legal scrutiny. In [2016](#), the South African High Court ruled that the National Prosecuting Authority had improperly dropped corruption charges against him in 2009. Currently, the National Prosecuting Authority is [considering](#) whether to reinstate the charges.

The likelihood of legal charges against Zuma raises the stakes for the ANC National Congress. Zuma's support for his ex-wife, Dlamini-Zuma, suggests he would expect her to help protect his legacy. A former cabinet minister and chairperson of the African Union, [Dlamini-Zuma](#) has promised in her campaign speeches to unite the ANC. By contrast, her opponent, [Ramaphosa](#), is running on a reform platform, positioning himself as a pro-business and anti-corruption candidate.

Is It Too Late for ANC Reforms?

South Africans are increasingly looking beyond the ANC for political solutions. The longstanding tripartite agreement that links the ANC with the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) has come under strain. For the first time, on [November 29](#), the SACP ran its own candidates in a local by-election instead of supporting ANC politicians, signaling that SACP links to the ANC may be weakening.

Where elections have already taken place, opposition parties are proving their ability to function without the ANC. As [Africa Watch](#) reported, in local elections held in August 2016, the ANC lost control of Pretoria, Johannesburg, and Nelson Mandela Bay. In Johannesburg, the Democratic Alliance (DA) and Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), two parties on opposite ends of the political spectrum, have proven able to govern in an uneasy coalition, largely due to both parties' opposition to the ANC. On November 30, the EFF provided the DA the necessary votes to cancel an ANC-led vote of [no confidence](#) against the mayor, a DA politician.

Conclusion

The compounding challenges of shrinking public support and widespread concern over corruption have raised the stakes for the December ANC national conference. Ramaphosa's lead in [delegates](#) suggests the party recognizes the need for change. The vote could go either way, however, because delegates do not have to vote as publicly pledged and some branches' delegates have refused to [declare](#) their intentions ahead of time. While a Ramaphosa victory would signal the ANC's intent to tamp down on corruption, given the scale of malfeasance under Zuma, the party will have an uphill battle to regain South Africans' trust.

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Background

Lesotho, a landlocked country with a population of 2 million, is located in southern Africa. South Africa entirely surrounds the small country and has long played an influential role in the country's politics. In 1998, SADC launched a controversial military intervention to quell a military coup in Lesotho, [sending](#) a contingent of security forces from South Africa and Botswana. As highlighted in [earlier editions](#) of *Africa Watch*, an attempted coup in 2014 sparked a volatile period in Lesotho, punctuated by several outbreaks of political violence, intrasecurity sector scuffles and assassinations, and SADC involvement, led by South Africa's deputy president, Cyril Ramaphosa. Previous SADC mediations led to several investigations and reports calling for political and security reforms, which largely went unheeded. A series of early elections failed to put an end to the political instability. The latest bout of violence took place in September 2017, when Khoantle Motsomotso, Lesotho's army commander, was [killed](#) by troops thought to be loyal to former head of Lesotho's military, Tlali Kamoli (who was behind the 2014 coup attempt).

SADC Force Arrives

While initial [reports](#) suggested that the SADC peacekeeping force would be made up of approximately 1,000 troops and deploy on November 1, the size was later reduced to around 250. After several delays, the SADC force began to [arrive](#) on November 20 and was officially launched on December 2. The contingent, known as the Preventive Mission in the Kingdom of Lesotho (SAPMIL), [includes](#) 207 troops, 24 police officers, 15 intelligence officers, and 12 civilian experts. It has an initial mandate of 6 months, but is expected to be renewed. [Contributing countries](#) are Angola, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Acting Prime Minister Monyane Moleleki [welcomed](#) the SADC mission at the launch: "your presence here today bears witness to yet another historic and firm resolve by SADC to support the Kingdom of Lesotho in her quest to institute reforms aimed at achieving lasting political and security [stability], necessary for economic development and the general well-being of Basotho [citizens of Lesotho]." SADC's Director of the Organ on Politics, Defense and Security Affairs, Jorge Cardoso, [noted](#) at the launch ceremony that the purpose of the mission "is not here to take over or replace the Lesotho Defense Force or other security institutions" but aims to "support and complement" the Lesotho government and its security forces.

Early Positive Signs

While it is too early to tell if the SADC mission will succeed, early signs indicate that the force deployment may already be having a salutary impact on the ground. On December 1, eight soldiers were charged with the killing of Lieutenant General Maaparankoe Mahao in June 2015. The Lesotho Times, a local newspaper, [called](#) this development in the delayed



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case “a major breakthrough.” On December 2, four other soldiers were [arrested](#) for the July 2016 shooting of Lesotho Times editor Lloyd Mutungamiri, which took place after the paper had published critical accounts of the military. Prime Minister Thabane [told](#) the *Daily Maverick*, a South African newspaper, that the deployment of the SADC force was finally allowing him the space to arrest soldiers for their past crimes: “That’s the objective and the intention and nothing more than that.”

Conclusion

Lots of work remains to be done. An SADC Commission of Inquiry into the killing of Mahao, which finished its work in July 2015, delineated a series of political and security reforms necessary to put the country on a stable path. Because previous governments failed to implement these reforms, the difficult task now falls to the current government and the SADC mission.

SADC’s past efforts at mediation proved insufficient and were unable to bring stability to Lesotho. With the deployment of troops, this time may be different. Early indications suggest that the backing of force may open up new opportunities for genuine progress and reform. International actors might be wise to support the SADC mission, paying particular attention to needed security sector reforms.

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