



BISHOPS OF SOUTH AFRICA CAUTION ON CHALLENGES FACING THE COUNTRY

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CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA -

Bishops of the Catholic Church in South Africa have advocated a more pragmatic approach on the part of the President, Mr Jacob Zuma, the country's Parliament and the ruling political party (ANC) in addressing the socio-economic challenges currently facing the country.

The call was contained in a recent official statement released by the South African

Catholic Bishops Conference (SACBC) in Cape town and signed by the President of the conference, Most Rev. Stephen. Brislin, the Archbishop of Cape Town.

In the same vein, the Bishops appealed to the people of the country to eschew violent solutions to the challenges facing the country noting that while it is legitimate for the people to make their feelings known and voices heard; "The economy and education are both vulnerable at this time and we urge workers and students not to do anything

that would further harm the economy or weaken the culture of learning’>

The Bishops called on the president, the parliament and the ruling political party to proactively rise up to the situation of the country and give decisive, fearless and honest leadership. They urged President Zuma to “reconsider his position” as President pointing out that he seems not to enjoy the confidence a national leader should have.

Their words: “We respectfully remind President Zuma that he has been elected to serve all South Africans. It appears that he has lost the confidence of many of his colleagues, as well as that of numerous civil society organizations.” They continued: “He should earnestly reconsider his position, and not be afraid to act with courage and humility in the nation’s best interests.”

“We have confidence in the leaders of the two noble institutions, Parliament and the ANC, and we trust that they will rise to the occasion and give decisive, fearless and honest leadership,” the Bishops have stated.

The Bishops’ appeal comes at a time when there have been widespread calls for President Zuma’s resignation after he reshuffled his cabinet firing Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan, a move that shook the country’s economy.

On the call on the President to step down from office, following a cabinet reshuffle which led to the removal of his Finance Minister, Pravin Gordhan, an action said to have shaken the country's economy; the Bishops declared: "While we note and respect the calls for the resignation of the President, such a step would not in itself be a complete solution, as corruption at every level must to be rooted out," the Bishops have noted and added, "the leadership of the ANC must make serious and strenuous efforts to end corruption and patronage at all levels of governance"

They described their country as being in a "state of anxiety and uncertainty" and urged the Parliament to urgently address the issue. "Our concern rises not from the fact that any particular minister has been replaced, but from the allegations as to how the decision was made and the motivation for it," the bishops declared.

They particularly questioned the Executive's decision-making process and indicated that President Zuma seems to act under external influences. "Where decisions are being made by others, who have not been elected to public office, is a matter of great concern and is a threat to the democratic process," they stated.