

BUDGET VOTE 1 PRESIDENCY

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There is every truth in the adage that: "Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown". The President will have to live with that knowledge as different matters some national; others provincial and perhaps even personal will be raised.

Some issues like the deaths of first 13 and up to so far 15 soldiers at the hands of the Central African Republic will linger in the air as much as the landing of the Gupta wedding jet at the Waterkloof Military Airbase. These issues will remain an indelible mark in the minds of South Africans.

It is regrettable that greedy contractors saw it fit to inflate prices on the construction of the residence of the president in eNkandla. Collusion by some employees cannot be ruled out in this matter, but lessons have to be learnt from this too and note be taken that building in the rural areas is made expensive by some hidden costs.

Section 84 subsection 2 (e) of the Constitution of the Republic enjoins the President to make some key appointments such as in that of the National Director of Public Prosecutions and others related thereto like the head of the SIU. Inordinate delays in effecting such appointments have a bearing in the administration of justice.

It is also not in the interest of those holding those positions in acting capacity as whatever decisions they take may later be turned down when the ideal incumbent takes office.

Public administration calls for a minimum of three months for the filling of posts. It will be difficult to call the public service to order if it takes the head of State over a year to have a position filled. It may also be interpreted as having no qualified and ideal candidates unless such position is being kept for someone still being groomed to meet the requirements.

There is little or no movement in the Serithi Commission on the arms deal except that it has not covered itself in glory when one takes into account the spat and subsequent resignation by Mr Moabi one of its former investigators. Such conduct and actions will end up compromising the commission even before it starts with hearings.

We hope the Phiega Commission Report on State Owned Enterprises will be made public and look forward to the phased implementation of their recommendations as contained therein. After all some of these entities tend to pose as if they are a law unto themselves.

Recently President Chikwete of Tanzania made a telling statement when he said we noticed the Arab spring up north but if governments inland and down south are not awake to it, we shall soon have a job spring. The youth are crying out for jobs alternatively capital to set up businesses though it is also difficult without the necessary skills. But the issue is, skills or no skills, they are citizens of this country who have to be assisted to earn an honest living. One wonders how far is the Youth Employment Initiative Scheme that saw light of day in the Presidency.

As Marius Ungere puts it: "Jobs are created by the private sector within conditions determined by the state. In South Africa we need a renewed attempt at collaboration between the state, business and labour to place the country on a new growth trajectory away from conflict to joint goals around economic growth that creates jobs" We

hope the deputy President will succeed in dissuading the labour movements from moving goal posts whenever a solution is about to be found.

The recent and regrettable spate of attacks on the shops of foreigners is but an indication of bigger things to come. Preliminary indications are that those attacks were not xenophobic *per se* but mainly criminal as those involved helped themselves to cash and goods from the spaza shops of their victims. People are hungry and they become jealous when they see others eking a living next to them. We do not condone unruliness but we are saying the time has come that our talks are translated to action or practice.

We in the UCDP have noted the hands-on approach of the President. He is somebody with a vision and desire to serve the nation. That he set up a department on Monitoring and Evaluation and installed a hotline shows that he is keen to access the man in the street. His recent visit to Eldorado Park on a call by some concerned mother about drugs is another proof of his desire to serve.

It is unfortunate that with all the layers of bureaucracy in government it takes the president personally to root out drugs and only thereafter one sees law enforcement officers and provincial politicians running around claiming to be cleaning up. We hold the view that they should have done that long before. Such instances do not need the president personally going there. It reminded me of one wise leader who on such occasion would say: "Re na le batho, fela re tlhoka batho" implying that some people are place holders only.

We need public spirited officials as opposed to the current situation where there are more chiefs than Indians in the public service.

