

South Africa

Zuma-ANC divorce sealed with a hiss

After spending months campaigning for another party, former president Jacob Zuma has officially been expelled from the ruling(ish) party.

Marché Arends

The bond between Jacob Zuma and the African National Congress used to be so strong that it withstood all manner of serious allegations against the former president: corruption, tax evasion, racketeering and rape. Finally, however, that bond has broken.

This week, Zuma – who was president of South Africa from 2009 to 2018 – was formally expelled from the party by its disciplinary committee. The straw that broke the camel’s back was Zuma’s open campaigning for an entirely different party in the run-up to the general election in May.

In that election, support for the ANC fell dramatically, to just 40% – with Zuma’s new outfit, uMkhonto we Sizwe, largely

responsible for much of that decline. It received a staggering 14.58% of the popular vote, making it the third-largest party in the country.

In comments to *The Continent*, the ANC’s acting spokesperson Zuko Godlimpi said that Zuma had never previously been formally charged with contravening party rules. He declined to say which senior party leader had brought the charges this time around.

Zuma has 21 days to appeal the decision.

“The reality is the ANC has never demanded accountability for the sins of its members when it comes to corruption,” said anti-corruption investigator and former ANC MP Andrew Feinstein. “The only time something happens to them is if they threaten the ANC, which is what Zuma has done.”

“If he had just stayed silent, he probably would have been fine,” Feinstein said. ■



Splitsville: Jacob Zuma was a part of ANC history. Now he’s apart from ANC future. Photo: Michele Spatari/AFP