

Activist wants action on corruption

Taschica Pillay

IF President Jacob Zuma had any decency he would resign, human rights activist Kumi Naidoo said.

Naidoo, who was given an honorary doctorate in social science by the University of KwaZulu-Natal yesterday, used his acceptance speech to urge South Africa's leaders to end corruption.

The former head of Greenpeace International was recognised by the university for his outstanding contribution to the struggle for democracy in South Africa, the international fight against climate change and the struggle against poverty and injustice.

Naidoo said afterwards that the situation in South Africa right now was tragic.

"What we see is a complete lack of progressive, effective, meaningful leadership and the capture of powerful state institutions to advance the interests of a very narrow number of political leaders and

their allies," he said.

"The fact that the nuclear deal is still being talked about when we know that it's too expensive, too dangerous and will deliver too little too late for people in rural areas, is an indication that the deal is driven by outside interest as well as the interest of uranium companies such as Shiva Uranium."

Naidoo said the axing of former finance minister Pravin Gordhan and his deputy, Mcebisi Jonas, was because the nuclear deal was being pushed hard.

"If people think the arms deal had a lot of corruption in it, this nuclear deal, if it goes ahead, will make the arms deal look like a Sunday morning picnic," Naidoo said.

"We have an ANC that has been captured and a state that has been captured.

"President Zuma still has hundreds of corruption charges against him.

"He should face them. If he had any decency he would resign.

"President Zuma and the people around him must understand you can fool some of the people all of the time, all the people some of the time, but you can never fool all the people all of the time.

"That is what is coming home to roost now in the aftermath of the mobilisation we are seeing following Ahmed Kathrada's funeral.

"Zuma didn't have the decency to acknowledge the letter by one of the senior leaders in our country's history, one of Madiba's closest friends and comrades.

"He should read the letter again and act on Kathrada's advice."

Kathrada wrote a letter to Zuma last year, asking him to step down following the Constitutional Court ruling that Zuma had failed to uphold, defend and respect the constitution as the supreme law with regard to the Nkandla matter.