

## **Former President Jacob Zuma Attacked the LGBTQIA+ Community**

By Noluvuyo Lata

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On 25 February 2024, while addressing Mkhonto Party (MK) followers in Maqongqo outside Pietermaritzburg, MK leader and former president Jacob Zuma made some very homophobic remarks to his audience.

The MK leader displayed the same attitude as do many African leaders when he claimed that homosexuality was “un-African” and was something that stems from *Dutch law*. He used this platform where he was campaigning for his party to openly bash the gay community and claim that should the MK win the 2024 elections; he would ensure that he does away with same-sex marriage.

In 2006 when Zuma was the deputy president, he openly admitted to being homophobic claiming that while he was a youngster no homosexual would come near him because he would “knock them out” suggesting that violence against the queer communities was acceptable. He later apologised for his remarks and withdrew his statements, but after this latest incident, it proves that Jacob Zuma is indeed homophobic and against same-sex marriage.

As the 2024 elections approach, politicians appear to think that it is okay to attack vulnerable minority groups to gain votes. This is like what the leader of the Patriotic Alliance, Gayton McKenzie, has been doing, spreading xenophobic hate speech to try and gain the following of xenophobic people in South Africa.

Recently, a member of Parliament in Ghana, Sam George during an interview with Nigeria’s News Central said that South Africa’s high crime rate is a result of the country embracing homosexuality, claims that are absolutely ridiculous.

“I am a foreign national from Zimbabwe who is also part of the LGBTQIA+ community. I moved from Zimbabwe because it was not an easy place to stay when you are queer, and I came to SA in 2010 and I [have] been living here since. I really loved how I could be myself in this country, I made a lot of friends, and I can live freely,” said Belinda Moyo.

“It pains me to hear such remarks from leaders because as a queer foreign national it means that I need to now look over my shoulder over my nationality and sexuality. I wish people would just let us be because in all honesty, we are not harming anyone we are just being us [ourselves]. There are a lot of serious issues that they could be focusing on instead of the queer community. As a lesbian woman, I hope Mr Zuma realises that in some ways he is also promoting violence against women and children because lesbians are women and there are children in high school that openly identify as queer. He really should be more careful,” added the 30-year-old businesswoman who lives in Benoni East of Johannesburg.

Politicians must start campaigning according to the needs of the country and social struggles and not try to gain votes by hating on a particular group.

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