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Vavi in a reconciliation rant

SUSPENDED COSATU BOSS TWEETS ON 'FLUSHING OUT' CONSPIRACY

LUPOLD MCHENGE
SUSPENDED Cosatu general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi has taken to Twitter to lash out at detractors he's best on "flushing" him out of his powerful position in the labour federation.

As the country marked the Day of Reconciliation yesterday, Vavi took to micro-blogging site Twitter to vent his thoughts, tweeting "Happy Reconciliation Day to you all - may the spirit of Madiba be with us today and every day of our lives" and "regrettably lost hope reconciliation will happen at Cosatu. The other side is hell bent on flushing me out. That's really you must face".

Vavi was suspended in September after an affair with a subordinate, also tweeted: "If suspension was genuinely to discipline for error committed it would have happened immediately & those committing same wouldn't escape".

He has approached the courts to have the suspension lifted. He is committed to a genuinely independent union movement that is revolutionary, militant and fighting for workers and the poor.

Vavi's spokesperson John Dube was not available for comment. ANC secretary general Gwede Mantsoe last month suggested Cosatu find political

solutions to their differences with VanU, who is very popular with workers. Mantsoe was addressing delegates attending the central executive committee meeting of the SA Transport and Allied Workers Union, an anti-Vavi union.

He said Cosatu could pursue Vavi, but if the price would be to split Cosatu it was not worth it. Mantsoe appealed to the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) not to break away from Cosatu over Vavi.

Numsa, Cosatu's largest affiliate with over 255 000 members, has been threatening to withdraw its support for the ANC at next year's general elections.

The union is set to hold its four-day special national congress in Bloksburg from today. The congress would discuss the crisis within Cosatu and the possibility of forming a political party for workers.

Numsa deputy general secretary Karl Cloete said: "The matter (suspension) is before the courts. We are still saying the manner in which it was handled was unconstitutional."

Cosatu president Sdumo Dlamini said: "There is no reason for Vavi to take to Twitter to air his views. He must speak to the leadership of Cosatu."

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Verwoerd calls for whites to reconcile

TRAVELING MAFIA

WILHELM Verwoerd, grandson of former South African Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd, the architect of apartheid, says South Africans needed to learn more about each other to speed up the process of reconciliation.

Speaking to The New Age on Reconciliation Day, Verwoerd said social injustice and inequalities within South African society were hampering reconciliation.

However, he said white South Africans had a

greater responsibility of ensuring that all the different races were united.

"It's not only the responsibility of previously advantaged South Africans but a responsibility of all South Africans," he said.

With South Africa approaching its 20th year of democracy, Verwoerd said the country was making great strides in promoting tolerance and reconciliation but warned that reconciliation would take a long time before it was fully achieved.

He said South Africans could learn a lot from the foundations that had been laid

by former president Nelson Mandela who forgave those who had imprisoned him, burned his wife and traumatised his children while he was locked up in prison for 27 years.

"The thing about reconciliation is that it boils down to meeting each other at grass-root level and it takes willingness from everyone," Verwoerd said. He described South Africa's road to reconciliation as a "marathon and not a sprint".

Verwoerd risked being alienated by his family and friends after his decision to join the ANC in the early '90s.

He was not even welcome at Stellenbosch, the town he grew up in as he was called a traitor to Afrikanerdom.

He joined the ANC as a way of reconciling with the people his grandfather made to suffer because of their political ideologies, while hoping his contribution within the ANC would be welcomed. Mantsoe, President Jacob Zuma yesterday accepted a firm stance of Madiba at the Union Buildings to mark Reconciliation Day and also declared the seat of government in Pretoria an official heritage site.

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WARM EMBRACE: While the statue of former president Nelson Mandela was unveiled in Pretoria, President Jacob Zuma and Madiba Mandela posed in front of it.

22 initiates killed

STANISLAV VELAPHI

MORE than 20 initiates have died in the Eastern Cape since the start of the circumcision season this month.

The Eastern Cape department of health has confirmed that 22 initiates have died at illegal initiation schools in East London, Mafikiweni, Willowdale, Tloko, Abul, Ntshini, Mthatha and Ngqeleni.

Provincial health spokesperson Nene Kapelo said 46 initiates had been rescued from these schools and had been placed at a safe centre in Mthatha. They are being treated by provincial government teams which include health

and police officers. They were rescued following botched circumcisions at their respective traditional huts (Gibhoni). There was no clarity on what had happened to the traditional surgeons (Gqobol) who had circumcised the boys as police spokesperson Capt Mthabane Godwana could not be reached for comment.

Only one surgeon was arrested last month at KwaMashu in Mthatha for allegedly operating an illegal circumcision school in the area. He is still in custody and will appear in court again on January 7.

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Samaritan to the rescue

VINCENT CHUMBEEN

A MOTHER's attempt to sell her five-month-old baby girl for R40 has failed.

The baby is lucky to be alive after a Samaritan overheard her in a truck stop and quickly alerted the police. Police spokesperson Capt PV van Wyk



LUCKY ESCAPE: Baby 'Bongi' was allegedly sold for R40.

confirmed the incident and arrest of the mother. He said the 33-year-old woman will appear on charges of child abandonment and neglect in the Bloemfontein Magistrate's Court today. The baby was hungry and soaking wet, he said.

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'Long Walk' score nominated

DELLANE SHANGASE

AFTER receiving a Golden Globe nomination for best original score for Madiba: Long Walk to Freedom, composer Alex Hoots is in contention for a nomination in the Original Score category for the 2014 Academy Awards in March. In another feat for Hoots, Ryan Amon, composer of South African-born Neil Blomkamp's *Distopia* soundtrack, is also among talents considered for an Oscar nomination.

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AbaThembu slaughter sheep for cleansing

STANISLAV VELAPHI

FORMER president Nelson Mandela's widow, Graça Machel, and his ex-wife Winnie Madikizela-Mandela would stay in Qunu for some time in line with the abathembu culture.

The abathembu were scheduled to meet in Qunu yesterday to formally release all family members who had gathered for Madiba's funeral.

Chief Nqosiphehlana Mazonisa said a sheep was slaughtered in Madiba's hometown to cleanse the hands of family members. "In our Thembu culture, this is called umthambo and its purpose is to cleanse the hands

of family members who attended the funeral."

Chief Mfundo Bhenguwene Mhura, who speaks on behalf of the abathembu king Buyelekhaya Daluhyaba, said according to the family culture, a meeting was convened a day after the funeral.

This is when family members are formally told the funeral is over and that they can go back to their homes or work.

"Madiba's widow, Graça Machel, and former wife, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, are going to stay in Qunu for a while."

"In terms of our culture they are supposed to stay for a while unless there is something urgent that needs their



MUTUAL SUPPORT: Mandela's former wife Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and his widow Graça Machel, vice

attention," Mhura said. Jacob Zuma during the memorial service at FNB Stadium last week.

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