

'Government will not meddle in judicial processes' - spokesman

The Government has responded decisively to the Cosatu's call for the charges against former deputy president Jacob Zuma to be dropped by reaffirming their respect for the Constitution and the independence of the judiciary.

On Monday, Cosatu's Central Committee meeting passed a resolution requesting President Thabo Mbeki to intervene politically to stop the trial of Zuma and to reinstate him as Deputy President.

In a statement following the Cabinet meeting on Wednesday, government spokesman Joel Netshitenzhe said that they "will be guided in its response by the supreme law of our land, the Constitution, which provides, amongst others, for separation of powers between the executive and the judiciary, and directs the President to "uphold, defend and respect the Constitution".

However, the Business Day reports that the diplomatically worded statement "belied the disdain the ministers of the cabinet expressed at Cosatu's 'crass' move". In the aftermath, some "embarrassed" Cosatu leaders have allegedly distanced themselves from the resolution.

"Thabo Mbeki would not break the law, thrash the constitution or undermine our young democracy...we will not meddle in judicial processes," it quotes Netshitenzhe as saying.