

# Denting President Jacob Zuma's popularity and reputation

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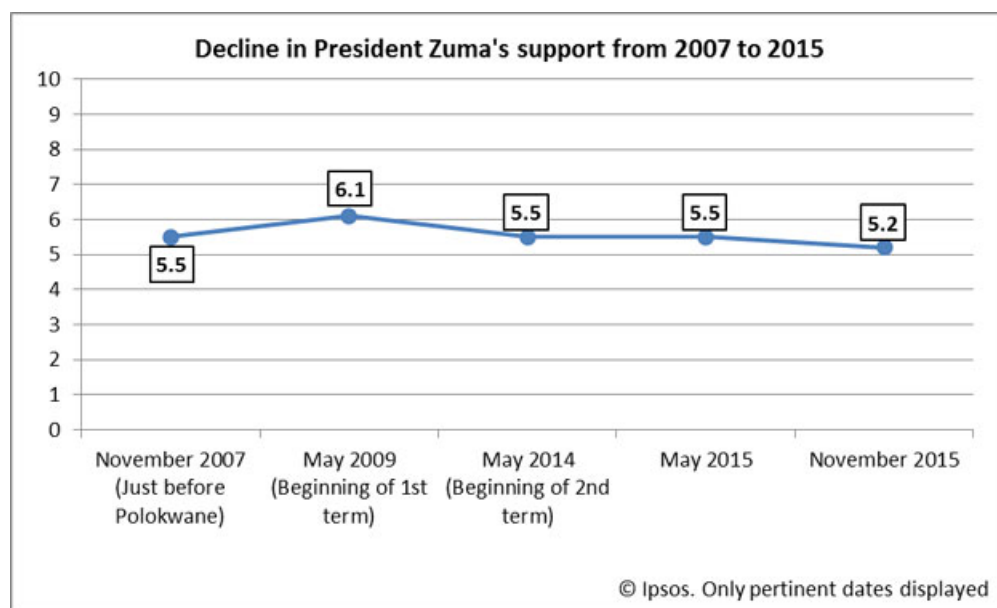
15 Dec 2015

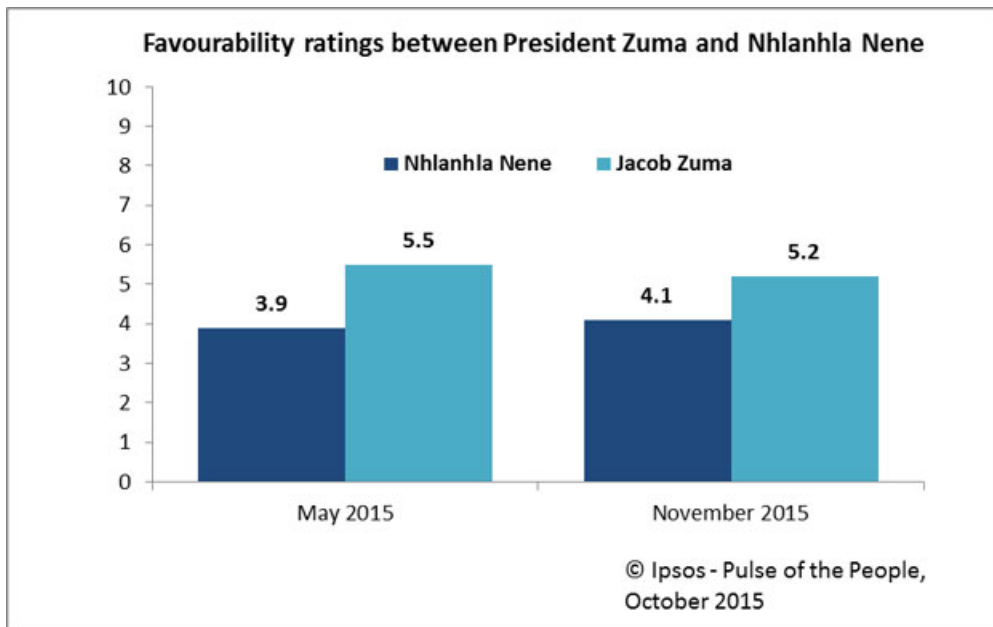
Three Ministers of Finance in five days is totally unheard of - however, this was exactly the news dominating the headlines the past few days. With the South African rand basically in a free fall since President Zuma's sudden announcement on 9 December 2015 that the Minister of Finance, Nhlanhla Nene, will immediately be replaced by the largely unknown David van Rooyen, the country was in uproar.

The media was filled with comments from experts and analysts, however, what are the feelings of South Africans on the subject of their president?

Looking at the *favourability ratings*<sup>1</sup> of President Jacob Zuma over the last few years, it is clear that the president's popularity is on the decline. On the other hand, although we do not have a long series of results for Nhlanhla Nene, his popularity as a political leader seemed to have been on the incline over the last year.

These findings are according to polls by market and opinion research company, Ipsos. The *Ipsos Government Performance Barometer* measures public perceptions about the performance of key leaders and institutions every six months. Recently a total of 3,617 randomly chosen adult South Africans were interviewed in their homes and home languages (see Technical Detail for more information).





The graph above shows that while the president's popularity is on the decline, Mr Nene's is on the incline<sup>2</sup>. On a scale of 0-10 where 10 means totally in favour and 0 means totally against, President Zuma scored 5.5 in May 2015 compared to 5.2 in November 2015. Although Nene has a lower favourability rating overall than President Zuma, this is expected as he only started in the position of Minister of Finance in May 2014 (after the most recent general election) thus South Africans were taking some time to get to know him.

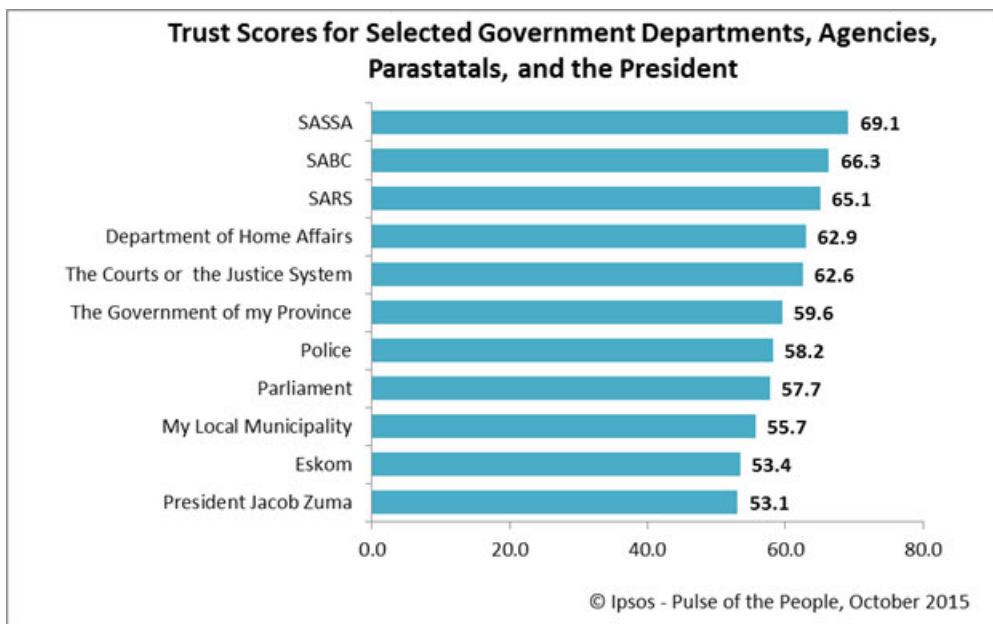
A further interesting finding of the most recent Ipsos Polls is that President Zuma's favourability rating has declined over the last year among supporters of the three largest political parties, including the ANC:

President Zuma's favourability rating	May 2015	November 2015
ANC Voters	6.6	6.4
DA Voters	2.5	2.4
EFF Voters	4.1	3.5

When asked "How well do you think President Zuma is doing his job?"<sup>3</sup>, South Africans have expressed the same trends as with the favourability ratings. Less than half of adult South Africans believe that President Zuma is doing his job very or fairly well - in May 2015 48% of adult South Africans were of the opinion that the president was *doing his job very or fairly well*; the recent November 2015 findings show that 46% of adult South Africans share the same sentiment - a decrease of 2 percentage points<sup>4</sup>.

In addition, only 4 in every 10 (40%) adult South Africans have indicated that they think the right people are appointed to lead government departments and agencies. (This is down 3 percentage points from 43% in May 2015.)

Looking at a slightly different aspect, "Trust" is seen as the most important indicator of reputation and the measurement of trust is based on a scale of 0 to 100, with 100 signifying perfect reputation. The reason why Trust is used is because it is a familiar emotion, something sought to build in every relationship. When you trust someone, you are more open to hear them, and give them the benefit of the doubt in the face of contradictory information.



The graph above shows that Jacob Zuma has the lowest level of Trust amongst a basket of 11 selected and measured Government-related departments, agencies, parastatals and personalities.

Although the results shown here were captured before the announcement of the replacing of Nhlanhla Nene, it is clear that fewer South Africans trust or show favourable sentiment towards President Jacob Zuma now than in the beginning of the year, or earlier in his presidency. This is especially important as local Government elections are about five months away, and the ANC is facing stiff competition from the opposition - especially in the major metropolitan areas where voters are more exposed to different opinions and have more access to a variety of news media.

#### Technical detail:

A total of 3,617 personal face-to-face interviews were conducted with randomly selected adult South Africans. The interviews were done in the homes and home languages of respondents. Trained quantitative fieldworkers from all population groups were responsible for the interviewing, which took place from 17 September to 19 October 2015. Interviews were done all over the country, from metropolitan areas to deep rural areas. This methodology ensured that the results are representative of the views of the universe and that findings can be weighted and projected to the universe - i.e. South Africans 15 years and older.

Interviews were conducted using CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing) and all results were collated and analysed in an aggregate format to protect the identity and confidentiality of respondents.

All sample surveys are subject to a margin of error, determined by sample size, sampling methodology and response rate. The sample error for the sample as a whole at a 95% confidence level is a maximum of 1.63%.

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pleased to offer our clients high quality standards, efficiency and intelligence.

<sup>1</sup>The question asked is: "On a scale from 10 to 0 where 10 means totally in favour and 0 means totally against, how would you rate the following leaders?"

<sup>2</sup>Nhlanhla Nene was first included in the Ipsos Government Performance Barometer Survey in May 2015 as he was only appointed Finance Minister in May 2014.

<sup>3</sup>The question asked is: "Do you think ... is doing his/her/their job very well, fairly well, not really well or not at all well?"

<sup>4</sup>The overall sample error of the study, based on sample size, response rate and methodology used is a maximum 1.63%, thus this decrease is significant.

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