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Zanele Magwaza-Msibi has devoted her life to the IFP and is concerned - about the party's future. Where to next for this firebrand?

HERE are tea and biscuits on the table, but the atmosphere is far from warm and homely. Six bodyguards hover - around us - four in the lobby of the Joburg hotel where we meet, and another two at the exit to the pool area. It's clear that Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) chairwoman Zanele Magwaza-Msibi is living in troubled times.

Her year began with a bang, First she heard there was a contract out on her life, then attempts were made on the lives of some of her supporters - including a councillor in KwaZulu-Natal. Next she was removed from her duties in the province by her own party and finally, on 18 January, she lost her attempt in court to force the IFP to hold a leadership election. It's no wonder she's under 24-hour guard.

I don't want us to talk about the IFP leadership. Let's rather talk about my life, she says in a soft voice, almost a whisper. This is not the kind of fighting talk we'd expected from the firebrand. Could she have developed cold feet in her struggle to transform the ailing IFP?

No, but you must see it from my perspective: my daughter, Gugu, couldn't sleep a wink after we heard there was a contract out with my name on it, she says. She kept watch on a sofa in the lounge. She wanted to be a human shield and take the bullet that was meant to rub me off the planet. Now you understand why I'm reluctant to talk about the friction between

me and umntwana Mangosuthu Buthelezi.â\200\235

But even though Gugu (20) left earlier this year for the United States to study speech and drama, she can't stop worrying about her mother. Neither can Zanele's friends, who have hired four of her bodyguards while the others are police officers.

â\200\234Gugu calls me every day to ask if those people still want to harm me,â\200\235 says Zanele (49).

As she says this, her phone rings and it's her mother, MaKhuzwayo, who chastises her for not phoning to say she'd arrived safely here at the Holiday Inn Garden Court in Milpark. It's not the sort of life Zanele imagined when she joined the party as a 13-year-old girl.

â\200\234My mother and siblings are also worried. They fear I may be assassinated. And thatâ\200\231s quite a thing coming from a family where there is no dissenting view at home - we are all

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members of the IFP and always have been.â\200\235

But following the collapse of her bid in the Pietermaritzburg High Court, it appears probable that she will start her own party.

As one of her most outspoken supporters, IFP Youth Brigade chairperson in Ulundi, Zakhele Buthelezi, says: â\200\234When a person does not find comfort at home, he leaves that home and builds his own. We will back VZ whatever she does.â\200\235

Rumours have been coming thick and fast that Zanele will start a new party called the New Freedom Party before the upcoming local elections, but until now she has dismissed this as speculation.

â\200\234If I start a new party, will it attract young

people who are disgruntled by the present political set-up and who no longer trust the parties they follow? Will they find a home in this new party? Are you going to join it? There are so many questions,â\200\235 she says.

â\200\234LET me tell you a secret,â\200\235 she says as she leans forward. â\200\234Sometimes I cry about all this. I cry when I am alone in my bedroom. I never cry in front of men because they will think I am weak and that will make them happy.â\200\235 This anti-female sentiment, she says, is at the heart of the decline of a party that has lost its grip on its stronghold, KwaZulu-Natal. With only 18 seats in the legislature compared to the ANC's 51, many say the party has been

BY KAIZER NGWENYA
PICTURES: TUMELO LEBURU

dominated by conservative old men for too long, including Buthelezi, who has been at the helm since its birth in 1975.

â\200\234Some of those men think I'm incapable of leading just because I'm a woman,â\200\235 she says.

The IFP's elective conference, where the leadership is chosen, has been postponed six times since July last year. And her supporters, called the Friends of VZ (the initials of her names, Veronica Zanele), believe it has been postponed to prevent Zanele from ascending to the IFP's highest position. In a desperate bid to force the party to hold the conference and to prevent the leadership from hauling her before an internal inquiry to investigate her involvement in the Friends of VZ, she took the matter to court in November last year.

She argued that she has been victimised in a plot to stop her from occupying the highest position in the party. But Buthelezi has accused her and her followers of feeding lies to the media to create the image of a party that is sexist, dictatorial and on the verge of collapse. Losing the case, with costs, indicates that her time in the party could be limited. Factions within the IFP, she says, have long been spreading rumours that she's surviving on financial support from ANC member Tokyo Sexwale.

â\200\230T last met Tokyo two years ago at the funeral of Princess Lethuxolo, the daughter of Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi. It's also not true that my husband, Mandla Msibi, is a member of the ANC,â\200\235 she says.

Mandla is a former manager at SAB and is now director of communications at the department of education in KwaZulu-Natal. He is

also a landowner with properties in Auckland Park and a cattle farm in KwaZulu-Natal.

The pair are both based at the provincial legislature since Zanele was redeployed there last year from the Zululand District Municipality where she was mayor for 13 years. She had developed a reputation for getting things done. .

â\200\234When I was a mayor I built more than 450 classrooms. I was called to the premier's office and asked why I was building classrooms because it was not part of my duties. I told the

premier that I did it as a mayor who wanted to serve the people,â\200\235 she said.

She also bought 84 tractors and gave them to emerging black farmers in Zululand, and always had clean audit reports from the Auditor-General.

BORN in rural Makhosini near Babanango in central KwaZulu-Natal, she is the fifth in a family of nine children.

â\200\234My father had five wives and my mother is the last wife. I have many brothers and sisters - I won't mention their names because they would fill the pages of your magazine,â\200\235 she says with a chuckle.

After completing a teacherâ\200\231s diploma at KwaQakaza College in 1989 she became a teacher and then principal of Fangelakhe Primary School at Nkandla in 1992.

â\200\230When I got there it was a two-roomed school with no windows, one door and dirt floors. There were two teachers and pupils from Grade 1 to Grade 7, so it was very overcrowded. My office was under a tree and there were no toilets or running water. [went out to the forest with parents to cut wood, I mixed

GALLO IMAGES/FOTC24/1AN CARBUTT

sand and cement and when I left the school we had done a lot to improve the lives of rural children.â\200\235

In 1995 she was the first woman elected to the executive council in Nongoma in the KZN local government elections. So began her life in full-time politics and plenty of travel between her three homes in Durban, Ulundi and Newcastle. It often put strain on her family as she has travelled a lot. But her and Mandlaâ\200\231s two children, Gugu (20) and Melusi (19), who is starting a business, have remained strong.

â\200\230I spend weeks away from home working,â\200\235 she says. â\200\234That's why every moment I spend with my family is so important. I also love gospel music and am a fan of the late Vuyo Mokoena, whom I recruited to the IFP.â\200\235

Politics is a tough business for anyone with

a family, but Zanele believes she has the muscle to make it work.

I'm no pushover and even if I'm threatened I'll never give up. It puts strain on my family, but I will not give up fighting corruption - this is a democracy; we all have the right to be

" free and equal.

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| National Freedom Party reignites

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Thokozani Mtshali S

POLITICAL tremors that hit the
i IFP when its former chairperson
Zanele Magwaza-Msibi launched
a party this week are also affect-
ing the student and youth wings.

The IFP split has also soured
relations with the ANC despite
the two parties having worked at
maintaining a cordial relationship
in recent years.

Continued tensions in IFP-
aligned organisations came as
some of its former youth leaders
defected to the National Freedom
Party, claiming this new party

also enjoyed support from the .

South African Democratic Stu-

dent Movement (Sadesmo), an

IFP aligned student formation

represented at most universities
| in KZN.

But Sadesmo leaders have
denied the claim, saying the
organisation remained behind the
IFP and reiterated earlier charges
by the IFP youth brigade that they
viewed Magwaza-Msibi as power
hungry and whose party, the
National Freedom Party, will flop.

â\200\234This issue has never even
arisen for discussion by any struc-
tures of Sadesmo. Our constitu-
tion is very clear on our political
allegiance that we are an IFP
youth brigade affiliate. We shall
further the aims and ghjectives of

the IFP within educational instity-

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bickering between IFP and ANC

tions and promote and implement the IFP's education policy at all levels," said Sadesmo president Ntuthuko Majosi. I

The breakaway party by the former national chairperson of the IFP has also reignited the fires between IFP leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi and the ANC. 15

Three weeks ago Buthelezi and the ANC youth league met to patch up relations between the two parties. 1

There has also been an intense exchange of words between the youth wings of the ANC and the IFP.

"There has been a string of incidents that leave no room for doubt about the ANC's involvement in the spilt within the IFP," said IFP youth brigade leader Pat Lebenya-Ntanzu, who also accused the ANCYL of being obsessed with insulting Buthelezi. o

She alleged that statements by the ANCYL did nothing to help reconciliation.

"This must stop. Insults will not help us create jobs. It will not help alleviate poverty. It will not solve rampant crime. Enough is enough. Leave our president alone," said Lebenya-Ntanzu. ,

The ANC also deny they tried to recruit Magwaza-Msibi and her followers to its ranks or destabilise strongholds of the IFP.

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CHRIS NDALISO

INKATHA Freedom Party lead have become victims of their own internal mud-slinging and it is nonsense that the African National Congress had offered the IFP

former chairperson, Zanele KaMagwaza-Msibi, the position of MEC

'So said KwaZulu-Natal ANC chairperson Dr Zweli Mkhize yesterday.

He was responding to media-

reports and allegations made in an apparently leaked letter that alleged the ANC was behind the split and the formation of KaMagwaza-Msibi's National Freedom Party (NFP) with the aim of encouraging mass defections from the IFP.

The ANC has had a fair share of its own problems and we have

THE Inkatha Freedom Party's student wing yesterday denied backing the National Freedom Party (NFP), after one of its leaders was linked to the new party.

The claim that we are part

of the new party is a blatant lie] SA Democratic Students

Movement (Sadesmo) president Ntutuko Majozi said.

One of the new party's prominent members is Andile Biyela,

dealt with those accordingly. The allegations are undermining our integrity. If KaMagwaza-Msibi had agreed to join the ANC she should have done so, not form

Mangosuthu, University of Tech-

nology student representative

council president, who contested recent student elections as

a Sadesmo member. Majozi said Biyela does not speak for Sadesmo.

- The party's constitution is clear on Sadesmea's political allegiance, he added, and it unambiguously states the movement shall be an IFP Youth Brigade affiliate ... it is Sapa

another party 4
As to the position allegedly offered to her, that's nonsense because as both premier and chairperson of the party. I would have

Zanele
Magwaza-
Msibi was
guarded by
heavily armed
police officers
as she toured
Zululand
areas
yesterday to

- speak to
supporters of
her new

. National
Freedom

. Party.

_PHOTO: . .
SKHUMBUZO
MIYA

known about such a matter. The IFP is IFP and it wouldn't matter whether we led the party, we wouldn't be bothered, it said Mkhize.

Mkhize said he is concerned that

Violence could break out in areas

like Nongoma and Ulundi

He appealed to the IFP and NFP to embrace multi-party democracy and maintain stability in the

_Tun-up to the local government elections.

ANC national spokesperson

-Jackson Mthembu urged his party

and the IFP to unmask the originators of the leaked letter.

It is very distressing and disingenuous of the IFP leadership, while knowing very well the rea-

sons for Mrs KaMagwaza-Msibiâ\200\231s
departure from their ranks, to put
the blame om the ANC,â\200\235 said
Mthembu in a statement.

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PMB councillors'

rumoured to
have joined NFP

SKHUMBUZO MIYA and NALINI NAIDOO

INKATHA Freedom Party councillors â\200\224including some
â\200\230in Pietermaritzburg â\200\224 are flocking to join the newly
taunched National Freedom Party (NFP).

In Zululand region â\200\224 the IFPâ\200\231s traditional strong-
hold â\200\224 the majority of its councillors and branches have
defected to the National Freedom Party announced yes-
terday by former IFP national chairperson Zanele Mag-
waza-Msibi. : Â»

In Msunduzi five of the 11 IFP councillors are believed
to have defected. Their seats in the council chamber
were empty during yesterdayâ\200\231s full council meeting.
Talk attea time was that theyhad gone tothe NFPlaunch
in Ulundi. : '

Meanwhile caucus leader Dolo Zondi and two of his .
councillors, Bukelani Zuma and Dennis Ntombela, were
summoned to IFP headquarters in Durban to discuss
the situation. Only Candy Seymour, Rebecca Khanyile
and Balozile Sokhela flew the IFP flag. â\200\224

The defectors are rumoured to be Patrick Bhengu,
Doris. Hlongwane, Msawenkosi Maphumulo, Richard

" Ntuli and Zwe Magubane. If they resign, the IFP will
lose two seats in the council as it.will only be able to
replace the three proportional representation council-
lors after the upcoming government eiections.

InZululand yesterday, Magwaza-Msibireceivedrave -
â\200\234receptions in the areas where she used to be district -

mayor before her deployment to the KZN Legislature
lastyear. InNongoma 25 out of 35 IFP councillorsdefect-
ed to the NFP: in Ulundi, 15 out of 18; and in Edumbe
municipality (Paulpietersburg), seven out of nine, in-
cluding expelled former mayor Mpiyakhe Hlatshwayo.

The IEP has also lost a number of branches and con-
stituenciesin the Zuuland region. EvenIFP leader Man-
gosuthu Butheleziâ\200\231s branch in the Nkonjeni area of
Mzhlabathini has defected to the NFP. Nkonjeni IFP
branch chairperson Moses Qwabe said the decision to
defect was taken at a recent branch meeting.

The NFP also gained all 24 IFP branches in Ulundi.
Chairpersons from these branches held a meeting at
Ulindi Holiday Inn before Magwaza-Msibiâ\200\231s arrival and
later announced their defection in a meeting with her.
Their defection could also render the three [FP-led mu-
nicipalities in Zululand dysfunctional until the local gov-
ernment elections, should the IFP dismiss them.

Themba Langa, the former chair of the IFP branch

in the Mkhazane area of Ulundi, said they decided to defect â\200\234because IFP leaders are scared of democracyâ\200\235.

â\200\234We warned them that if the national chairperson leaves, we will go with her, but they refused to listen.- We are now riding the moving wagon, the NFP,â\200\235 Langa said. Magwaza-Msibi started her Zululand tour by addressing a crowd of supporters at the Holinyoka community hall in Nongoma.

The sleepy rural town came to a standstill as Magwaza-Msibi, accompanied by a large number of police vehicles, drove through the town to greet her supporters.

At Ulundi hundreds of people gathered at the local taxi rank where Magwaza-Msibi addressed them from the back of a police van.

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by Skhumbuzo Miya

THE ANC in KwaZulu-Natal has vehemently denied IFP accusations that it was behind the formation and the bankrolling of the National Freedom Party (NFP), which has been founded by former IFP national chairperson Zanele â\200\234VZâ\200\235 Magwaza-Msibi.

Following the launch of the party, the IFP leaked to the media a â\200\234confidentialâ\200\235 memorandum which it said was leaked to it by sources within the ANC. The memorandum insinuates that the ANCâ\200\231s national executive committee (NEC) was involved in coercing Magwaza-Msibi to establish the party.

The memorandum, dated December 20, 2010, said the organisation has taken a decision to accommodate Magwaza-Msibi in its ranks and offer her an MEC position.

â\200\234Although the NEC'is scaptical [sic] about it, because this might cause a recipe for violence between the two parties in the province, Mrs Magwaza-Msibi has accepted an offer of being appointed as MEC. -

â\200\234The NEC has taken a resolution to give her the support during her troubles with the IFP and also on the day of a court decision.

â\200\234The ANCYL has thrown its.

wait [sic] behind Mrs Magwaza-Msibi and also vowed to mobilize the youth to ensure that

all IFP strongholds in Zululand

are destabilised and taken over through propaganda mechanisms ... Inkatha must die once and for all,â\200\235 reads the purported memorandum. .

IFP = leader ~ Mangosuthu Buthelezi also alluded to the fact that the ANC was behind the formation of the NFP. .

â\200\234The split'in the IFP is not about policies and values, but about personal ambition.

â\200\234Another facet of this political phenomenon is the ruling

party attracting within its fold- all other components of black -

society, which spellsthe demise of the democracy we fought for

for so many generations.

â\200\234The new party was registered months ago and there are plenty of indications that it received financial support from the very political forces which the IFPâ\200\231s democratic vigilance

â\200\234intends to hold accountable and

keep undercheckandbalance.â\200\235 ANC KZN provincial secretary Sihle Zikalala said that the

ANC needs no new party in or-

Former IFP chairperson Zanele Magwaza-Msibi addresses thou-

~sands of her supporters as she launches her new party, known as

the National Freedom Party, in Durban. The IFP breakaway is seen to target IFP strongholds such as Zululand, where Magwaza-Msibi

-der for its support base to expand. â\200\234We have equally noticed

the desperate attempts by the

IFP of trying to portray the formation of this new party as

sponsored by .the ANC,

â\200\234The fake copy of minutes whichthe Buthelezi and the IFP are distributing, have been gen-

was the party-elected mayor. Photo: SKHUMBUZO MIYA

erated to try to hide away from the embarrassment of their dying party.â\200\235 -

During thelaunch of the NIP, Magwaza-Msibi denied having received funds fromthe ANC or

_ being involved in any clandest-

tine meetings with the presi-

dent of the ANC.