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ESKOM LOAD-SHEDDING: MORE THAN A HANGOVER FROM THE ZUPTAS

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The phenomenon of load-shedding is hanging over the festive season of 2018 like a dark cloud. For many, across the country, their festivities might happen by candlelight, which may add to the ambience but will predictably cast a shadow over any possible and much-needed economic recovery.

Naive South Africans believed that with a new President and a new Minister of Public Enterprises, plus a new Eskom Board, Eskom should be functioning optimally, and load-shedding was something of the past and would be over. The fact is that corruption and mismanagement cast a long shadow and cannot be turned around quickly. Additionally, incapable, inexperienced and corrupt officials (evidenced by the design faults at Medupi and Kusile) can't be fired at will without the requisite due process, which is a supreme irony, considering the damage that they have caused. It is therefore important to state that the present load-shedding - with feeble excuses from Eskom about lack of capacity and needed maintenance, and uranium left out to get wet - is a bad hangover from the Zupta era. So is the fact that Eskom is in deep financial crisis and continuously dependent on State bail-outs.

The concern is that Eskom's problems cannot - after a year of a new Board and new management - only be blamed on the past. The question must be asked whether the new Board and management have done enough to take Eskom in a new direction, having learnt from past mistakes. What has been done about the dubious contracts with Gupta suppliers? What has been done about the enormous labour and management costs of the organisation? What has been done about bad management of the myriad managers at Eskom? It is also concerning that the Minister and the President are silent on this important issue. We believe that the nation deserves better than load-shedding and feeble excuses.