

North West is 'divided'

ANC: ACHIEVING PARTY UNITY IN PROVINCE IS UNLIKELY, SAYS ANALYST

» **Big guns move in as factionalism and infighting dominate landscape.**

Eric Naki

Achieving unity among ANC structures in the North West will be a difficult task for Luthuli House to accomplish as there is so much at stake for everybody and a lot of unfinished business.

This is the view of Professor Andre Duvenhage, an expert on ANC/alliance politics at the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, who believed everybody was pulling in different directions in the province.

Also, he argued, the Supra Mahumapelo factor was still central in the continuing disunity among ANC structures in North West.

With the Jacob Zuma faction now isolated due to the marginalisation of Ace Magashule and Jacob Zuma by court processes, North West was the last hope for their political survival.

This week, Luthuli House dispatch its top brass to North West in an attempt to contain conflict and disunity among its structures there.

The national working committee (NWC) led by President Cyril Ramaphosa chose officials to handle the situation.

They covered the entire province in a programme of rebuilding party structures and holding talks with various party regional and provincial structures in Rustenburg, Potchefstroom, Ganyesa and Mahikeng.

The discussions would culminate in a virtual report-back by the NWC members on what they achieved.

Attempts to get response from ANC national spokesperson Pule Mabe for the past two days proved fruitless. He ignored WhatsApp queries sent to him about the NWC visit to North West.

"I don't say it's impossible, but unity is going to be very difficult,"



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Ethiopians from the Tigray region living in South Africa protest outside the department of international relations and cooperation in Pretoria yesterday, calling for an end to Ethiopia's ongoing internal conflict. Picture: AFP

said Duvenhage. "I don't see the ANC putting a proper process in place to address these problems.

"There is too much conflict at all levels – provincial, regional and the municipalities.

"The majority of municipalities in North West are under administration due to this ongoing conflict within the ANC."

In 2019, the province was expected to hold an elective provincial conference to elect a new provincial executive committee, but it failed due to infighting.

The current interim provincial committee became unpopular when it embarked on a cleanup at municipalities. It recently ordered eight officials – including mayors – speakers and chief whips to step down, but this was meant with massive resistance.

The visit by the ANC top brass was seen as an intervention to impose unity. The leadership was

hoping to have ended all divisions before the upcoming ANC national general council (NGC) scheduled for early next year.

"There is severe conflict among ANC structures in the province. You cannot separate the conflict that is happening in the party at provincial and regional level with the one at the municipalities," said Duvenhage.

He said the Zuma/Magashule group, the David Mabuza/Paul Mashatile premier league group and the Ramaphosa group had conflicting interests. Besides these, former premier Supra Mahumapelo remained influential in the province.

"There are those who say if Supra is not accommodated, there will be no unity in the province and they also have ghost structures which add to the conflict.

"The Magashule/Zuma faction could target the ANC branches to

mobilise them against the judiciary. Unity is going to be very difficult because there is too much conflict at all levels in the province," Duvenhage said.

The expert envisaged a revival of the conflict between Mahumapelo and his old foes, Nono Maloyi and China Dodovu, in the new power structure.

The ANC hoped that redeploying both Mahumapelo and Dodovu to parliament would help.

Mahumapelo chairs the tourism portfolio committee while Dodovu chairs the select committee on cooperative governance, traditional affairs, water and sanitation and human settlements.

Redeployment is an old ANC trick to separate party enemies to avoid having two bulls in one kraal. Former President Thabo Mbeki employed the same strategy when he redeployed Magashule from Free State to parliament when he appointed Magashule's archrival, Mosisua Lekota as the province's premier.

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