

All eyes on Magashule at NEC

The integrity commission and the 'plot' are on the national executive committee meeting's agenda

Paddy Harper & Dineo Bendile

Proposals by ANC secretary general Ace Magashule that the party's integrity commission, which investigates claims of corruption or misconduct by its members, acts on the instruction of his office have been shot down by the party's national leadership.

The ANC national working committee (NWC), at a recent meeting, rejected placing the commission under the control of the secretary general's office.

Instead, the NWC, which meets on September 28, and the national executive committee (NEC), which sits the same day, are likely to ratify an autonomous integrity commission able to initiate its own investigations.

Two NWC members, who asked not to be named, confirmed the integrity commission would be "getting to work" after its terms of reference and membership are ratified by the NEC.

"Conference said the integrity commission must be set up by the NWC and the NEC by the end of June. It has been set up and the membership discussed by the NWC. This [compo-

sition] now needs to be ratified by the NEC," the NWC member said.

The conference resolved to establish a new integrity body because its existing structure was regarded as toothless.

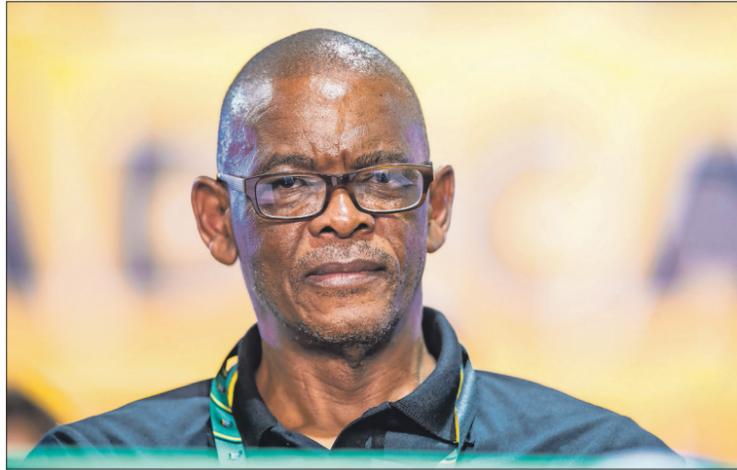
"The terms of reference were sent back," the NWC member said. "The secretary general had put in a clause that, before the integrity commission could investigate somebody, it had to get approval from the secretary general's office."

This meant his office, and not the commission, would decide who to investigate.

"We told him it won't work," the NWC member said. The NWC wanted the integrity committee to be able to institute investigations "all on its own".

The NEC is also expected to ratify Magashule's report on the process of auditing membership in the provinces and regions. The report, presented to the NWC, found that Mpumalanga had 400 wards but 508 ANC branches, an indication that branches were cloned when the ANC's deputy president, David Mabuza, was ANC provincial chairman and premier of that province.

The report has heightened tensions



Order: ANC secretary general Ace Magashule's report on auditing party membership is expected to be ratified. Photo: Delwyn Verasamy

between Magashule and Mabuza, a one-time ally of Magashule and former president Jacob Zuma.

A provincial general council meeting, at which elect replacements would be chosen for Mabuza and other provincial executive committee members who had been elected to the NEC, has not sat because the process of consolidating cloned branches has stuttered, said ANC sources in the Mpumalanga.

Anti-Mabuza branches in Mpumalanga, which threatened court action should the council sit, have demanded the provincial lead-

ership be dissolved and replaced with a task team.

Ronnie Malomane, a spokesperson for the branches, said they met an NEC delegation last week and agreed to suspend their court application pending the outcome of the NEC meeting.

The NWC has already suggested that ANC provincial and regional executive committees that had missed the August conference cut-off date should be dissolved and replaced with task teams.

The NEC will have to process this decision, the NWC member said.

The motivation for the decision was to avoid potential court action over structures that had outlived their term of office and remained in place during the list processes ahead of elections, he said.

Magashule's meeting with Zuma at the Maharani Hotel in Durban, allegedly as part of a plot to unseat President Cyril Ramaphosa, will also be on the meeting's agenda.

"Ace will have to explain," the NWC member said.

Zuma is also expected to attend the meeting.

A staunch Ramaphosa supporter and NEC member, who also spoke on condition of anonymity, said he believed it "stupid" to have that meeting on the NEC's agenda.

Although he believed Magashule's conduct wasn't doing the party any good, no evidence had been presented to prove he was planning to oust Ramaphosa.

"How do you come to [an NEC] meeting and say you want to discuss Ace because he met with someone? Do you know how stupid that is?" he said.

"Someone must be able to say: 'Here is the evidence. Here is a video or a tape. Listen to them.' Then we can do something about it. But if they just met? Our suspicions [that there is a plot] can be legitimate but they don't qualify to be discussed [without evidence]."

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Mahumapelo rejects task team offer

Paddy Harper

Axed North West premier Supra Mahumapelo has declined an appointment to the ANC's provincial task team, saying he would not be part of the purge currently under way in the ruling party.

The task team was set up by Luthuli House to run the ANC in the province until after next year's national elections.

Instead, Mahumapelo has gone on the offensive, accusing the governing party of conducting a "purge" against him since its elective conference at Nasrec in December.

The move by the former premier, who is a staunch ally of former president Jacob Zuma and who was recalled over the collapse of the North West government, comes as members of his disbanded provincial executive committee (PEC) prepare to go to court to challenge the decision by the national executive committee (NEC) to remove it from office.

Mahumapelo, whose name has been linked to the proposed establishment of a new political party comprising disgruntled Zuma supporters, told ANC secretary general Ace Magashule this week in a letter that he would not accept the post.

Mahumapelo had been included

in the provincial task team in a bid to create stability in the ANC in the province, and his refusal appears to be his attempt to show the leadership the middle finger.

In a letter to Magashule, Mahumapelo said that, although he appreciated the view that he could assist in building the ANC in the province, the provincial task team was the direct result of a "purge" that had been "building since Nasrec".

"There is a group within the NEC and the province which started working on this 'project dissolve' just before and after Nasrec," he said. "All means opposite to the democratic values of the ANC were used as a means to achieve this political objective, aimed at projecting some of us as pariahs in our own organisation," he said.

"While the NEC has the power to decide anything, this decision goes against the spirit of ANC unity and renewal, and time will prove this," he added.

Mahumapelo said the branches had been undermined by a "mob", which was now "being catapulted and clothed with PTT [provincial task team] membership".

"I hope leadership [will] understand that I can't behave differently from my political conscience and conviction," he said.

Former North West ANC provincial secretary Susan Dantjie and other members of the dissolved PEC have indicated their intention to go to court to challenge the decision to dissolve the committee.

Attempts to obtain comment from ANC spokesperson Pule Mabe were unsuccessful at the time of publication.

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