



# ANC SUCCESSION DEBATE

## A NON-STARTER

**UPDATED REMINDER TO ALL ANC STRUCTURES NEC, PECS,  
RECS AND BECS AND MEMBERSHIP**

**29 DECEMBER 2024**



In recent days a narrative has emerged in the public discourse suggesting a number of senior leaders are involved in a succession race for leadership positions at the next ANC National Conference in 2027. This narrative is driven by the belief that the ANC must essentially exist as a tool to contest power in order to advance self-aggrandisement. A belief suggestive that the ANC is a feeding trough, hence an insatiable scramble for leadership.

This narrative is premised on a misguided analysis of our body politic, whether by default or by design. It is equally a mischievous effort aimed at detracting us from the task at hand of renewal and reversing our electoral fortunes. This goes against the constitutionally stated duty for all ANC members that is underpinned by selflessness and seeking no personal material gain but to voluntarily improve the lives of our people.

This reductionist approach to ANC leadership issues may on the surface pretend to be about the individuals concerned, when in fact it is an agenda aimed at clandestinely driving a dim view on what the organization stands for. This therefore means that whenever the ANC seeks to self-correct, the naysayers will find an opportunity to drive this narrative deeper, a narrative that seeks to perceptively divorce the movement from the masses of the people.

Those peddling this narrative seek to achieve particular political ends by setting us on a destructive path characterised by mistrust and suspicion. We will not go down this path and will not be hoodwinked into engaging in factional debates that do

not add value to the renewal of the ANC. The May 2024 electoral outcomes plunged us into uncharted waters that forced us to make hard political choices. These were necessary to enable us to remain in a position where we would advance transformation and accelerate our efforts to improve the lives of our people. The new reality also forced us to contend with the emergence of the MK Party, which had the effect of eroding our support base.

The moment we find ourselves in is aptly characterized by Charles Dickson when he says, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.”

The contradictions brought about by what the NEC characterised as a strategic setback of the national democratic revolution (NDR), demands of us to make critical trade offs and employ unpopular tactics in achieving strategic advantage in the midst of competing ideologies within the Government of National Unity (GNU) environment. However, we are under no illusion that ANC Policy and manifesto commitments remain our lodestar in navigating the stormy waters of our latter-day political landscape.

The advent of the GNU is a tactical choice we have made in order to rebuild the ANC’s electoral base and reconnect with communities in the run-up to the local government elections. We have never been under any illusion that the GNU is a means to an end, and therefore not a permanent feature of the political



landscape we envisage. Our primary objective is to achieve an outright electoral majority that would enable us to govern without reliance on other parties. Such a victory is neither for its own sake nor for the leaders, but to enable accelerated national transformation and deliver on our manifesto commitments.

The shifting political sands in our body politic demand of the ANC to find a path that will advance its strategic objectives, while remaining true to its values and character. Such a path must translate into a practical expression of its manifesto commitments to realise the dreams and aspirations of the citizenry, as an integral pillar in building a national democratic society that is truly non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous. The Statement of Intent and the GNU minimum programme are a clear testament of this.

As we approach the local government elections in 2026, we are hard at work addressing the root causes of the declined electoral support and rebuilding our structures on the ground. But most importantly, we are consolidating our service delivery mechanisms so that no one is left behind as we forge the kind society envisaged in our country's Constitution. In this regard, ANC branches must champion the causes of their communities and be responsive to the challenges these communities face.

The dynamic relationship between ANC structures and its deployees across all centres of state power is crucial in unblocking service delivery challenges and instilling hope that the ANC can make a better life for all a lived reality. This can only be achieved through tangible action that our people can see, feel and experience.



In the same vein, our commitment to the renewal of the ANC has never been greater. Renewal must be understood within the context of the primary task of the ANC, which remains the mobilisation of all the classes and strata that objectively stand to benefit from the cause of social change.

The ANC has always understood that to lead the NDR successfully, it has to renew itself so that it remains relevant to the changing conditions of the struggle both locally and internationally.

We remain firmly on track towards realising this goal and will not be deterred by fictitious contests that seek to undermine our efforts to rebuild and renew the ANC. The 56th national conference is still a long way off. Therefore, characterization of actions of individual leaders as positioning themselves for one leadership position or the other remains nothing more than a figment of the imagination of those peddling these stories.

The NEC at its recently-held meeting took a number of important decisions on this matter, which serve as a guide to all our structures on engaging on leadership matters in the run-up to the 2027 elective conference. The implementation of these will be guided by a Perspective on Leadership which will be a product of discussion with all our structures. This will guide relevant processes at Branch, Regional and Provincial levels.

The influence of money in ANC electoral processes has proven to be a destructive tendency that must be nipped in the bud. The Electoral Committee, led by Cde Kgalema

Motlanthe has therefore been given a mandate to take an incisive look at this practice and make firm recommendations in addressing it. Equally destructive is the leaking of internal discussions that serves the purpose of projecting the ANC as a fractured organisation in order to advance a particular perspective in the public discourse. A Standing Committee of the NEC will investigate these leaks in order to strengthen the organisation and ensure that decisions of the ANC are communicated by its Secretary-General and not through faceless sources.

These decisions are foregrounded by the principle that no one is allowed to engage or promote themselves in the name of the ANC for any position in the build-up to the 2027 national conference. Anyone who crosses this line by engaging in leadership contestations and discussions outside the agreed approach will face the consequence and be subjected to disciplinary processes.

In the same vein, we are mindful that the ANC should not allow itself to be drawn into premature leadership discussions that seek to divert its focus on addressing the strategic setback of the NDR. Such distraction continuously play themselves out with some on the media platforms pitting leaders against one another in the name of succession. Our leaders must have the presence of mind to rise above these and resist the temptation to react to such provocations.

**CDE FIKILE MBALULA**  
**ANC SECRETARY-GENERAL**