

New ANC leadership must get closer to the people — Mbeti

Time for younger generation to play bigger part in politics, former national chair says

SITHANDIWE VELAPHI

Former ANC national chair Baleka Mbeti said the ruling party's leadership elected in December would have to find ways of resolving issues that upset South Africans.

Mbeti said she would not be available to contest for positions at the party's 55th national elective conference set to take place in Nasrec, Johannesburg, from December 16.

The conference is expected to be attended by 4,250 delegates, ANC acting secretary-general Paul Mashatile said recently.

ANC president Cyril Ramaphosa is expected to face a showdown with former health minister Dr Zweli Mkhize, co-operative governance and traditional affairs minister Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, deputy president David

Mabuza and tourism minister Lindiwe Sisulu for the party's president position.

Speaking to the media on the sidelines of the Nelson Mandela Museum's African Liberation Heritage Indaba at the East London ICC on Friday, Mbeti said it was time for the younger generation to claim their space in party politics.

"I retired from active politics when I left parliament before the last [general] elections.

"I was already on the way out of active politics when I left the position of national assembly speaker. I have been in politics since the 1970s and I think younger people must take over," said Mbeti.

"But that does not mean I have nothing to contribute. With my knowledge of coming from different perspective and exposure, I will continue to offer my contribution."

Mbeti said the leadership of the ANC elected at the conference would have to get closer to the people and understand



BACK TO BASICS: Former ANC national chair Baleka Mbeti speaking to the media in East London on Friday. Picture: SITHANDIWE VELAPHI

their frustrations.

"I would like to see a leadership that is in sync with the views, the feelings and the aspirations of the people.

"Many times I get the sense

that our people are upset about issues facing them. I think we have got to try and find ways of getting closer to understanding where those gaps emanate from."

Asked about her preference for the ANC's top six leadership, she said: "I have not applied my mind on that. The ANC Women's League team that I am leading has not yet held that

discussion."

Mbeti said delegates needed to be mindful of gender equality when they elected the leadership.

"The general policy implementation issue we are raising as we go to the conference is that in the delegations the branches are electing to go to the conference, they have got to remember that the ANC has taken a position of having 50/50 representation of men and women.

"Therefore let us apply that principle practically when we choose delegates. When we exercise our minds on leadership positions, let us take seriously the implementation of the policies that we have already adopted.

"The important thing is to balance and move forward together. That is very good because that is what's built the country," she said.

Mbeti was the ANC chair for two terms until the 54th national conference in 2017.

ADM buying car to cut security costs

APHIWE DEKLERK

Amathole district municipality chief whip Nanziwe Rulashe's life is still under threat, to the point that the council has decided to buy a new car as part of her protection detail.

The decision was taken by a special ADM council sitting on Thursday after it was informed by speaker Onke Mgunqulu that a security threat assessment had come back stating Rulashe's life was still in danger.

ANC member Rulashe made national news earlier this year when she was caught on video being dragged along the ground by a security guard inside municipal premises.

A few days later, unknown gunmen entered her home in East London and shot at her bedroom.

She was not home at the time and no-one was injured. After the shooting, she went into hiding and the municipality provided her with security following a threat assessment by crime intelligence.

The Daily Dispatch has previously reported that her security costs skyrocketed, with the council billed for close to R1m in just three months.

Mgunqulu told the council they were paying close to R300,000 monthly for her security and that R120,000 of that amount was for vehicle hire.

He told the council they would write to Cogta MEC Zolile Williams to ask that the office of the chief whip be treated in a similar manner to that of the speaker and mayor after they had made the position a full-time one.

This means Rulashe would be entitled to similar security benefits as guided by the mayoral handbook.

Mgunqulu did not disclose the amount the municipality was going to use to purchase the vehicle.

"Councillor Rulashe had security services protecting her. They were procured for three months. So by the beginning of May their contract was terminated without us receiving the threat analysis report," said Mgunqulu.

He was referring to Rulashe's security being withdrawn by the council in May after it had not received a security threat assessment.

"We are tabling to this council to say the threat analysis still says councillor Rulashe is under threat, so therefore this is to recommend that the council condones the deviation related to the procurement of security services for [her]."

"The second one is that the council consider purchasing a vehicle for the use of councillor Rulashe's security. Remember, the reason we are coming to the second recommendation is that

currently we are paying close to R300,000 [for security]."

"Part of that money, which is close to R120,000, is for the hiring of the vehicle she is using. So to cut down the costs, if we buy the vehicle, [it] is going to be part of the fleet of the municipality and we also discussed that we need to request the MEC of Cogta, so that the office of the chief whip be treated [the same as that] of the mayor and the speaker to cut down the costs," said Mgunqulu.

The council supported the proposal but opposition councillors first questioned how the car was going to be used.

DA councillor Cecil Auld said she was not against the purchase of the car.

"I am sort of confused because if we purchase the vehicle for her, we are presuming then that those security guards are going to be in the vehicle at all times," said Auld.

UDM councillor Similo Sitele questioned the cost implications of buying the car for Rulashe.

"I have got no problem for councillor Rulashe to have a nice, beautiful car that can protect her, but also the issues of the cost implication in relation to security [needs to be disclosed]."

Ntsangani explained that the vehicle would be an asset for the municipality and they would then hire security personnel and firearms for them, leading to a decreased cost.

Sitele said the council should insist that the vehicle be for Rulashe's use only until there was no longer a threat to her security.

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FIGHTING FOR EQUALITY: Khoi-San activist Christian Martin attended the recent meeting at the House of Traditional and Khoi-San in Bisho. Martin and a delegation of Khoi leaders also attended the meeting. Picture: THEO JEPHTHA

Khoi-San still excluded from economic opportunities, activist says

SITHANDIWE VELAPHI

Khoi-San activist Christian Martin says the Khoi-San people are being excluded from economic opportunities.

Speaking in Bisho after deputy president David Mabuza addressed the Eastern Cape House of Traditional Leaders on Thursday, Martin said the Employment Equity Act defined black people as Africans, coloured, Indian and Chinese.

"The Act does not talk about Khoi-San. [These] people are suffering. Our children don't get job opportunities.

The economic opportunities that are available ask for African or black people.

"When we apply, we are being told that we are not Africans. Neither do we qualify as black people," Martin said.

"If you talk about development you realise nothing is happening in our areas. We have been omitted when it comes to employment equity. We don't get employment and socioeconomic opportunities."

Martin has called for a review of the Employment Equity Act.

"I used to call myself a coloured until

I spoke to the elders who made me understand that, in fact, I was a Khoi-San descendant.

"We want to be considered Africans. We as the Khoi-San indigenous people were able to welcome Africans from the north and Europeans from the sea but we are the ones pleading to be called Africans.

"We are Africans. We are asking for acknowledgment that we are part of this country," Martin said.

In 2019, President Cyril Ramaphosa signed into law the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Bill, which

sought to transform traditional and Khoi-San institutions in line with constitutional imperatives.

"While certain traditional structures and leadership positions have been recognised by law in compliance with constitutional precepts, there has never before been statutory recognition of the Khoi-San.

"The formal recognition of the Khoi-San communities required enabling legislation to which the president has now assented," Ramaphosa said at the time.

Though they are invited to events in

the Eastern Cape House of Traditional Leaders, Khoi-San people are not members of the house.

This means they are unable to influence the decisions of the house.

Co-operative governance and traditional affairs MEC Zolile Williams said on Thursday plans were in place for Khoi-San leaders to become members of the Eastern Cape House of Traditional Leaders.

"The process has unfolded for the Khoi-San leaders in the province to be the members of the house," Williams said.

Former MK operative Mzimasi Hala finally receives master's degree in history

SIVENATHI GOSA

After giving up his high school career and joining the struggle, former Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) underground operative Mzimasi Hala found the courage to complete his studies and acquire his master's degree in history.

Hala, 63, was awarded his degree on Friday, at the same Rhodes University graduation ceremony where high commissioner to Namibia Thenjiwe Mtintso received an honorary doctorate for her contribution as a freedom fighter and gender activist.

"This was an emotional moment for me," Hala said.

"I cried on the day I was informed I had made it. My wife was the first graduate in our family, and my children followed, so it is an honour for me to be a graduate as well."

Hala's master's thesis documents his experiences and those of other veterans in the ANC's military wing.

The director of security at the department of health shared his

journey on how he went back to school to complete his studies after joining the struggle.

"When I joined the struggle, I knew that it is either I will survive or I will die," he said.

"That was the choice made by the ANC in exile. The first question you were asked was if you wanted to go to school or join the army.

"We all decided to join the army due to the conditions under which we lived in SA.

"I am happy that I have made it, though there are some sad memories, as some of my comrades who I fought with during the apartheid era are no longer here.

"I dedicate this master's degree to those I serve with in Umkhonto we Sizwe."

Hala said he had been led by Mtintso during the struggle, as she was one of the MK commanders in his unit.

"We were not afraid to be led by women in Umkhonto we Sizwe," he said.

"I am very glad that the university has decided to honour her."



CONGRATULATIONS: Former uMkhonto weSizwe veteran Mzimasi Hala completes his masters degree in history. Picture: VELISILE BUKULA

Hala believes SA is ready to be led by women who are capable of making decisions and leading the country.

"The national ANC conference is approaching in Decem-

ber, and the slates circulating do not have many women as presidential candidates — it is always men. But I am sure in the near future, the ANC will have a female president," he said.

Hala joined the struggle in 1978 and was in the ranks of Umkhonto we Sizwe in 1981.

"The person whom I salute today is premier Oscar Mabuzyane, who encouraged

me to enrol in university. He pushed and made sure that I achieved my dream," he said.

Speaking at the graduation ceremony, vice-chancellor Prof Sizwe Mabizela said as the grad-

uates moved on, they should never cease to appreciate the value of learning, the significance of knowledge, the strength of ideas, the merit of asking questions, the usefulness of theory, the need for reason and evidence, the power of logic and the benefits that come from clear thinking and thoughtful argument.

"We are now living through very challenging times," Mabizela said.

"They are graduating at a time of deep uncertainty and anxiety. Our nation is at a crossroads in every conceivable sense — politically, economically, socially, morally and ethically.

"We are in the midst of the worst crises in our 28 years of a democratic dispensation. All about us, we see pervasive and debilitating poverty and deprivation existing alongside obscene and unbridled opulence and vulgar and ostentatious display of ill-gotten material wealth."

He said corruption, greed, nepotism, deceit, impunity,

malfeasance and lawlessness had spiralled out of control and been normalised as an acceptable form of life.

Mabizela wished the graduates success, happiness, discernment and fulfilment in the years ahead.

My wife was the first graduate in our family, and my children followed, so it is an honour for me to be a graduate as well