

SACP also bans Zuma

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SACP asks Zuma to stay away

Military veterans boycott party's national congress

By **Ngwako Modjadji**

The SACP has become the latest structure to reject President Jacob Zuma.

The communist party, which is holding its national congress in Boksburg on the East Rand, has written to the ANC saying it prefers to be addressed by any other leader, just not Zuma.

The move is likely to deepen tensions between Zuma supporters and the SACP.

Cosatu also rejected Zuma during its central committee meeting in May. The SACP and Cosatu have asked Zuma to step down as head of state.

Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa will address the SACP tomorrow.

"The SACP have asked the president to step down as the



Second deputy general secretary of the SACP Solly Mapaila with first deputy general secretary Jeremy Cronin. / MASI LOSI

president of the republic, and we have our ally the ANC to address the congress," SACP second deputy general secretary Solly Mapaila said.

"We felt that it is important,

particularly after the fiasco of the May Day celebrations in Mangaung. We felt that we had initially invited the ANC and would leave it to them to decide who should attend [but] we felt

[it] appropriate that we needed to inform [them] that any delegate would be much better than sending the president whom we have asked to step down."

At a media briefing yesterday, the SACP gave a strong indication that its leadership is likely to remain unchanged.

However, its first deputy general secretary Jeremy Cronin has said he was not available.

Sowetan understands that KwaZulu-Natal secretary Themba Mthembu will take over from Cronin.

"The election of the officials of the SACP and of the incoming central committee is in the hands of delegates," Cronin said. "Let me upfront indicate that I will not be available to return to my current position."

Mapaila said he would not contest SACP general secretary Blade Nzimande, who is seeking another term, because of the political unity of the party.

There have been calls within the SACP for Mapaila to replace Nzimande as the general secretary.

Mapaila also poured cold water on claims that Nzimande was a dictator who decided for the SACP.

Nzimande said the SACP was not short of leaders.

"Do you change leadership when the truck is going fast at a fast speed?" asked Nzimande.

"The next six months are almost unpredictable in terms of what is going to happen. There are these rolling e-mails, you don't know who will be left standing. There is an ANC conference in December and we don't know whether the ANC will manage to unite itself."

Yesterday, leaders of the ANC's Umkhonto weSizwe Military Veterans Association (MKMVA) snubbed the SACP.

MKMVA president Kebby Maphatsoe, known for his strong support for Zuma, said after careful consideration the association decided not to attend the SACP national congress.

"The current unfortunate path that the SACP has taken to disregard the well-established tradition that alliance partners do not prescribe to each other about internal organisational matters by trying to prescribe to the ANC who should be its president," Maphatsoe said.

"MKMVA values the tripartite alliance, but we believe that it is critical for the SACP and Cosatu to return to the fundamentals that made [the] alliance such a great success and formidable force in our liberation struggle."

Mapaila said it was regrettable that MKMVA decided to pull out because of factions.