



AT A CROSSROADS: SACP delegates sing during the 14th Congress of the SACP held in Boksburg, on the East Rand

Picture: MASI LOSI

Cronin warns of 'gangster leadership' in ANC

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THE SA Communist Party is sceptical about the ANC's ability to end the current political crisis through leadership elections at its December conference.

The party's outgoing first deputy general secretary, Jeremy Cronin, raised the prospect of the current dominant faction collapsing the conference at the end of the year should it lose.

He also warned of a possible split if the "premier league" slate wins.

"What happens if the premier league slate wins through hook or crook in December?"

"What happens? Is there perhaps a massive split in the ANC? I mean certainly it's going to be very hard

for the majority of us to remain in ANC position under a gangster leadership," Cronin said.

He was delivering his report on state power to the SACP's 14th congress, where the party is discussing the possibility of contesting elections on its own in 2019.

The "premier league" is the Zuma-aligned faction in the ANC that supports former African Union Commission chair Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma to ascend to the presidency at the end of the year.

The SACP is seen to be supporting ANC deputy president Cyril Ramaphosa, although it has

not publicly endorsed him.

A new candidate for the ANC presidency emerged yesterday, when the Alfred Nzo region in the Eastern Cape endorsed ANC treasurer general Zweli Mkhize for the position.

What happens if premier league slate wins in December?

This could split the Ramaphosa camp, to which Mkhize was seen to be aligned. Official nominations only open in September.

ANC deputy secretary general Jessie Duarte, who was attending the congress — and is aligned to Zuma — said on the sidelines she did not believe the national conference would collapse and that the party was looking at a unified ap-

proach possibly through the president's proposal that the losing presidential candidate automatically becomes deputy president.

The paralysis of the ANC's leadership was at the forefront of the SACP's discussion on elections and reconfiguration of the alliance.

The ANC in its current state was unable to play a leading role.

The group of ANC veterans and stalwarts, who have been pushing for the ANC to hold a national consultative conference (NCC), also addressed the SACP yesterday and accused the leadership of the governing party of not acknowledging that there was a crisis.

The veterans boycotted the ANC's national policy conference last week after it refused to hold a separate NCC.