

# AIC rips into ANC's E Cape leadership

## Party accused of working against possible Matatiele move to KZN

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**A**FRICAN Independent Congress (AIC) president Mandla Galo has hit back at ANC leaders in the Eastern Cape, accusing them of trying to sabotage the incorporation of Matatiele back into KwaZulu-Natal.

Speaking to journalists on the sidelines of a public hearing hosted by the KwaZulu-Natal legislature in Kokstad on the possible incorporation of Matatiele into KZN on Tuesday, Galo claimed he had been told that some ANC leaders were trying to influence residents of Matatiele, including traditional leaders, into resisting the change.

“We discovered that people are being mobilised and told to say they do not want to be part of KZN.

“We are surprised that the Eastern Cape provincial [ANC] would pee on an agreement we entered into with their leadership at national level,” he said.

Galo claimed some people had been called by Matatiele municipal bosses and told they would lose their jobs, including those with the extended public works programme, if they did not fight the change.

Galo threatened that they would approach Minister in the Presidency Jeff Radebe, the convener of the talks about the incorporation of Matatiele when they started in 2016.

The matter would also be escalated to ANC secretary-general Ace Magashule's office.

Galo's claims come days after the Daily Dispatch reported that the Eastern Cape government and ANC had questioned the terms of a coalition agreement made by their na-

tional structures in 2016, saying they could find no convincing reasons for Matatiele to be incorporated into KZN.

Last year the AIC and the ANC's then national leaders agreed to ensure that Matatiele went back to KZN following a signing of a memorandum of understanding outlining the process to reverse the move to the Eastern Cape that took place in 2005.

The Dispatch previously reported that in helping the ANC retain control of Ekurhuleni Metro, the AIC had used Matatiele as a bargaining chip.

On Tuesday, Galo alleged that provincial ANC leaders had approached traditional leaders, telling them they would become the subjects of Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini if they allowed the change to take place.

He also said they were told that if the reincorporation were to happen, they could find themselves not being able to practice some of their customs and traditions.

The AIC leader said Matatiele had regressed when it came to infrastructure and services under the Eastern Cape, with hospitals and clinics even running out of medicine.

Many roads had also become impassable due to neglect.

Under KZN's jurisdiction patients would be transferred to hospitals in nearby towns with better resourced health facilities, he added.

Attempts to source a comment from ANC provincial secretary Lulama Ngcukayitobi on Galo's claims proved unsuccessful yesterday as his phone rang unanswered and he did not respond to a text message.

But Matatiele municipal spokeswoman Olwethu Gwanya rubbished the claims, saying the transfer of the area back to KZN was reliant on neither the wishes of her municipal bosses nor those of the regional ANC leadership.

Instead, she said, the municipality, working with Bhisho, had met with residents this week to sensitise them about the planned public hearings and explain that their voices would determine where Matatiele ended up.

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