

Masualle's heel-dragging on reshuffle raises PEC's ire

By **ZINGISA MVUMVU**

Senior Political Reporter

ANC bosses in Calata House are livid over premier Phumulo Masualle's refusal to reshuffle his cabinet despite instructions by the party to do so.

The ANC provincial executive committee (PEC) met Masualle twice last month to instruct him to carry out a cabinet "reconfiguration" with the aim of strengthening governance in the province.

This was after the provincial bosses had received the thumbs-up from Luthuli House to instruct Masualle to make the changes to his cabinet.

However, weeks later, Masualle has yet to carry out the changes.

ANC provincial secretary Lulama

Ngcukayitobi said the party was "not taking kindly" to the protracted postponement of the reshuffle as it was affecting both the party and the government's functioning in the province.

Ngcukayitobi said Masualle was yet to get back to the ANC about when he would announce the reshuffle. He said they last interacted with the premier about a fortnight ago.

In January, when the PEC first resolved to reshuffle the cabinet, the Daily Dispatch reported that Masualle would be among those axed.

However, the ANC national executive committee (NEC) resolved in March to retain Masualle but allow the PEC to change the cabinet.

Masualle's spokesman, Sonwabo



UNDER PRESSURE: Eastern Cape Premier Phumulo Masualle, Cogta Deputy Minister Obed Bapela, Cogta MEC Fikile Xasa and Cogta Minister Zweli Mkhize meet in Mthatha yesterday

Picture: SIKHO NTSJOBANE

Mbananga, could not be reached for comment at the time of writing yesterday.

In his last recorded comment on the matter, Masualle told the Dispatch two weeks ago that he would issue a media alert when he was ready to announce the cabinet reshuffle.

Among those who face the chop are rural development and agrarian reform MEC Mlibo Qoboshiyane, finance MEC Sakhumzi Somyo and public works MEC Thandiswa Marawu.

The PEC's plan would see cooperative governance and traditional affairs (Cogta) MEC Fikile Xasa move to rural development and agrarian reform and MPL Xolile Nqatha re-

placing Xasa.

Ngcukayitobi yesterday said that the PEC was displeased that Masualle had not acted as per the party mandate to reshuffle the cabinet.

"The delay works against the will of the ANC because the problems facing our government are mounting.

"This does not give confidence among ordinary people that the current cabinet is able to resolve the issues they have been raising with the cabinet," he said.

Ngcukayitobi added that Calata House was seeking a date to meet with Luthuli House bosses to update them on developments in the province.

— zingisam@dispatch.co.za