

Masualle 'unhappy' with reshuffle

‘All of us serve at the behest of the ANC’

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PREMIER Phumulo Masualle has admitted he is being forced to axe members of his executive committee against his wishes.

Confirming at a media briefing yesterday that he was reluctant to fire the MECs this week, he said: “In our lives as cadres we have had to do things we are unhappy about.”

He said he hoped the MECs who got the chop would understand that it was the ANC that appointed and removed cadres from office.

Masualle was speaking after months of internal wrangling.

Signalling that his hand was forced, he said the imminent reshuffle of the exco would happen whether he personally agreed with it or not.

“All of us serve at the behest of the ANC. And when it is time that the ANC thinks differently on the deployment, usually the relevant authorities would do the interface with their deployees to advise them on the course of events, but those are things done internally,” he said.

Masualle has been under im-

mense pressure from early this year to make changes to the provincial government political leadership as mandated by the ANC provincial executive committee (PEC), whose recommendations were approved by Luthuli House.

However, months have gone by without the premier pulling the trigger, to the point that last week alliance partners in the province ganged up on him and accused him of being “defiant” in a joint press statement.

Masualle yesterday brushed off the criticism, saying: “I can only laugh at that because there has never been such.”

According to him, the delay was caused by “engagement and deliberations with ANC leadership” to arrive at a stage of readiness to make the changes – and that time was now.

“I can confirm we have had engagements and deliberations that have brought us to a stage that we are ready to make such a pronouncement,” he said.

The premier sidestepped questions seeking detail about which MECs were likely to bite the dust and why. He simply said all would be unveiled when the reshuffle was announced today or tomorrow.

The Dispatch understands that Masualle tried to further delay the reshuffle, hoping to present his own key performance targets for MECs whom he has previous described as “the A-team”, but this move was

shot down by national party bosses on Monday.

He was told it was the PEC that had the final say on who would be in the provincial exco and who not.

It is believed that Masualle tried in vain to defend rural development and agrarian reform MEC Mlibo Qoboshiyane, as well as finance MEC Sakhumzi Somyo. Both are in the firing line, along with public works MEC Thandiswa Marawu and social development MEC Nancy Sihlwayi.

Masualle yesterday said the cabinet he appointed in 2014 when he came into office had made “significant advances” but he acknowledged there were also shortcomings.

“We have had areas where we made significant advances and there are areas where we have not made that much headway given the significant challenges we faced,” said Masualle.

“But, fairly speaking, we have made inroads in terms of bringing about transformation within the space of the resources availed to the province.

“Of course, at a point a number of factors get to be considered and that would influence the course of action taken. The deliberations with the leadership of the ANC would have been among the things we had to consider.”

Masualle concluded by saying he would invite the media “soon” to attend the announcements. —
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