



NEW MEC for Human Settlements and Public Works Peggy Nkonyeni is the only SACP member in the 10-member cabinet. | African News Agency (ANA)

■ POLITICS

SACP members in KZN 'sidelined in MEC list'

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THE SACP in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) said some of its senior members were sidelined during the appointment of MECs and they believe the ANC did not consult with them enough prior to the announcement of the provincial cabinet.

Peggy Nkonyeni, the new MEC for Human Settlements and Public Works, is the only SACP member in the 10-member cabinet.

SACP provincial chairperson James Nxumalo said he was disappointed that he and Themba Mthembu, former agriculture and rural development MEC, had been left out, but the matter was now "water under the bridge".

After his swearing in on Monday, Premier Sihle Zikalala announced his 10-member cabinet and replaced Mthembu with Bongi Sithole-Moloi, the former MEC for arts, culture, sport and recreation.

SACP second deputy provincial secretary Msizi Nhlapo told Independent Media yesterday that the ruling party should have thoroughly consulted with the SACP before finalising the provincial cabinet. "On the eve of the inauguration at around 8pm to 9pm, Mthembu and James (Nxumalo) were asked to meet the ANC leadership and were informed about the decision.

"They (Mthembu and Nxumalo) said although they respected the ANC processes we note that we have not been correctly engaged," said Nhlapo.

Nhlapo said Zikalala should have followed the example of other provinces, one of them being North West, that had delayed the appointment of their cabinets to allow proper engagements with its alliance partners – the SACP, Cosatu and SA National Civic Organisation (Sanco).

Nxumalo said the three meetings between the ANC and SACP were not enough for proper engagements to take place.

"We were very straightforward and principled in saying on matters of deployment in provinces, the provincial secretary of the SA Communist Party must be prioritised, especially because Mthembu was an MEC and we had thought he would go back to the cabinet even if he were to be deployed

to another portfolio. I am also there but they did it their own way and we accepted it," said Nxumalo.

Nxumalo said the SACP was watching to see if the party would be accommodated during the appointment of portfolio committee chairpersons.

ANC provincial secretary Mdumiseni Ntuli said the ANC consulted twice with its alliance partners to discuss the issue of the speaker, deputy speaker and executive.

"When they say it was not enough, I am not sure if that statement is correct as we only closed the meetings when our discussions had been concluded. At the meeting nobody asked for the meetings to be rescheduled as a result of not enough time being given to the discussions," said Ntuli.