



Publication: SundayTimesNCO - Main
Title: SENIOR MPs NOT YET OFF THE HOOK ON CYRIL VOTE
Publish date: 18 Dec 2022
Page: 8

Reach: 7000
AVE: R 144320.00
Author: Staff Reporter

Sisulu, Mkhize and others 'absent' face possible sanction from incoming NEC

By AMANDA KHOZA

● Six MPs who were absent from the Phala Phala impeachment vote in parliament this week without explanation are not off the hook and may still face the party's wrath, including presidential hopeful Zweli Mkhize and tourism minister Lindiwe Sisulu.

The ANC gave notice this week that it would institute disciplinary proceedings against four MPs who defied the party line and voted in favour of an impeachment process against President Cyril Ramaphosa.

Although the national working committee initially said the four MPs, including co-operative governance minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, should face disciplinary charges, the NEC later decided to leave the matter to the incoming NEC.

Dlamini-Zuma, who openly flouted a national executive committee (NEC) resolution to vote against impeachment, heads the list of prominent members who had already been notified of pending disciplinary action.

Sisulu's troubles are likely to be compounded by the leaking of a telephone conversation which she had with former EFF secretary-general Godrich Gardee in which she appears to be colluding against Ramaphosa.

Others are international relations committee chair Supra Mahumapelo, former mineral resources minister Mosebenzi Zwane and MP Mervyn Dicks. They are all known opponents of Ramaphosa.

The incoming NEC will also decide what action to take against absentees, including a deputy transport minister Sindi Chikunga after it emerged that she missed Tuesday's Phala Phala vote because she travelled abroad without authorisation, according to a report of the national working committee presented to the NEC meeting on Thursday.

The report shows Chikunga is among the six ANC MPs being probed by the chief whip and party bosses over missing the vote.

Chikunga denied she had gone to London without permission from transport minister Fikile Mbalula and Ramaphosa to attend an International Maritime Organisation event.

Chikunga said the invitation was initially extended to Mbalula, but he deployed her.

"I even wrote an apology letter to the speaker of parliament because the sitting had been planned for an earlier date and then it was rescheduled for December 13."

Chikunga said she left the country on December 10, three days before the vote, accompanied by her support staff.

"When the trip was paid for I did inform the chief whip about my frustration and she sent a message to me after voting."

"If I had cancelled at that time I was going to attract accusations of irregular and wasteful expenditure, including for all the ground transport in the UK, and ... South Africa ... I would have not been present at a very crucial climate change meeting and that could have left the country isolated."

She said the meeting was so important that if South Africa did not attend "our ports will essentially remain white elephants".

Chikunga shared a letter dated December 5, signed by state law adviser Geoffrey

Senior MPs not yet off the hook on Cyril vote



ANC NEC member Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma at the party's national elective conference. Picture: Sandile Ndlovu



Lindiwe Sisulu reportedly 'left the chamber after the debate.'



Zweli Mkhize, who is contesting for the post of ANC president, did not vote.

“If I had cancelled at that time I was going to attract accusations of irregular and wasteful expenditure”

Sindi Chikunga

Mphahuli giving authorisation for her to travel to the UK from December 10 to 14.

Apart from Mkhize and Sisulu, who "left the chamber after the debate", only to find herself locked out when the voting took place, other MPs who may also be in trouble

include Bongani Bongo, chair of the appropriations committee Sifiso Buthelezi and Siphokuhle Patrien.

Backbencher Thabo Mmutle is under scrutiny after he was "locked outside the chamber when the doors closed".

The only MPs given permission to be absent were defence committee chair Cyril Xaba, who was in hospital; Philliswe Xaba-Ntshaba and Simphiwe Mbatia, who were both on sick leave, and Sibusiso Kula, who had a bereavement.

"The chief national presenter has been requested to take the necessary steps to institute disciplinary proceedings against the above members," says the report.

Ramaphosa survived a possible impeachment hearing over Phala Phala when 212 ANC MPs, supported by two from Cope and Al-Jamiah, voted against the section 89 panel of experts report that found he had a prima facie case to answer over the theft of foreign currency from his farm.

Opposition parties mustered 148 votes in favour of the report. Two MPs from the Good party, public works minister Patricia de Lille and Brett Heron, abstained from the vote.

De Lille serves in the cabinet at the invitation of Ramaphosa.