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Paths to peak of party power

TOP SEVEN: MOST OF THE NEWLY ELECTED HAVE CLOUDS OF SUSPICION OVER THEIR HEADS

➔ **Maropene Ramokgopa is the exception and has a clean slate.**

Profile



Cyril Ramaphosa was re-elected ANC president.
Picture: Nigel Sibanda

Cyril still on shaky ground

Pragmatic, wealthy and ambitious, Cyril Ramaphosa was re-elected leader of the ANC yesterday, despite being badly damaged by a cash heist scandal that has dogged him for months.

But he is on much shakier ground than when he was first elected party leader in 2017, amid deep divisions within the ANC.

Ramaphosa promised a "new dawn" for South Africa when he became president in 2018, but his image has been dented by scandal and a lacklustre economy.

Details about the huge cash haul, stolen from under sofa cushions, have dealt a massive reputational blow to the man who had pledged to root out graft.

"He was this icon of the cleanup struggle, a paragon of virtue... with this [scandal] came so much doubt on his credentials and a reminder that this is not a superhuman," said political analyst Susan Booysse.

A protégé of Mandela, who described him as one of the most gifted leaders of the "new generation", Ramaphosa stood alongside him when he walked out of jail in 1990.

But after missing out on succeeding Mandela, Ramaphosa went into business.

In 2012, his image was tarnished when police killed 34 striking workers at a mine where he was a non-executive director and had called for a crackdown.

He became Zuma's vice-president in 2014 and was criticised for not speaking out against graft.

-AFP

Deputy president



Paul Mashatile

Before being elected deputy president of the ANC, Paul Mashatile was ANC treasurer-general from December 2017 and acting ANC secretary-general from January 2022. He was also minister of arts and culture from 2010-2014 in Jacob Zuma's first Cabinet.

He was elected to the Gauteng provincial legislature, before joining the provincial Cabinet for 13 years as MEC for transport and public works (1996-1998) and then as MEC for safety and

security (1998-1999).

Mashatile was premier of Gauteng from 2008 to 2009.

He has been embroiled in a number of scandals as part of the so-called Alex mafia after he allegedly acquired shares in a software company with state contracts.

In 2006, Mashatile, then finance MEC, caused a scandal by spending R96 000 on his government credit card and incurred R250 000 in "entertainment" expenses between February and June of that year.

Two months later, he hosted another government dinner costing R108 000. He was also accused of corruption in administering the Alexandra Renewal Project, which cost R1.3 billion, ahead of the 2019 election. -Compiled by Reitumetse Makwea

Secretary-general



Fikile Mbalula

Fikile Mbalula, currently minister of transport, was appointed to this role by President Cyril Ramaphosa in May 2019.

Like many others, Mbalula began his political career in student politics, making his way up to the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) as president in August 2004-2008, having previously held the post of secretary general 1998-2004.

Joining the big leagues he went on to become manager of the ANC election campaign in the 2009 general elections, and then served as deputy minister of police from 2009-2010, and later became the minister of sport and recreation from 2010-2014.

Following a Cabinet reshuffle by former president Jacob Zuma in 2017, Mbalula was appointed as minister of police.

Mbalula was implicated in the testimony of witnesses, such as former Prasa chair Khanyisile Kweyama, after dissolving the interim Prasa board.

But he said he flagged the state capture allegations but the ANC national executive committee ignored him.

2nd deputy secretary-general



Maropene Ramokgopa

One of the three women in the top seven, Maropene Ramokgopa is known as the youngest mayor in the Eastern Cape.

She was appointed to the mayoral post in 2006 by former president Thabo Mbeki.

She is also the special advisor to President Cyril Ramaphosa on international relations.

She previously served in the ANC's Women's League as the sec-

retary-general.

At 26 years of age, she has already started to serve in executive positions.

She was appointed by former president Jacob Zuma to represent South Africa as the head of mission at the consulate general in Mumbai, India, in 2016.

She served for four years in that position.

Since 2008, Ramokgopa has served on the national executive committee of the ANC's Youth League.

Ramokgopa co-founded the young women's desk and wrote the concept document for the ANCYL.

Following her appointment yesterday, Ramokgopa dismissed allegations she was appointed because of her close proximity to Ramaphosa.

National chair



Gwede Mantashe

Pictures: Nigel Sibanda

Gwede Mantashe, also known as "Tiger", is a former chair of the South African Communist Party and secretary-general of the ANC. On 26 February, 2018, Mantashe was appointed minister of mineral resources.

He started his political career by co-founding and holding influential positions in the

National Union of Mineworkers. He was elected ANC secretary-general in 2007 and became national chair in 2022.

In 2020, he admitted to bribing two *Sunday World* journalists and was also accused of using his foundation to score irregular finances.

Mantashe, and his wife, Noland, were implicated in the project to provide emergency power generation. According to *Daily Maverick*, legal papers suggested the decision to provide Karpowership SA with contracts were corrupt.

During Zuma's presidency, Mantashe was a key figure in the bid to shield him from accountability. He has also been accused of benefitting from state capture.

1st deputy secretary-general

Better known as Gauteng's first female premier, Nomvula Mokonyane served in the Gauteng Legislature before she was appointed MEC of agriculture, conservation and environment in 1996.

She became MEC for safety and liaison from 1999 to 2004 and was housing MEC between 2004 and 2009, then minister of environmental affairs, after serving as minister of communications and water and sanitation.

As water and sanitation minister, Mokonyane headed South Africa's Lesotho Highlands Water Project.

According to a report by *City Press*, a single company, LTE Consulting, was awarded contracts worth R5 billion in a single year, all dealing with water and sanitation, after they donated more than R3.5 million to the ANC in



Nomvula Mokonyane

only two months.

A second controversy in which Mokonyane found herself related to the merger of two of South Africa's powerful water boards, the Umgeni and Mhlathuze boards, both in KwaZulu-Natal.

In 2019, ex-Bosasa COO Angelo Agrizzi testified to the Commission of Inquiry into State Capture that Mokonyane was paid R50 000 a month for years to protect the company from law enforcement agencies.

Treasurer-general



Gwen Ramokgopa

Gwen Ramokgopa is the former MEC for health in Gauteng, having succeeded Qedani Mahlangu.

She was the executive mayor of City of Tshwane metropolitan municipality from 2006 to 2010. Before that she served as the MEC for health in Gauteng from 1998 to 2006.

Following her term as

Tshwane mayor, she was deputy minister of health in the national government from November 2010 to May 2014.

In 2008 she was hit with allegations of mismanagement, nepotism and corruption, according to investigative programme *Carte Blanche* on M-Net.

But Ramokgopa labelled these accusations as "mischievous and irresponsible".

Earlier this year, she was accused of nepotism by Democratic Alliance member of the Gauteng legislature Jack Bloom after she hired an alleged friend, advocate Lebe-loane Mpelegeng, to head the department's legal services division.