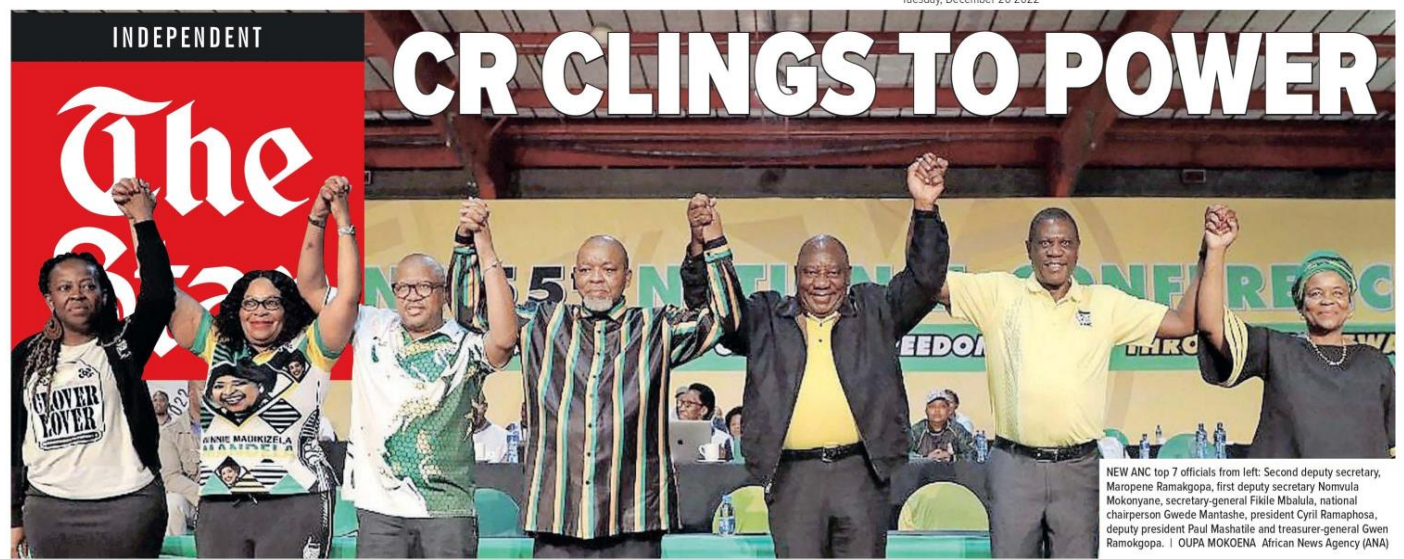




Publication: Star, The (Early Edition) - Main
Title: CR CLINGS TO POWER
Publish date: 20 Dec 2022
Page: 1

Reach: 74520
AVE: R 191017.13
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NEW ANC top 7 officials from left: Second deputy secretary, Maropene Ramakgopa, first deputy secretary Nomvula Mokonyane, secretary-general Fikile Mbalula, national chairperson Gwede Mantashe, president Cyril Ramaphosa, deputy president Paul Mashatile and treasurer-general Gwen Ramokgopa. | OUPA MOKOENA African News Agency (ANA)

■ Allegations of vote rigging and vote buying ■ Ramaphosa gets 2 476 votes ■ Mkhize gets 1 897 votes

WILLEM PHUNGULA, MAYIBONGWE MAQHINA
and SIYABONGA MKHWANAZI

PRESIDENT Cyril Ramaphosa has managed to cling to power against all odds at the ANC's national conference in Nasrec.

The president defeated his arch-rival Dr Zweli Mkhize in a highly contested ANC presidential race yesterday.

While the president won, his victory came after allegations of vote rigging and vote buying, with delegates claiming that attempts to woo them were made by people in Ramaphosa's camp. With Mkhize edging ahead earlier yesterday due to announcements of backing from provinces that had previously aligned with Ramaphosa, the president's win, although by a slight margin, came as a shock to many pundits.

According to insiders, his win could be attributed to his last-minute horse-trading between his running mates who were contesting each other.

Political analyst Ongama Mtimka said Ramaphosa's win also proved that it was the branches not provincial leaders who have power, referring to provinces like North West, Gauteng and Limpopo which despite branches endorsing Ramaphosa announced on the eve of the voting that their provinces had switched to Mkhize.

"These provinces, including KwaZulu-Natal, were humbled by their own branches. The provincial elites thought that they were in control of branches but they were humbled," said Mtimka.

He said Ramaphosa's win meant the anti-corruption project he had started would continue.

His win also meant that the Phala Phala saga did not do much damage to his reputation within the party as delegates backed him, despite rivals using the debate against him. The outcome also meant KZN again would not be represented in the top seven, for the second time since 2017.

However, it was a less tight race than what was expected, given the nominations made by branches. Ramaphosa defeated Mkhize by 585 votes garnering 2 476 against Mkhize's 1 897.

His win also meant the branches had maintained their initial nominations where the president had scored

Finally – three women in top seven leadership

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THE "Woman on top" ANC mantra has finally been realised after the 55th ANC National Conference announced its top seven leaders.

Three women were elected to the ANC's top seven positions, taking the ANC's female representation at the top structure to 42% from 16% previously. Gauteng MEC for Public Safety Faith Mazibuko celebrated the move following the announcement on Monday. Nomvula Mokonyane was named first deputy secretary-general, with Maropene Ramakgopa taking the second deputy secretary-general position, while ANC veteran Gwen Ramokgopa

emerged as treasurer-general. Mokonyane beat another female contender, Tina Joemat-Pettersson, to the position of first deputy secretary-general.

With 2 178 votes, Paul Mashatile was announced as ANC deputy president ahead of Oscar Mabuyane's 315 and Ronald Lamola's 1 858. Gwede Mantashe retained his position as ANC chairperson.

Mazibuko said the inclusion of women in the ANC was a step in the right direction, following years of complaints that the top structure of the ruling party was dominated by men.

Jessie Duarte, who died early this year, had been the only woman in the ANC's top six.

"Finally, we have three women in the ANC top six. I am happy and excited. I welcome the election of more women in the top seven," said Mazibuko. "What makes it even more exciting is that they are all from Gauteng, and their membership is here in the province."

She said she was excited that Mokonyane made it as the first deputy secretary-general.

"I am so happy, Nomvula Mokonyane, that finally she is here. I wish her well as she takes up her position as first deputy secretary-general of the party. This is an important role, and we need women to be empowered with such positions," she said.

Minister in the Presidency for State

Security Zizi Kodwa called the election of three women in the top seven a historic win for the ANC.

"This is a historic victory for the ANC to have three capable and strong women in the top structure of the ANC."

"It is the first time that this has happened in the history of the ANC, and I wish we could have more women's representation because we do have capable women in the movement," Kodwa said.

He said he had faith in the leadership of all three women chosen to be in the top seven as they were all seasoned ANC leaders who had been around the ANC long enough to lead the renewal of the party.

divided house. Divisions in the party have been glaring at the conference with different groups pushing for their preferred candidates.

Mngomezulu said it would be tough to foster unity and the new leader would have to work hard to ensure the party was united in the build-up to the next elections in 2024.

"It is not going to be easy at all because these divisions are deeply entrenched as they start from the National Working Committee, the National Executive Committee, the Provincial Executive Committees, the regions and branches."

"This is going to affect the party because what happens next is a build up to 2024 and there is not enough time for the ANC to regroup," said Mngomezulu.

In addition, the new party leadership, under Ramaphosa, will have to address the governing party's dwindling membership which has plummeted in at least eight provinces by more than 300 000.

In the party's report, which was tabled in the closed session, only the Western Cape ANC managed to increase its membership, by a mere 6 000 more members. This is likely to cause the new leadership more woes as the party has long lost control of the province, which has been in the hands of the DA.

The membership exceeded the one million target in 2012 when it registered 1 220 057. The report shows that Mpumalanga lost more than 100 000 members in the past five years.

See pages 2 and 6

2 037 against Mkhize's 916 before the conference.

Reacting to the results, one of the president's strong men in KZN, former Public Works and Human Settlements MEC Jomo Sibiya, said they were excited that the president won, adding that his win meant the renewal project of the ANC would be realised.

This was echoed by another chief campaigner of the president, Minister in the presidency Mondli Gungubele, who said the leadership collective that emerged would ensure the renewal of the party, adding that he was praying for the national executive committee that would assist the top 7 in renewing the ANC.

In the deputy president position, Paul Mashatile defeated the Eastern Cape's Oscar Mabuyane and Mpumalanga's Ronald Lamola.

For the secretary-general position, Fikile Mbalula won, defeating Mdmiseni Ntuli and Phumulo Masualle, while Gwede Mantashe retained his national chairperson position, beating Stan Mathabatha and David Masondo.

In the first deputy secretary-general position, Nomvula Mokonyane beat Tina Joemat-Pettersson, while the

		Spillt	Abstentions	Total
P	Cyril Ramaphosa	2476		
	Zweli Mkhize	1897	4	7
DP	Ronald Lamola	315		
	Oscar Mabuyane	1858		
	Paul Mashatile	2178	10	23
Chair	Gwede Mantashe	2062		
	David Masondo	280		
	Stanley Mathabatha	2018	11	13
SG	Mdmiseni Ntuli	1080		
	Phumulo Masualle	1590		
	Fikile Mbalula	1692	7	15
DSG1	Nomvula Mokonyane	2195		
	Tina Joemat-Pettersson	2145	5	39
DSG2	Maropene Ramakgopa	2373		
	Ronald Nalumango	1948	7	56
TG	Bejani Chauke	590		
	Pule Mabe	1652		
	Mzwandile Masina	281		
	Gwen Ramokgopa	1809	12	40

newly established second deputy secretary-general position went to national Women's League Task Team co-ordinator Maropene Ramakgopa from Limpopo.

The top seven was completed by

Gwen Ramakgopa as the first ever woman treasurer-general in the history of the ANC.

KZN ANC spokesperson Mafika Mndebele said the province accepted

the outcome, which was a democratic process. On where things went wrong after three provinces switched to Mkhize on the eve of voting, he said they respected how delegates voted privately.

Former ANC provincial spokesperson and current provincial executive committee member Nhlakanipho Ntombela urged the party to accept the outcome, saying although the province had taken a decision to back Mkhize, they were bound to accept Ramaphosa has won.

However, Mkhize put up a good fight taking his campaign across the country, which saw him garnering votes from the delegates in the provinces that had endorsed Ramaphosa and not only in his home province of KwaZulu-Natal, which had emphatically endorsed him.

With KZN fully behind him with more than 800 votes coupled with half from the Eastern Cape and Gauteng plus sizeable numbers from Mpumalanga, Limpopo and North West, Mkhize was tipped to win the presidential race but it was not to be.

Political analyst Professor Bheki Mngomezulu from UWC said whoever emerged victorious would have his work cut out as he would have to try to mend fences and reconcile all factions in a

