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I`m a dead snake on my way out – premier

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Alex Japho Matlala

Is Limpopo premier and ANC chair Stan Mathabatha signing his way out of domestic politics and leaving his government responsibilities any time soon?

This was a question on Limpopo ANC provincial executive committee (PEC) members lips after Mathabatha told his detractors during a meeting he is a "dead snake and attacking him was a waste of time".

He was under attack from some in his chamber, including members of the youth league.

Among others, he was accused of being an absent premier, failing to give jobs to the youth, while municipalities, provincial departments and state-owned enterprises were in a bad state, thus "bringing the name of the province and the ANC into disrepute".

"I am a dead snake and am on my way out. So attacking me, may be a total waste of time," Mathabatha is quoted as saying during the heated meeting.

The charge was allegedly led by the ANC Youth League provincial chair Tonny Rachoene, who is said to have accused the premier of failing the province.

According to sources, Rachoene was drawing a picture of how the province continued to perform dismally in audits under Mathabatha's stewardship.

Rachoene also accused Mathabatha of failing to attend crucial meetings, saying this was giving the party a bad name.

"Some of us are concerned as this affects our livelihood and our political careers. Although his office announced his return in August from his mourning period, he still continued with his no-show in several events thereafter," he said.

A PEC source added: "An example of this is last month in Giyani during the 2019 ANC manifesto review. Although his political clique was quick to protect him, claiming he was still mourning, deep down we knew he was just forced to show face before [ANC secretary-general] Fikile Mbalula after his Nasrec conference blunder."

Mathabatha's alleged utterances have since sparked a hot succession debate in the province.

Some began questioning who is the most powerful, articulate, knowledgeable and wisest cadre to replace him – in case he resigned before his term ended in 2024.

Limpopo is the only province which never had a woman premier since 1994.

Some of the names punted are public works MEC Nkakareng Rakgoale, basic education MEC Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya, health MEC Phophi Ramathuba as well as two men, cooperative governance, human settlements and traditional affairs MEC Basikopo Makamu and economic development, environment and tourism MEC Rodgers Monama.