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VOTED IN: The newly elected provincial ANC Veterans League leadership sing at the East London ICC at the weekend. They are, from left, chair Humphrey Maxegwana, deputy chair Ntombuvuyo Nkopane, secretary Phakamile Ximiya, deputy secretary Ntombekhaya Mahlaha and treasurer Kholiwe Mpiti. Picture: THABANG MASEKO

ANC veterans can help save the party — Serote

VUYOLWETHU SANGOTSHA

ANC veterans have watched the party spin into a downward spiral while it could have tapped into their fountain of knowledge, party stalwart Mongane Wally Serote said as he addressed the ANC Veterans League provincial conference in East London at the weekend. Two-hundred delegates attended the two-day event at the ICC on Friday and Saturday. Serote questioned who had the power to “deeply infiltrate the ANC to a point of disempowering it completely”. He mentioned the Sars saga that hogged headlines a few years ago and raised concerns over the way the powers that be handled state-owned enterprises such as Eskom and Transnet.

“These are serious economic hubs of our country,” he said. “If you destroy them, you are destroying the economy.” Serote said if there were things that constrained the leaders from what they were supposed to do, the veterans had the ability to help them get out of that space. “We are just going through a nightmare. When you are going through a nightmare you want to run, but you can’t run; you want to scream, you can’t scream, but the danger is in front of you [and] I think that’s where we are as an ANC. “I just want to clarify that so somebody doesn’t say I undermined the national executive committee.” Serote lambasted leaders who were putting self-enrichment first and destroying the

ANC. He said some discredited the ANC and derailed its policies. “We know there are people who execute all these things that are wrong and the questions is: what must we do, what should we have done?” “Who are these people? What methods should we use to dislodge them from anything that is ANC at various levels?” He said these people had gained power, forging ahead with their objectives which had nothing to do with the ANC, and destabilised the democratic movement. He said the conference needed to acknowledge that the party had not acted promptly and efficiently before it became weakened and it was about time to take a stand. “We have to identify those

people,” Serote said. Eastern Cape ANC provincial chair and premier Oscar Mabuyane assured the party’s veterans that they had the full support of the provincial government and the provision of their houses was well on track. Mabuyane was speaking at the conference on Friday. “The expectation we have of this conference is for you to deliberate advancing the interests of veterans,” he told the delegates. “As the Eastern Cape provincial administration, we have been at the forefront of saying the issues of veterans must be streamlined in all of government. “That is why we have set aside for procurement of goods from companies that are owned by veterans of our struggle.”

Mabuyane said the provincial government had been instructed to engage the department of military veterans in an attempt to tackle all bottlenecks and accelerate the delivery of houses to military veterans. “We are confident in the project implementation plan for the military veterans which has a target of completing all houses required in the province by the end of the 2025/26 financial year,” he said. “This is part of acknowledging them for their role in building the SA we live in today.” Humphrey Maxegwana, who is also Buffalo City Metro council speaker, was elected new provincial chair and public works and infrastructure MEC. Ntombuvuyo Nkopane was elected deputy chair. The secretary is Phakamile

Ximiya, the deputy secretary Ntombekhaya Mahlaha and the treasurer Kholiwe Mpiti. Maxegwana said in 2024 the country would reach a historic milestone of 30 years of democracy and the successes made should be highlighted and defended. He said the newly elected leaders must act to address the shortcomings threatening to undermine the gains, including a chronic poor economic performance that had led to a high unemployment rate, poverty, and inequality. “The ANC government must move decisively to implement conference resolutions to end load-shedding,” Maxegwana said. “We must transform and grow the economy so that it creates jobs.”