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CO-OPERATIVE Governance and Traditional Affairs Velenkosini Hlabisa has promised leaders of the Khoi and San community that they will take their seats in houses of traditional leaders in all three spheres of government.

Hlabisa was speaking at the three-day all-inclusive national convention of the Khoi and San community leaders at the Birchwood Conference Centre, in Ekurhuleni, set to discuss and find permanent solutions to challenges raised by the community, including their recognition.

He described the convention as a national consultation that should contribute to bringing about unity and ultimately cooperation on the leadership and the process for the Khoi and San communities.

Hlabisa said there is a National House of Traditional and Khoi and San Leaders but the Khoi and San are not there and are only there by name.

"This is the process which will ensure that at the local houses, pro-

vincial houses, and the national house, the Khoi and San will be represented by warm bodies who will have been recognised through the law and become part of contributing to issues of developing South Africa," he said.

According to Hlabisa, the Government of National Unity was engaging with leaders of all five stems of the Khoi and San communities in South Africa, and the engagement must ensure the full participation of the Khoi and San in the commission established to settle matters of disagreement.

In 2021, the government established the Commission on Khoi-San Matters through which recognition could be sought by a community, branch, senior leader, and branch head in terms of the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act.

The commission's term of office is between September 2021 and the end of August next year.

Hlabisa said the commission is responsible for the proper recognition of the chiefs, kings, and their majesties among the Khoi and San.

"The commission is where they



MEMBERS of the Khoi and San communities who had taken their fight for recognition to the ANC's 55th national conference in Nasrec, Johannesburg, in December 2022. | OUPA MOKOENA Independent Newspapers

will present their stories, issues, history until there is official recognition of who is an iNkosi, Kgosi or a chief, and who is a king among the Khoi and San following their lineage," he explained.

Hlabisa also warned that should

the community not participate in these structures, they will not have full recognition as a legitimate community in South Africa.

He said the Khoi and San experienced genocide to the point of near extinction.

Earlier this week, a group of members of the Khoi and San community protesting for recognition were evicted from the Union Buildings after an eviction order obtained by the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure in December last year.