



# NEW ANC LEADERSHIP

By *Ben Turok*

**A**sigh of relief and a groan of despair. That is how many of us reacted to the ANC leadership contest.

Ramaphosa and Mantashe will now be the public face of the ANC and that is for the good. Magashule and Duarte will be the engine room and that is a different matter altogether. Mabuza will be head of the ANC's national deployment committee and of the political committee overseeing Parliament. It is hard to believe that this conference of grassroots representatives could elect the iron fist from the Free State to run Luthuli House for the next five years.

Delegates elected some people who clearly do not represent the interests of the mass of the people. We can only assume that slate politics intervened, rather than good sense.

Whereas there have been numerous condemnations of lists, including a last minute appeal by the ANC Electoral Commission for branch delegates to vote only for leaders known to them, this was rejected from the floor in favour of sticking to lists circulated in advance of the conference. And so the ANC has ended up with what someone called a mixed masala to lead it into the 2019 national elections. The point is, can Magashule and co bring about the renewal that everyone is craving?

For that matter can the new leadership overcome the danger of two centres of power while Zuma remains head of state and concentrates on staying out of jail?

Corruption and state capture will continue to thwart our country's economic progress as long as Zuma remains in charge of the administration of justice.



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The Economist said recently that "... between R150 - R200bn (5% of GDP), has been filched." (December 2017). In his closing speech at the conference Ramaphosa said, "... we must confront the reality that critical institutions of our state have been targeted by individuals and families ... We are called upon to act against corruption and collusion." We shall see whether this is applied to those close to him.

We can now expect public pressure to increase as the expectations of change are dampened. The ANC Stalwarts and Veterans will get no recognition from Magashule and Duarte for their efforts to restore the integrity in the movement. They will have to go it alone or reach out to other forces seeking change.

There is also the increased restlessness in Parliament within the ANC caucus as evidenced by the 52 ANC MPs who did not vote with the party in the Zuma no confidence vote.

Business has found a new voice in the BLSA as corruption and poor performance in the state system is now

widely recognised but not addressed. Other business organisations are also speaking out and the press is outspoken in exposing the rot in the state system, in government and within the ANC itself.

Behind a lot of the disquiet lies the dismal data about the economy. We do not need to repeat the figures for unemployment, poverty and inequality, they are well known. But we do wish to draw attention to the weak performance of SA Business and their withdrawal from the real economy as indicated by the fact that foreign interests now own 60% of the values on the Stock Exchange.

But the ANC is likely to remain a large mass party since so many of its members have personal interests in terms of political appointments, careers, and other opportunities as long as it remains a governing party right across all spheres of the state.

We need to encourage much more participation in public life by individuals and groups who understand the depth of our crisis as a society and to speak truth to power as never before.

Finally, the seemingly endless controversies about what to do about our economy need resolution. We desperately need a simple set of proposals to resolve our most immediate problems and lay the basis for more fundamental structural change in the future. Many of the present proposals are too complex and too ambitious. We need urgent action on a limited set of realisable objectives around which broad agreement is achievable. Perhaps an Economic Codesa is the answer. **NA**