



# THE MERCURY

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## Cele tipped for ANC eThekweni leadership role

*Speculation mounts over upcoming appointments in the party*

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FORMER police minister Bheki Cele could be set for another political comeback into ANC leadership structures, as he is being tipped to be the new convener of the ANC eThekweni region.

Sources in the party have told *The Mercury* that Cele will be appointed as convener, former ANC Youth League leader Thanduxolo Sabelo will be appointed as coordinator, and other names include a current deputy minister, a former MEC, and a senior councillor in eThekweni.

The ANC is expected to change its task team in the different regions this week. This past week, senior leaders of the ANC held meetings with party officials in different parts of the province. Cele engaged members of the ANC in Durban on Sunday, while another ANC meeting was held at the Moses Mabhida region in Msunduzi.

Party members revealed that the process to rebuild party structures is now on hold, as the ANC will hold no conferences to elect new structures until after the local government elections expected later this year. They said the cut-off date for structures to finalise their conferences was April 1, and any structure that was not ready will have to wait until after the election.

A source in the ANC in eThekweni spoke of this new Regional Task Team (RTT) development, pointing out that there was still a lot of paranoia in the party.

"Many of the people that are in the structure are supporters of the current president, Cyril Ramaphosa, or could support a presidential bid by Patrice Motsepe. That is how this proposed RTT looks to be shaped," said the source.

Speaking on the manner in which the proposed RTT will be structured, ANC sources said it seemed there was still a lot of fear and mistrust in the party that there could be secret MKP members within the organisation.

Cele denied any knowledge of the speculated deployment. "No, no, no, I have not heard anything about that; no one has said anything official to me. I just heard from the grapevine like you."

Sabelo said the ANC processes are still unfolding.

"The ANC processes are not complete. No member has been assigned any responsibility as yet. But if I am given any responsibility, I am willing and able

to do my best in achieving the given responsibilities."

In the Moses Mabhida region, party members said they expected a wholesale change. "I believe the only person who is expected to be retained is Zet Luziphu. I do not believe any of the others are coming back, but that is speculation at the moment," said the member.

One member, when asked about the process of rebuilding the party branches, said, "We will see that after the elections."

Another member also stated that the rebuilding of structures was on hold until after the elections, saying, "I can tell you now that there will be no conferences until after the elections. The RTT structure that is being brought in will be dealt with during the election work."

The spokesperson for the ANC KZN Provincial Task Team, Fanle Sibisi, said the party had nothing to say on the matter.

Speaking on the RTT changes, he said, "In the media briefing by the Secretary General of the ANC, Fikile Mbalula, last week, the SG said the issue will be addressed before the end of this week."

Political analyst Thabani Khumalo said going to elections with task teams was not the right approach, as many ANC branches are "confused".

"Since the emergence of the MKP, the ANC in this province is dead and buried. If they want to revive it, they need to rebuild from the ground up and ensure they have strong branches. At the moment, their branches are confused. When branch members are with the ANC, they speak an ANC language; whether they are with the MKP, they speak MKP language. How can you take such branches to an election?"

Professor Musa Xulu said task teams, in their nature, look and sound temporary, and even give impressions of instability.

"The ANC may face challenges on the ground if it campaigns through task teams, which the public may see as temporary and project the ANC as being unstable. Elected structures are, by far, a better option as they instil confidence in the voters."

Speaking on the possibility of Cele returning, he said he would face a difficult task on different fronts.

"Although he is a very charismatic person, he may equally be divisive as factions will continue to dig their heels in. The Zandile Gumede faction is very strong in eThekweni."

### IMPERSONATOR

## Details emerge on criminal charges against Mkhwanazi, Lerutla

MERCURY CORRESPONDENTS

DETAILS have emerged on the criminal charges against suspended Ekurhuleni Metro Police Department deputy chief, Julius Mkhwanazi and Ekurhuleni City Manager Kagiso Lerutla, who both appeared in court yesterday.

Mkhwanazi and Lerutla appeared in the Boksburg Magistrates' Court, accused of orchestrating the audacious scheme in March 2019 in which a person was allegedly paid to impersonate Lerutla in



**SUSPENDED** Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Police Department (EMPD) deputy chief Julius Mkhwanazi and Ekurhuleni city manager Kagiso Lerutla, made their first court appearance at the Boksburg Magistrate's Court yesterday. | ITUMELENG ENGLISH Independent Newspapers

a court case.

It is alleged that Lerutla skipped a court appearance in a traffic case and instead sent a paid impersonator, "Mr X", in his place, and was helped in his scheme by Mkhwanazi.

According to prosecutors, Lerutla had been charged for a traffic violation and was required to appear in court but he needed to attend a job interview on the same date. Therefore, the State alleged, he along with Mkhwanazi recruited and paid a third party to pose as him.

The impersonator allegedly appeared before the court under false pretences, completing diversion paperwork using Lerutla's personal details.

This allowed Lerutla to attend an interview for a Chief Financial Officer

(CFO) position at the same time. The State contends that this was no minor deception.

Prosecutors alleged that there was a sum of R400 000 in gratification linked to the scheme, pointing to a calculated effort to manipulate the justice system for personal gain.

National police spokesperson, Brigadier Athlenda Mathe, confirmed the details of the incident to the media on the sidelines of the court case yesterday.

Mkhwanazi was arrested at his home on April 18, while Lerutla was apprehended a day later at OR Tambo International Airport upon arrival from Cape Town.

Both men now face charges of corruption, fraud, and defeating the ends

of justice. The State has indicated it will oppose bail.

The case was postponed to April 23 for a formal bail application.

The matter comes as Mkhwanazi is facing damning allegations that emerged during his three days of testimony before the Madlaga Commission of Inquiry. Mkhwanazi faced scrutiny at the commission over his alleged role in the death of alleged suspect Emmanuel Mbense, who was allegedly tortured to death by Metro Police officers in April 2022.

He was accused of ordering metro police to dump Mbense's corpse into a Brakpan river.

Mkhwanazi has denied any wrongdoing in connection with the incident and other allegations made in the inquiry.

### CONTROVERSY

## Tshwane CFO Gareth Mnisi denies EFF's Julius Malema link to ongoing security tender allegations

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**SUSPENDED** City of Tshwane CFO Gareth Mnisi dismissed claims that EFF leader Julius Malema gave him a list of seven companies bidding for a R2.9 billion security tender in the city amid allegations of tender-rigging at the Tshwane Metro Police Department (TMPD).

This occurred during his second appearance at the Madlaga Commission of Inquiry yesterday, where he faced intense questioning following his testimony on Friday.

Mnisi faced questioning over his role in the alleged security tender-rigging and his relationship with Sergeant Fannie Nkosi, whom he described as his friend.

He told the commission that Nkosi forwarded him a list of seven companies from suspended TMPD deputy chief Umashi Dhlamini to check for compliance.

The message was followed by another that read in part: "The above is from the red berets, please check with Mfowethu (Mnisi) if it is the same with his from CIC (Juju) to verify the authenticity."

When asked if he had ever received a

list from Malema, he said: "No". One of the seven companies listed at the top was Ngaphesheya Construction and Projects linked to Nkosi's brother, Bheki.

According to recent testimonies, Ngaphesheya was among the successful bidders that received over R2 million from the city for services rendered, out of over R10 million paid to various companies between November 2025 and January 2026.

Nkosi has been accused of conspiring with Dhlamini and Mnisi to help his brother's company secure a TMPD security tender despite the company not meeting the requirements. Mnisi testified that after receiving the list, he explained to Nkosi during a telephonic call that "I cannot check compliance because the tender has closed".

He reiterated that Nkosi mistakenly believed Mnisi could check compliance.

However, Co-commissioner Advocate Sandile Khumalo SC challenged his version, asking why Nkosi repeatedly sent Mnisi the message and why Mnisi thanked him after receiving the list.

Mnisi said he thanked Nkosi for the reminder to send the list. He told the commission that Nkosi seemed persistent

because he did not understand Mnisi could not check company compliance.

Mnisi said he was annoyed by Nkosi's persistence and showed it by ignoring him.

Co-commissioner Advocate Sesi Baloyi SC, however, took issue with Mnisi's annoyance, noting that Mnisi never showed evidence of it; instead, he acknowledged Nkosi's messages.

In one of the WhatsApp exchanges, Mnisi told Nkosi that this was "our formal list" and he later told the commission he meant this was the final list for which he needed to check compliance.

Mnisi said: "This discussion took place more than a year ago. I have got no reason to lie about this."

He testified that he suspected Nkosi wanted him to exceed compliance and possibly secure the tender for both companies.

"I was not cooperating with him. There was nothing I could do to check compliance."

The commission heard that Deputy Mayor and Finance MMC Eugene Modise sent Mnisi a message stating he met with ActionSA and EFF representatives who wanted him to push for five companies to be included in the list of preferred tender

bidders. Mnisi forwarded the message, saying he conveyed the warning that the tender award process could be compromised. He conceded that Dhlamini had no legitimate role to play before the Bid Adjudication Committee.

Unpaid invoices for services rendered by a company called Gubis 85 Solutions came under the spotlight. Nkosi recently testified that while driving to Mpumalanga with Mnisi, someone allegedly linked to Gubis phoned Mnisi demanding payment for outstanding invoices and threatening legal action against the city.

Nkosi claimed he overheard their conversation and decided to intervene by speaking to Dhlamini to resolve the payment dispute. Mnisi was questioned about involving Nkosi in city matters when Nkosi was not a municipal official.

He responded that in hindsight he should have asked for direct contact with Dhlamini and liaised directly with him.

He denied sharing any confidential or sensitive city information with Nkosi, stating that their discussion was general and that he did not send Nkosi details about a service provider's owed amount.

Mnisi's testimony is under way.

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