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Zondo commission – Ramaphosa, wearing “ANC hat”, appears before Zondo

The cadre deployment policy of the ANC has once again taken the spotlight at the state capture commission. President Cyril Ramaphosa is in the witness seat to answer questions on a number of issues that have arisen during the course of the commission’s hearings. He appears in his capacity as president of the party.

In his opening statement, he likened the commission in importance to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The latter was established at the beginning of the democratic dispensation, and Ramaphosa said both carry the responsibility of being decisive moments for the country to shed itself of mistakes of the past and move forward.

“This commission is the instrument through which we seek, as a nation, to understand the nature and extent of state capture, to confront it, to hold those responsible to account, and to take the necessary measures to ensure that such events do not occur ever again in our country,” Ramaphosa said.

“State capture and corruption have taken a great toll on our society and our economy. They have eroded the values of our Constitution and undermined the rule of law. If allowed to continue, they would threaten the achievement of the growth, development, and transformation of our country.”

But to what extent has the ANC’s own policies played a part in the erosion? Ramaphosa has not yet faced that question. He has so far been asked to outline the mandate and responsibility of the cadre deployment committee, which is generally chaired by the party’s deputy president. Ramaphosa held this position for five years, having been elected at the ANC’s 53rd elective conference in Mangaung.

Of the committee, Ramaphosa explained that it makes recommendations on the key appointments in government institutions. “The minister concerned, for instance, when it comes to a state-owned enterprise or state entity, would come forward and say ‘I need to appoint the CEO of one of the key state-owned enterprises’ and in doing so, they will then have that post advertised, as they should in terms of regulations and corporate governance and so forth.

“A message will then be forwarded through the ANC deployment committee, that there is a position that the minister will bring to the deployment committee, to articulate what position they need to fill. But then they will have triggered the process of filling that position.”

While the advertisement is out there, people within the ANC will be encouraged to apply and once the shortlisting has happened, the minister will return with the shortlist for the committee’s recommendation. The list will most likely have ANC members, but some may not be.

The recommendation, said Ramaphosa, is done with the state’s developmental agenda in mind. So the person appointed should be capable of carrying out this agenda, while adhering to public service regulations governing that institution.

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