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## **Pityana warns that new ANC leadership could be 'more of the same'**

Save South Africa convenor Siphon Pityana is skeptical that the ANC will “self-correct” at its elective conference in December, and has warned that it will probably reproduce “varying shades of the same leadership that has plunged the organisation into its worst crisis in its history”.

“The ANC we see today is not the ANC I know,” he said at Oxford University in the United Kingdom, where he was presenting the Bram Fischer Memorial Lecture.

Pityana said many see the December conference as the final throw of the dice for the ANC, “and for the progressive, democratic vision that inspired so many of us”.

But he cautioned: “We should not be surprised at the possibility that the conference may end up being a gathering of powerful pawns of interests that are external to the ANC; interests that may well be agnostic to the preservation of the movement or, even more importantly, the survival of South Africa’s democratic project.”

He added: “Judging from the nominations currently doing rounds, and the NEC slates of the respective candidates, what will be coming out of December is less of a revolution and more of an accommodation, bound to reproduce varying shades of the same leadership that has plunged the organisation into its worst crisis in its history.

“By rejecting previous calls for the resignation of the NEC and the convening of a consultative conference, the ANC has instead chosen the path of a revolution from the top -- a fight to the finish among factions, or a false truce, built on an unprincipled ‘unity pact’ -- that will perpetuate the life of the various divisive factions.”

Pityana said there is a strong perception that the ANC “has become little more than a vehicle for thieves and looters, with only their self-interests at heart”.

“They have truly captured the organisation and left many of its tried and tested cadres – once proud revolutionaries – as a hand-wringing lobby on the margins.

“The thieves are nothing if not single minded. They believe that holding a position in the ANC is worthwhile only because of the proximity it provides to government resources, and to private business linked to the state.

“They try to extort money in the ANC’s name from businesses, desperate to secure contracts from government. The once-proud ANC name is used and abused without hindrance because the party has little or no control over these rogues.

“More and more of us are starting to ask whether we will ever again see the ANC in which we grew up, to which we devoted our lives, and for which we sacrificed so much,” said Pityana.

“Is the ANC capable of correcting itself? Can it retrace its steps? Can it rediscover itself? Painfully, I doubt it. I honestly do.”

Pityana said the ANC had a perfect opportunity to introspect during the parliamentary vote of no confidence on 8 August, but was tone deaf to the will of the people.

“The current situation inside the ANC Alliance calls upon true and honest cadres to take a hard look around, and accept that there are many among them who are perpetuating this toxic status quo.

“They must also accept that there can never be a price big enough to pay to isolate and exorcise them out of the ranks of this great movement.

“That is why we must resist calls for unity at all costs, as it might come at a very high price. In any event, in the ANC I know, unity has always been based on values and principles -- not personalities.”

- Pityana’s full speech is available on the Save South Africa website [www.savesouthafrica.org](http://www.savesouthafrica.org)