

Ramaphosa's Cabinet spring cleaning targets fewer than 30 – Mbalula – Biz News 14 May 2019

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African National Congress (ANC) head of elections Fikile Mbalula has indicated President Cyril Ramaphosa intends shedding ministers to create a leaner Cabinet.

President Cyril Ramaphosa intends to cut the cabinet to fewer than 30 members, according to senior official and the ANC's head of elections, Fikile Mbalula.

Mbalula has been reported as saying the governing party is behind Ramaphosa, though he added that he could not speak for 'dark forces'.

The ANC has long attracted criticism for its bloated executive – presently comprising 34 ministers and 35 deputy ministers.

It has also emerged that Ramaphosa has reinstated a policy and research advisory unit. The purpose of the new unit, Policy and Research Services, will be to provide oversight of government policy design and implementation, as well as of projects such as the National Health Insurance (NHI). Policy and Research Services will prioritise the economy, infrastructure planning and development, agricultural development and service delivery. The latter is one of the top issues identified as crucial by registered voters in polls leading up to the election.

In his State of the Nation Address in February, Ramaphosa promised that cabinet members accused of corruption and other wrongdoing would be removed from government.

According to Ramaphosa's spokesperson, Khusela Diko, the cabinet reconfiguration is already underway, though lists circulating about the 'new' cabinet were 'not a true reflection'. Diko said the specifics of Ramaphosa's cabinet would be made clearer after his inauguration on 25 May.

The IRR has argued that key to the provision of services as well as the reduction of corruption is not just a leaner cabinet, but a leaner public service over all. Best practice world-wide supports the view that less government usually means more service for the citizens, not less.