
ANC backs Zuma for South African presidency despite charges

By Editor

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JOHANNESBURG, Jan 8, 2008 (AFP) - South Africa's ruling ANC said Tuesday its newly elected leader Jacob Zuma, who is to go on trial for corruption, would be the party's candidate for the presidency in next year's elections.

In a statement after a meeting of the national executive committee on Monday, ANC secretary general Gwede Mantashe said the party's top body had 'reaffirmed its support for the ANC president during these trying times.'

'It confirmed that the ANC president will lead the ANC election campaign as the organisation's candidate for president of South Africa in the 2009 election,' Mantashe added.

Zuma is due to go on trial in August after being charged late last month with corruption, racketeering and money-laundering.

The charges came less than a fortnight after he ousted South African President Thabo Mbeki from the head of the party in a bitter election contest.

The African National Congress has ruled South Africa since the end of the whites-only apartheid regime 14 years ago.

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