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ANC STATEMENT ON THE DEMAND FOR AN INDEPENDENT ZULU KINGDOM

The ANC has taken note of the demand made by King Goodwill Zwelithini for an independent Zulu Kingdom at his meeting with State President F W de Klerk in Durban on Monday 14 February.

The ANC remains perturbed that King Zwelithini is always seen to be intervening on behalf of Freedom Alliance in situations where there is an apparent deadlock in negotiations with the ANC. While the ANC does not question the right of the King to act and try to ensure an amicable solution to the problems, it will be unfortunate if a perception were to develop that the King is articulating the views of the Freedom Alliance.

These perceptions are fuelled by the fact that the King is always seen in the company of one political leader. No consultations with leaders belonging to other political organisations are seen to be entertained. The ANC remains concerned that these developments might erode the King's role in bringing peace among the people of Natal.

The demand for the restoration of the status of the Zulu Kingdom as was constituted prior to colonialism negates the course of the history of our country and the struggle for democracy, peace and justice in which Zulu, Sotho, Xhosa, Pedi, Tswana, Venda, Tsonga, Coloureds, Whites and Indians have laid down their lives.

The ANC is of the opinion that the issue of the monarchy in Natal, as in other provinces, can best be addressed within the framework of democratic provincial constitutions. The democratically elected Natal Provincial Legislature, as will other most provincial legislatures, will have the responsibility of determining the role of the monarchy to the best interests of the people of Natal.

The ANC reaffirms its commitment to finding a peaceful and lasting solution to the current problem through a process of dialogue with all parties concerned, including the King. In this regard the ANC is willing to immediately send an emissary to King Zwelithini to discuss the matter.

Our country stands at the threshold of democracy whose dawn will ensure freedom, peace, jobs, education, stability and justice. All of us, black and white, business, workers, students, self-employed, Christians, Muslims or Jews can ill afford the postponement of the dawn of freedom. More than ever before the cause of peace and justice demands that all South African stand up in defence of the democratic process.

The ANC appeals to leaders of all-political persuasions to give priority to the best interest of the country and to rise above narrow petty political interests. Our people cannot afford a single extra day under apartheid rule.