

OPENING STATEMENT BY DR FT MDLALOSE
NATIONAL CHAIRPERSON OF THE INKATHA FREEDOM PARTY
TO THE NEGOTIATING COUNCIL

ON MONDAY 26TH APRIL, 1993
AT THE WORLD TRADE CENTRE IN JOHANNESBURG

When we met barely three weeks ago we did so deeply aware of the need to achieve something constructive after a wasted ten month hiatus in negotiations. From: â\200\230May 1992 'to date; -nbthivy Â« of substantive value has been achieved in bringing democracy to our land other than the formation of this body to replace Codesa.

Yet we gather today under the menacing shadow of ever-increasing violence. Our party has lost yet more leaders in the last month. Mr Siphwe Gumede, a member of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, was assassinated by unknown assailants. Mr Leonard Ngubo, Ntuzuma vice-chairperson and our representative in the imminent formation of an Ntuzuma LDRC, was likewise assassinated. Mr Ephraim Ndebele, Umlazi unit 17 councillor and IFP leader and prominent in the regionâ\200\231s peace process, was murdered. Mr Robert Sikobi, Mr John Thembani and Mr Roy Mpisane, all IFP leaders in Umlazi, were all killed during the past month. A prominent member of our Central Committee, Professor Maphalala, has been subjected to police harassment and his property damaged.

We would point out that the murders of yet more IFP lleaders have followed inflammatory statements by ANC lleaders. Addressing mourners at the vigil for Mr Chris Hani, the ANCâ\200\231s Southern Natal chairman, Mr Jeff Hadebe, called on ANC followers to "rid" South Africa of Dr M G Buthelezi. After our President, Dr M G Buthelezi, had expressed his horror at the murder of Mr Chris Hani and offered his condolences to the family, ANC and SACP leader, Mr Blade Nzimande, publicly rejected these at a rally in Pietermaritzburg on April 12, saying the ANC said "no thanks to the tears of Mangosuthu Buthelezi."

It lis this sort of denigration that fans the flames of violence. Mr Nzimandeâ\200\231s utterances are not words spoken in the heat of the moment. They form part of a campaign of killing talk by senior ANC leaders that has gone on for years. Many senior leaders of the ANC, including the late Mr Chris Hani, have in the past publiclyv called for the murder of Dr Buthelezi and members of the IFPâ\200\231s Central Committee.

This is what State President, Mr F W de Klerk, said in Parliament on April 20 about the role of the ANC in violence: "Its major role in creating a climate for violence and politically motivated murders lis undisputed. The many graves of members of ths leadership of the IFP who have been systematically decimated by the ANC and its structures, bear testimony to this. (Hansard, disc 481)

None of us can forget the fact that over 270 officials of the IFP have been slaughtered with modern weapons. Our entire organisation and the bereaved families demand to know who is behind in the systematic and serial killing of IFP officials. All the sophisticated institutions and organisations of our country are unable to provide an answer to this fundamental question.

There is great hope that this multi-party forum will succeed where Codesa failed, that the foundations have been laid for genuine and inclusive negotiations that will produce the settlement we have waited so long for. The IFP is pleased with progress to date - particularly with the recognition given to the need to review Codesa's agreements and to prioritise debate on the form of our future state. This bodes well for moving forward. We would also like to believe that the negative bilateralism of the recent past and the attempted marginalisation of parties participating in negotiations, is now over.

However, since we are less than confident of a fundamental change of heart among those involved, only unfolding developments will reveal whether this is the case or not. Certainly we are not impressed with the manner in which SACP leader Chris Hani's murder is being cynically used as a gambit to make unilateral demands over the timetable of change.

Boipatong was likewise seized upon as an excuse first to walk out of Codesa and then to present a series of totally unreasonable demands backed up with mass action that culminated in the tragedy of Bisho.

Mass action is again being seized upon as an instrument to force the pace of change and to secure the ANC's grip on the reins of power, though this time we suspect the ANC's haste is partly motivated by a desire to crack down upon the very grassroots militants it exhorted to render the country ungovernable. This,

together with apartheid, was responsible for nurturing the culture of violence that has reduced the country to the state it is now in.

Hani's assassination and the latest proposal for six weeks of mass action remind us that irrespective of what we negotiate as leaders in this forum, and irrespective of whatever World Trade Centre bonhomie the nation perceives in us through the media, it must be recognised that we are not negotiating in a vacuum. Talks that broke down have been resumed, but what is being done about the political violence?

The Inkatha Freedom Party believes it is time to get serious if this body is going to have any meaningful role to play in charting the way forward. We believe it is time this multi-party forum came to grips with the realities of what is happening in this country, instead of pushing unpleasant matters under the carpet as though their disappearance from the agenda of this body will make the problem go away.

Frankly, we hold out little hope for a successful transition to democracy unless the question of political violence is addressed, and addressed properly. Constitutional negotiations cannot succeed on their own, in taking the nation forward.

Negotiations, if they are the success we pray they will be, can merely reflect the consensus reached by us on the rules of the game of the future political system within which normalised politics should be played out. This is transparent politics which respects multi-partyism, respects political opponents, and respects the broad values that underpin true liberalism.

However, the political violence tearing our society apart renders this completely meaningless. What good is a . decent constitution superimposed upon a lawless people, with no respect for themselves or their political opponents? What good is a transition to democracy founded upon savagery? Where are the values going to come from to ensure that the document we negotiate lasts longer than the first crisis that befalls the first government? Violence threatens all of us and our future. Violence is no foundation upon which to make the transition to democracy.

Far from decreasing since February 1990, political violence has in fact increased steadily. Last year we recorded at least 759 attacks on our party, and 590 supporters were killed, 388 of them in Natal/KwaZulu. Violence appears to have a life of its own, consuming more and more of our fathers, mothers and, tragically even children, in its evil flames. A further casualty is the hopes and dreams we have of peace. Cynicism, withdrawal, anguish, fear and hatred become the dominant emotions. Constant threats of mass action are designed to cow people into accepting the supposed inevitable take over of power by those for whom the ground rules of politics are intimidation and the denial of freedom of choice. Our politics has degenerated to that of territorial hegemony and rule through the barrel of the gun - yet certain parties blithely talk of setting an election date as if we are lying in a bed of roses.

We are convinced that much of the violence is not accidental and that it is no mere inevitable by-product of the transition. There is an agenda behind it whose goal is to subvert the democratisation process and to deny the people of South Africa their freedom of choice in the forthcoming elections.

In addition to its thousands of ordinary members who have been hacked, stabbed, burnt and shot to death over the past few years, the Inkatha Freedom Party has seen over 270 of its office bearers assassinated. Office bearers - branch chairpersons, secretaries, organisers and the like - are the life blood of a political organisation. We believe our opponents are working on the axiom that if you remove the head, the body dies. The agenda we believe, is simple - marginalise the IFP through any means fair or foul, to prevent it maximising its opportunities in the election to come.

We know with a certainty born of direct experience, that the IFP has been deliberately targeted by certain organisations. We have traced the events of the past decade in detail. We have the words of senior and mid-ranking leaders indelibly etched in our memories. We have their strategy documents. We have their agendas. We have their hit lists. It is appalling of course, but not surprising for that is the way of revolutionaries.

But even more disturbing is the fact that there is collusion at the most senior levels of government to downplay this. We believe that the Government has failed in its responsibility to put an end to this nefarious agenda.

We find it totally incomprehensible that the SA Police have seemingly failed to establish who is behind these serial murders of our leaders over a period of several years.

We find it totally incomprehensible that the Government has known for a very long time that trained MK killers are deployed from Transkei to assassinate our leaders, but that the first steps it took to deal with Transkei were occasioned by the killings of whites at the end of last year - still no mention is made of MK, however.

We find it totally incomprehensible that despite the provisions of the Groote Schuur and Pretoria Accords, let alone the National Peace Accord, the Government was party to an agreement permitting the continued training of the selfsame cadres now being deployed against us in South Africa.

We find it totally incomprehensible that the Government was party to another agreement that chose to put all the blame for political violence on the IFP, whose hostel supporters were to be fenced in like animals, while totally exonerating those attacking them.

We find it totally incomprehensible that the Government acceded to a demand that traditional accoutrements be banned while such instruments were responsible for at the very most, less than 5% of deaths in political violence. Yet it legitimised others' military training.

We find it totally incomprehensible that the Government gives the leaders of those found to be involved in gun running every opportunity to distance themselves from the incidents and that it takes steps to prevent the release to the media, of incidents of profound significance relating to the planned assassination of IFP leaders.

We find it totally incomprehensible that the Government is committed to double standards vis à vis its relationship with organisations responsible for deliberately perpetrating acts of political violence as instruments of political strategy. That it threatened to break off negotiations with the PAC over as-yet unproven APLA killings but continues to negotiate with the ANC when its military wing has been proven to be involved in violence is reprehensible.

We find it totally incomprehensible that intelligence agencies of the Government are actually involved in a smear campaign against the IFP and are involved in providing support to those seeking our demise.

The mere fact of this political violence is in itself, a national crisis. However, the Government's unwillingness to deal with it, and indeed its covert connivance in permitting its continuance, lead the IFP to assert with total conviction that the implications for both the transition to democracy and the fledgling democracy yet to be born are so profound, that it is absolutely vital that we deal with it, and that we do so now - in tandem with negotiations, not afterwards.

The fact of the matter is that the IFP cannot see its way through to negotiating a constitutional settlement if this forum continues to pretend that the violence only needs be sorted out later. When is later? What happens in between? Are we to lose another five or fifteen or twenty five leaders? Is there to be a repeat of the 9 massacres in Natal/KwaZulu that took place in the last few months of last year, mostly committed by trained hit squads in uniform?

Will there be the standard refrain decrying the hideous violence in which women and children are mown down like animals but an unwillingness to point fingers at and take steps against, those guilty of perpetrating the dastardly acts? It seems to us that the prevailing attitude is that it doesn't really matter if the victims are IFP people because the IFP doesn't matter.

This attitude, I am afraid to say, seems to the IFP to be that which certain parties have purposively adopted precisely in order to minimise public perceptions of the severity of the slaughter and the culpability of those involved. Violence is decried, but one of the most fundamental causes is ignored. Yes, apartheid is to blame, but we are sitting here transforming that. Socio-economic deprivation is another factor, and that too, is being addressed, albeit in a very limited fashion.

The State's covert agencies have an ugly past, but we are assured, though why we should believe it I do not know, that such activities have been stopped.

But why is absolutely nothing being done about the proliferation and the activities of private armies in South Africa?

Every effort must be made to deal with the threat of violence emanating from the right wing both within and without the security establishment. Conservative militants refusing to participate in negotiations and vowing to subvert the democratisation of South Africa have to be emasculated if we are to avert the potential of the counter-democratic forces.

We observe that it is suggested on all sides that the strongest action be taken against APLA and that pressure be exerted on the PAC leadership.

But when attention is focused upon Mkhonto we Sizwe, suddenly we are in a new ball park. Suddenly, the rules of the game change. The IFP is extremely disturbed by this. We know that the Government and the ANC have a cosy agreement on MK being permitted to train its cadres and we know they are being trained overseas and in Africa, as well as in Transkei whose independence is not recognised by the ANC and which is defined by them as an integral part of South Africa.

There may be no formal agreement between the Government and ANC to this effect, but we also know these cadres are being deployed in Natal/KwaZulu and that they are coming into the region with hit lists of IFP leaders; that they are importing large quantities of arms and ammunition; and crucially, that the Government is fully aware of this. The Government knows what MK is up to, but it does nothing. Not only this, it actually assists the ANC and covers up incidents which might prove highly embarrassing.

For instance, when MK arms smugglers were recently arrested near the Swaziland border, the Government gave the ANC intelligence department access to the prisoners and later set up a press conference for them in its Durban security headquarters to enable the ANC leadership to state that it was ignorant of the gun running. Again, when MK cadres were apprehended entering Natal with maps of Durban townships, a list of IFP leaders and their addresses, together with silenced weapons, there was a prohibition on the release of this incident to the media.

The IFP wants to know why. We want to know why the people of South Africa are denied information in the Government's possession pertaining to persistent attacks upon the IFP by another party's armed wing. We have requested the Goldstone Commission to subpoena the Government to release all the information in its possession, but to date, we have heard nothing. We want to know why the South African taxpayer is funding MK training. The fiscus cannot cope with our people's horrendous socio-economic plight, yet it pays for MK training. We want the Government to explain to us and to our people why it is so silent on this and what purpose is being served. We want a public explanation of a possibly clandestine agenda determining one approach towards APLA and another towards MK?

There is an election coming up in the near future. We don't know yet exactly when it will be, but in terms of our proposals being put before this body, we envisage the entire negotiations, transitional and electoral processes being finalised by the end of next year at which stage the first democratic governments ever in South Africa can take office. We sincerely believe this is possible, and we are determined to avoid lengthy delays in the finalisation of the new constitution and democratisation of our land.

But we must also be quite frank in admitting that there are major problems with our timetable if the violence directed against us is permitted to continue unchecked. If there is to be a general election in South Africa, it must be clearly understood by this forum that it is to be a fair and free election. It is not to be an election premised upon the politics of victory at all costs backed up by private armies devastating communities and sowing fear and mayhem.

What kind of election are we talking about when our party, and others for that matter, are prevented with violence from mobilising actual, let alone potential supporters? -

When, following attacks upon the IFP in Sebokeng that sparked 1990's "Reef War", the President of an opposing party explicitly endorses what he calls "the community's resolution to ban Inkatha members from the Vaal Triangle", and when aligned organisations presently repeat the call that none but the so-called "democratic forces" may mobilise on the Reef?

When, for fear of the assassin's guns, our party officials live every day as though it were their last - of 32 IFP branch chairmen in the Natal Midlands in 1987, only two were still alive in 1991? It was a planned attack on our branch chairman in Table Mountain that resulted in the murder of six children earlier this year.

When masked hit squads run amok in communities - such as in Gengeshe, Hlanzeni, Zimeleni, Folweni, Felekisi, Umgababa, Bhomela and Mkhobeni in the second half of last year - slaughtering 93 people and in the process rendering the communities paralysed with fear?

This is what is happening now. This is the reality before us. It is simply not good enough that this multi-party forum concentrates its energies exclusively upon constitutional matters. It is our responsibility to take the lead in directing the country towards peace, failing which our constitutional deliberations will come to naught.

Some steps are fairly obvious. We would have thought it obvious that we require as a top priority, some public form of political reconciliation between the ANC and the IFP. We are committed to this and to our jointly spreading the peace message to violence-torn communities, but we fear our counterparts have little commitment to pursuing this, in large part because they have given in to pressure from their militants to avoid conciliation at all costs.

Notwithstanding this, the IFP believes there are other steps that can be taken. First, the National Peace Accord must be strengthened; there must be penalties for infringements of its provisions; and much more financial support must be given to boost the peace process, particularly at the local level.

Second, more effective policing is needed, both in preventing violence and in arresting the perpetrators. Third, a review of the judicial system must be undertaken in parallel with this, to prevent the release on bail of suspected killers, to provide a witness protection programme, and to speed up the processing of cases.

But these will remain essentially palliative unless private armies are stopped in their tracks once and for all. Nearly three years have gone by since the ANC ostensibly committed itself first to peace and then to a suspension of the armed struggle.

It may sound cynical to declare that at one level the ANC has in fact fulfilled its side of the bargain - there is to all intents and purposes a cease fire between itself and the Government. Perhaps this is in part why the Government is content to accept the status quo. Its Members of Parliament, its branch chairmen, its leaders are not being assassinated, so what's the problem?

And the ANC is happy that the CCB is disbanded since ANC members were in the main the target of the State's covert security organs. It is likewise more than satisfied with the Government's preparedness not to force the organisation to hand over its weapons of war. What has happened to the Operation Vula arms caches established in Natal? We have no assurance whatsoever that they are not in fact being used by MK now against us, yet the caches remain in the ANC's possession and the individuals responsible for the smuggling of these weapons figure prominently in these multi-party talks and did so in Codesa without a care in the world.

But where does this leave the IFP? We, who were as much a target of the ANC as was the Government during the ungovernability years, remain a target. In the 1980s the KwaZulu Government was to be destroyed through attacks on councillors, schools and the like. In 1990, it was to be disbanded, and despite PAC and Azapo warnings to the ANC of impending doom, this was precisely the result. And in 1992 it was to be overthrown through mass action. In the 1980s, there were frequent calls for our leaders to be assassinated, as indeed they were - but in a brief few months last year, 17 IFP and traditional leaders were assassinated in Natal/KwaZulu alone.

As already mentioned, the week before Mr Chris Hani was slain, a member of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, Mr Siphile Gumede, was assassinated – hardly a word appeared in the media and no one other than us gives a damn. After all, he was an IFP man.

I am not attempting to be melodramatic. This is indeed the perception of our constituency. Our supporters believe that the war declared on Inkatha many years ago has never come to an end, and that it is now continuing – in fact getting worse – precisely because the deployment of armed cadres and hit squads has been legitimised by a Government unwilling to do anything to upset the bilateral apple cart it is so busy trying to balance.

This will not do. The negotiating process is not being authored by the Government and the ANC. This is a multi-party forum, not a bilateral forum, which means we either make progress together or we do not. do. so at all.

What do the participants in this forum expect of the IFP? Are we to concur that it is right to take a hard line on APLA because its activities clearly lead to loss of innocent life, exacerbate racial tensions, nurture hatred and generally render the political climate extremely tense, but are to accept that this does not apply to MK whose activities are of a far greater magnitude? Where is the integrity in condemning in the most strenuous terms APLA's killing of whites, but in remaining silent on an assault on a fellow participant that has taken the form of a low-intensity civil war?

The IFP will not accept these double standards. We believe all private armies must be disbanded forthwith. APLA, MK, AWB or Wit Wolve members wishing to join the future defence force can do so, providing they satisfy whatever minimum criteria are in place.

We have no problems with this. So why are these private armies needed? Apartheid cannot be resurrected, so there is no need for liberation armies to renew their assault upon the apartheid state. So why are they needed? The fact of the matter is simple. Private armies not only serve absolutely no useful purpose whatsoever, but, as instruments of violence, are the most serious threat to the potential success of these multi-party talks. Our hopes for a future democratic South Africa are underpinned by nothing less than the efforts we collectively put into resolving the problems facing us of which violence is a key.

Constitutional negotiations have to go hand in hand with the peace process since neither can succeed without the other. We have had enough of failed negotiations and we have had enough of failed peace. Now is the time for us to put the past behind us and to do everything in our power to bring both peace and democracy to our land.

We demand that this forum immediately set up a Commission supported by military and technical experts to organise and supervise the disbandment of private armies, the identification and control of arms caches, measures to prevent any further recruitment and military training of citizens abroad, and the rehabilitation of former members of private armies.