

**IFP NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING  
ADDRESS BY  
PRINCE MANGOSUTHU BUTHELEZI MP  
PRESIDENT OF THE INKATHA FREEDOM PARTY**

**Ulundi: 9 July 2010**

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Tomorrow we will meet as an Extended National Council to seek the answer to a critical question; are we still one Party, with one vision, one legacy and one future? Or are we a party divided against itself, split from top to bottom and heading for a crisis? We have called this meeting because, through the NEC, the leadership of the Party has foreseen the danger of going to Conference without having resolved the tensions around this issue.

We are all painfully aware of the incidents of violence and disruption which have marred some of our meetings, even forcing us to duplicate meetings that had to be called off for the sake of security. The internal ructions that have been splashed across the media give us a clear indication that we are locked in a battle for the soul of the IFP. There is no doubt in any of our minds that there is a faction within the Party that is intent on destroying our legacy and weakening our structures, so that they might snatch away the leadership of the IFP.

The thought at the forefront of our minds is what is going to happen at Conference? We have seen how meetings have been ambushed and turned to chaos by the so-called "Friends of VZ". We have seen elective conferences degenerate into swearing matches and fistfights. We have seen guns being drawn and leaders being shot. And we know the threats that have been bandied about by the "Friends of VZ" that they are going to cause a ruction at our Conference.

We cannot afford to walk into Conference with these tensions unresolved. Already we are forced to hire an unprecedented level of security at our meetings and people are afraid of attending. Our members are intimidated and we must consider that some might not come to Conference out of fear. We must also bear in mind that our members have been forced to endure extra costs already, due to meetings having to be duplicated. This is a great burden to place on our largely impoverished support base.

Based on our experience of other meetings, it is likely that the "Friends of VZ" will pressurize our members either not to attend, or to cause disruptions. We may even see people being bussed in to sway the vote.

I am speaking from experience during the recent Provincial Conference of the Party. In ISULABASHA, a leader there first discouraged people from attending the Provincial Conference. This was because of the decision of this National Council that the Durban Metro District elections be re-run. He wanted the Committee that was elected in the election whose results were nullified to attend the Provincial Conference. When the Provincial PEC and



the NEC directed that the previous committee will represent the District, he then suggested that people must boycott the Provincial Conference. When he realized that people were determined to attend he then turned around and organised people to attend with the intention of disrupting proceedings at the Provincial Conference. I would assume that some of the combies that Security could not allow into the premises which had people who were armed were some of the groups of people he had organised to attend with the intention of disrupting the proceedings. In fact, some of the people from ISULABASHA joined the Okhahlamba group that came along with Mayor Maliyakhe Shelembe. As you may know these people did not only hold Mr Shelembe shoulder high. They also swore at me and other leaders of the NEC such as the National Organiser and the Secretary-General and myself; among other things calling us by our mother's private parts. These are the kind of things we feel may discourage some people from attending the general conference. And this is why both the NEC and the National Council feel even strongly that we made the right decision in having the extended meeting of National Council tomorrow.

The likelihood of serene debate and calm discussions is diminished by the fact that we have unresolved conflicts in the Party. We still do not know where we stand in respect of certain leaders. At tomorrow's meeting, the challenge we face is to get people talking openly and honestly, so that we may come clean with one another about what we want, what we intend doing and whether we are still committed to the IFP as it stands today. If people want change, they must have the guts to say so and the courtesy to explain how they see the future of the IFP.

We are in a crisis because of the activities of the "Friends of VZ". Clearly their intention was to bring us to this point of calamity so that the possibility of the IFP experiencing its own Polokwane becomes likely. But the leadership of this Party is not willing to walk into Conference at the point of crisis. We are determined to defuse the situation before Conference, for the sake of our people's security, for the sake of determining the genuine will of our members, and for the sake of preserving for South Africa a party that has always been a beacon of integrity, goodwill and hope.

This past weekend, we held the KwaZulu Natal provincial conference. Many of us expected this to be a dry-run for Conference and we anticipated that the tensions would climax. I am pleased to say that the provincial conference went off quite well, despite the fact that a group of people demonstrated outside to show their support for people who have damaged the name and reputation of this Party. Two former mayors who were recently dismissed for bringing the Party into disrepute by their lack of discipline were even lionized outside the conference hall.

A group of people were apparently carrying Mr Maliyakhe Shelembe on their shoulders. These were the same people who brought Mr Wiseman Mcoyi to the conference, even though Mr Mcoyi was expelled from the Party following a disciplinary hearing in this National Council. Mr Mcoyi has a history of making inflammatory statements and engaging in offensive behaviour that



brings the Party's name into disrepute, particularly in front of the media. He had no place being at our provincial conference except to stir up tensions and cause disruption. **On Tuesday evening in the IGAGASI Radio Programme Mr Mcoyi continued to say more things that further bring this Party into disrepute.**

He is one of those who is acting in the name of our National Chairperson and he speaks in support of our National Chairperson as the preferred candidate for the presidency at our Annual General Conference. We all know that our National Chairperson has clearly said she will not be available for nomination, but this has not stopped the antics of those who campaign in her name and engage in all manner of underhanded tactics. One of the issues we need to unpack tomorrow is where our National Chairperson really stands in this debacle. Mr Nhlanhla Khawula was also brought into the Provincial Conference by these anarchists.

When this National Council disciplined Messrs. Wiseman Mcoyi, Nhlanhla Khawula and Thokozani Zulu, and Ms Lucia Buthelezi, for bringing the Party into disrepute with their utterances outside the structures of the Party, the media tried to portray the false image that these comrades were being penalized for supporting our Chairperson, Ms kaMagwaza-Msibi. Nothing could be further from the truth. But it is an established fact that brown envelope journalism is exacerbating the damage being done to our Party. I have been warning about brown envelope journalists in some of our KwaZulu Natal media. To some people it was as if I was speaking through my neck. But with the revelation of what the Cape Argus political editor Mr Smith admitted that he and his colleague had been doing to profile for Mr Rasool, former Premier of the Western Cape, no one now can accuse me of being unfair to our media in this Province. There is no doubt that with the information I have that some of the journalists in the media have been doing exactly that in connection with our National Chairperson **is accurate**. Giving the impression that the leadership of this Party was persecuting our National Chairperson. A blatant lie, meant to portray her as a victim just as Mr Zuma was victimized before Polokwane. Whatever actions we have undertaken to discipline those who have infringed provisions of our Constitution; the media has deliberately spread the lies that they were being victimized because they support our National Chairperson. A blatant lie! **Money is the root of evil! Corruption in South Africa has spread its tendrils from highest echelons of the state right up to the Fourth Estate. The media is democracy's watchdog and this indicates the extent to which democracy is imperiled by corruption throughout the length and breadth of our country**

The decision that was reached to expel these people from the Party was conducted through a secret ballot. The votes were unanimous and our National Chairperson was herself part of that collective. So there is a certain amount of discrepancy when it comes to whether the "Friends of VZ" are really VZ's friends. But there is enough evidence to make us question what is being said so insistently and what is being done. We must get to the bottom of this in tomorrow's meeting.



We cannot allow anything to threaten the success of our Conference. We have been forced to postpone Conference several times and on each occasion we were vilified and ridiculed in the media. It fell to this National Council to take the difficult decision in May to again postpone Conference, when we came face to face with the fact that some of our constituencies and districts had not yet held their mandatory conferences in advance of our Annual General Conference. In terms of our Party's Constitution, a General Conference cannot be held until all the relevant steps have been taken.

Among others, Zululand, the City of Johannesburg, Ethekewini and Umgungundlovu were still to hold their conferences. National Council had no authority to circumvent the Constitution and we were forced to make the decision to postpone our General Conference until 23 to 25 July to give districts the opportunity to fulfil their responsibilities. We saw chaos erupt at the Constituency elections in the City of Johannesburg and the IFP Chairperson in Ethekewini had to be escorted away by security when threats were made against him and against Mr Narend Singh, after the nullified elections for the Ethekewini Metro.

Because of these shenanigans, the Durban Metro elective conference had to be stopped and elections need to be re-run, even though the Durban Metro Committee was elected. There are some who are not happy with this, and I have received a letter warning that they will demonstrate against me on the 17<sup>th</sup> of July. I have been warned to send someone to collect their memorandum on my behalf. This is unheard of in a political party and unprecedented in my lifetime. This was even a more compelling reason for us to hold the Extended National Council meeting tomorrow. **Is there one IFP or two parties in one? That is the issue that the Extended National Council ought to answer tomorrow.**

Clearly matters have gotten completely out of hand. The question we must ask ourselves is, "Where do we go from here?" Is the IFP headed for a split at its Conference? Are we already two entities within one party? If that is the case, there is trouble ahead, because a house divided against itself cannot stand. I have warned that we are not talking about two potential paths towards the future IFP. We are talking about one path to unity, survival and growth, and another path towards destruction. This Party has no future if it splits; other than a weakened image, a silenced voice and a shattered legacy.

This is a fact we need to face in our deliberations tomorrow. We have wasted a great deal of time and energy in the past year fighting the fires of internal conflicts. We have done this at a tremendous cost. It has cost us time in which to campaign for the IFP's survival in the 2011 Local Government Elections. We all know that the election results of 2009 and those of the recent by-elections have not painted a bright future for the IFP. The fact is that support for the IFP has diminished and we have a tougher job ahead of us than ever before to convince the electorate that the IFP is still strong, still the best partner in governance, and still worth voting for.

By losing time, we have lost votes. We have lost the confidence of some of our supporters because, while we were disciplining members and trying to counter the lies being spread about us in the media, other parties were out talking to our people, cajoling them, enticing them and convincing them that there is a better alternative to the IFP. That is all part of the election game. But we have put ourselves out of the game for more than a year, and we have an enormous amount of catching up to do if we hope to survive or even grow in the 2011 Local Government Elections.

Last Sunday, I reminded our provincial conference in Mpumalanga that we still garnered more than 804,000 votes in 2009, we still have 18 representatives in the national Parliament, and we are still one of South Africa's biggest political parties. So it is not all doom and gloom. But more than showing us how needed we still are in the South African political landscape, these figures give us the measure of our responsibility to the South African public. We are still in the service of our people, and we bear the responsibility to sort out our issues now so that we may refocus our attention where it rightly should be; on service delivery, development and strengthening democracy.

Let us today concentrate on the normal work of the National Council.

We cannot abandon our Vukuzithathe Campaign at this point or set aside the Consolidated Report of the 2010 Extended Review General Council. We cannot halt our work, intending to take it up again later. Because later may never come. There are issues we need to put on the table tomorrow, and resolve tomorrow. There is just no more time to waste. This Extended National Council will be a deciding moment in the future of the IFP. May God grant us the courage to look squarely at our problems, and resolve them.

As we emerge from tomorrow's meeting, we need to be able to answer the burning question of the IFP's future. Let us not lose focus. The question before us is this; are we one party, or two? The answer will shape our future.

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