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Minnow foils ANC bid to oust IFP

CHARLES PHAHLANE
& ANGELA BOLOWANA

THE African Christian Democratic Party has put a spoke in the ANC's plans to wrest control of KwaZulu-Natal from the IFP by declaring it was pledged with Premier Lionel Mtshali's compromise offer of two cabinet seats for the ANC.

The ANC has rejected Mtshali's offer, and said the prescription about who it should send to cabinet was an "insult".

Last night the IFP said in the provincial legislature that by reshuffling his cabinet Mtshali had gone beyond the call of duty and shown enormous flexibility and responsibility.

But the ANC said it would not back down.

ACDP leader Kenneth Meshoe said he was pleased Mtshali had honoured the commitment to having a 50/50 representation in the provincial cabinet between the ANC and the IFP.

Thanks to defection, legislation, the ANC coalition with the NNP and Minority Front has 40 seats while the IFP's coalition has 38 seats. The UDM has one MP, Sipho Goma, and the party has declared its support to the IFP, while the ACDP is the power broker in the 80-seat legislature.

A motion of no confidence would fail if the ANC cannot get one more vote, or get either the UDM or ACDP to abstain.

Joanne Downs, sole member of the ACDP, has made it clear that she would not side with either party and considers it all joy being at the centre of such a momentous point in politics.

IFP-ANC RECONCILIATION 'HAS FAILED'

Relations at dead end, says Buthelezi

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TROUBLED relations between the Inkatha Freedom Party and the African National Congress had reached "a dead end" and there was "no prospect" of meaningful dialogue to resolve the impasse, IFP leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi said yesterday.

Buthelezi also shot down reports of an imminent meeting between himself and ANC leader Thabo Mbeki to thrash out their differences and revealed that preparatory talks had failed on Monday.

The talks took place in Johannesburg between ANC deputy president Jacob Zuma and ANC secretary-general Kgalema Motlanthe on the one hand, and IFP national council member Celani Mtetwa and the party's spokesman, Musa Zondi, on the other.

The Mbeki Buthelezi meeting was to have dealt with the many problems plaguing relations between the ANC and IFP.

Monday's meeting was meant to set up an agenda for the meeting between Buthelezi and Mbeki, mooted for May 12, but because the ANC had brought its KZN leader, S'bu Ndebele, to the meeting, and the IFP's provincial leader, Lionel Mtshali, was not there, "the IFP was not happy" and the discussion "did not achieve anything", said Buthelezi.

"As far as I'm concerned,

there's no meeting scheduled between us and there's no prospect that there's going to be any meaningful communication between us and the ANC," Buthelezi said yesterday.

Asked where the relationship between the two parties was headed, Buthelezi said: "We've come to a dead end, so there is nothing I can say further."

The IFP leader repeated his oft-stated reminder that the relationship between the ANC and IFP

the government of national unity was going to achieve when I was a minister of president Mandela in terms of the interim constitution."

Of his continued participation in the post-Mandela cabinet at Mbeki's invitation, Buthelezi said: "So far, I don't think that will be successful - which I regret very much and which I am very sad about."

His forthright comments come amid increasingly acrimonious exchanges between the two sides in their tense standoff in the KwaZulu-Natal legislature, with the ANC threatening to topple the IFP's premier, Mtshali.

The ANC is demanding that Mtshali reinstate the two ANC ministers he fired last year - Dumisani Makhaye and Mike Mabuyakhulu - raising the ire of the ANC by replacing them with DA members. Following the recent floor-crossing - to which the IFP was vehemently opposed - Mtshali also sacked Gabriel Ndabandaba, the former IFP education minister who used the floor-crossing window period to defect to the ANC, which now wants Mtshali to reinstate him too. The ANC has rejected Mtshali's offer this week of two posts for the ANC, on condition that Makhaya is excluded.

"The ANC's view that the firing of the ministers should be dealt with by the KZN legislature and not at a national level was a big stumbling block to arranging a meeting between Buthelezi and Mbeki.



MANGOSUTHU BUTHELEZI

was important because violence between the two had claimed thousands of lives in the past.

Stressing the importance of the ANC-IFP relationship, Buthelezi said: "It is not I who's saying it is important - 20 000 people died. Everyone should realise we are doing peacekeeping exercises all over Africa on the basis that here we managed to resolve our problems and achieve reconciliation, which, in fact, has not succeeded.

"After nine years it is quite clear in my mind that we have not succeeded to consolidate the reconciliation which we thought

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