

BUSINESS DAY, Tuesday, October 3 2000

# Zwelithini finds himself in tough spot on demarcation

Perception that king has moved closer to ANC undermines some of his credibility in province, writes **Nirode Bramdaw**

THE Zulu monarch, King Goodwill Zwelithini, finds himself between the devil and the deep blue sea.

In the charged political landscape of KwaZulu-Natal, the king has not been successful in his bid to remain above the party political fray, and instead is perceived as a supporter of the African National Congress (ANC).

Having been weaned from the Inkatha Freedom Party by then tourism and economic affairs MEC Jacob Zuma, the king launched a legal challenge to IFP leader Mangosuthu Buthezi's claim to the prime ministership of the Zulu nation.

This was, however, conceded in the subsequent abandonment of the case, as part of a negotiated peace pact in the province.

Matters came to a head for Zwelithini in his alignment with other traditional leaders, including Buthezi, in their opposition to the demarcation process.

His allies in the ANC, including former president Nelson Mandela and President Thabo Mbeki, went ahead with the democratisation of traditional areas over the opposition of some traditional leaders.

This process spelt the unspeakable for traditional leaders — forsaking their birthright to lead and competing in elections.

Political analyst Dumisani Hlope said the perceived shift in allegiance gave the king credibility problems. "He was once ensconced in the closet of the IFP, and then shifted to the ANC."

This has alienated IFP supporters. He has found it difficult to woo them back, while ANC supporters in the province remain wary of the need for a



King Goodwill Zwelithini

monarch.

Hlope views the situation as part of a broader malaise that faces traditional leaders elsewhere. "The Zulu nation, like any other African nation, has found itself degraded by the ravages of colonialism. Other forms of mind control, particularly Christianity, have also impinged on the cultural heritage of the black races," said Hlope.

He doubts the "traditionality" of the opposition to demarcation, being led, as it is, by traditional leaders.

"In African culture, the amakhosi (traditional leaders) would gather at an imbizo (meeting) and table their opinions on a subject. After deliberation, the king would decree his opinion and lead the route to be taken," said Hlope.

The African idiom of the king speaking for the nation was doubtful in this instance. The king's "running between the IFP and ANC" had caused damage to his image.

The chairman of the National

House of Traditional Leaders, Mpiyezin-tombi Mzimela, said the king was not a member of the body, as he was "above" it.

"We report to him all the proceedings in the demarcation battle as they unfold. We have his blessings in all our actions," said Mzimela.

The king's spokesman, Theminkosi Memela, said that although he had not attended the weekend meeting between traditional leaders and Provincial and Local Government Minister Sydney Mufamadi, the king had already voiced his "disquiet" to Mbeki at a meeting in January.

"Although it was agreed at that meeting to have contact and consultation, nothing materialised," said Memela. He could not confirm whether Zwelithini would attend an October 21 meeting in Pretoria.

It appears the monarch is being taken less seriously by some in the province. This was evident during a KwaZulu-Natal Tourism promotion on Friday.

During his speech, "subjects" were quite candid in their disrespect for the monarch, laughing at his mispronunciation of English words. Questioned, a guest replied: "He is a king. So what?"

At his 50th birthday party in Nongoma last year, Zwelithini was forced to depart from his keynote address several times to call for silence while he spoke.

The king has also had to contend with sustaining the impressive mantle of his predecessors.

Thus far all Zwelithini has managed to muster in this regard is the resuscitation of the annual reed dance, which he uses to espouse "traditional African values".



# BUSINESSDAY

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## Squaring the circle

**G**OVERNMENT's appointment of a "technical committee" to review the role of traditional leaders in local government may turn out to be yet another attempt to square a circle.

The aim is the laudable one of winning the co-operation of traditional authorities in local elections. But hardline traditionalists are resisting the very idea of elected councils in their areas of jurisdiction. Repeated attempts have been made to bring them on board, climaxing in the weekend meeting between chiefs' representatives and a senior government team headed by President Thabo Mbeki.

It is hard to see what the committee can achieve in the week reportedly set aside for its work. Under the constitution, the election must take place before January 31, while the Independent Electoral Commission says it needs at least 60 days to prepare for balloting. The implication is that the poll may now have to be postponed from the expected date of November 29. If it is rescheduled to the holiday period, levels of participation will inevitably suffer.

It would, of course, be preferable if the committee brokered some pre-election agreement. But the elections must go ahead with or without the chiefs' consent. To this end, political parties with rural constituencies, notably Inkatha and the United Democratic Movement, should clearly affirm their support for the elections and actively lobby their members to facilitate them. For opportunistic reasons, they have so far been equivocal or silent on the issue. If the rural election is marred by violent intimidation and a low voter turnout, they will be partly to blame.

Rural councils need the backing of traditional leaders to work effectively, and the quest for an accommodation must continue after the poll. But chiefs cannot be allowed to hold the country to ransom, and no further delay should be countenanced. SA has shown its ability to stage elections in trying circumstances. If necessary, this election should be secured in potential trouble spots through the large-scale deployment of security forces.

Xolani Xundu

# Govt, chiefs move to end impasse

Contralesa says traditional leaders assured of more power

GOVERNMENT and traditional leaders are evidently moving in the same direction in their attempts to resolve the impasse on the role of chiefs in local government that saw the announcement of the local government election date being postponed.

Patekile Holomisa, president of the Congress of Traditional Leaders of SA (Contralesa), said yesterday that President Thabo Mbeki had assured traditional leaders that their powers and functions would be increased.

Holomisa, who is also a member of a technical committee of traditional leaders and government set up at the weekend, said there were indications that the two institutions were moving in the same direction. The technical committee met yesterday and sought to establish whether new municipal structures would result in the powers and functions of chiefs being diminished and, if so, in what way.

"If, in terms of existing legislation, traditional leaders are a part of local government, and if this is the case (in terms of government's proposal), the institution will continue to be a form of local government," he said.

A team of legal experts had been assembled to review the roles and functions of municipalities and traditional leaders, and would table its report tomorrow. "They must find a way of resolving overlapping powers between the two institutions. In the spirit of co-operative governance, a formula will be found to ensure the two structures complement each other rather than being contradictory," Holomisa said.

Zam Titus, director-general in the provincial and local government department, said: "All people working on this have to burn the midnight oil because of the urgency of the matter. Proposals that we will submit to our principals will start emerging tomorrow. For government, there is no reason why we should not finish at the end of the week."

Titus said Provincial and Local Government Minister Sydney

Mulamadi would disclose this week whether the election date government had in mind was affected. He could not say whether the date was November 29.

Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) chief electoral officer Mandla Mchunu said the IEC viewed the meeting between government and traditional leaders in a positive light.

"It is very important to take away any potential obstacles to free and fair elections. We are hoping that they will announce a date this week because it would work for us to have the elections at the end of November."

He said the IEC needed at least six weeks after the date was announced to prepare for elections. African National Congress spokeswoman Nomfanelo Moyo said it was good that government wanted to bring everyone on board. "We hope the whole process will not derail the elections. Our history in this country is of give and take."

United Democratic Movement president Bantu Holomisa called for the elections to be postponed until late January so the concerns of traditional leaders could be addressed. "Their concerns cannot be solved overnight. If there is going to be a change (in the local government system) then it would force them to postpone the election until next year," he said.

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# The Citizen

TUESDAY 3 OCTOBER 2000

## Poll date delay must be brief

DELAYS in local elections could have significant implications. Not only are political parties inconvenienced. So, too, is every organisation involved, including school and similar institutions which are to be used as polling stations.

Most severely affected will be the Independent Electoral Commission, which has to plan in detail, including hiring staff on contract. In addition, delivery to the poor requires the establishment of efficient local government structures.

Bearing all of this in mind there is understandably consternation at the weekend statement by Minister Sydney Mufamadi, putting on hold the announcement of a date because of pressure from traditional leaders.

Obviously discussions with "African royalty", as they prefer to be called, must be handled with circumspection. Modernity or not, many South Africans are content to owe their fealty to tribal superiors.

Their wishes must be acknowledged, along with those of the chiefs who fear their authority will be whittled away by new demarcations and municipal arrangements.

At the same time democracy cannot be held to ransom by unreasonable demands. We would have hoped that, after lengthy talks, the government would have reached a workable agreement with the chiefs. But official assurances have not been adequate.

Now a "technical committee" has been set up to clarify the role of traditional leaders. It must complete its work promptly and give the people a chance to make their political choices.

The poll delay must be as brief as possible.

## Time to change

FARMERS have the right to do what they want to with their land. But they must also help educate children whose parents work on farms.

That is why Northern Province education MEC Edgar Mushwana has urged them to sign an agreement to provide land to build schools.

Unfortunately, only two out of 1 490 farmers have signed the agreement and the government is faced with a deadline of November 30.

Should the government seize farmland for schools? Not until all avenues have been exhausted.

Farmers must be made to understand that workers and their children are the most intimidated, least-considered and poorly funded. Now the government wants to maintain all farm schools, which would eliminate a big headache for farmers. It is time to change.

## Premier warns on royal rights

By THULANI MSIMANG

Local Government Reporter

KWAZULU-NATAL Premier Lionel Mtshali has warned that the failure to resolve boundary disputes may cause traditional leaders to defend their powers by "all means at their disposal".

He also accused government of trying to reduce the powers of traditional leaders. Mtshali was addressing a Heritage Day ceremony over the weekend organised by traditional leaders where he was quoted in an IFP-owned Weekly newspaper, *Ilanga*, warning government that "people may be forced to defend what is theirs by all means at their disposal".

The warning came while a technical committee set up by the government and traditional leaders was meeting behind closed doors in Pretoria in a bid to resolve a stand-off between the two parties over the rôle of South African Royalty within the new municipal structures.

"I am concerned about what may happen to this nation if people try to take away the powers and the dignity of traditional leaders," Mtshali said.

The ANC said it was irresponsible of the premier to threaten violence at a time when the matter was still under discussion. ANC spokesman Mtholephi Mthimkhulu said the democratic rights of people who live in rural areas must also be safeguarded.

● Meanwhile, the Independent Electoral Commission has called on thousands of potential voters, who missed the last phase of registration for local government elections, to register this week at their nearest municipal offices. An IEC spokesman said the voters' roll was still open for last-minute additions.



CAPE ARGUS, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2000

# New committee to examine role of tribal chiefs

CHARLES PHAHLANE  
PARLIAMENTARY BUREAU

A nine-member committee announced yesterday to examine the role of traditional leaders under the new municipal boundaries will commence its work tomorrow assisted by a team of legal experts.

The Joint Technical Committee, established yesterday, includes Provincial and Local Government Director General Mr Zam Titus, Head of the House of Traditional Leaders Inkosi Mpiyezintombi Mzimela, ANC MP Inkosi Patekile Holomisa, Home Affairs Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi and the IFP leader's spe-

cial advisor Dr Mario Ambrosini.

A sub-committee of legal experts will table a report at the meeting on a review of the roles and functions of municipalities on the one hand and that of traditional leaders on the other.

The Joint Technical Committee also agreed on its functions, which are to examine whether the powers of traditional leaders would be diminished after the local elections and, if so, in what way. It will also make recommendations to remedy the situation.

Mr Mufamadi was due to announce the date of the election on Saturday but postponed the announcement so that the impact of the demarcation process on the

powers of traditional leaders could be assessed.

Traditional leaders have criticised the new municipal demarcation saying it would diminish their powers. Their representation in local councils has been increased to 20%, but traditional leaders say this does not give them powers they would lose under the new dispensation.

The Democratic Alliance yesterday attacked the Demarcation Board for failing to properly consult with traditional leaders resulting in the postponement of the election date.

"The DA is of the opinion that this issue could have been prevented if the Municipal Demarcation Board had taken

pro-active steps well in advance to make proper use of the consultation process with traditional leaders," said DA MP Francois Beukman said.

He was referring to Provincial and Local Government Minister Sydney Mufamadi's answer to a question tabled in the National Assembly. In his answer, Mr Mufamadi said that the Demarcation Board held various workshops to consult with traditional leaders and their concerns were considered.

In a recent speech in the National Assembly, Mr Mufamadi said the challenge for traditional leaders and elected officials was to master the issue of peaceful co-existence.



CAPE ARGUS, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2000

# Marais aims to be city mayor

## 'I'll bring laughter back,' vows New NP choice

The Western Cape's flamboyant Peter Marais will be Mayor of Cape Town if the Democratic Alliance wins in the unicity metropolitan area in the upcoming local government elections.

"I will bring back laughter to the streets of the Cape Flats and I will manage the urban renewal in the city with gusto and imagination, and in close collaboration with the private sector," said Mr Marais.

Last night he was unanimously chosen by the New National Party's executive committee as its mayoral candidate, but by early today he had not heard the outcome of the crucial DA meeting that followed.

But sources close to the DA confirmed that the New NP's provincial minister of welfare had been selected as the DA mayoral candidate at this meeting.

But, because a few Democratic Party members had some concerns about Mr Marais that need clarifying, the DA is not expected to make a formal announcement until the end of this week.

Mr Marais, who was axed from New NP Premier Gerald Morkel's cabinet earlier this year for five months because of his criti-

**TROYE LUND**  
Political Reporter



cisms of the Democratic Party, the New NP's coalition partner in the provincial government, added: "My record speaks for itself; I have always delivered."

Mr Marais said he was sure the DA would win, and that he viewed his potential position as a new challenge to unify the local authorities he established when he was minister of local government in 1995.

DA sources said that, apart from his local government background, his charismatic style, his talent for public speaking, his ability to relate to people at all levels and the respect he commanded among members of the opposing African National Congress in the province were deciding factors.

"I see it as another stage in the transition

of the South African political scene," said Mr Marais, who, if his party wins the election, will head a unicity with a R9-billion budget, which will be run by a cabinet-like executive committee of local councillors.

While seven of the nine provinces have opted for a super-mayor with no executive and full decision-making powers, the Western Cape and KwaZulu Natal have opted for a system similar to the national Government structure of a president and cabinet.

Neither the Northern Cape, nor the Northern Province qualify for a unicity structure, but have been obliged to pass legislation allowing one should the need arise.

Meanwhile, as political parties finalise their candidate lists for the local election, the national Minister of Local Government, Sydney Mufamadi, has postponed the announcement of the election date because of unhappiness among traditional leaders about newly demarcated municipal boundaries they say would diminish their powers.

In terms of the constitution, the elections must be held by the end of January. They are widely expected to be held in late November or early December.



Peter Marais: DA candidate for Cape Town mayor