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WOMEN’S GUILD CONFERENCE - NATAL REGION

Address by Mangosuthu G. Buthelezi  
Chief Minister of KwaZulu and President of Inkatha

ULUNDI 8TH JUNE 1989

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| UNITED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH - ISILILO

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Mrs. Dlamini President of the Women's Guild; the Secretary Mrs. E.  
QKQMA\Mhd%AN\

Dludla and Chaplain and other Pastors present here today, my  
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sisters.

I wish to say that as a Christian I always feel so much at home  
amongst other Christians and particularly amongst Christian women,  
who are the back-bone of the Church in our communities. My  
mother's own commitment to Christianity has throughout life been a  
great inspiration to me. It is a Christian. faith which has

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inspired many a Black mother to strive to educate us in this country. In more than 80 per cent of the stories about a poor boy or a poor girl who made it in education, you will always find that

the mother invariably is the Heroine of each such epic.

The United Congregational Church has a very special place in heart. For four years of my formative years, I was a student at Adams College where I did both my Junior Certificate

matriculation under the predominant influence of Ministers of

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Congregational Church. I therefore thank you Madam President for inviting me to be here today to welcome you all to Ulundi, the capital of KwaZulu, not merely as Chief Minister but also as your brother in Christ.

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I address many meetings during the course of any year and a large percentage of them are important meetings. They are meetings about fundamental political problems; they are meetings about tactics and strategies in the struggle for liberation; they are meetings in

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which I gather support for the struggle for liberation; they are meetings in which unity is sought and the strength that comes from unity - is sought. They are meetings with national leaders in this country as well as Prime Ministers, Presidents, Foreign Ministers and other Cabinet Ministers of leading nations in the world. They are meetings at which governments from right around the world - including First World and Third World governments - send delegates to deliberate together.

Yet my sisters, I can regard it as more important than my meeting with you today. You are the mothers and the sisters of the nation; you are the wives in the nation. You are playing out a God-given role which none can play for you. You are doubly burdened in this role. Firstly we as Black South Africa have a political job to do that none can do for us because we are the most oppressed. The only way those who are oppressed today can walk tall tomorrow is to do something about their oppression.

////;one can cross our borders to do what we have to do on the ground.

Nobody in South Africa will or could do what we have to do. Ours

is the responsibility to salvage the country from -the â\200\224hideously

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destructive \_system\_of,apartheid)which\_divides. It is we who are

divided )who \_must -~bind-ourselves.together. toâ\200\224 form.-a ~new â\200\224South

Africa. The strength of the South African nation will ultimately

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If I reach out for my brother and sister and.\_my \_grasp-is\_weak, the

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nation will be weak \_and South\_Africa-will-be -weak.

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: depend wupon the strength with which Black hand.\_holds- Black- hand.

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You my sisters as Blacks share this overall Black burden. You of all people know that the struggle for liberation is not a Party

political thing. It is not . politics only that. . will: ; save our

country. The struggle for liberation is a struggle to join Black

to Black. It is a struggle to locate the Black people of South Africa in the influential positions where Black bargaining. power can be strengthened. It is a struggle to give every man, woman and

child a rightful place in all the social, economic and political



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institutions of this country. It is a struggle for\_\_ a â\200\224whole

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birthright which covers everything.

/gt is a struggle which involves all \_black -â\200\224institutions; that involves workers and their trade unions; that involves black employers .and â\200\224their associations; that involves professional associations; it involvÃ©s civic associations and right at the top of the list - more important than anything else, more important

than major political groupings in fact - it involves the churches

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of thisâ\200\224country. Â®

Not only are you as the black women involved in this total â\200\224-Black  
attackâ\200\224.on \_apartheid - this nationwide â\200\224endeavour â\200\224to.\_ claim - ou  
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birthrightâ\200\224.and \_to\_establish-the kind\_of-decency that goes with a  
birthright\_authored-by -God \_Almighty - you are also involved in your  
own way as women of South Africa.

My sisters, I am deeply aware that when any tragedy strikes about

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the poverty-stricken black population it is-the women, the mothers,  
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who are-battered\_most. It is they who suffer most. It is they  
who lose most\_and it is upon them that the nation relieg,on\_to.â\200\224do

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the-most\_to xecover.

Your great calling in life is not a calling to be an-under-dog; it

is not a \_calling-to play a â\200\224second-class citizens â\200\224xrole. Your  
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calling is to stand\_up,asâ\200\230yomenb to walk tall as women and to do  
that which only the women of the nation can do.

My sisters, when poverty strikes and home life is disrupted) and when community life starts disintegrating, it is the women of South Africa who are burdened with the real burden of poverty. All Black

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South Africa suffers but the women suffer most of all.

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//i-\201hen there is war or revolution or faction fighting, or when there is violence in our townships, it is the women who suffer most. When there .is a degeneration of human relationships and human beings start snapping and snarling like some demented cur, the

bite and the tearing are one thing. But the aftermath is something altogether different, something altogether worse, and- Â¥t 48 something which settles so heavily on the women of \_South Africa.

But then, Glory be to God; the countefpart of all this is also true. With this great burden comes great prii}leges. It is the women who are privileged to be defenders\_of the faith\_in-adversity.

It is the women who are privileged to fight the rearguard action to salvage the Â@best \_and to let the worst fall away into the past.

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g When change comes, those who suffered most, will benefit most  
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them the change will be the greatest. &

My sisters, when I have been visiting the United States in recent  
years, I have heard the phrase "Black empowerment" being used more  
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black women of South Africa can be the real empowerers of Black  
South Africa. It is women who must support the best that men can

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l and more frequently. When I hear this phrase I think that only the  
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do. And I am not saying anything about men playing a primary role  
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which women must just support. I am saying that nothing can  
succeed unless women back it. Neither war, nor peace, nor trial  
and tribulation, can be made meaningful to the nation unless women

back it.

very revolutionary leader right around the world in every  
continent, in every country, where revolution has succeeded, knows  
that women had to be mobilised before success could be achieved.

When it comes to freedom fighters, it is the women who stand up to

be counted.

But of all the responsibilities that rest on the women, the moral responsibility of saying yeah when and saying nay when nay is needed, is the greatest black women of South Africa say no, no and no

revolution and to the violence with which some are bring about radical change.

shoulders of  
yeah is needed  
Qb â\200\230all. The  
yet again to

attempting) to



I am a political leader in the midst of the South African violence which has so blighted the image of our black struggle for liberation. I do not talk about political violence theoretically. My sisters, vyou know that those who bury their dead talk about violence at first hanÂ\$>and talk-aboutâ\200\224it -most -meaningfully. As a black leader, I know that there is a great cry in South Africa for

the cessation of violence.

Wherever violence strikes most - as it has been striking in the

Greater Pietermaritzburg Area and spreading further afield over the

last vyear.-and\_\_a\_half\_to two years - there lis reaction after  
reaction opposing violence. The people who are most affected by  
violence, most deplore it. They deplore it most because they are

battered into violent conflict. They are intimidated into violent

cenfliet . It is not a case of two sides in a violent conflict  
desiring violence at the grass root level and coming together to  
form opposing groups who will fight it out willingly.because that

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is what they want to do.

No, my sisters, violence creeps in at night as though it is brought in by some kind of hyenas. It starts working its evil thing and more ~andâ\200\224 moreâ\200\224 individuals \_and then more and more groups and ultimately \_ \_more- and\_ \_more~ localitiesraare,,battereĩ¬\201) by T Individuals, groups and communities are actually dragged into

violence. Circumstances develop around them in which they are enveloped in violence.

We know as a black people the desire for full participation in the affairs of the nation is the great desire which is written in the hearts and minds of the people. It is the struggle for liberation which has written that desire there. It is the struggle for liberation which has confirmed our claim to the great liberties

that God has created in His scheme of things for people.

Our struggle for liberation in this country has written indelibly in the hearts and minds of Black South Africa that we are

struggling for a fair and just society. We are struggling for a society in which there will be equality before the law and the constitution. We are struggling for a society in which there will be equality of opportunity for all. And we are struggling for a society in which race, colour and creed will no longer be deciding factors of who has the most, who has the most favoured by the State.

Our black struggle for liberation was not only

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ideals which are there in the great scheme of things that God has created for the improvement of mankind, but it is also founded on noble means of achieving noble objectives.

The struggle for liberation has things and a struggle against evil been a struggle against temptation destroy the goals you are aspiring

political violence does.

been a struggle for the noble ways of achieving them. It has so to hit out in anger that you

zc) o} That, my sisters, is what

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When vyou look at any violent tactic and strategy, or you look at any confrontation designed to produce violent conflict, vyou will inevitably . and alwaysâ\200\224observe-that- intimidation has to be used to soften up the peoplejpefore they become participants. The struggle for liberation demands the best in us. It does not demand the

worst in us.

It is the women of South Africa - the black women of South Africa - who have to stand up and be counted when violence tries to rub out

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that which the history of the struggle has written in the hearts and minds of people. It is the women who say n?) a thousand times no, to the burning, maiming and killing around them. It vl's â\200\230ondy the women who can actually legitimise the violence that erupts around them. It is in the power of women to say yeah or to say nay more effectively than it is in the power of any black political

organisation to say yeah or nay to violence.

Calling for violence is easy; standing up and shouting slogans and



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using rhetoric is easy; It is something that anybody can actually learn. Making violence a people's violence, violence supported by

and desired by the people, is on the other hand only something that the people themselves can do. It is something that history must do

beyond the ability of any political organisation to say yeah or

â\200\230nay. The voice of the women of South Africa in a very real sense

is the voice of history declaring its opposition to political

violence.

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We have had hideous Black-on-Black confrontations in the Greater Pietermaritzburg Area and we have had violence which has spread from that area to other areas. Whole communities are reeling under the onslaught of violence. Communities are being torn apart by violence erupting in them. There is now a great cry that enough is

enough and all the people are saying let there be peace.Â®

A;;);n April this year I finalised plans for a peace initiative and ever since then I have been working on the ground to establish

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peace between Black and Black. Nothing mars the image of the struggle for liberation and nothing saps the potency of black political power as much as the violence of Black against Black does. There is no justification for it under any circumstances. Even those who claim that they are fighting a just war against apartheid are wrong. They are wrong firstly because there is no such thing as a just ' war ' in South Africa . while there are alternatives to violence which have not yet been really properly

pursued.

Secondly, however, political violence must be doubly condemned not only because it is not justified because there are other things that can be done, but it must also be condemned because it has taken the turn of using violence in black internecine black conflict. Those who claim that violence is justified are damned to hell when they use violence against the victims of apartheid and not against the pillars of apartheid. They are damned yet again

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and even more deeply than the violence they wuse for the  
indiscriminate.â\200\224~violenceâ\200\224 of bombs in -market places> in places\_\_of  
entertainment\_and-inâ\200\224public walk-ways.

The great peace initiative that I have announced and that I have  
begun implementing is a peace initiative which all decent citizens  
should call for. My sisters, if any one man in South Africa could  
be more excused for wanting violence than any other man, it would  
probably be Dr. Nelson Mandela. The hideousness of the violence

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that has erupted in the Greater Pietermaritzburg Area and that has spread elsewhere since, has made Dr. Nelson Mandela cry out from

jail - let there be peace between Blacks.

In Dr. Mandela's first ever communication to the public of South Africa in the 26 years that he has been in jail, he wrote to me calling for a cessation of Black-on-Black conflicts in Natal and

KwaZulu. This is what he wrote:

1335/88: NELSON MANDELA. Victor Verster Prison

BEG E S T S R R e R e e RS

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Private Bag X6005  
Paarl South, 7624

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Dear Shenge,

I thank you for the warm and well-considered telex message you sent me on behalf of Kipg Zwelithini and Inkatha on the occasion of my seventieth birthday. I also received your letter of 26 August 1988 in which you wished me a speedy recovery from illness, and in which

you outlined your efforts both locally and abroad to secure the

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release of prisoners in South Africa.

Apart from vyour telex and a telegram\_ fromâ\200\230 Mrs. Helen Suzman, hundreds of similar messages came from well-wishers in the country and in different parts of the world. It is partly the wunswerving support of suchâ\200\230men and women, and partly the achievements made by our organisation within and outside the country which have given

prisoners so much strength and hope.

You will readily accept that it is not at all easy from my present



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quarters to comment fully and freely on the sentiments you so

eloquently expressed in the above correspondence. It is sufficient to state that your persistent demand for the unconditional release of prisoners before negotiation can start, is a stand which I have always welcomed as a positive contribution to the search for

lasting peace in this country.

Obviously, my present hope is to see, in due course, the

restoration of the cordial relations which existed between you and

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00.R., and between the two organisations in the seventies.

The most challenging task facing the leadership today is that of national unity. At no other time in our history has it become so crucial for our people to speak with one voice, and to pool their efforts. Any act or statement, from whatever source, which tends to' â\200\234create or 'worsen divisions is, :in - the existing political situation, a fatal error which ought to be avoided at all costs.

Far more information than I possess at the moment is required before I can blame any of the parties involved in the deplorable conflicts now taking place in Natal. All the same, I consider it a serious indictment against all of us that we are still unable to combine forces to stop the slaughter of so many innocent lives. The struggle is our life and, even though the realisation of our fondest dreams may not be at hand, we can nevertheless make that struggle immensely enriching or absolutely disastrous.

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In my entire political career few things have distressed me as to see our people killing one another as is now happening. As you know, the entire fabric of community life in some of the affected areas has been seriously disrupted, leaving behind a legacy of hatred and bitterness which may haunt us for years to come. It is a matter which requires the urgent attention of all people in this country. Nothing will please me more than to know that my concern and appeal have not fallen on deaf ears.

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Once again, thank vyou, the King and Inkatha for your inspiring message. My best wishes to you and Mndlunkulu.

Yours sincerely,

MADIBA

My sisters, I am totally committed to do whatever I can do to bring about peace. I know that it is no good sitting around in lofty meetings in five-star hotels talking about violence. If anybody is

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really interested in stopping violence, then that somebody must walk with me to the places where the stopping\_mustâ\200\224 be â\200\224put â\200\224-into practice. They must walk with me into the communities where

violence has most erupted.

On Sunday the 26th May I went to KwaMakhuta which you all know is a place where violence has erupted so hideously and where people have been so battered by it. I had a mass meeting there in which there

was a really fantastic grass-root support for my call for peace.

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There lis a great crying out by the victims of violence that

violence must now cease.

On the 18th June I will go gb KwaMashu to have another peace prayer rally against violence and on the 26th June i will go to Edendale.

On the 16th July I will have another mass rally but at Imbali this time. Then again on the 23rd July, I will go to Taylor's Halt for

a mass prayer rally for peace. You, my sisters, who suffer the

consequences of violence know that it is these very llocalities

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where that which is most hideous has struck the hardest. Figo it o â\200\230

them to bring the message of peace to the people and to demand the

reconciliation of Black to Black.

I need your prayers in this pursuit of peace for the people. I do  
it because I love them; I do it because I serve them; I do it  
because all the martyrs and heroes of our struggle both present and

past, demand that Black now ceases battering Black.

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There is an additional reason why you and I, as Christians, have no alternative but to support the peace initiative. We are the

followers of Christ, the Prince of Peace. He implores us in his

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gospels to be one)as much as He and His Father are one. We owe this to our children and their children's children. If we develop a culture of violence as a black community, what future do our children and their children's children have? How can we negotiate peace with Whites who oppress us, if we cannot establish peace

amongst ourselves? How can we credibly condemn violence if we

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ourselves have been its perpetrators?

My sisters, it is you, the women of South Africa, who are needed to back the moves that your political leaders make to bring peace between Black and Black. I make the call not only as a political leader but I do so also as a Christian. It is you who is needed to back the call for Black unity. Ultimately it is the women of South Africa who will be the deciding factor in how the struggle for

liberation is finally won. None of us doubt that it will be won.

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It is simply a question of when and how. The how will determine what kind of society we will have in the future. In this sense,

the women of South Africa have the future of our country in the palms of their hands. Hold it gently, my sisters; nurture the future. It is all we have got. Your children will inherit what

you now do in the struggle for liberation.

I have talked for some time now about the power of women in the struggle for liberation. The most important thing of all, however,

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has now to be said. Beâ\200\230f;e daughters of God in all you do. Walk with Christ in everything you do. Let the Holy Spirit empower you in whatever you do. Be faithful to the Gospel. Purify the power of your womanhood in Christ. Employ the power of your womanhood so that our prayer, 'They Kingdom come on earth as it is heaven' |is

made meaningful in our acts of faith.

You have come together as the women of the United Congregational

Church to labour here, to debate here and to decide on issues. May

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your deliberations be inspired and may you work tirelessly during these days of your Conference to discover the great truths of the Gospel and to apply them to your circumstances. My sisters, may

God be with you.

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