



## **EFF TRIBUTE TO KING GOODWILL ZWELITHINI KA BHEKUZULU**

Friday, 12 March 2021

The EFF pays tribute to the King Goodwill Zwelithini ka Bhekuzulu, the King of AmaZulu, who passed away in the early hours of the morning on Friday, March 12, 2021. The King was hospitalized for some time, and succumbed to illness after waging a brave fight against sickness. His passing comes after a particularly difficult year for the King and his family. His sister, Queen Nloyiso Sandile, then a regent of the Amarharhabe Kingdom, passed away in July 2020, and his son, and heir to the Zulu Kingdom, Prince Lethukuthula Zulu, died under mysterious circumstances in November 2020.

King Zwelithini was the longest reigning King of the Zulu nation in the history of its existence, having assumed this leadership position at the tender age of 20, after his father, King Cyprian Bhekuzulu kaSolomon passed away in 1968. The mere fact that he was on the throne for this long is evidence of the King's perseverance and strength. He assumed leadership of the Zulu nation at the height of apartheid repression and exploitation, and yet he stood firm in his resolve to unite not only people of Zulu descent, but all African people in what we now know as KwaZulu Natal.

At a time when the evil apartheid regime tried to sow seeds of division amongst African people, King Zwelithini embraced the unity of the African people. He married a Swati princess, Queen Mantfombi Dlamini, a daughter of King Sobhuza of Eswatini; and his sister, Nloyiso was married to the King of Amarharhabe, King Maxhobayakhawuleza Sandile. This demonstrated that the King and his family recognized that African people across the length and breadth of this country were one, and refused to let the demon of tribalism sowed by colonialism and apartheid to divide the people.

The King Goodwill Zwelithini ka Bhekuzulu is in a lineage of courageous anti colonial warriors such as Shaka, Dingane, Cetswayo and many countless warriors whom despite possessing no superior armaments and machine guns, fought against colonial invaders.

It was the unifying role played by King Zwelithini during the late 1980's to early 1990's, that saved the country from internecine tribal wars, when the apartheid regime sponsored black on black violence. The King at that period truly became a King for everyone, and his firm, unifying voice gave everyone in KwaZulu Natal a sense of belonging.

King Zwelithini, though a traditional leader in every sense of the word, was also a modern traditional leader who was in touch with the modern needs of his people. When the country was ravaged by HIV and AIDS, and when people in KwaZulu Natala were dying in their numbers because of this disease, the King heeded scientific advice that male circumcision lowers the risks of transmission of the virus. He ordered that all Zulu men should undergo medical circumcision, in order to help the fight against HIV and AIDS.

As the sole trustee of the Ingonyama Trust, the King was passionate about agricultural development, and aimed to have people residing on Ingonyama Trust land fully engaged in agriculture. Despite the recent criticisms of the Ingonyama Trust, the King remained calm, and was engaging even those who held different views from him on the matter of land under the Trust. Whilst elements under his leadership sometimes did wrong things, the custodianship which the King did not deprive black people of access to land for residential and at times agricultural purposes.

Despite leading one of the most powerful nations of black people in the world, King Goodwill Zwelithini was one of the most humble human beings willing to engage with all people in South Africa. Whilst many ageists and conservatives undermined and tried to treat the Economic Freedom Fighters with disdain and disrespect, the King made time to engage with the Leadership of the EFF and even hosted the entire leadership for his 69th Birthday in 2017. We cherish and will always cherish the deep wisdom and guidance we received from King Goodwill Zwelithini.

In his honour, our generation should appreciate that total decolonization will include the recognition of sound and developmental traditional leadership which must play its role and functions without gender discrimination. Many parts of the Western World including the so called Great Britain, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Spain, Netherlands, Belgium Monaco, Luxembourg continue to uphold the traditional leadership whilst misapplied modernity in the African continent almost always erodes traditional leadership. Traditional leadership system should play an important role in the preservation of culture, language and useful traditional epistemology, which are being eroded by western cultures, languages and knowledge systems. The King played an important role in this regard.

The country has lost a true leader, an embodiment of our people's quest for true freedom and self-determination. The EFF sends its deepest condolences to the family of Isilo samabandla, Uhlanga lo Mhlabathi, Ingonyama yakwa Zulu.

Wena Wendlovu!

Wena wendlovu!

Bayede!

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