

'CONCERNS WHOLE NATION'

Zulu king slams farm murders

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KING Goodwill Zwelithini said the ongoing killings of white farmers should not only be condemned by the white community, but should be the concern of the entire nation.

Delivering his speech at the official opening of the KwaZulu-Natal legislature in Pietermaritzburg yesterday the king also challenged the rest of South Africa to speak out against racism instead of making it only the problem of those who were being discriminated against.

He said social cohesion and reconciliation, the country's two nation-building projects, had failed because people saw themselves as belonging to a group instead of being part of South Africa.

"If we are being honest with ourselves, these two initiatives have failed to take us forward from our sad past," said the king.

He said the challenges that confronted the nation were being dealt with in racial terms, adding that as a nation "we tolerate rather than embrace each other".

In reference to Penny Sparrow's racist outburst in which she called black people at the beachfront "monkeys", the king said her comments must be criticised by all South Africans.

"If someone has been called a monkey that should shock the whole nation, not just black people, because such statements take us back as a nation.

"If a farmer is killed there should be widespread condemnation of such acts, not only from white farmers, but from all of us because the victim is a South African irrespective of where he comes from," said the king.

He said the lack of job opportunities for young people should

not only be discussed by a certain racial group "because this would affect all of us".

He said South Africa was at a crossroads because of its failure to implement social cohesion.

The king said reconciliation had failed because the project had been hijacked by experts from Gauteng or Cape Town who had no clue of local conditions.

"In short, I am saying let us put a stop to all the glittering functions meant to discuss reconciliation. Let us go to the communities on the ground who are affected to encourage reconciliation."

He said racial groups depended on each other.

"I always say that the history of the Zulu nation would not be complete without the history of the Indian communities, and the history of English people, Afrikaners and Germans.

"If we accept this truth we would go beyond tolerating each other to embrace each other," he said.

He said the government should go back to the drawing board to plan new programmes to visit various communities.

"Let's come up with programmes to visit communities in Chatsworth, Phoenix, KwaMashu or Inanda when there are problems between Africans and Indians communities."

The king also reprimanded KwaZulu-Natal Finance MEC Belinda Scott and her Human Settlements and Public Works counterpart Ravi Pillay for not attending the annual Reed Dance ceremony an event which he said was driving social cohesion.

"There should be no one who is seen to be not accepting the Zulu king while living within the Zulu nation. If they work for the government, I would also be happy to work with them since they handle



King Goodwill Zwelithini arrives to address crowds for the opening of the legislature in Pietermaritzburg yesterday, flanked by Premier Willie Mkhurru, PICTURE: SIBUSISO NDLOVU

the affairs of my people," he said. He said Scott and Pillay's failure to go to his traditional ceremonies was defeating the efforts of rainbow nation.

Premier Willie Mkhurru apologised to the king for Pillay and Scott not attending the Reed Dance.

"This means that my job (of talking to them) would be easy. Your Majesty because they are not children, they are adults who are capable of listening.

"The good thing is that they

did not appoint themselves to the position they are holding," said Mkhurru.

Scott declined to respond to the king's remarks.

However, Pillay said he viewed the king's comments as gentle, corrective, fatherly advice.

"When His Majesty speaks we listen. His Majesty is a very important pillar of the social cohesion efforts in the province and we must do everything to support those programmes."

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