

## **OBITUARY OF PRINCE MANGOSUTHU BUTHELEZI MP**

Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi was born into the Zulu Royal Family on 27 August 1928, in the Mahlabathini District of Zululand, in the Union of South Africa. He was born to Princess Magogo kaDinuzulu, the sister of King Solomon, and Inkosi Mathole Buthelezi, the traditional Prime Minister to the Zulu Monarch and Nation.

He would live to become one of the most respected statesman his country had ever seen; a champion of democracy, a powerful force for liberation, an advocate of peace and a leader of unwavering principle. By the time of his passing on 9 September 2023, at the age of 95, Prince Buthelezi had led a life of remarkable sacrifice, commitment and resilience.

He was raised at KwaDlamahlahla Palace under the care of King Solomon kaDinuzulu and, after the King's passing in 1933, by the Regent, Prince Mshiyeni kaDinuzulu.

When he was just 14 years old, Prince Buthelezi's father passed away, and he was brought by the Buthelezi family to eMadaka, one of his father's homesteads, to stab the ground; indicating that he was the heir and successor to Inkosi Mathole.

Upon completing primary school at Mahhashini in Nongoma, he was accepted into Adams College in Amanzimtoti. On his way to Adams, the Regent presented him at Ohlange to Dr John Langalibalele Dube, the first President of the ANC.

In his matric year, Buthelezi's uncle, Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme, the Founder of the ANC, enlisted him to assist with his correspondence. Thus his political education began.

In 1948, in the very year that the National Party took power in South Africa and began instituting the dastardly policy of apartheid, Buthelezi entered the University of Fort Hare. Alongside many future leaders of Africa, he studied Roman-Dutch Law, Criminal Law and Bantu Administration.

Three years into his studies, as a member and activist of the Fort Hare branch of the ANC Youth League, he participated in a boycott of a visit by the Governor General, for which he found himself expelled. Fortunately, on the intervention of the Regent and the former principal of Adams College, he was admitted to the non-European Section of the University of Natal where he completed his studies. He was finally allowed to graduate at Fort Hare.

In 1951, Prince Buthelezi took up work in Durban and began attending political rallies at Nichols Square. He spent much of his time with his mentor, Inkosi Albert Luthuli, at Lakhani Chambers in Grey Street, where they discussed faith, the pursuit of freedom and servant leadership. During this time, he became close to leaders like Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu and Nelson Mandela.

On 2 July 1952, Prince Buthelezi married Irene Audrey Thandekile Mzila at St Faith's Anglican Church in Durban. It was a love that lasted a lifetime, producing eight children: Princess Phumzile Nokuphiwa, Prince Ntuthukoyezwe Zuzifa, Princess Mandisi Sibukakonke, Princess Mabhuku Snikwakonke, Princess Lethuxolo Bengitheni, Prince Nelisuzulu Benedict, Prince Phumaphesheya Gregory and Princess Sibuyiselwe Angela.

In 1953, while preparing to do his legal articles under Mr Rowley Arenstein, Buthelezi was called upon to return to Mahlabathini to take up his hereditary position as Inkosi of the Buthelezi Clan. On the advice of Inkosi Luthuli, he accepted. However, the regime refused to fully recognise him, as he was a known member of the ANC. He was compelled into an acting position, before finally being installed in 1957.

By that time, His Majesty King Cyprian Bhekuzulu kaSolomon, Buthelezi's first cousin, was on the throne. In 1954, the King appointed Buthelezi *uNdunankulu weNgonyama neSizwe sikaZulu*. Thus he took over as traditional Prime Minister to the Zulu Monarch and Nation, a role that his father, great grandfather, and great great grandfather had all played. He would serve in this position for seven decades, under three successive Kings.

The following year, in October 1955, the architect of apartheid, Dr HF Verwoerd, addressed an Imbizo convened by King Cyprian Bhekuzulu Nyangayezizwe. Amakhosi tasked the young Buthelezi with responding to Verwoerd. He spoke out strongly against the injustice of the regime and his direct approach earned him the praise name "UBHEJANE OVIMBELA'MABHUNU EBLINJINI EMONA".

A man of deep and life-long faith, Buthelezi attended the Anglican Congress in Canada in 1963 as a lay delegate. He had already travelled to Norway, the United States and the United Kingdom. But *en route* to Canada, he stopped in London and visited Oliver Tambo, the exiled leader of the ANC. Tambo expressed concern that Buthelezi was being watched by the Security Police and indeed, upon his return to South Africa, Buthelezi's passport was confiscated for the next 9 years.

In 1970, the regime imposed the homelands system to ensure so-called 'separate development'. While the ANC rejected the homelands system, Luthuli and Tambo believed that Buthelezi would be able to undermine the system from within. Accordingly, they sent a message to Buthelezi's sister, Princess Morginah Dotwana, urging him not to refuse the leadership of the Zulu Territorial Authority if he were elected to lead. Amakhosi did indeed elect Buthelezi as the Chief Executive Officer of the Zulu Territorial Authority, and Buthelezi accepted the mandate of his leaders.

The ANC's External Mission thus proudly declared, in January 1971: "The enemy's own creation... the Zulu Bantustan... have become battlegrounds of freedom, where the true representatives of the people are fighting the racists and rejecting their regime."

With his passport returned, Buthelezi began travelling to London, Nairobi, Lagos and Stockholm, meeting with Tambo and other leaders in exile. He travelled to the United States to seek investment for KwaZulu, and visited several African Heads of State to thank them for giving sanctuary to all South Africa's exiles.

When he became Chief Executive Councillor of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, in 1972, he began engaging Prime Minister Vorster on the need not only for political change, but for equality and Black trade unions. This earned him the title of "Newsmaker of the Year" by the South African Society of Journalists.

In 1974, while visiting President Kenneth Kaunda in Lusaka, Zambia, Buthelezi received the President's advice to form a membership-based organisation to reignite political mobilisation on South African soil. The liberation struggle was in hiatus following the banning of the ANC, PAC and other political organisations. The leaders of the Frontline States, in consultation with Tambo, believed that only Buthelezi could fulfil this role.

Thus, on 21 March 1975, Buthelezi founded the National Cultural Liberation Movement, Inkatha Yenkululeko yeSizwe. He based Inkatha on the 1912 founding principles of the ANC and committed it to non-violence, negotiations, unity, inclusivity and nonracialism.

The following year, Buthelezi became the Chief Minister of the KwaZulu Government. In this capacity he was able to create the KwaZulu Finance and Investment Corporation which opened Ithala Bank. KwaZulu's economic base began to develop in earnest and Buthelezi was able to uplift millions of oppressed South Africans.

Through his leadership, more than 6 000 classrooms were built, as well as teacher and nursing training colleges, clinics, the Prince Mshiyeni Hospital, and industrial zones.

At the same time, apartheid's grand scheme to balkanise South Africa began, with the Transkei homeland accepting independence. Knowing that Buthelezi was obstructing this scheme by refusing independence for KwaZulu, President Olusegun Obasanjo invited him to be in Nigeria on the day of the Transkei's independence ceremony.

In October 1976, Tambo addressed the United Nations General Assembly and called for disinvestment and international sanctions against South Africa. Buthelezi disagreed, knowing that the poorest of the poor would be worst affected. He argued the need to protect an economy that the majority would ultimately inherit. This was the first ideological rift between Buthelezi and the ANC.

By 1977, the regime was deeply concerned about the rapid growth of Inkatha. The Minister of Justice, Police and Prisons summoned Buthelezi to Pretoria where he demanded that Buthelezi restrict membership of Inkatha to Zulu-speaking South Africans. But Buthelezi refused, and Inkatha remained home to all oppressed South Africans.

He was increasingly becoming a thorn in the side of the regime. By 1978 he had formed the South African Black Alliance, comprising Indian, Coloured and Black political organisations. At mass rallies, he was quoting from Mandela's speeches, despite it being illegal to do so. But the Police could take no action, for fear of starting a riot in support of Buthelezi.

A second ideological rift then opened between Buthelezi and the ANC, on the issue of an armed struggle. On 29 October 1979, at Tambo's invitation, a delegation of Inkatha led by Buthelezi met with a delegation of the ANC's mission-in-exile in London. For two and a half days the ANC tried to persuade Buthelezi to support their armed struggle and to allow weapons and guerrilla soldiers to be channelled into South Africa through Inkatha's structures. But Buthelezi refused. He could not abandon the liberation movement's founding principle of non-violence. Ultimately, the two organisations could not agree, and committed to meet again.

In that same year, Buthelezi founded the Mangosuthu Technikon, which was later named the Mangosuthu University Technology, in order to provide young black South

Africans with vocational skills. He was also appointed Chancellor of the University of Zululand, a position he held for 21 years.

Committed to building the future, Buthelezi travelled to the United States to meet with President Jimmy Carter to discuss the Sullivan Principles and the need to maintain investment in South Africa for sake of protecting jobs for the oppressed.

In 1980, his book "South Africa: My Vision of the Future" was published, and he launched the Buthelezi Commission of Enquiry into Social, Economic and Political Justice. Consisting of 46 scholars, politicians, lawyers, educationalists, religious leaders and businessmen, the Commission investigated the possibility of reconstituting KwaZulu and Natal as a single self-governing unit, to break out of the apartheid mould. A market economy system was given preference over socialist or communist alternatives.

But that year brought tremendous pain for Buthelezi. On 2 June 1980, speaking at the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Freedom Charter, the ANC's General Secretary Mr Alfred Nzo fired the opening salvo in what would become a decades' long campaign of vilification against Buthelezi. Nzo labelled all those who worked within the "Bantustan system" "politically bankrupt careerists and renegades" who have "betrayed the... sacred interests of... the people". Despite knowing the truth about Buthelezi and the role he was playing on the instruction of the ANC, Tambo remained silent. It was clear that the party Buthelezi had faithfully served was turning against him because he refused to toe the line on the armed struggle and sanctions.

By 1981, Transkei, Ciskei, Bophuthatswana and Venda had taken independence. In pursuit of the plan to balkanise South Africa and deprive the oppressed majority of their citizenship, Prime Minister Botha offered the entire KwaZulu as an independent country under Buthelezi's leadership. But Buthelezi consistently refused the offer. He believed in one sovereign South Africa and rejected the Bantustan concept outright. His principled stand fulfilled the mission he had been given by the ANC to undermine the apartheid system from within.

He continued to travel widely, seeking support for the cause of liberation and the immediate improvement of his people's lives. For his work in fighting for trade unions, he won the George Meany Human Rights Award of the Industrial Organisation of the American Federation of Labour. He was received at the White House by President Ronald Reagan and later by President George Bush, and attended the Presidents' Prayer Breakfasts in Washington. He was received by Prime Minister Margaret

Thatcher in London, Chancellor Helmut Kohl in Germany, Prime Minister Den Uyl in Holland and Prime Minister Shimon Peres in Israel. In later years, Prime Minister Thatcher would travel to Ulundi, KwaZulu-Natal, to visit Buthelezi.

Tragically, however, the ANC's campaign of propaganda and vilification against Buthelezi escalated as his support grew. With the goal of making South Africa ungovernable, they unleashed a strategy of people's war which engulfed the country in violence. A Black-on-Black low intensity civil war began which would claim the lives of some 20 000 Black South Africans over the next ten years.

Throughout that time, Buthelezi stood steadfast on the side of peace. He urged his supporters against violence and called for calm in the midst of chaos. African leaders continued to embrace him, knowing his credentials as a freedom fighter. Indeed, when the Commonwealth Group of Eminent Persons visited South Africa in 1986, General Olusegun Obasanjo was allowed to visit Mandela on Robben Island, and he took the opportunity to ask Mandela about Buthelezi. Mandela told him, "Buthelezi is a freedom fighter in his own right."

Throughout the ANC's campaign against Buthelezi, Mandela never turned against him. They had been friends before Mandela's incarceration and continued to correspond throughout. Their letters speak clearly of their enduring friendship.

In 1986, Buthelezi won a victory for non-racialism in the midst of apartheid. Under his leadership, provincial constitutional talks were engaged through the KwaZulu Natal Indaba. This resulted in the establishment of the KwaZulu/Natal Joint Executive Authority; South Africa's first non-racial, non-discriminatory government.

His work as traditional Prime Minister to the Zulu Monarch and Nation saw His Majesty the King bestow the King's Cross Award in 1989, as well as the King Shaka Gold Medal.

While Buthelezi chose the path of negotiations for South Africa's liberation, he refused to engage bi-lateral negotiations with the National Party Government, demanding instead that all parties be enabled to come to the negotiating table. Ultimately, when President FW de Klerk announced his decision to release Mandela and unbanned the ANC, Buthelezi was the only person he mentioned by name as having persuaded him. In speaking of Buthelezi's principled approach, President de Klerk said, "In history he will be looked upon as a leading figure in South Africa during a period where there was a great risk of a catastrophe."

On 10 July 1990, with political parties finally unbanned, Inkatha yeNkululeko yeSizwe became the Inkatha Freedom Party. Buthelezi was unanimously elected as President of the Party he had founded.

Speaking at the first mass rally at King's Park Stadium after his release, Mandela publicly thanked Buthelezi for all that he had done to secure his release. On 29 January 1991, Mandela and Buthelezi, together with their delegations, met for the first time since Mandela's release, at the Royal Hotel in Durban. After lengthy discussions, they issued a joint communique committing to hold joint rallies from that point onwards, to end the violence between the two parties.

As constitutional negotiations began, Buthelezi took a stand for the participation of the Zulu monarch. He insisted that recognition of the King be included in the Constitution. He also insisted on the inclusion of a Bill of Rights, a federal state, and strong checks and balances against the abuse of power.

The last piece of legislation he piloted through the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly was the Ingonyama Trust Act, which placed all the land of the Zulu Kingdom under the custodianship of the King, retaining it as communal land for the benefit of the people.

On 27 April 1994, in South Africa's first democratic elections, the IFP won more than 2 million votes, taking up the governance of KwaZulu-Natal and securing seats in President Mandela's Cabinet. Buthelezi was appointed Minister of Home Affairs. He continued in that position for the next ten years, piloting the full legislative and policy transformation of the Department.

On the very first occasion that President Mandela and Deputy President Mbeki were both out of the country, Mandela appointed Buthelezi as Acting President; a position that Buthelezi will fill 22 times over the next ten years.

He continued his advocacy for the institution of traditional leadership, which reached a climax in November 2000 just before the first Local Government Elections. Following extensive negotiations with the *Ad Hoc* Cabinet Committee led by Deputy President Zuma, Buthelezi obtained Government's commitment to amend Chapters 7 and 12 of the Constitution to ensure that the role, powers and functions of traditional leaders would not be diminished in the establishment of local government structures. Tragically, that commitment was never fulfilled.

In April 2002, during a recorded interview, former President Mandela finally admitted to the ANC's long waged and unjust campaign against Buthelezi. He said, "We have used every ammunition to destroy him, but we failed. And he is still there. He is a formidable survivor. We cannot ignore him."

Tragically, the Buthelezi family faced another trial, with the passing of Prince Nelisuzulu Benedict on 24 April 2004 and, just months later, on 5 August 2004, the passing of Buthelezi's daughter, Princess Mandisi Sibukakonke. Then, in July 2008, shortly before her father's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, Princess Lethuxolo Bengitheni was killed in a car accident. Buthelezi was devastated by this loss, as she was not only his daughter but his trusted long-serving secretary.

But his work in the service of the nation, and in Parliament, continued; and he continued to receive accolades. In 2009 he received the Order of St Markhus from the Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, of the Greek Orthodox Church, in Egypt. While visiting Rome to attend The 5<sup>th</sup> World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet, he received an audience with the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, at the Vatican. He spoke on gender parity at the World Economic Forum on Africa in Dar Es Salaam in 2010, and was granted the Simon of Cyrene award by the Bishops of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa.

In February 2019, Buthelezi was invited by His Royal Highness Paramount Chief Mpezeni IV to participate in the Nc'wala Traditional Ceremony in Zambia. After being received by President Edgar Chagwa Lungu, Buthelezi visited His Excellency Dr Kenneth Kaunda, the first President of the Republic of Zambia, who publicly thanked Buthelezi for heeding his advice in 1974 to form Inkatha.

The following month, the former President of Nigeria His Excellency Dr Olusegun Obasanjo invited Buthelezi to deliver a lecture at the Presidential Library in Ogun State, where Dr Obasanjo thanked Buthelezi for the fundamental role he had played in the liberation struggle.

Shortly after his return, however, tragedy struck again. On 25 March 2019, Princess Irene Audrey Thandekile Buthelezi sadly passed away after an extensive period of illness. The family had recently celebrated her 89<sup>th</sup> birthday and had been looking forward to the coming celebration of 67 years of marriage. It was a time of tremendous sorrow for all whose lives she touched.



In August that year, at the IFP's National Elective Conference, Buthelezi officially retired from the presidency of the Party after 44 years at the helm. He handed the baton to the next generation, who awarded him the title President Emeritus and asked that he continue to provide his guidance, wisdom and advice to the new leadership of the IFP. The Party committed to continue his lifelong legacy of integrity and servant leadership.

In December 2019, Buthelezi met with the President of the African National Congress, His Excellency Mr Ramaphosa, at the President's residence in Durban to discuss the unfinished agenda of reconciliation between the IFP and the ANC. These discussions had been ongoing between the parties since 1991 and it remained Buthelezi's greatest hope that they would finally achieve the normalisation of relations between the two parties in order to heal the wounds of the past.

But Covid was soon to intervene and prevent further meetings. And it brought other disasters as well. On 12 March 2021, the Zulu nation was devastated by the passing of Majesty King Goodwill Zwelithini kaBhekuzulu.

Buthelezi had served the King as traditional Prime Minister to the Zulu Monarch and Nation for almost fifty years. He stepped forward to guide the nation in that moment of grief, assisting the Regent, Her Majesty Queen Shiyiwe Mantfombi Dlamini Zulu. Sadly, however, the Regent also passed on 7 May 2021, and Buthelezi was called upon to guide the nation again. He did so with wisdom and a steady hand, doing all that needed to be done to ensure that the King's heir, King Misuzulu kaZwelithini, ascended to the throne.

While his focus was largely on the Zulu nation at that time, Buthelezi never failed to act as a statesman on behalf of South Africa. His leadership during the civil unrest of July 2021, following the arrest of the former President of the country, calmed racial tensions and helped restore law and order. In the aftermath, he helped coordinate and deliver food parcels to devastated communities.

That perhaps is the measure of the man. Regardless of the positions he held or the awards he received or the accolades bestowed on him, he remained a humble servant of the people. Once, when asked by a group of students how he wanted to be remembered, he said, "I will be happy if they say of me *'He loved his country'*".

Prince Buthelezi is mourned by countless friends throughout the world. He was deeply loved and admired by many. He is survived by his eldest child, Princess Phumzile

Nokuphiwa, his son, Prince Ntuthukoyezwe Zuzifa, and his youngest child, Princess Angela Sibuyiselwe. His children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are joined in their grief by the entire Buthelezi Clan, the Zulu Royal Family and the nation of South Africa.

A true servant of the people has passed. May he rest in eternal peace.

## **POSITIONS HELD –**

Member of Parliament, National Assembly (1994 – 2023)

Minister of Home Affairs, Government of South Africa (1994 – 2004)

Acting President of the Republic of South Africa (on 22 occasions between 1994 and 2004)

Founder and President of the Inkatha Freedom Party (1975 – 2019)

President Emeritus of the Inkatha Freedom Party (2019 – 2023)

Chancellor, University of Zululand (1979 – 2001)

Inkosi of the Buthelezi Clan (1957 – 2023)

Founder of the South African Black Alliance (1977)

Initiator of the Buthelezi Commission of Enquiry into Social, Economic and Political Justice (1980)

Initiator of the KwaZulu/Natal Indaba (1986)

Chief Executive Officer, Zulu Territorial Authority (1970 – 1972)

Chief Executive Councillor, KwaZulu Legislative Assembly (1972 – 1976)

Chief Minister of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly (1976 – 1994)

Chancellor, Institute for Industrial Education (1971 – 1977)

Patron, Magqubu Ntombela Foundation

Patron, Rhino and Elephant Foundation

Patron, Wildlands Conservation Trust

Patron of the Mabula Ground Hornbill Project (2017 – 2023)

Patron of the Growing Up Without a Father Foundation (2019 – 2023)

Honorary Patron, Sivananda World Peace and Community Development Foundation

Chairperson, Buthelezi Traditional Council (1975 – 2023)

Chairperson, Mashonangashoni Regional Authority (1968 – 2023)

## **AWARDS –**

**Man of the Year**, Institute of Management Consultants, 1972

**Newsmaker of the Year**, South African Society of Journalists 1973

**Knight Commander of the Star of Africa** for Outstanding Leadership, President Tolbert, Liberia, 1975

**Doctor of Law**, honorary degree, University of Zululand, 1976

**Citation for Leadership**, District of Columbia Council (US) 1976

**Doctor of Law**, honorary degree, University of Cape Town, 1978

**French National Order of Merit**, 1981

**George Meany Human Rights Award**, The Council of Industrial Organisation of the American Federation of Labour (AFL-CIO), 1982

**Apostle of Peace** (Rastriya Pita), Pandit Satyapal Sharma of India 1983

**Doctor of Law**, honorary degree, Tampa University, Florida, USA 1985

**Nadaraja Award**, Indian Academy of South Africa, 1985

**Man of the Year**, Financial Mail, 1985

**Newsmaker of the Year**, Pretoria Press Club, 1985

**Honorary Freedom of the City of Pinetown**, Natal, 1986

**Man of the Year Award**, Institute of Management Consultants of South Africa, 1986

**Doctor of Law**, honorary degree, University of Boston, Mass, USA, 1986

**Freedom of Ngwelezane**, 1988

**Unity, Justice and Peace Award**, Inkatha Youth Brigade, 1988

**Magna Award for Outstanding Leadership**, Hong Kong 1988

**King's Cross Award** by H.M. King Zwelithini Goodwill ka Bhekuzulu, Ulundi, 1989

**Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters**, City University of Los Angeles, 1989

**Key to the City of Birmingham**, Alabama, USA, 1989

**Conservation Award Class 1**, Bruno H. Schubert Foundation, 1999

**King Shaka Gold Medal** by H.M. King Zwelithini Goodwill ka Bhekuzulu, KwaDukuza, 2001

**The Charlton Heston Courage Under Fire Award**, American Conservative Union, 2001

**Order of St Markhus**, by the Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, Greek Orthodox Church, Egypt, 2009

**Order of St Michael and All Angels**, by Bishop Dino Gabriel on behalf of the Diocese of Zululand, Anglican Church of Southern Africa, 2010

**Peace Maker Award**, African Enterprise, 2010

**Simon of Cyrene**, by the Bishops of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, 2010

**Everlasting Gospel Leadership Award**, Brotherhood of the Cross and Star, 2011

**NatureLife-International Environment Award 2015**, NatureLife-International, Germany, 2016

**Honour of Merit Award**, Imperial Youth of Brazil, 2021