

Zuma confirms 'love child'

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President Jacob Zuma has put out a statement confirming his child with Irvin Khoza's daughter, while lambasting the media for criticising him.

A media storm erupted this past week around weekend reports that Zuma (67) had fathered a possible 20th child with his old friend and soccer tycoon Irvin Khoza's daughter, Sonono (39).

But Zuma on Wednesday confirmed his relationship and his child with Sonono Khoza and added that he had taken responsibility for his actions.

"I said during World Aids Day that we must all take personal responsibility for our actions. I have done so.

"I have done the necessary cultural imperatives in a situation of this nature, for example the formal acknowledgement of paternity and responsibility, including the payment of *inhlawulo* to the family," Zuma said in a statement issued on his behalf by the Presidency.

Personal

"The matter is now between the two of us, and culturally, between the Zuma and Khoza families."

Zuma bemoaned the naming of the child's parents in public, which had "essentially exposed her to the public, which has serious implications in the long term for her, and amounts to the exploitation referred to in the Act, because the media is making money out of the matter.

"The media is also in essence questioning the right of the child to exist and fundamentally, her right to life. It is unfortunate that the matter has been handled in this way," he said.

The *Sunday Times* reported that Zuma fathered a child with Sonono, the daughter of World Cup local organising committee chairperson Irvin Khoza.

The child was reportedly born on October 8, three months before Zuma—a polygamist—married for a fifth time. The baby girl was said to be the president's 20th child.

According to the *Sunday Times*, a delegation acting on Zuma's behalf visited the Khoza family in December to discuss the Zulu customary damages, *inhlawulo*, that are due when a child is born out of wedlock.

Igniting fresh controversy, *The Times* reported on Wednesday it had evidence suggesting that Zuma and Khoza were already married according to customary law, which would bring his number of wives to four.—Sapa

Below is the full text of the release:

3 February 2010

STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT JACOB ZUMA ON MEDIA REPORTS ABOUT HIS CHILD

I have noted recent media reports about aspects of my personal life.

I have noted too that these reports have been the subject of much discussion in the public arena by various organisations and people from all walks of life.

I have therefore decided, after some careful deliberation, to make public comment on a matter that is otherwise intensely personal. I had been out of the country when this matter arose.

I confirm that I have a relationship and a baby with Ms Sonono Khoza. I said during World Aids Day that we must all take personal responsibility for our actions. I have done so. I have done the necessary cultural imperatives in a situation of this nature, for example the formal acknowledgement of paternity and responsibility, including the payment of inhlawulo to the family. The matter is now between the two of us, and culturally, between the Zuma and Khoza families.

It is unfortunate that the individuals concerned have been unfairly subjected to harsh media exposure merely because of the position that I occupy. Our Constitution and our laws require us to protect children from harmful public exposure. The Constitution states that it is inappropriate to place at risk, the child's well-being, physical or mental health, spiritual, moral or social development.

Both the Child Care Act and the new Children's Act also provides for the protection of children from exploitation. The naming of the child's parents has essentially exposed her to the public, which has serious implications in the long-term for her, and amounts to the exploitation referred to in the Act, because the media is making money out of the matter.

The media is also in essence questioning the right of the child to exist and fundamentally, her right to life. It is unfortunate that the matter has been handled in this way. I sincerely hope that the media will protect the rights of children.

Much has been made of the government's policy on HIV and Aids and this relationship. It is mischievous to argue that I have changed or undermined government's stance on the HIV and Aids campaign. I will not compromise on the campaign. Rather we will intensify our efforts to promote prevention, treatment, research and the fight against the stigma, attached to the epidemic. We will also continue with our campaign to ensure that every South African knows their HIV status, and that all those who need it have access to appropriate treatment.

We respect and uphold the freedom of the media. It is one of the freedoms we fought for, and which we will always defend. However, the President of the Republic, the mother and the baby are also entitled to the rights afforded to all South Africans in the Constitution. These rights cannot be waived just because of a position one occupies.

I would request that the dignity and privacy of the affected individuals in this matter be respected.

*Issued by the Presidency
Union Buildings*