

NO "HOBSON'S CHOICE" IN ELECTIONS

"BLACK AND WHITE MUST HAVE MULTIPLE OPTIONS"

Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi has re-affirmed his commitment to centre-ground politics. And in a message to White South Africa, he has promised Whites he will see to it that there will not be a simple "Hobson's choice" in future elections.

Reporting back to the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly after his recent meeting with President FW de Klerk and other leaders, Dr Buthelezi underlined the need for a "national will" to replace apartheid through non-violence and negotiation.

Pledging that he would "stand firm" in his commitment to bring about a fair and just society in the country, the KwaZulu Chief Minister promised that the goodwill in the hearts and minds of Blacks would be harnessed for the sake of all, regardless of race, creed or colour. Honour would survive the present uncertain political circumstances, he said.

It was urgent that Black and White had a "multiplicity" of choices, not only around the negotiating table, but in the elections which would follow.

Dr Buthelezi said: "I will see to it that there is not going to be a simple Hobson's choice between the devil and the deep blue sea. I will see to it that centre-ground politics is rich in its offering to South Africa's body-politic.

"I will garner the goodwill that Inkatha, amongst others, has sown in the hearts and minds of Blacks. I will employ goodwill for the sake of South Africa."

The issue was not now one of Black versus White. Now that the South African Government was moving firmly away from apartheid, Black and White were inseparably bound to each other whatever happened.

"I feel honour-bound to serve my country and to negotiate the best that can be achieved for South Africa and all future generations. I will not bow to pressure arising from Party political skirmishing and I will not put Party political manoeuvring before the good of South Africa."

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The Inkatha President revealed he had information which had led him to conclude that an attempt had been made to wreck the meeting with the State President.

He said that before the meeting he had been informed that leaders from some homelands had met ANC deputy president Dr Nelson Mandela. And the Rev Allan Hendrickse had subsequently confirmed that Dr Mandela had tried to persuade him to boycott

the meeting.

Dr Buthelezi appealed to Dr Mandela to "put South Africa first" and said that "honour and integrity" was needed in the politics of negotiation.

These negotiations should be representative of all shades of political opinion and a multi-party event. It was a "matter of sadness" that a man of Dr Mandela's stature "should attempt to stop South Africans getting together to talk across colour lines and across Party political lines about peace and democracy."

In an earlier statement, Dr Buthelezi re-emphasised that when he entered negotiations, it would be as President of Inkatha and not as a homeland leader.

Inkatha was still by far the largest membership-based Black political organisation in South Africa and he had a mandate to

negotiate a new non-racial democracy into existence.

Said Dr Buthelezi: "There is a very substantial body of public opinion in South Africa which demands that Black and White leaders now get together to put the politics of negotiation on track. That body of public opinion is sufficiently powerful to make the politics of negotiation "real politik" — and that is what will happen."