
Thousands pack Soweto stadium in mass pledge for peace



Dr Buthelezi addresses the mass rally... "The killing must stop".

In one of the most impressive peace rallies seen in South Africa in several decades, more than 50 000 people – with thousands more thronging the gates outside – packed the Jabulani amphitheatre in Soweto recently to hear Inkatha Freedom Party President, Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi, spell out the Party's stand on violence. The rally was visible proof of the IFP's rapidly-growing support base and its ability to draw large crowds in the heart of the Reef's Black townships...

Declaring 1991 as a "year of opportunity", Dr Buthelezi said he wanted the destiny of South Africa written in "sure, bold language" that would be respected and held in awe by generations to come.

The Inkatha President had to pause on more than one occasion to acknowledge the salutes and greetings from the various IFP branch delegations who poured into the overflowing stadium.

"Our year of

opportunity" – Dr Buthelezi

Many of them had travelled through the night from diverse points across the country to be present at the rally.

Dr Buthelezi was loudly cheered as he said: "We must put together a society which future generations will thank us for. That is not going to come by the route of a Constituent Assembly, which the ANC is campaigning for. It is going to come through negotiations".

Re-affirming once again the IFP's emphatic rejection of the Harare Declaration Dr Buthelezi added: "We in the Inkatha Freedom Party say we do not want to repeat the history of some African countries, where political victories over colonialism, racism and White minority rule led to the total destruction of that very fabric of society which should have been kept intact to put the new order to work for the people.

"We are simply not prepared to leap into some constitutional darkness, without seeing where we will go from there onwards. We will leap off no Constitutional precipice".

Democracy could not be achieved through the politics of intimidation and mass action. Each political group should have the same right and opportunity to present policies and positions to the people for their endorsement, Dr Buthelezi said.

"Let us differ without regarding each other as enemies. We have not unleashed violence against Whites who have oppressed us for so long. How can we then unleash violence against our own people, merely because we have political differences on strategy? We are all opposed to apartheid. Let us stick to our multi-strategy approach, where each one of us is free to do whatever he or she can in the particular circumstances. That is what multi-party democracy is all about".

A highlight of the rally was the appearance on the platform, alongside Dr Buthelezi, of the mayors of Soweto and several other Black townships, who have been flocking to the Inkatha Freedom Party banner in recent weeks and months. They received a standing ovation lasting several minutes.

Dr Buthelezi said the IFP had not fielded official candidates in council elections. "But we respect the right of people to offer themselves for these Council positions and we respect the right of people who want to vote for them to do so".



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– Dr MG Buthelezi.

He told the mayors: "In the new South Africa, the experience that you have gained in local government will stand Black South Africa in good stead. I certainly know that the experience I have gained as Chief Minister of KwaZulu will make my leadership very much more powerful in a new open democracy than it would otherwise have been".

Referring to the IFP/ANC accord in Durban on January 29, Dr Buthelezi described it as a milestone in Black political history".

The IFP leader concluded: "Peace is not going to come overnight. There will continue to be difficulties. But every time one or another precious son or daughter of Africa dies because of political violence, we should be more actively driven to bring about peace. Violence must end – and it must end now".

A panoramic view of tens of thousands of people who packed Soweto's Jubilee amphitheatre to overflow to hear IFP President, Dr MG Buthelezi.



The IFP's commitment to multi-party democracy in South Africa cuts across barriers of race and creed. Here a Johannesburg IFP supporter acknowledges the cheers of the crowd.

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