

MEMORIAL SERVICE HOSTED BY THE INKATHA FREEDOM PARTY

**IN HONOUR OF
PRINCE MANGOSUTHU BUTHELEZI MP
FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT EMERITUS OF THE INKATHA FREEDOM PARTY
TRADITIONAL PRIME MINISTER TO THE ZULU MONARCH AND NATION
INKOSI OF THE BUTHELEZI CLAN**

**TRIBUTE BY THE HON. MR VELEKOSINI HLABISA MPL
PRESIDENT OF THE INKATHA FREEDOM PARTY AND
LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION IN KWAZULU-NATAL**

Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi Regional Stadium, Ulundi: 13 September 2023

The Hon. Princess Phumzile Nokuphiwa Buthelezi, daughter of Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi and National Chairperson of the IFP Women's Brigade;
His Royal Highness Prince Ntuthukoyezwe Zuzifa Buthelezi, son to His Excellency and Chairperson of the Buthelezi Family Trust;
The Hon. Princess Angela Sibuyiselwe Buthelezi, daughter, and Member of Parliament for the IFP;
Members of the Buthelezi Family and of the Zulu Royal Family;
Members of the Buthelezi Clan;
CEO of the Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi Foundation, Mr Senzo Mfayela;
Board Members of the Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi Foundation;
The Deputy President of the Inkatha Freedom Party, the Hon. Inkosi EM Buthelezi, and the National Executive Committee of the IFP;
Speaker of the National Assembly, the Honourable Mrs Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula;
Members of Parliament and Members of the Provincial Legislatures;
Mayors, Deputy Mayors, Speakers and Councillors;
Members of the IFP's National Council, and all our structures, including the IFP Youth Brigade and the Women's Brigade;
Amakhosi and Izinduna;
All Leaders and representatives of political parties;
Members of the diplomatic corps, and friends of the IFP.

Fellow mourners, please allow me, on behalf of the IFP, to reflect on the life of His Excellency, the Prince of KwaPhindangene, the Founder and President Emeritus of the IFP.

Thank you for joining us as we gather to reflect on the exceptional life of a truly great man; a man whom we all loved and greatly admired: uMntwana wa KwaPhindangene, the Founder of the IFP, and President Emeritus, traditional Prime Minister to the Zulu Monarch and Nation, and the Inkosi of the Buthelezi Clan.

I would like to express our deepest condolences once again to Shenge's family on this devastating loss. We mourn with you and carry you in our prayers. Your tears are our tears; your grief is our grief. May you find comfort in the knowledge that uMntwana is now at rest with His Heavenly Father.

I would also like to thank the nation of South Africa, who consistently prayed for the Prince of KwaPhindangene while he was in hospital, and continued to pray, as well as sending messages of condolences after the sad news of his passing. Your prayers and words of encouragement and support have been a great consolation to the Buthelezi family, as well as to the IFP.

As the Leader of the Party that uMntwana founded, nurtured, and raised into a political force to be reckoned with, I believe that I can speak on behalf of each and every IFP member when I say that there will never again be a leader like uMntwana waKwaPhindangene.

The loss of Prince Buthelezi has left a gaping vacuum in the IFP, in the Zulu Kingdom, and in the South African political landscape.

Most – if not all - of us here today have never had to live in a world without uShenge. I believe that while he left the world a better place, there is still much work we can continue with in his name, in order to honour his life, his sacrifices, and his legacy.

And what a legacy it is.

uMntwana waKwaPhindangene was many things to many people. He had the unique ability to excel at everything he put his hand to.

The Prince Buthelezi was a true mentor.

While at primary school, I benefited from the Good Citizenship programme, which taught learners about self-help and self-reliance, and selfless service to one's community and country. This programme was incorporated into the school curriculum by the KwaZulu Government, under the leadership of then Chief Minister, the Prince of KwaPhindangene.

These teachings resonated with many of us and motivated us to join the National Cultural Liberation movement, which was also called Inkatha yeNkululeko yeSizwe, and began to study the leadership and values of its President.

In the 45 years that followed, I and many of our leaders have had the privilege of learning under the master's wing, which led many of us to various leadership roles within the IFP, as well as a life dedicated to service.

uMntwana waKwaPhindangene - even after he stepped down as the President of the IFP - continued to make his presence felt continued to make his presence felt when circumstances demanded it, such as during the July 2021 unrest, when he was one of the very few political leaders who was out on the streets of his community, in Ulundi, supporting residents and calling for calm. He was also the first to call on the President of the country to deploy the SANDF to save our economy. Unfortunately, his call was not acceded to immediately.

We will forever be grateful for the opportunity to have worked beside uMntwana waKwaPhindangene in the service of our people. He was a great influence in our lives, a man of the highest integrity who was never afraid to speak his mind and stand up for the rights of the people.

Throughout his life, uMntwana's faith in Christ guided all his principles and was the cornerstone of his commitment to peace, service and sacrifice.

As we gather here today and reflect on the life of uMntwana waKwaPhindangene, I believe that we can all draw a measure of comfort in the knowledge that Shenge has run his race, and has now gone to join his heavenly Father and receive his reward.

His was a race well run, a life in which uMntwana waKwaPhindangene dedicated more than seven decades to public service, while remaining a devoted family man.

We are honoured to have the Buthelezi family with us here today.

Forgive us for having deprived you of good times with your father and grandfather.

Over the years, there was never any doubt that despite his punishing schedule and many Party and political commitments, uMntwana always made time for his family. He was a family man. We saw him. A father figure, a man of faith.

I can also speak with conviction when I say that His Excellency's three surviving children, Princess Phumzile Nokuphiwa Buthelezi, Princess Sibuyiselwe Angela Buthelezi, and Prince Ntuthukoyezwe Zuzifa Buthelezi, and all the grandchildren, were all blessed to have a close relationship with their father and grandfather.

In particular, Prince Zuzi, on behalf of all of us, I want to thank you. During uMntwana's last days, when life was hard, and it was difficult for him to execute things alone, you were always by the side of His Excellency.

We know you no longer had your own diary. While he was in hospital everything stopped in your life, so you could become a support structure to His Excellency. May you, Shenge, and all your siblings and the grandchildren of His Excellency – may God bless you for having been a support structure to uMntwana wa KwaPhindangene.

While I am sure that your grief runs deep, I hope that you will draw comfort from the warm and loving relationship that you shared as a family, and the many precious memories you made over the years, such as your family tradition of morning and evening prayers, which spanned decades.

uMntwana wa KwaPhindangene was also a much-loved and respected traditional leader.

Not only was he the traditional Prime Minister to the Zulu Monarch and Nation, a role he diligently and honestly fulfilled with distinction over seven decades, in the service of three Kings, but uMntwana also remained as Inkosi of the Buthelezi Clan.

uMntwana wa KwaPhindangene was born into the Zulu Royal family as the son of Princess Magogo kaDinuzulu, King Solomon's sister, and Inkosi Mathole Buthelezi, the King's Prime Minister.

At the age of 14, uMntwana lost his father, and was recognised as his heir and successor. In 1957, aged 29, he was installed as Inkosi of the Buthelezi Clan – a position he held for the rest of his life.

Prince Buthelezi waged a lifelong battle to protect the institutions of the monarchy and traditional leadership. This included forcing Parliament to reconvene for one day before the 1994 elections, to insert the recognition of the Zulu Monarch into the Constitution.

For his dedication, uMntwana waKwaPhindangene received both the King's Cross Award and the King Shaka Gold Medal from His Majesty, the late King Goodwill Zwelithini kaBhekuzulu.

After the passing of His Majesty, King Goodwill Zwelithini kaBhekuzulu, uMntwana waKwaPhindangene played a crucial role in ensuring that his heir, then-Prince Misuzulu Sinqobile kaZwelithini, ascended to the throne, despite opposition that existed.

We will always honour uMntwana for the smooth process that he led after the demise of the late King, allowing the new King to ascend the throne.

His Majesty King Misuzulu Sinqobile kaZwelithini was one of the many prominent South Africans who expressed their deep sadness at the loss, sharing that "I lament with the entire nation during this difficult period". The King further praised uMntwana, saying "Prince Buthelezi served the crown diligently for more than seven decades and as Inkosi of the Buthelezi Clan for many years. His absence will be felt by all of us who have benefited and learnt a lot from Prince Buthelezi's leadership abilities."

uMntwana will be remembered by history as an activist, working to liberate his people and his country from the shackles of oppression.

The seeds of activism were planted while Prince Buthelezi was a young man – first, as he assisted his uncle and founder of the ANC, Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme, with

correspondence, while uMntwana was completing his matric. Then, while studying at Fort Hare University, where he joined the ANC Youth League.

After he completed his legal studies and began working as a clerk, he began attending political rallies and was mentored by Inkosi Albert Luthuli, and formed close bonds with leaders like Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu and Nelson Mandela.

It was on the instruction of Inkosi Luthuli and Oliver Tambo – who believed that Shenge could undermine the apartheid system from within – that he took up leadership of the Zulu Territorial Authority, later becoming Chief Minister of KwaZulu.

In 1971, the Prince of KwaPhindangene received praise for his efforts from the ANC's External Mission, with Oliver Tambo announcing that, "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."

Throughout his life, there were certain things that never changed, and Shenge's heart for the people and his desire to represent them and fight for their rights was one of these things that never changed. The leadership of the ANC and the leaders of the Frontline States knew his heart was for the people.

This is why, in 1974, following the banning of the ANC, PAC and other political organisations, on the advice of President Kenneth Kaunda and with the support of Oliver Tambo, uMntwana waKwaPhindangene was advised to form a membership-based organisation to reignite political mobilisation within the borders of South Africa, while all other leaders were in prison or in exile.

In the struggle for freedom and the advancement of Black South Africans, the Prince of KwaPhindangene held more rallies under the banner "Free Mandela" than any other leader in South Africa.

He also made use of his unique position within the apartheid system to fight for the rights of the Black South Africans. When he was offered nominal "independence" for KwaZulu by the apartheid government, he rejected their offer, thereby retaining citizenship for millions of Black South Africans.

Amongst other things, he used his position and influence as Chief Minister of KwaZulu to champion education and build more than six thousand classrooms, build the Mangosuthu University of Technology and develop the University of Zululand, when he was the Chancellor. He demonstrated to all that he was a champion of education, and always promoted the slogan “education for liberation”.

uMntwana waKwaPhindangene also championed local economic development and Black businesspeople through the establishment of the KwaZulu Finance and Investment Corporation, which opened Ithala Bank and provided financing to those who were barred from accessing loans, especially the Black people.

The Prince of KwaPhindangene became the lone voice within South Africa that was openly calling for the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners, as well as the unbanning of political organisations that were forced to operate in exile.

However, despite all his efforts in support of the ANC’S mission-in-exile, when Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi refused to embrace the armed struggle and international sanctions and disinvestment, he was vilified by the ANC.

Inkatha found itself a target of the ANC’s People’s War, in which some 20 000 lives were lost to Black-on-Black violence.

During this time, and despite the impossible situation he found himself in, uMntwana waKwaPhindangene showed himself to be a man of integrity, who never wavered from the founding principles of Inkatha, and its commitment to non-violence, negotiations, unity, inclusivity and non-racialism.

When South Africa finally broke free from the shackles of apartheid and oppression, leaders on both sides of the divide acknowledged the role that uMntwana waKwaPhindangene played in the freedom we achieved in 1994.

Mr FW de Klerk, the last president under the minority government, mentioned uMntwana waKwaPhindangene by name when speaking about his decision to release Nelson Mandela from prison. When Madiba was released, Madiba too, spoke of the contribution made by the Prince of KwaPhindangene in ensuring that he and other political prisoners

were set free and that political organisations operating from exile were unbanned and allowed to come back home.

Madiba himself described the Prince of KwaPhindangene “a freedom fighter in his own right.”

There can be no doubt that uMntwana waKwaPhindangene was a true patriot, who fought for the rights and freedoms of our people in South African.

As someone who lived through this time, we will always be grateful that uMntwana did not forsake his values and principles, and did not abandon the people of South Africa.

When political parties were unbanned in 1990, Inkatha yeNkululeko yeSizwe became the Inkatha Freedom Party.

uMntwana was unanimously elected as President of the Party. He continued his role until 2019, when he stepped down, and handed over the baton to the new leadership that is leading the Party as we speak.

We give thanks to Shenge for the legacy he created for our country, and for the IFP, even as we speak today in this Memorial Service.

The IFP is a Party that says to the people “trust us” and the people say “yes”. They have given us their support because they trusted the Prince of KwaPhindangene, his leadership and his legacy.

uMntwana has an unblemished track record of good governance. Never, during his many decades of service, has there ever been a whisper of scandal or corruption under his rule. He was a man that led with transparency and accountability, and who was never found wanting.

Even after he stepped down as IFP President in 2019, Shenge did not slow down, or rest. He remained actively involved with and committed to the Party that he founded and loved so dearly.

His legacy as a politician speaks of a man who always put the people first, and was not afraid to speak up and challenge authority when the need arose.

He was a Member of the first democratic Parliament and served faithfully in his capacity as an MP for 29 years, leading the IFP's Caucus and was often the voice of reason when tensions ran high in the House in the National Assembly.

uMntwana was also an exceptional orator, who spoke with confidence and genuinely connected with his audience, simply because he genuinely cared.

During the 29 years that Shenge led the IFP Caucus in the National Assembly, the Party took on the role of a constructive opposition that did not oppose merely for the sake of opposing. Where the ruling party put legislation on the table that would benefit the people of South Africa, the IFP would support it. However, when the ruling party stepped outside the lines, the IFP was never afraid to speak up.

There are no words to express how much Shenge will be missed.

His passing means the end of an unforgettable chapter in the life of the IFP. But, in order to honour his legacy and what he has built, we need to go on and preserve his legacy, as we begin a new chapter without him in our lives.

His legacy will be the pillar of the IFP's next chapter, and I am confident that the constant guidance he provided to us as a collective, will ensure that the IFP will continue on its upward trajectory.

As we gather here today, we thank uMntwana for all the contributions, counselling and guidance he provided to us as his followers over the many years since the inception of the IFP.

We will uphold the principles of servant leadership, and self-help and self-reliance, as we work together to build the South Africa of Shenge's dreams: a just, prosperous, and moral society, whose citizens engage with each other on the basis of ubuntu/botho.

The Prince of KwaPhindangene was a champion of South Africa. He was also a truly great statesman, and a credit to the country.

Indeed, he was an international icon, alongside the great leaders of Africa. There are few in the world who have served their country for over seven decades, as uMntwana did. During this time, he was welcomed and worked with leaders throughout Africa, including Emperor Haile Selassie, President Julius Nyerere, President Kenneth Kaunda and President Olusegun Obasanjo.

He counted them as friends.

In recognition of his distinguished service to Africa, Shenge was awarded Knight Commander of the Star of Africa by Liberia's President Tolbert, as well as the French National Order of Merit from President Giscard d'Estaing, for distinguished service uMntwana rendered to the people of South Africa.

uMntwana as an international icon was received at the White House by US Presidents Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan and George Bush. The UK Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, personally visited him in Ulundi, and also hosted uMntwana in the United Kingdom.

Today, the world weeps, for a giant tree has fallen.

If one asks ordinary South Africans, they will tell you that uMntwana was a good man, a humanitarian.

I was struck by many of the tributes that have been pouring in over the past few days, with people referring to uMntwana as "a true people's leader". Many refer to him as "father" or "grandfather" and others call him "giant" or "nation-builder", "formidable survivor", "the man you can trust" and "the servant of the people".

There was a young woman who spoke about the good things that Shenge has done, particularly for rural communities. She spoke of Shenge's contributions in reforming the traditional courts and delivering justice to the people in their communities. Members of his community shared that he was always just a phone call or a walk away from the Buthelezi Clan, despite his heavy schedule.

uMntwana was an 'early adopter' when it came to the preservation of our country – and the world's – natural resources.

He described himself as having been “a conservationist all [his] life”. He supported rhino conservation and initiatives to save the oceans. Under his leadership, the IFP spoke out about the impact of shark nets on the oceans and the horrors of captive lion hunting.

He was Patron of the Rhino and Elephant Foundation, the Wildlands Conservation Trust and the Mabula Ground Hornbill Project.

It is impossible to cover the depth and breadth of his life and legacy in its entirety, but today is just the beginning.

His legacy, his wisdom, and the many lessons we can draw from his exceptional life will never be forgotten.

I can confidently assure you of this, as the President of the IFP. We will remain true to uMntwana's example of servant leadership, and the values and principles he espoused.

I also make this commitment as the Chairperson of the Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi Foundation, which was launched last year and exists to preserve the legacy of uMntwana waKwaPhindangene in its diverse entirety. Emulating his life philosophy and principles, the Foundation will work towards creating a better South Africa, Africa and the world at large.

I therefore conclude by saying, in the midst of our shared grief, let us take this opportunity to give thanks for Shenge's life. Let each of us leave here today with a renewed commitment to honouring the legacy of the Prince of KwaPhindangene in our own lives. Let us be people of integrity and peacemakers, dedicated to serving others and to the pursuit of freedom for all.

May uMntwana's legacy light the way to a future of South Africa and the world.
