

## **BATTLE OF ISANDLWANA REMAINS AN INSPIRATION**

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**Media statement:** Issued by the Office of the Premier

KwaZulu-Natal Premier Senzo Mchunu has hailed His Majesty for convening the most inclusive and successful Commemoration of the Battle of Isandlwana.

The commemoration which took place over the weekend in Nquthu involved an inter-faith programme, an enactment of the battle by Zulu warriors and British soldiers and ended with the presentation of the Zulu Kingdom Orders to the warriors who ensured the historic victory of the Zulu Nation over the British.

His Majesty announced that a Social Cohesion Dialogue would be convened by Bayede Foundation to promote the concept of non-racialism and the protection of human rights.

“I want to express my appreciation to all religious leaders who participated in the inter-faith programme as directed by His Majesty. Our message to the religious leaders is that the provincial government has high regard for all religions practiced in KZN. The same applies to religious leadership, naturally.”

“Your participation in today’s “Prayer for Rain” gives us hope because under these circumstances our fate depends on the falling of the rain. I say this because as the Provincial Executive Council we have visited different parts of the province to assess the impact of the current drought. It has ravaged agriculture and ordinary members of our communities have lost their livestock.”

“Clearly, our efforts aimed at reviving agriculture have been dealt a heavy blow with both commercial and emerging farmers counting losses running into millions of rands. Our greatest fear is that this prolonged drought will lead to food insecurity resulting in many families exposed to abject poverty and hunger.”

“In addition, the lack of access to clean water for many families and schools may lead to the outbreak of diseases - something that we cannot afford as the province. Because our fate depends on the falling of the rain, it is very important that we humble ourselves and look up to heavens and request divine intervention.”

“The commemoration gave us the opportunity to renew ties and reflect on the history that makes us known as the Rainbow Nation. Importantly, we must now build on the unity that we have achieved over the years of struggle and selfless dedication of many of our kings, chiefs and warriors. They participated in many battles and conflicts which took place in different parts of the province.”

Historical records show that the following battles were fought in this province:-

- **Voortrekker: Blood River 16 December 1838**
- **Anglo-Zulu: Isandlwana 22 January 1879**
- **First War of Independence: 1881**

- **Anglo-Boer: 1899 -1902**

“All of these wars were fought by those who yearned for independence and political self-determination. They fought for the protection of cultural identity and they took up arms to protect their languages. But more importantly, these wars were fought by our ancestors who wanted access to land on one hand; and those who were against the forceful seizure of land on the other hand.”

The Battle of Sandlwana proved pivotal to South Africa’s geo-political evolution. The military prowess of the Kings and warriors of Isandlwana served as an inspiration to many generations of leaders who found themselves at the forefront of a broader struggle to build a non-sexist, democratic and prosperous society.”

“Therefore during the commemoration we were celebrating the contribution of the people of KwaZulu-Natal from all races and religions towards the creation of a united nation. Today we must stand together and announced to the world that we will never allow just a few individuals to destroy the racial harmony that we have achieved after years of hard work”

“By all accounts, this province has achieved racial harmony and prosperity through collective efforts by Whites, Indians, Coloureds and Africans. Therefore, this year’s commemoration of the Battle of Isandlwana gives us the opportunity to strengthen the solidarity amongst the people of this province.”

“I want to single out one of the pathfinders of our liberation such as the first Anglican Bishop of Natal, the Right Reverend John William Colenso.

On his arrival in this province Bishop Colenso was horrified by imperial injustices and atrocities committed by the apartheid regime against Africans. He learned the Zulu language and went on to produce a Zulu Dictionary, and a Zulu translation of the New Testament and other parts of the Bible and Prayer Book for the instruction of the Zulu nation. Today we pay tribute to the Bishop for his firm stand against injustices and appreciate all whites who are taking a stand against racism.

“We must follow closely on the footsteps of our great forefathers in the struggle for equality and human rights. They sacrificed all they had in order to realize the freedom that we enjoy today. We must uphold their values of love, respect, compassion, peace, justice, equality and freedom. As government we will continue to invite the people of this province across all racial lines to celebrate the end of apartheid and the dawn of a united, prosperous and non-racial country.”

Ends

Enquiries

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