

Mkhize, Zulu king to hold talks as the land issue heats up

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COOPERATIVE Governance and Traditional Affairs Minister Zweli Mkhize is to meet King Goodwill Zwelithini in an attempt to defuse tensions over government plans to disband the Ingonyama Trust.

The trust, whose sole trustee is the king, owns three million hectares of land.

One of the government's proposals that has incensed Zwelithini is for land under the trust to be transferred to the state or the Department of Human Settlements.

The KwaZulu-Natal House of Traditional Leaders and amakhosi recently wrote to former president Kgalema Motlanthe asking him to explain how the panel he chaired came to the conclusion that the Ingonyama Trust Act should be repealed or amended.

This was after Motlanthe had declared that many trad-

itional leaders behaved like tin-pot dictators because they referred to themselves as the owners of the land.

"The approach which confronts us as the ANC must be to understand that the ANC enjoys support from the people, not traditional leaders. Some pledge their support to the ANC, but the majority act like tin-pot dictators to people in villages," Motlanthe had said.

Enraged traditional leaders in KwaZulu-Natal, led by Inkosi Phathisizwe Chiliza, chairperson of the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders, dared the government to take tribal land.

Prince Mbonisi Zulu, King Zwelithini's spokesperson, said he was not at liberty to comment on Motlanthe's remarks as the issue was still being discussed internally in the Royal Household.

Deputy Minister of Cooperative Governance and

Traditional Affairs Obed Bapela recently said government was planning a mini-summit with traditional leaders to discuss land issues.

He added that Motlanthe had not personally called them tin-pot dictators, but was rather reflecting the views that communities had conveyed to the task team.

"Security of tenure for those people living on the communal land of the Ingonyama Trust needs to be discussed. The community raised issues they are not okay with. In a democratic system every law is subjected to review. Zweli will go with a delegation to meet with the king," he said.

In a bid to resolve the impending impasse, KwaZulu-Natal Premier Willie Mchunu is also planning a provincial land summit "to create a platform where everyone is heard", his spokesperson Thami Ngidi said.

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