

**EULOGY DELIVERED BY MEC FOR COGHSTA MEC HON. BASIKOPO
MAKAMU ON THE OCCASION OF THE FUNERAL SERVICE OF THOVHELE
NNGWEDZENI ALFRED MPHAPHULI: HA-TSHIKONELO**

FRIDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 2023

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR, VHO

THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF VHEMBE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, CLLR F
NKONDO

MAYOR OF COLLINS CHABANE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, CLLR S MALULEKE
CHAIRPERSON OF THE LIMPOPO HOUSE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS,
HOSI NGOVE

THE MPHAPHULI ROYAL FAMILY AND TSHIKONELO TRADITIONAL
COUNCIL

VHO THOVHELE VHARE HONE FHANO

MEMBERS OF LOCAL HOUSES

PASTORS OF DIFFERENT CHURCH DENOMINATIONS PRESENT HERE

THE TSHIKONELO COMMUNITY

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

Ndi matsheloni,

It is with a humble and contrite heart that I address you this morning, as we usher this well-respected leader, a son of the soil and a flagship of traditional matters in our province to his final resting place.

I am here personally today because our Honourable Premier Chupu Stanley Mathabatha and our provincial government treasure what Thovhele Mphaphuli and his Royal family represent, which is the many humble citizens of the 13 villages he led.

The Premier has sent me to shoulder you in support during this trying time. He could not be here this morning as he is in Botlokwa to honour the funeral of his friend Kgoshi Dalton Machaka.

However, to the Royal Family, the Traditional Council, relatives, friends, colleagues and the entire community, allow me to convey that the Premier wishes you to know that he carries you in his thoughts, and extends his heartfelt condolences.

Programme Director,

We meet here today under painful circumstances because the loss of a loved one is an undesirable part of life.

The loss of a child is a bitter experience because there is still much you hoped for in their future. But the loss of our elderly is difficult to bear because we have spent much time with them and hold dear memories where they are concerned.

But the loss of a revered leader, leaves an entire community searching for meaning and strength. I encourage you to find meaning and strength in the legacy that Thovhele Mphaphuli has left.

Allow me to remind you that when Thovhele was ushered into this world through God's divine plan in the 1940s, it was during the harshest era of our nation.

The then government was oppressive, it had no respect for human rights and did not incline itself to hearing the cries of the greater majority of citizens.

Thovhele, Vho Madadzhe the third, the great grandson of Thovhele – Vho Madadzhe the first, spent his formative years here in Ha-Tshikonelo.

He would have seen the oppression that his people lived under. He would have experienced the lack of liberation they were forced to endure.

A little under 10 years after he was born, Hendrik Verwoerd became Minister of Native Affairs. The apartheid government then passed the Immorality Amendment Act, the Group Areas Act, the Suppression of Communism Act, and the Population Registration Act which officially divided South Africans into 'White', 'Coloured', 'Asian' or 'Native' population groups.

It was therefore no wonder that when Thovhele Vho Tshikonelo Madadzhe Mphaphuli (Madadzhe the Second II), passed on in 1993 after close to six decades of his reign, Thovhele Mphaphuli left his job at the department of Agriculture to start serving the people of Tshikonelo as their leader a year later.

It does not escape us that Thovhele's readiness to serve may have been not only spurred on by his obedience to duty, but a drive to see justice prevail among his people.

Because like Thovhele, the liberation heroes in the history of our beloved country not only fought for the liberation of our people, but for the restoration of their dignity and the enforcement of equality.

The life of Thovhele Mphaphuli may have not been labelled as such while he was still alive, but when you look at the works of his hands, you realize that this was a man dedicated to uplifting his people and reaffirming the right to human dignity.

Under his reign, Thovhele saw to the development of two primary schools and two high schools. His dedication to seeing to the educating of his community members saw him lead the establishment of a community library and three early childhood development centers.

Thovhele also ushered in to Tshikonelo the development of a modern healthcare centre for the health and welfare of community members. Drawing from his wealth of agricultural experience, he saw it wise to avail over 104 hectares of land to small scale farmers in the area for the purpose of farming.

He also managed to establish six bore holes as a backup system to the water reticulation already established by the municipality.

Programme Director,

Flowing from our painful, yet rich liberation history, this government desires nothing else but to support our traditional leaders.

Apart from the roles they played in our not-so-distant past, they, like Thovhele Mphaphuli, continue to prove themselves vital to the social cohesion and economic development of our communities.

They are the architects of change, and without them we fall short as a government. We are therefore unrelenting in protecting them, and the pivotal roles they play in our communities.

It is for this reason that our hearts, as government and the people of Limpopo, are bleeding over the loss of Thovhele.

To his family, and especially his children, life and God has entrusted you with the responsibility of taking this great man's legacy forward.

As a government, we know and understand that it is customary to choose a successor for Thovhele, as it has always been before he took over and decades before him. A successor will and must be chosen, it is our African way.

We humbly encourage that this transition is undertaken and managed with peace and harmony. We would like to see this difficult time unite this family and make it stronger.

It would be a shame if the works of all the leaders that have gone before are undone due to conflict. We trust that the foundation left by the Mphaphulis who have gone before you will guide you to a prosperous future.

I plead with the community, to give the Royal Family the necessary respect and space to mourn, but also when the time comes, to trust them and leave the matter of succession in their capable hands.

In closing Programme Director,

Allow me to reflect to 1940, just some years before the birth of our Thovhele, the apartheid government passed the Electoral Laws Amendment Act of 1940, which provided for the compulsory registration of white voters only.

It was then that black people were barred from participating in the voting process.

Today, 30 years after attaining democracy, we can vote simply by presenting ourselves at a voting station with our ID during a registration event, even better, technology now allows us to register virtually in the comfort of your home.

The IEC has recently launched the 2024 election programme, and has announced this coming weekend, the weekend of the 17 to 19 November 2023 as the date for voter registration.

I encourage everyone here to take responsibility by registering to vote, and urging your friends, neighbours, family, relatives and colleagues to register to vote.

We can only better our country by actively taking part in its democratic processes.

I want to again caution members of the community from wanting to participate in issues of the royal family. This is unacceptable and must not be promoted.

Matters in the royal family must be left strictly to the Royal Family. I call upon community members to respect these and other traditional customs.

Thovhele Mphaphuli leaves an absolute impact not only on the face of this community, but also in our hearts as the Limpopo provincial government. His name will forever be remembered.

May the Spirit of Thovhele Mphaphuli,

...Rest in Peace. Ndaa!!