



## PRESS RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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### **STOP THE BANTUSTAN BILLS KZN TRADITIONAL COURTS BILL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FAILS IN UMLALAZI!**

Traditional Courts Bill public hearings, convened by the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Legislature, have been characterized by flawed public participation processes. On 14 November 2019, the Legislature scheduled public hearings in Umlalazi [Mpungose Hall, King Cetshwayo District] and Umzimkhulu [Clysdale Hall, Harry Gwala District]. Although the public hearings commenced simultaneously, **the Umlalazi public hearing was stopped abruptly at the behest of traditional leaders.**

The **Stop Bantustans Campaign**, an initiative of the **Alliance for Rural Democracy** together with allied organizations and movements, has now learnt that the process for public participation was interrupted shortly after oral submissions began. Supposedly the District House of Traditional Leaders led by Inkosi Biyela argued that they did not receive sufficient notice or opportunity to make submissions on the Traditional Courts Bill. **In fact, when the session opened for presentations, the only speakers who were allowed to take the floor were all men.** The first submission seemingly offered a criticism on traditional leaders. **Thereafter, all subsequent speakers were traditional leaders.**

And on that basis, the representatives of the **KZN Provincial Legislature prematurely closed the session stating that no more oral submissions can be made as the traditional leaders have spoken, and under custom they have the last word.** The Legislature instructed all the community members who had travelled and wanted to give oral submissions to rather make written submissions. And just like that democratic process was hijacked by traditional leaders.

Not forgetting that the KZN **Provincial Legislature had failed to provide transport to facilitate people's public participation** so everyone who attended had done so with their own means. **The Legislature unilaterally stopped a parliamentary process of law making in order to concede to the whims of traditional leaders.** These events illustrate that **public participation is a farce and that the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Legislature is not accountable the people, but rather answers to the House of Traditional Leaders.**

Stop The Bantustans Bills Campaign reiterates our call for meaningful public participation, as outlined in the Constitution. On these grounds we **call upon the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Legislature to convene another public hearing that will be dominated by rural communities** who are going to be affected by the Traditional Courts Bill. And we call on the Legislature to use their existing public participation budget to assist rural communities with transport to these subsequent hearings.

As the Alliance for Rural Democracy we will also be taking the matter up with the Department of Justice and Parliament respectively. We are calling for one system of democracy for all living in South Africa and we condemn any preferential treatment given to traditional leaders at the expense of rural masses.

STOP THE BANTUSTAN BILLS!

For more information about the march, contact [admin@stopthebantustanbills.org](mailto:admin@stopthebantustanbills.org) or visit [www.stopthebantustansbills.org.za](http://www.stopthebantustansbills.org.za)

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