

Methodist Church of SA - Statement of condolences

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa : A statement of condolences to the nation, families and relatives of the late Mr. Eugene Terre'Blanche and Hon. Dr. Molefi Sefularo

The Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, Bishop Ivan Abrahams, has learnt of the deaths - in separate incidents over the Easter weekend – of Mr. Eugene Terre'Blanche (leader of the Afrikaner Weerstandbeweging, AWB) and of Dr. Molefi Sefularo, South African Deputy Minister of Health – with deep shock and sadness.

The two personalities held vastly differing social and political viewpoints, yet their deaths present an aura of senselessness especially as both might have been avoidable.

As we commemorated Easter over the past week - a celebration of life beyond death, healing over pain and suffering, light beyond darkness and hope beyond despair – such celebrations do little to diminish our sadness at the loss of two diverse public figures. In this spirit, therefore, we offer our condolences and sympathies to nation, friends, families and relatives of the deceased.

In the case of Mr. Terre'Blanche, we recognize that more needs to come to light in dealing with the criminality surrounding his death and urge the police and judiciary to leave no stone unturned through investigation and prosecution. Should media reports be correct that Mr. Terre'Blanche's death is linked to land and labour matters, we advise that government sensitively use this unfortunate occurrence as an opportunity to raise the level of national dialogue in order to come to terms with the trauma of ongoing poverty and inequity fifteen years into our constitutional democracy.

We also believe that it is extremely unfortunate that Dr. Sefularo has become a victim of a road accident during the time his government was promoting the road safety campaign "Arrive Alive". Faith communities especially remember Dr. Sefularo as an anti-apartheid activist who worked closely with the Eastern and Western Cape formations of the United Democratic Front. We hail his humble contribution to end apartheid together with his wisdom and energy that led to the founding of a constitutional democracy. We also celebrate his contributions to government policies aimed at combating HIV and Aids while making health care more affordable to the poorest people and communities.

In December 2008, Bishop Abrahams pointed out that the World Health Organisation (WHO) research had predicted that by 2020 road accidents would move to sixth place a cause of global deaths. More, he said, needed to be done to make roads safer for the poorest of our nation and especially for the developing world. This information may be cold comfort for the families of the late Dr. Sefularo. However, we petition government – especially as the late Dr. Sefularo championed the cause of the poorest - that it strengthen its plans for safer roads and transportation both in the run up to and after the completion of the FIFA World Cup Tournament.

Statement ends.

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