

ZWELITHINI LAND TRUST SLATED AS 'DIRTY DEAL'

Siviwe Feketha

ZULU King Goodwill Zwelithini has come under fire from land reform activists who labelled his trust, which is behind a massive land claim, as a "dirty deal" masterminded by apartheid rulers.

Zwelithini, through the Ingonyama Trust, recently lodged a massive land claim stretching across three provinces.

This was in line with the Restitution of Land Rights Act which was recently amended to allow lodging of land claims until 2019.

However on Monday, Sozani Ngubane, head of Rural Women's Movement, an organisation representing more than 50 000 rural women in KwaZulu-Natal, lashed out at Zwelithini's claim.

"Rural women are not allowed



OUTSPOKEN: Nomboniso Gasa

'Land claim an apartheid-era pact'

to speak at the traditional councils ... they [traditional leaders] claim they are representing us," she said.

Ngubane was speaking at a seminar on land reform and traditional leadership organised by the South African Civil Society Information Service (SACSIS) at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg.

In attendance were civil society organisations including the Land Access Movement of SA and the Legal Resources Centre.

Ngubane criticised traditional leaders, saying rural women continued to be at the receiving end of feminised rural poverty.

She said some were evicted from their marital homes after the death of their husbands under

Zwelithini's watch. She also accused him of purporting to be Ingonyama's sole trustee.

Gender activist Nomboniso Gasa labelled the Ingonyama Trust, which instituted the claim, a "dirty deal".

"The Ingonyama Trust is the dirty deal that was done on the eve of this dispensation by the Nats in an attempt to pacify the Inkatha Freedom Party.

"Indeed, a new form of dispossession is unfolding in the name of land reform," said Gasa.

She added that traditional authorities were part of the black elite in cahoots with multinationals in exploiting the resources meant for the marginalised majority.

The IFP has voiced its support for the massive provincial claim, which stretches to provinces including Mpumalanga and Eastern Cape.

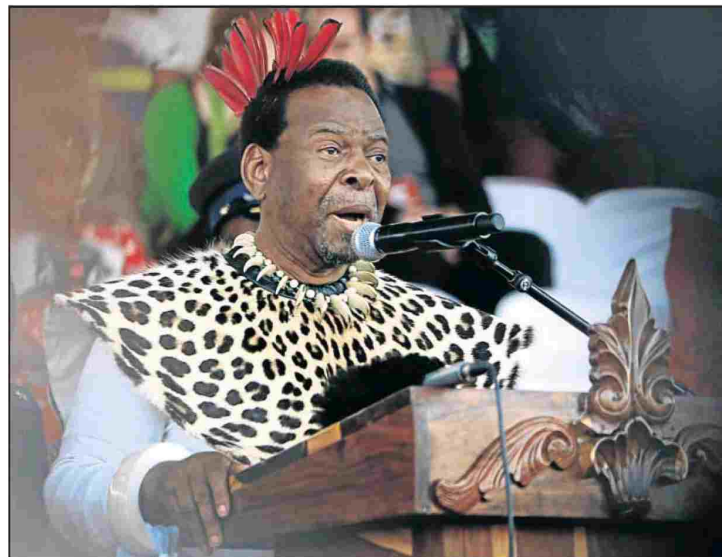
In July, President Jacob Zuma signed the Restitution of Land Rights Bill Amendment into law, opening a second five-year period of lodging land claims.

The law allows people to claim for land dispossessed from them between 1913 and 1994. The final date for submissions is 2019.

SACSIS executive director Fazila Farouk said women should be at the centre of land reform.

Ingonyama Trust spokesman Simphiwe Mxakaza said he still needed to consult with his principals because he could comment.

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UNDER FIRE: King Goodwill Zwelithini has been criticised over a land claim he made through the Ingonyama Trust

PHOTO: TEBOGO LETSIE