

SPEECH BY PREMIER DR RAMATHUBA DURING THE COURTESY VISIT BY THE
PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (EXCO) TO THE BAPEDI KINGSHIP, MOHLALETSE,
SEKHUKHUNE ON 17 DECEMBER 2024

Honouring the Bapedi Kingship and Its Legacy

Programme Director, MEC for Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and
Traditional Affairs, Mr Basikopo Makamu,
Your Majesty Queen Manyaku Thulare
Deputy Minister of Traditional Affairs, Mr P.Z Burns-Ncamashe,
Deputy Minister of Cooperative Governance, Dr Namane Masemola,
Speaker of the Limpopo Provincial Legislature, Ms Makoma Makhurupetje,
Other MECs present,
Deputy Speaker of the Limpopo Legislature, Ms Tebogo Mamorobela,
Chairperson of Portfolio Committee: CoGHSTA ,
Members of Portfolio Committee: CoGHSTA,
Chairperson of Limpopo HTKL, Hosi Pheni Ngove,
Deputy Chairperson of Limpopo HTKL, Kgoši Boleu Rammupudu,
Invited Kings and Queens,
Esteemed members of the Bapedi Royal Council,
Religious Leaders in our presence,
Distinguished Guests,
Members of the media
Ladies and Gentlemen

Thobela!

I stand before you today with a profound sense of respect and duty as we pay this
courtesy visit to the Bapedi Kingship. It is an honour to be in the presence of such a rich
cultural heritage and to acknowledge the leadership of Acting Queen Manyaku Maria
Thulare during this interim period.

We gather here under circumstances that are not of our choosing, but rather because of
the court judgment issued by Judge Pathudi of the High Court Limpopo Division on 03
December 2024. This judgment, which allows Queen Manyaku to reign as Acting Queen,
is a legal binding judgement intended to fill the gap until the Supreme Court of Appeals
hears the appeal in February 2025.

As a government, we are duty-bound to respect this judgment and uphold the rule of
law, recognising the ongoing legal process.

While we would have preferred to come together in celebration of a united Bapedi
Nation, with the Kingship finalised and embraced by all, we acknowledge the
complexities of the current situation.

It is with a sense of responsibility that we honour the court's decision, even as we hope for a time when the Royal Councils can reach a consensus on the rightful leadership of this great nation.

Just two months ago we met with the leadership of traditional leaders in Limpopo in a two-day workshop wherein we dealt with various issues that affect traditional leadership in our province.

What touched my heart then was the absence of the two Kingships of Bapedi and Vhavenda and the Queenship of Balobedu. All these because there were disputes that have been going on for many months, making it difficult for the President to exercise his obligation of conferring the designated leader of each of the groups I mentioned.

Only last week did the issue of Balobedu get resolved with the President having recognised Her Majesty Queen Masalanabo Modjadji VII as the Queen of the Balobedu Queenship.

It is our wish that within the next six months we should have all these matters resolved.

You would agree with me that this is indeed a painful situation that a province like ours with such rich history should be facing such uncertainties. Instead, we should be joining hands harnessing on the existing potential within our various areas and let the world look at us in envy as we move ahead in making Limpopo a great province.

As it is, investors are standing at the periphery watching and waiting for these disputes to be over. No investor will come to a place where there is no stability. If we must fight against joblessness and grow our economy, we need to resolve these matters urgently.

I said to the traditional leaders we met then that it doesn't give us joy that there are many cases of traditional leadership disputes that are in court, courts that are, in some way, not supposed to have been a repository of our cultural and traditional matters.

The Bapedi Nation is a community rich in potential and resources and it is only through unity that these riches can be fully realised. The history of the Bapedi Kingship is one of resilience and strength, dating back to their migration from the region of Botswana to the Sekhukhuneland where they are situated. This legacy of perseverance is a testament to the enduring spirit of the Bapedi people.

Traditional leadership, particularly kingship, remains a pillar of stability and moral guidance in our society. It plays an essential role in safeguarding our heritage, promoting social cohesion and addressing the challenges faced by our communities. In an ever-changing world, institutions like the Bapedi Kingship are vital for maintaining the balance between modernity and tradition.

Kings and traditional leaders are custodians of culture, arbiters of disputes, and stewards of development, ensuring that the voices of the people are heard and their needs addressed.

The family holds the sacred responsibility of determining succession, and no external authority, including the government, can interfere in such matters. It is through your guidance and resolve that the stability and dignity of the Bapedi Kingdom are preserved.

As the provincial government, we celebrate this historic decision and affirm our unwavering support for traditional leadership. Our role is not to dictate the path of succession but to provide the necessary framework and resources to ensure the effective functioning of traditional institutions.

Today's courtesy visit reaffirms the partnership between traditional leadership and the government. Together, we can address the challenges facing our communities, such as unemployment, poverty and social inequality.

The Bapedi Kingship, under the guidance of Acting Queen Manyaku Maria Thulare, is poised to play an important role in uniting its people and driving development within the kingdom and beyond.

In conclusion, let us celebrate the resilience and unity of the Bapedi Kingdom. Let us honour the legacy of those who have come before and let us look to the future with hope and determination.

Together, we can build a prosperous and united Bapedi Nation.

Thank you.