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FINANCES

Proposal of R10 monthly contribution by Zulu King advisors' sparks debate

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KWAZULU-Natal Treasury has poured cold water on the proposed monthly R10 contribution from Zulu people to make King Misuzulu and the royal family financially independent from the government.

Reacting to the proposal, which has sparked public debate, provincial Treasury MEC Francois Rodgers said he was not aware of any legislation that permitted such revenue generation.

The provincial government provides funds for the Zulu royal household including for events.

Last week, Rodgers announced that there would not be additional funding for this year's Reed Dance festival after the king moved it from Enyokeni royal palace to Mashobeni palace.

The Enyokeni palace has a R140 million amphitheatre complex, which years ago, was specifically requested by the royal family. The complex was fast-tracked to be ready for this year's ceremony; however, the king announced that the event will no longer take place at this venue.

During an inspection last month by Arts and Culture MEC Mtomuhle Khawula and Public Works and Infrastructure MEC Martin Meyer, it was

also announced that the government will no longer need to hire VIP marquees and toilets as Enyokeni has the infrastructure in place.

The newly-built Mashobeni palace in Pongola, in the north-east of the province, has no building to house VIP guests which means the organisers will have to procure marquees and ablution facilities.

In a direct response to the Treasury's decision to refuse additional funding, the king's advisors proposed that all Zulus must contribute R10 a month so that the king would not have to rely on government funding.

In a statement issued by the advisors, African historian Professor Jabulani Maphalala and Abantu Botho Congress founder Philani Mavundla, they said they were concerned about the negative press coverage of the king's decision to relocate the Reed Dance from Nyokeni to Mashobeni.

The advisors invoked an old Zulu saying, "Umlomo Ongathethimanga", which meant that once the king has spoken, no other voice should challenge his authority.

Maphalala on Sunday defended the proposal, saying it was important because politicians tend to undermine the king as he is on their payroll and they fund his cultural ceremonies.



KING Misuzulu has moved this year's Reed Dance festival from Enyokeni palace to Mashobeni Palace. | BONGANI MBATHA Independent Newspapers