



**STATEMENT BY KZN CHURCH LEADERS GROUP AND KZN CHRISTIAN COUNCIL ON
COMMISSION FOR THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF CULTURAL,
RELIGIOUS AND LINGUISTIC COMMUNITIES (CRL COMMISSION)**

“O land, land, land, hear the Word of the Lord” (Jeremiah 22:29) Jesus prays: “Father let them be one...so that the world may believe and know that you sent me and have loved them...” (John 17:20—23)

Preamble -The KwaZulu-Natal Christian Council (KZNCC) as a fellowship of churches, Christian organizations and District Christian Councils..., fulfills its common calling “to the glory of God” ... by developing a “*united Christian response to the many social issues faced in this province, to achieve a just social order, protecting and promoting the sanctity of human life, human dignity, community development*” (KZNCC Constitution Preamble and Objective 4.1).

For the past number of months, debates have unfolded regarding statements and actions of the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities. In these debates, church leaders conceded that there have been instances of graft, corruption, lack of accountability and transparency as well as unethical conduct on the part of leaders and members of Churches. However, these challenges call for a more nuanced and measured response marked by transparency and accountability, which at the same time recognize both the autonomy of religious institutions and the need for ethical governance.

It is important to note that many Churches, Denominations, and Christian Movements in KwaZulu Natal are affiliated to the KwaZulu-Natal Christian Council, which is itself a provincial structure of the South African Council of Churches. In order to gain affiliation, founding documents, constitutions, profiles and statutes of member bodies must be formally lodged with the KZNCC at its offices in Pietermaritzburg. This existing repository of governance documents provides a credible and accessible framework through which State agencies or any independent body tasked with protecting communities may obtain information in the process of lawful investigation or even the prosecution of wrongdoing.

Furthermore, the longstanding constructive relationship between KZN Churches and the KwaZulu Natal Provincial Government in advancing social justice, peace, community development, and moral regeneration demonstrates that cooperation, rather than control, has historically yielded meaningful results. This partnership could serve as a model for addressing instances of malpractice or abuse without undermining religious freedom.

In keeping with its constitutional mandate, the KwaZulu-Natal Christian Council is strengthening its internal regulatory mechanisms by establishing a dedicated *Sub-Committee for Ethical Self-Regulation and Self-Discipline*, composed of members of the KZNCC Executive, representatives of the Theological Cluster (TC), delegates of Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference (SACBC), the Council for African Instituted Churches, The Evangelical Alliance of South Africa (TEASA), the Pentecostal Alliance of South Africa, and the Council of African Independent Churches (CAIC).



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This committee is well equipped to deal decisively with abuses which might occur in KZNCC Member Churches and will convene regularly to assess applications from churches seeking membership of the Council, while also providing guidance and support to ensure that all affiliated churches and Christian organisations remain compliant with the laws of the Republic of South Africa. In addition, the committee will promote adherence to sound ethical standards and robust theological frameworks 1 by collaborating with the South African Council of Churches in formulating a Code of Conduct for its member churches and organisations.

In conclusion, the regulation and accountability of Churches in KwaZulu-Natal should remain the responsibility of the Church itself, exercised through credible, representative and constitutionally grounded structures such as the KZNCC.

Government has a vital role in upholding the law; however, the direct regulation of religious institutions must not be transferred to the State. Rather, the above model of self-regulation, supported by cooperation with public authorities, offers the most balanced, effective, and constitutionally appropriate path forward.

Pietermaritzburg, 14th April 2026

+Cardinal Wilfrid Napier
Chairperson:
KZN Church Leaders Group

+Presiding Bishop Nkosinathi Myaka
Chairperson:
KZN Christian Council

ENDS!

ISSUED BY: The KwaZulu Natal Christian and the KZN Church Leaders' Group

MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

Contact: **Bishop Nathi Zondi**
Spokesperson
ps.nzondi@gmail.com
083 445 7423