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**Submission to the Commission on Traditional
Leadership Disputes and Claims**

Draft 1

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**Approved by: AmaHlubi King's Planning Committee
AmaHlubi Royal Committee
AmaHlubi National Working Committee**

***“The truth which makes man free, is for most part,
the truth, which men prefer not to hear.”***

Introduction

The commission was established under Chapter 6 of the Traditional Leadership and Governance Act of 2003 with the objective of providing a platform for dispute resolution and the settlement of claims arising out of any province within the Republic of South Africa.

Paragraph 25 (2) (a) (ii) states that:

the commission has authority to investigate a traditional leadership position where the title or the right of the incumbent is contested.

It is under this section that the amaHlubi Nation wishes to state their claim.

The claim of the amaHlubi nation relates to the recognition of the status of the amaHlubi king, Ingonyama Muziwenkosi ka Tatazela ka Siyephu ka Langalibalele, whose official title is King Langalibalele II.

The basis of our claim

Langalibalele I, who was king of the amaHlubi until his arrest and deposition in 1873, died under house arrest as a prisoner in 1889. As a result, his successors were never returned to the throne. The consequence of this is that his successor, Ingonyama Muziwenkosi, Langalibalele II, is categorised by national and provincial government as a chief within the KwaZulu/Natal province, making him and his people in Natal (and elsewhere), subjects of another king. This is despite the fact that he has in excess of twenty (20) senior traditional leaders all over South Africa who pay allegiance to him.

We would like to submit that:

1. the amaHlubi should be accorded the same status and recognised as a nation, in the same way as amaXhosa, baTswana, amaNdebele etc,
2. iSilo Langalibalele II should be accorded his rightful status as the **King** of amaHlubi. As the amaHlubi are now found in both Natal and the Eastern Cape (and some in Rustenburg), the King should be officially recognised in all the areas where there is amaHlubi under a senior traditional leader.

It is important to point out that, this is not a new claim, nor are we creating a new position within our nation. There is documented evidence that there have been numerous attempts to try and address this matter (see attached letters dated 10 and 18 May 1978).

This claim is also in line with the definition provided for in the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act, which states that:

The King means a traditional leader under whose authority, or within whose area of jurisdiction, senior traditional leaders exercise authority in accordance with customary law; and recognised as such in terms of the act.

It is important to emphasise that we are not contesting or questioning the position of any King in South Africa; rather, we are appealing for the recognition of the historical and rightful place for the King of amaHlubi.

In addition, the AmaHlubi would like to request the commission to assist in addressing one of the amaHlubi's pressing problems, the issue of Headman (izinduna) who subsequent to Ingonyama Langalibalele's arrest by the British Colonial Authorities in 1873, were nominated by the British to be chiefs on his land, primarily in the Estcourt District. Also, there are other traditional leaders placed by subsequent Provincial governments in other areas of the amaHlubi ancestral home, areas like Dundee, Newcastle and Ladysmith.

Examples of such traditional leaders are:

Mabaso

Ndaba

Dlamini

Zondi

Some Historical Background

There is ample evidence both from written records and oral historians, that amaHlubi whose historical name was amaMpembe/amaNgelengele/imiHuhu (according to Soga), are historically the largest tribe/nation in the Southern-East Africa. This claim is documented in at least four records, namely:

1. The Annals of Natal, page 141
2. The Rev AT Bryant, Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, 1929. (Chapter 17, page 147)
3. N Herd, The Bent Pine, page 2
4. A H Manson, page 15

HM Ndawo (Iziduko zamaHlubi, 1939) further supports this where he has listed a total of fifty five (55) clans and tribes who constitute the Great amaHlubi Nation. To this we should add the amaBhele and amaZizi tribes who have also originated and constitute part of the great amaHlubi nation (isizwe samaHlubi).

According to Soga, the amaHlubi are the oldest in origin and are a much older tribe than either the amaZulu or amaXhosa.

There is a lot of literature about the AmaHlubi, but very little is known or documented about the origins of this tribe. Most of the literature refers mostly to the time of King Langalibalele, and therefore offers very little on the roots of the amaHlubi nation.

From our research, it is safe to say that this once mighty tribe originated from what today is known as the Congo as part of the downward migration of the eMbo group/nation or amaLala from central Africa.

After settling briefly along the Lubombo mountains, a range extending from the North of present day Zululand northwards along the Swaziland-Mozambique border, they went South and settled in what today is known as Natal as far back as the 13th century, leaving behind a section of their group which later became the amaSwazi nation. There is numerous evidence, which confirms that the amaHlubi are closely related to the amaSwazi. The amaHlubi language is similar to that of the amaSwazi (the tekela language). Further evidence was the preference of amaSwazi maidens by the amaHlubi Kings.

At this stage, they are said to be the largest formation of the eMbo nation. AmaHlubi are said to have occupied the territory, which was marked by the Pongola River on the north east border, to the east it extended beyond the Income (Blood) River extending South to where Umzinyati and the Tugela river meet. To the South were the Bushman's River and the Drakensberg mountains, which also made up the Western border. In today's terms the Hlubi Land would include the following areas:

Charlestown, Volkrust, Newcastle & Madadeni, Utrecht, Wakkeestroom, Alckockspruit, Paulpietersburg, Vryheid, Dundee, Nquthu, Glencoe, Harrismith, Van Reenen, Ladysmith, Colenso, Winterton, Weenen, up to Estcourt. This therefore makes amaHlubi to be the earliest rules of what the colonialists later called the Natal Colony. In fact, Hlubi oral historians insist that the amaHlubi land extended up to Hammarsdale, meaning that it also included and extended beyond Pietermaritzburg.

It is not known who the king of the Hlubi's was at the time they first settled in this region. Below is a structure, which may give us an indication of who led the Hlubis at the various stages of their development.

Oral history gives us the following Hlubi Kings estimated to have ruled from about 1300 to the present:

1. Chibi 1300 – 1325
2. Lubelo 1325 - 1350
3. Busobengwe (Bungane I) 1350 - 1370
4. Fulathel'ilanga 1370 - 1390
5. Bele 1390 - 1410
6. Lufelwenja 1410 - 1430
7. Sidwabasenkomo 1430 - 1450
8. Mhuhu 1450 - 1475
9. Mpembe 1475 - 1500
10. Mhlanga 1500 - 1525
11. Musi 1525 - 1550
12. Masoka 1550 - 1575
13. Ndlovu 1575 - 1600
14. Dlamini 1600 - 1625
15. Mthimkhulu I 1625 - 1650
16. Ncobo and later, Hadebe 1650 - 1675
17. Dlomo I 1675 - 1710
18. Mashiya 1710 - 1720
19. Ntsele 1735 - 1760
20. Bungane II 1760 -1800
21. Mthimkhulu II (Ngwadlazibomvu) 1800 - 1818
22. Dlomo II and later, Mtetwa (commonly known as Langalibalele I) 1839 - 1889
23. Siyephu (Mandiza) 1897 - 1910
24. Tatazela (Mthunzi) 1926 - 1956
25. Muziwenkosi (Langalibalele II) 1974 -

According to Rev. A.T. Bryant, it is estimated that amaHlubi arrived at the Umzinyati around 1650, and then Hadebe would have been the first King of the amaHlubi to rule in Natal.

If Rev AT Bryant's estimate is correct in saying that the amaHlubi arrived at the uMzinyati around 1650, then Hadebe would have been the first King of the amaHlubi to rule in Natal.

It must also have been around this time that the Hlubi changed their name from amampembe/ngelengele/mhuhu to Hlubi.

AmaHlubi certainly ruled the largest territory in what today is erroneously called Kwazulu/Natal. We say so because of our belief that the province should be called, Kwazulu/Hlubi Province, given the history that, what the colonialists conquered and called natal was the traditional amaHlubi territory. In addition to maps, John Wright and Andrew Manson confirm that the amaHlubi at the time of King Bungane ruled a larger territory than even the Mtetwa and Ndwandwe (who were in their own right much larger than the Zulu Chieftdom).

The Amazizi and Amabele Tribes and other sub-tribes/clans

It was quite common in the early days of African history that weaker tribes would seek protection from the stronger nation/tribe, or sections of a tribe (during internal feuds) would break away and join another. Sometimes the stronger tribe would in pursuit of wealth attack a weaker/smaller tribe/clan. Another common practice was when a princess came to marry a king; members of her tribe “impelesi”, who would often never return home, would accompany her.

In all these instances, the incorporated tribe would pay respect and show allegiance to the supreme ruler.

As the amaHlubi were the largest and stronger in their earlier days, there are a few examples of the tribes and clans that had a different origin but joined amaHlubi to create this super nation:

- Mdakana, Mlambo and Gumbi – broke away from amaNgwane, so did Khweswa & Mnguni from the Mchunus (abenguni) and Nkwali (Mkhwanazi from Ndwandwe.
- Maduna (Matona) of Sotho origin were incorporated on arrival in Hlubiland, so did Nkomo and amaZengele (Thiyani).
- Tshabalala and Msimang of Swazi origin came through marriage, so are the Xaba who are of Mtetwa origin.
- Other sub clans include:
AmaBongwe, Dontsa, Ndaba, Hlatswayo, Khumalo, Mabaso, Mayaba, Nkala etc.

Other tribes can be traced from the ancient amaHlubi Kings. For example:

- AmaBhele are either formed from the Hlubi king called Bhele or according to Soga (page 424), they are from King Mhuhu’s son called Bhele, brother to King Mhlanga.
- While the amaZizi, are derived from King Dlamini of the amaHlubi, who is 14th on the Genealogical table above. Hence the salutation of the amaZizi which is Dlamini! (see Soga page 425)
- Sikosana is derived from Musi (Msi), son of King Mhlanga (Ncwana page 10 and HM Ndawo page 18)

These are but a few examples of how the amaHlubi built this nation.

AmaHlubi during the reign of King Shaka of the amaZulu

History records confirm that leaders of the mighty amaHlubi nation, had special knowledge of royal medicines and medicines for rainmaking. Some sources also indicate that the

amaHlubi “are declared to have been a race of intrepid warriors”. The iziYendane were the most feared regiment during Bungane’s reign under the commander-in-chief of Makhatha ka Ndlukazi (from Shabalala clan).

Norman Herd (page 2) commented that: *“History records are inescapably dominated by the dramatic exploits of the Zulu. Yet the amaHlubi, one of the largest perhaps the largest of the eMbo had had their hour of greatness....at the beginning of the Nineteenth century the Zulus were a tiny insignificant clan and from their social pinnacle the amaHlubi could look down upon them as despised tobacco-sellers.”*

It is no wonder then that none of the other mighty nations in the region dared to attack the amaHlubi, in particular reference to the Ndwandwes and Mtetwa.

It is for this reason that even Godongwana (later to be called) Dingiswayo, Shaka’s mentor, sought shelter from Bungane when running away from the spear of his father Jobe. It is here that he was brought up and learnt the medicines of kingship, which he used on his return to reclaim his throne. Dingiswayo must have told Shaka about the relationship with the amaHlubi. For although Shaka attacked and conquered many tribes, amaHlubi during the reign of Bungane and Mthimkhulu were spared. Clearly amaHlubi had a very cordial relationship with the amaZulu during the reign of Shaka.

HM Ndawo on page 256 reports;

“(Prince) Mahwanqa (brother to King Mthimkulu) was always well received by the Zulu monarchy, for the amaZulu and amaHlubi have always been in very friendly terms, offering advise to each other on several matters.”

This is also further demonstrated by Shaka’s response upon being told that the amaNgwane Chief Matiwane, had killed Mthimkulu during a surprise attack. It is reported that Shaka promptly sent his troops to search and destroy Chief Matiwane. (HM Ndawo page 238)

It is further reported that after the death of Dingiswayo, Shaka’s biggest challenge was to conquer Dingiswayo’s killers, Zwide ka Langa of the Nwandwe (Nxumalo) tribe. In 1826 he then visited the amaHlubi to request their medicine (intelezi) and the support of the iziyendane regiment. For a long time during Shaka’s reign the iziyendane volunteered their services and were considered one of the most trusted regiments. This was so because at this time, their king, Mthimkulu, had died and amaHlubi were recovering from the destruction that followed Matiwane’s attack. Moreover, it was common for these two nations to support each other at the hour of need.

We can therefore conclude that contrary to common belief, Shaka never conquered the amaHlubi. Instead was happy for them to rule independently as his neighbours.

Langalibalele’s ascension amaHlubi King throne and his relationship with the amaZulu monarchy

King Bungane II had three prominent sons, namely Mpangazitha, Mthimkulu II and Mahwanqa. His heir was Mthimkulu also known as Ngwadlazibomvu.

Mthimkulu, who lived in Utrecht, assumed power after Bungane's death. He ruled for a while his brother, Mpangazitha, was installed by his father, Bungane, as chief of the Hlubis near Newcastle.

As stated earlier, Mthimkulu died in 1818 during the war with Matiwane of the amaNgwane tribe, Mpangazitha then fled and was embroiled in several of the Mfecane wars. He also died in a battle with the amaNgwane on his return from Lesotho in 1825. Some of the amaHlubi clans found in the Eastern Cape are descendants of Mpangazitha. Among them we can count: Mehlomakhulu, Sidinane, Siphambo and Zibi.

After Mfecane the amaHlubi returned to their land led by Mthimkulu's brother, Mahwanqa.

Among Mthimkulu's sons we find Dlomo II (the heir), Langalibalele (Mtetwa), Duba, Magadla, Ludidi, Luzipho, and Mhlambiso, among several others.

Mahwanqa was reluctant to handover power to Dlomo. As a result, Dlomo sought advise from his counterpart, the amaZulu King Dingane (a practice that was common even before his time). It is also documented that even King Sobuza I of the amaSwazi tried to intervene on this matter.

On his return, his regiment promptly killed Mahwanqa after which Dlomo went to advise Dingane. Unfortunately, little did King Dlomo know that Dingane had other intentions, which was to weaken the amaHlubi by destroying the amaHlubi leadership. As a result it was on this visit that King Dlomo and his guards were put to death on Dingane's instruction. It is from this occasion that the Hlubi/Zulu relations began to sour. Clearly the two had very different ideas about the future state of political affairs. Zulu on the one hand, wanted to consolidate power and had little tolerance of independent nations/tribes on its borders. On the other hand the amaHlubi were bent on regrouping and reassert their independence from any political power. Clearly at this time the balance of power had tilted towards the Zulu monarchy.

Dlomo's death opened the way for Mtetwa (Langalibalele I), his younger brother to claim the throne as king of amaHlubi. However this would not happen without Mini, Mahwanqa's son attempting to claim the throne for himself. Again, it was Dingane who sent his army to assist Langalibalele defeat Mini, only to try and kill him on his visit. So Langalibalele survived another attempt by Dingane to destroy the amaHlubi leadership.

Some historians suggest that Dingane who was in the process of consolidating his power in main Zululand was not comfortable with the resurrection of the Hlubi ruling house. He saw this as a threat to his rule near his borders and was keen to neutralise nearby tribes who showed any inclination towards autonomous rule.

Langalibalele had a major challenge of rebuilding the tribe after the Mfecane wars.

It was the events leading to Natal being declared a British territory in 1843 that had signalled a new chapter in the amaHlubi History. This new British colony's northern border had cut through the amaHlubi land in particular the Umzinyathi district, which had always been the home for the amaHlubi Royal house. This incident technically divided the amaHlubi who had returned to their home, such that some were now living in the colony while others lived in Zululand. As a result the amaHlubi ruling house found itself within the borders of Zululand.

By this time Langalibalele had successfully rebuilt his power and had earned a reputation from several nations in Southern Africa as a rainmaker. His people did not just increase in numbers but also in prosperity.

J Wright and A Manson made the following observation:

“From the perspective of the Zulu royal house, Langalibalele was beginning to emerge as a figure whose power in the upper Mzinyathi - upper Pongolo borderlands rivalled that of the king himself. “

This was a development that Mpande who had succeeded Dingane would not tolerate for long. This is when he started raiding Langalibalele’s people for cattle, an act that was an implicit recognition of Langalibalele’s independence, for if he was fully incorporated into the Zulu kingdom, other institutionalised means would have been used to extract wealth.

Even during the time in his uMzinyati country, it seems Langalibalele lived with some level of independence from the Zulus. Some evidence lies in the fact that despite the fact that Mpande had banned missionaries from operating in the Zulu Kingdom, Langalibalele never sought permission from Mpande when he decided to send an envoy on a 1000- kilometre trip to Grahamstown to request Wesleyan Missionaries to work among the Hlubi. About this incident, J Wright and A Manson, remarked:

“Langalibalele’s actions in this case could only have been seen by Mpande as an assertion of his independence, and must have contributed substantially to increasing already-rising Zulu-Hlubi tensions.”

In 1848 the Zulu king Mpande launched an attack against the amaHlubi, although the amaHlubi defeated the Zulu army, as a cohesive force they fled under the leadership of Langalibalele, across the Buffalo into Natal in 1848. It is reported that he fled to avoid a larger Zulu force that would be sent to compel his submission. The Hlubi were to settle along the Klip River, today’s Ladysmith, and later Estcourt. This move was perhaps the most significant display of the Hlubi leader’s refusal to be subjected under the rule of the Zulus.

At this stage it is important to note that although the Natal region was under British rule. The amaHlubi, in their eyes were simply reoccupying another part of the old Hlubi homeland. It is reported that Mr Shepstone remarked “the amaHlubi were at one time the largest tribe in South East Africa, and were among the Aboriginal Tribes which anciently occupied the territory now forming Natal, prior to their being disturbed by the Chaka wars. ...” and they were now simply returning to the land, which their fathers had previously fled”. (Colenso pg 3)

Another point to make regarding Langalibalele’s independence from the Zulu monarchy relates to his arrival in Natal. There was a law/practice/principle, which stated that cattle, which came with people who are deemed to have fled the Zulu kingdom, would be returned to the king of the Zulus as they are deemed to be his property. This was however not the case with Langalibalele. A recognition that he had ruled autonomously of the Zulu King.

To the amaHlubi they had now reoccupied their homeland and should now be free from the rule of any authority. Here they were free from disturbances from the Zulu, but they had to contend with the British authority, which wanted to subject all traditional leaders to its rule, and deemed them and their tribes/nations to be subjects of the Queen of England.

Even here, Langalibalele, to a great extent ruled with independence and certainly did not pay any allegiance to the Zulu monarchy or any other authority for that matter. It is reported that Langalibalele continued an age old tradition of holding Umkhosi wokweshwama (ceremony of tasting the first fruits) annually. This is significant because, from Shaka's reign onwards, only the Zulu King would hold "Umkhosi".

To demonstrate his status as King of the Hlubi it is reported at least in two publications that Langalibalele as king wanted only to have to deal with the Governor of Natal, and not with local magistrates.

In Bishop Colenso records taken during the trial, his son Mango, testified that "Langalibalele said he was King, and could not obey the summons ..(from a local magistrate." (page 26). While in J Wright and A Manson it is reported that "as early as 1852, when only in his mid thirties, Langalibalele sent an envoy to Pietermaritzburg to remind Shepstone (the Governor) that he was a great and influential Chief (read King) who resented having to put up with threats from the local magistrate."

AmaHlubi in Natal grew not only in numbers but also in prosperity. Langalibalele's position of influence in African societies inside and outside the natal Colony was further enhanced by his reputation as a rainmaker. It is reported that Kings and Chiefs throughout Southern Africa had consulted him including King Moshoeshe, Mpande and Cetywayo. He is reported to have developed strong ties with Moshoeshe, Cetywayo and Sobhuza of the amaSwazi. A clear recognition of his status as, King of a once powerful amaHlubi nation.

It is important to mention that although the amaHlubi areas that had extended beyond Natal, the amaHlubi who lived in the Eastern Cape under various Hlubi Chiefs, continued to recognise Natal as home of their supreme Royal House and recognised Langalibalele as their King. HM Ndawo confirm this by saying "as far as we all knew Langalibalele is the king of all the amaHlubi in South Africa." (page 377)

The British in Natal were certainly getting uneasy about Langalibalele's growing independence, his defiance of the colonial authority and influence among other tribes/nations in Southern Africa. This is what led to the infamous battle in 1873 and his subsequent arrest for treason and imprisonment on Robben Island in 1874.

There were unfounded fears that Langalibalele's general defiance, his independence and possession of firearms were a security threat to the Colony's white community. Rumour was that Langalibalele was collecting guns for purposes of planning a rebellion. Given his influence and prominence, it was a threat the British were not to take lightly. Learning of the intention by the colonial government to attack his tribe and arrest him, he planned his escape with some of his troops. This act was to be considered by the colonial administration to be an act of treason.

Langalibalele was exiled in Cape Town until 1887 when he was allowed to return to Natal, resettled in the Zwartkops area under some form of house arrest. He never regained his power as leader of the Hlubi; he died in 1889 and was buried on the foothills of the Drakensberg. Despite the outcry, there was no restitution for the Hlubi.

Siyephu, Langalibalele's son with Mzamose (king Sobhuza I's daughter), took over as leader of the Hlubi's in 1897. He ruled until his death in 1910. Tatazela took over in 1926 and ruled until 1956.

Current Monarch of the amaHlubi, is his Majesty, king Muziwenkosi Johannes Hadebe ka Tatazela, Langalibalele II.

AmaHlubi are now found all over South Africa under over 20 chiefs who pay allegiance to Isilo Llangalibalele II. These Hlubis are found in areas like, Newcastle, Ladysmith, Estcourt, Ixopo, Hershell, Matatiele, Mt Fletcher, Mt Frere, Qumbu, Tsomo, and Rustenburg.

The following senior traditional leaders pay allegiance to Ingonyama Muziwenkosi:

1. Inkosi Hadebe – Ixopo
2. Inkosi Hadebe – Newcastle and Dundee
3. Inkosi Ndaba – Estcourt
4. Inkosi Hadebe – Ladysmith
5. Inkosi Magadla – Matatiele
6. Inkosi T Zibi – Mt Fletcher
7. Inkosi Ludidi – Qumbu
8. Inkosi M Zibi – Rustenburg
9. Inkosi Nongamile Zibi (acting) - Middledrift
10. Inkosi Mehlomakulu – Qumbu
11. Inkosi Mehlomakulu – Mt Frere
12. Inkosi Mehlomakulu - Herschell
13. Inkosi Luphindo – Matatiele
14. Inkosi Sibenya - Mgwalana
15. Inkosi Mini – Qumbu
16. Inkosi Ncwana - Tsomo
17. Inkosi Nhliziyo - Ngqwaru
18. Inkosi X – Peddie (Ngqushwa)
19. Inkosi Matandela – Matatiele
20. Inkosi Mvunge - ka Mlindazwe – Toleni
21. Inkosi Dlomo - ? (Natal)
22. Inkosi Welile Notha – Mt Ayliff

Are Hlubi leaders Chiefs or Kings?

We have for several hundreds of years regarded the leaders of our nation, who descend from the main royal house, that is the house of Hadebe, as Kings.

From the research conducted by SB Hadebe on this question, for his theses, he concluded:

The amaHlubi regard all the rulers who descend from the royal house, which is now in Estcourt district as Kings. Bhungane, Mthimkulu and Langalibalele were Kings; they were never subjects of the Zulu Kings. (1.6 page 10 – 11).

Even the current head of the amaHlubi nation is referred to as either:

Ngonyama (the Lion)

Nkosi yamakhosi (King of Chiefs)

Isilo (ruler of the Lion Kingdom)

This is further supported by HM Ndawo in his book, “ibali lamaHlubi” (the story of the amaHlubi), who throughout the book refers to Hlubi leaders as Kumkani (Xhosa word for King). He goes further to explain that the amaHlubi called the head of the nation, **iSilo**, and his majesty’s wife would be referred to as Ndlovukazi, similar to the Zulu and the Swazi. Isilo is the same as Ngonyama, which means King in the English language.

Unpublished statements by a Sivivi kaMaqungo in the James Stuart Collection (Killie Cambell Library, Durban, it is stated “Ntsele was a great King, even far mightier and better known was his son King Bungane”. Giving testimony to the fact that our leaders were referred to as Kings.

Further testimony is found in AT Bryant’s book, “olden Times in Zululand and Natal (page 87), where he writes about Dingiswayo (Godongwana) of the Mtetwa:

“His path took him up-country, through the Nkandla district, and finally landed in Hlubi-land (the country of the emaHlutshini along the upper Mzinyati, 120 miles from the sea) then ruled by King Bungane, son of Ntsele.”

Further, there is undisputed evidence that amaHlubi were once the largest tribe South East of Africa with numerous clans and subclans. Some of these clans had their own Chiefs who paid allegiance to the Hlubi King. Evidence of this is found in (among others) J Wright and A Manson’s book “the Hlubi Chiefdom), which states that:

“Although Bhungane is said to have a special knowledge of medicines of Chiefship, and although his rule extended over a larger territory, his subordinate Chiefs seem to have retained a considerable degree of autonomy. “

This is then testimony that to have chiefs under the Head of the Hlubi nation is certainly not a new phenomenon. This on its own confirms that the amaHlubi head has always been inkosi yamakhosi that is head of Chiefs, commonly referred to as a King.

Even in Norman Herd’s Bent Pine, when he describes the manner in which king Langalibalele was buried after his death in 1889, he begins by saying that “Langalibalele received the kind of burial reserved for tribal kings”.

One can also infer from the remarks made by king Langalibalele to the Bishop of Natal during his trial in 1873 that from the fact that he had an intimate friendship with both king Cetywayo of the amaZulu and Moshoeshe of the baSotho, that they must have accepted him as their equal.

Recognition of the current head of the amaHlubi nation by other kingdoms.

King Muziwenkosi, Langalibalele II, is not only recognized by his Chiefs, but also by numerous kingdoms in Southern Africa. Among them we can count the following:

- Ndebele Kingdom
- Swazi Kingdom
- Xhosa Kingdom
- Basotho King
- Amampondo Kingdom

In all these places, when His Majesty visits he is accorded his status and recognition as any head of a Nation.

Should the amaHlubi be subjected to the Authority of the Zulu King

We raise this issue because there are some who want to believe (for their selfish interests) that the amaHlubi (particularly those in Natal) should be subjects of the king of the amaZulu. Here we will demonstrate that such a perception or claim is misplaced.

The greatest insult you can give to the AmaHlubi is to refer to them as Zulus. In fact to quote Soga (the South Eastern Bantu, 1930, pg 449)

“the term Zulu is today used in a wide application quite unjustified by actual fact, as it is made to include generally all the tribes in Natal. There were and still are, tribes numerically superior to the Zulu and of totally different origin..... “

There are three points we would like to make regarding this issue:

- Firstly, we have already demonstrated that from oral history and the research conducted by Rev JH Soga, amaHlubi are the Oldest in origin, much older than the amaZulu.
- Secondly, the amaHlubi have their unique history, culture, tradition and heritage, which is distinct from the amaZulu and amaXhosa. J Wright and A Manson (page 5) confirm this:

“The Hlubi were distinct from the peoples of what later became Zululand by their **tekela speech** and by certain of **their customs**. The men did not wear **headrings but instead twisted their hair in tassels**, which hung down all round the head. These were known as iziyendane, a word which was used as a nickname for the Hlubi and related peoples by the inhabitants of Zululand. A distinctive feature of the amaHlubi men’s dress was the **umsubelo**.

- Thirdly, even if after the death of King Mthimkulu the amaHlubi were considered by the Zulus as their tributaries, there is numerous evidence that the **amaHlubi have never been subjects of the Zulu monarch as their king**. To prove this, his heir Langalibalele protested to any suggestion that he should pay allegiance to the king of the amaZulu. This resulted in Mpande’s army attacking Langalibalele in 1848. Although he had defeated the Zulu army, he decided to flee his homeland, which was at the border of Zululand, and reoccupy the land, which belonged to his forefathers, Natal. This was an act by King Langalibalele to declare his independence and proclaim his autonomy.

Having moved from his original home, he continued to rule his people independent of the Zulu King. Here he even continued an age-old Hlubi ceremony, umkhosi wokweshwama (tasting of the first fruits ceremony), a ceremony, which only the Zulu king was allowed to hold after Shaka, became king. Up to today, the head of the Hlubi nation still holds this ceremony.

Another proof of Langalibalele’s autonomy from the Zulu monarch was the treatment of his cattle when he left Mzinyati to settle in Natal. The official policy of the Natal government was that all cattle in the Zulu country were the property of the Zulu King. However Langalibalele and the amaHlubi were allowed to retain their cattle, as the authorities regarded Langalibalele as having ruled autonomous of the Zulu king. (A Manson and J Wright, page 38)

Other sources and statements, which confirm that AmaHlubi traditionally had their own king: *(to be sourced and attached to the final document)*

Statement from amaSwazi Royal House
Statement from amaNdebele Royal House
Statement from amaXhosa Royal House
Statement from amaMpondo Royal House
Confirmation of allegiance from amaHlubi Chiefs

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