



Diakonia Council of Churches

## **‘Current powers threatened by the power of the poor’- Bishop Michael Vorster**

On 11 December, church leaders, family members and friends of the Kennedy 12 held a prayer service outside the Durban Magistrates’ Court organised by Diakonia Council of Churches.

In his message of solidarity Bishop Michael Vorster of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa said the week had seen three significant events, namely, the launch of the climate change document, the peace procession against violence on women and children and the Kennedy 12 prayer service. “Common to the three events is the question: Will justice be done?”, he said.

After giving each one present the gift of a black cross which symbolises human rights, Bishop Vorster said, “For the accused and their families, for those whose relatives were killed in the violence and for those whose shacks have been demolished - who have no place to stay, for there is ‘no room for them in the inn’, this year’s Christmas will be a black one”.



He drew parallels between the Kennedy Road events as we enter Christmas with the events surrounding the birth of Christ. “Are the current powers threatened by a lowly movement of the poor - Abahlali baseMjondolo as Herod was threatened by the newly born Prince of peace that he had to kill all baby boys? Are the current powers threatened by the practise of true democracy?”, Bishop Vorster asked.



After the court session friends and relatives of the accused were addressed by Revd Mtetwa, deputy Chairperson of Rural Ministers’ Network who urged Abahlali baseMjondolo not to give up, but to continue their struggle for democracy. Claude Mormont of *Entraide et Fraternite* delivered a message of solidarity in which he showed his appreciation of the work Abahlali baseMjondolo are doing in their quest for a better life.

In a brief hearing which was interrupted by an hour long adjournment, the five were further remanded in custody to 22 January 2010. The seven who are on bail had their bail conditions unchanged.

Immediately after the court appearance, Archbishop Thabo Cecil Makgoba, Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town issued the following statement: “We continue to say to President Zuma, please, Mr President, show mercy and compassion and hear the prayers and longings for democracy by your people”.

