



Diakonia Council of Churches

'Produce the evidence', demands Bishop Rubin Phillip.

Anglican Bishop Rubin Phillip has demanded that the state provides evidence in the case against the Kennedy Road 13, or release the accused.



Bishop Rubin Phillip was addressing about fifty people, mostly church leaders and family members of the Kennedy 13, who had gathered for a prayer service organised by Diakonia Council of Churches, at the Durban Magistrates' Courts.

In a moving speech Bishop Rubin said, *"What we are demanding from the state is that they provide the evidence that these men did wrong. If they did indeed do anything wrong, then prosecute them. If there is no evidence, release them now."*

Bishop Rubin, who is known for his relentless defence of justice in KwaZulu-Natal, also announced the establishment of a commission of enquiry into the Kennedy Road events which, he said, would comprise "high powered legal professionals" and notable citizens with impeccable track records, as well as distinguished international experts. The objective of the commission would be to establish the truth. *"The name of Abahlali has been darkened and tarnished. Abahlali's reputation must be vindicated"*, he said.



Addressing the gathering, Revd Solomuzi Mabuza, Chairperson of the Church Land Programme, implored the church not to give up its prophetic role. *"We believe in a God of justice. Let us not be afraid to speak the truth to power"*, he said.

After the service, clergy and family members of the accused filled the court room for the bail hearing, sitting through the lengthy proceedings which were interrupted by a forty five minute adjournment. After the long and unjustified delay in bringing specific charges against the thirteen accused, charges were dropped against one, while the charge of murder against seven were also dropped. Five of the accused will appear again on 11 December, allowing the state time for further investigations, and bail was denied these five.



The service was followed by a time of prayer with families of the accused and members of Abahlali baseMjondolo who had attended the proceedings in solidarity with the accused. Prayers were led by Revd Phumzile Zondi-Mabizela, CEO of the KwaZulu-Natal Christian Council.

Diakonia urges all our friends and partners - who have shared the struggle for our hard-won democracy - to continue praying for the accused in their time of need.