

Mogoeng calls for peace, forgiveness to resolve land issue



Chief Justice Mogoeng (PHOTO:Mary-Ann Palmer/[News 24](#)).

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Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng says the only way to achieve a truly sustainable solution to the emotive land expropriation issue is through peace, unity and shared prosperity.

Mogoeng was the keynote speaker at an event hosted by the Mediation Foundation for Peace and Justice at the Castle of Good Hope today.

The head of South Africa's judiciary – a part-time pastor – challenged those present, who were mostly members of the First Nations (Khoi and San) royal houses, to seek the return of their land through peace and forgiveness.

Speaking to the media outside the event, Mogoeng said the country needed to go back to basics if it wanted the best land

expropriation solution.

“We need to get the foundation right. For us to resolve any of the serious problems that confront South Africa, we have got to deal with ourselves as a people.

“We are too divided to achieve anything,” he added.

The critical starting point therefore was for South Africans, black, white and especially First Nations people, to recognise that the overemphasis placed on artificial differences has taken citizens back.

“We need to recognise that we are one people, one nation and as long as we are divided, we are not going to achieve anything. This is a critical beginning, that our country has everything that each and every one of us needs to prosper and realise our full potential.

“Let’s unite. Let’s pursue peace. Let us love and respect ourselves because you can’t give what you don’t have.”

Mogoeng also said there were so many things that enjoined and united South Africans as people, and that for too long, the country has focused on what separated it.

“The rest of the African continent looks to South Africa for guidance and solutions because of the incredible capacity we’ve displayed for compromising and bridging our differences, and the infrastructure we have here.”

Mogoeng said he would visit a group of “mega farmers” in Parys at the end of August to engage and take his message to them.

“The message is the same: don’t despair about the land issue. We are a peace-loving people as South Africans, and there is no solution that relates to the land issue except one that caters to all of us, that unites us, and is enduring.

“If we ever think we have arrived at a solution, but it is

such that it benefits some but not all, it won't last long. We will play games to try and sustain it, but it can never sustain forever.

"So that which will unite us and sustain peace, is the kind of solution that we must pursue."

He again emphasised that solutions driven by love, reconciliation, peace and shared prosperity "will last forever. If not, it will fail, and it's just a matter of time".

There was a strong church presence during Mogoeng's address and a ceremony to honour the First Nations royalty present. Mogoeng led those present in a prayer and asked God to lead the way as South Africans find solutions to what was a heart problem.

"Nobody wants to be dehumanised, nobody wants to be exploited. So I understand where the anger comes from. But it is time to forgive," he challenged them.

If they did so, God would find a way for land to be returned to those who deserved it and for all in the country, black and white, to prosper together, he said.