

Buthelezi was asked to talk

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By PATRICK LAURENCE
Deputy Political Editor

CHIEF Gatsha Buthelezi of KwæZulu was asked to speak at Mr Robert Sobukwe's funeral by Bishop Ernest Sobukwe, brother of the dead man.

Chief Buthelezi, who was evicted from the memorial service as a "bantustan stooge", was one of three speakers axed after black militants took over the funeral arrangements.

His two scheduled fellow speakers were Mrs Helen Suzman, MP, and Mr Benjamin Pogrand, Deputy Editor of the Rand Daily Mail and a long standing friend of Mr Sobukwe's.

Bishop Sobukwe is in hospital in Cape Town and was not available for comment yesterday. But Bishop Patrick Matolengwe, Anglican Suffragan Bishop of Cape

Town, confirmed he had asked Chief Buthelezi on behalf of Bishop Sobukwe to speak at the funeral.

Bishop Matolengwe, a close friend of the Sobukwe family, said: "Bishop Sobukwe and Robert Sobukwe had nothing against Gatsha personally, although they disagreed with him politically."

Bishop Matolengwe also confirmed that he had invited Mrs Suzman to speak at the request of Bishop Sobukwe.

Mrs Veronica Sobukwe had earlier denied asking either Chief Buthelezi or Mrs Suzman to speak at her husband's funeral. She confirmed, however, that she had asked Mr Pogrand to speak.

Mrs Sobukwe said: "I did ask Mr Pogrand to speak on behalf of my husband. He was a true friend."

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