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## Why the Zulu King's Last Will & Testament is so important for South Africans



The late King Goodwill Zwelithini, King of the Zulu nation, the largest monarchy in South Africa, passed away earlier this year after ruling for more than 53 years on the throne. His passing has set off a series of dramatic events that are still playing out in the public eye, and in the courts.

Firstly, in his Will, he appointed his wife, Queen Mantfombi MaDlamini-

Zulu, as Regent of the grieving Zulu nation. Bearing in mind that the King was in a polygamous marriage and there are several wives and children that may want to claim their stake in the estate, one would have expected some jostling to occur. However, no one expected the newly appointed Regent to pass away only a few weeks later and for her Will to appoint her son as the new King.

This move was quickly contested by the late King's first wife, Queen Sibongile Dlamini, who is claiming a 50% stake in the estate as she claims she was married in civil law and therefore in community of property, since 1969, to the late King. Moreover, the Queen's two daughters also filed a court application contesting the King's Will, stating that the signature of the King was forged and hence the Will is not valid.

Both these cases have been consolidated and will be heard later this month, leaving the Zulu Kingdom in a state of suspension and the royal household at odds with each other.

So why is this case important for us as South Africans you ask? The reality is that over 75% of South Africans pass away without a valid Will in place. You may not be a Zulu King with millions in assets, but you are certainly king of your own kingdom and master of your own (and your family's) legacy.

With this in mind, here are a few simple guidelines to help you secure your kingdom.

1. Don't procrastinate
  2. Speak to a professional
  3. Handwritten amendments - These can sometimes be unclear and therefore unenforceable.
  4. Sign your Will
  5. Your witnesses should be independent
  6. Keep your Will safe
- Make sure you don't pass away with no-one knowing where your Will is. This happens every day and nullifies the efforts you went through to ensure you've diligently captured your final wishes. Keep a copy with you in a safe place and ensure your executor has a copy too.

The fate of the heirs to the Zulu Kingdom now sits in the hands of the courts. Chances are this may end up being a lengthy and messy battle as there is so much at stake. This storyline plays out almost every day with regular South Africans' estates being contested and messy legal battles between families that result in them being torn apart – but obviously very few get the media attention that the late Zulu King's is getting. Hopefully, the one positive that may come of this case is that more and more South Africans will realise that they don't need to be royalty to get their affairs in order.