

New guidelines for ritual animal slaughter

COMMUNITIES should continue to slaughter animals as a religious and cultural practice, the Commission on the Rights of Culture and Religion said yesterday following a conflict between animal rights activists and traditionalists.

The commission had researched animal slaughter for ritual ceremonies after the outcry over ANC heavyweight Tony Yengeni's slaughtering of a bull in a cleansing ceremony following his release from prison.

Commission chairman Wesley Mabuza said the conflict had been brought about through misunder-

standing. "They should listen to each other to understand one another."

Animal rights activists objected to the slaughter on the grounds that the practice constituted cruelty to animals.

Mabuza said traditionalists believed the ritual was part of their culture and that objecting to it was an infringement on their rights to freely practise their religion.

The commission recommended that communities continue to slaughter animals for cultural and religious purposes, but take care to consider other people who might be sensitive to the practice.

It also recommended that municipalities look at amending by-laws to accommodate communities slaughtering for religious and cultural reasons. And care should be taken at all times to ensure the welfare of the animals from transportation to death.

Bushy Shikwambana, of the Ekurhuleni Environmental Health Services, said the municipality did not have by-laws on slaughtering, but draft by-laws had been formulated, stating that residents should submit an application to slaughter to the municipality 14 days before the event, and slaughtering should be done in

an enclosed environment.

In African tradition, an animal can be slaughtered to give thanks, to ask for healing, to communicate with God and the ancestors for a blessing and good luck, and to ask for rain or protection.

However, Masathongo Shamanic Institute chairwoman Nombeko Bikwani said some of the guidelines were too restrictive. "I cannot seek permission every time I have to slaughter."

She added it would also not always be possible for the seller of an animal to provide a certificate that the animal was in good health. - Sapa

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NELSON MANDELA BAY

War fire for grave violations

Watchdog has tough questions for officials

violated historic country. was in Port Elizabeth on a fact-finding activist group Isizwe Development Agency on behalf of relatives had been buried in Veeplaas, situated near township. Agency an Mapela said had been violated ere built in 1994. flawu Tyatyeka ng mission had

confirmed the graves had been violated. "It's frightening that in almost all the municipalities [we have gone to] we experienced the same problem. We will ask the municipality hard-hitting questions why the graves were violated. Many townships were built on top of graves. "The municipalities and developers should get their act together." Tyatyeka, who also serves as the Eastern Cape convener of the commission, said they would report back to the communities on their findings. "But we won't dictate terms to the municipality or the de-

veloper who built the houses on what should be done, although they will have to let us know what they have agreed on with the families." Tyatyeka urged municipalities not to take the issue of graves lightly as [people believed] they were chains linking the spirits of the dead to the living. "What if your mother appears to you in a dream and says: 'My child it's cold here where you have buried me.' Then you won't be able to perform any rituals because RDP houses have been built in the area." He said the outcome of the meet-

ing with the municipality and the affected families would serve as a beacon guiding them on how to solve similar cases in other municipalities which had also been found to have violated historic burial sites. Municipal spokesperson Kupido Baron confirmed the meeting had been scheduled with the concerned group and that the matter would be discussed at length today.



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