

Religious leaders vow to fight corruption

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CAPE TIMES Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein in conversation with Anglican Archbishop Thabo Makgoba at the launch in Khayelitsha of an anti-corruption campaign by the Western Cape Religious Leaders Forum, supported by Kairos Southern Africa and the SA Council of Churches. Picture: COURTNEY AFRICA

Cape Town -

In one of the strongest stances yet taken against corruption, people of all faiths came together in Khayelitsha on Wednesday to launch an anti-corruption campaign led by the Western Cape Religious Leaders Forum.

The forum is supported by Kairos Southern Africa and the SA Council of Churches.

Religious leaders in the city, headed by Anglican Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, issued a stern warning to political leaders about their reluctance to deal with corruption.

This and the public's silence would lead to society crumbling, they said.

The launch of the campaign follows the religious leaders' Anti-Corruption Summit in June where they heard testimonies from communities, social justice activists and the office of the public protector on the cost of corruption and pledged to join the fight against it.

They said the corrupt pursuit of money and power was threatening SA's young democracy and robbing the poor of their basic needs and opportunities.

Speaking at Look Out Hill in Khayelitsha on Wednesday, Makgoba said corruption had a serious effect on how society, the government and the public sector operated.

He said that if good men and women remained quiet, the country would have failed to fight corruption.

Religious leaders should take it upon themselves to fight corruption, he said.

“We as religious leaders are still learning to speak truth to power but are afraid to speak truth to our friends who are in power,” Makgoba said, adding that corruption in whatever form was not right.

He said their call against corruption was not limited only to those in power but was also addressed to members of the public.

Those ordinary citizens offering or taking bribes, regardless of how small they were, were fuelling the problem, Makgoba said.

Pastor Xola Skosana of the Way of Life Church in Khayelitsha said the discourse on corruption should not be limited to maladministration or procurement. It should also speak to the inequalities in our society.

He issued a challenge to mayor Patricia De Lille, Western Cape Premier Helen Zille and President Jacob Zuma to focus on the gap between those in affluent areas and those in the townships.

“They manage and preside over a corrupt and fraudulent political system.

“That in itself opens up a breeding ground for all types of corruption,” Skosana said.

Catholic Archbishop Stephen Brislin said that in recent times, corruption had broken the trust between members of the public and their leaders.

He said the situation in Marikana, where more than 30 people were killed in clashes between miners and police, was only a symptom of what was happening in the country

Brislin said there was a lot of anger over corruption.

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein said the moral regeneration of society required that children should learn the bill of responsibility at school.

Doing so would instil a culture of responsibility.

“If the schools are not teaching it, take it up with the principal. If the principal is not responsive, then take it up with the MEC of Education,” Goldstein said.

He encouraged people to use platforms such as Corruption Watch.

A declaration for the call to end corruption was signed by 18 religious leaders in Cape Town and 44 other signatories.

The campaign plans to hold dialogues on corruption across the country.

It will conclude in a national “preach and teach” event on International Anti-Corruption Day on December 9.

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<http://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/religious-leaders-vow-to-fight-corruption-1.1368280#.VCFC4Racxfg>