

# Tutu, Motlanthe share embrace

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inlsa Cape Town.08.10.11. Anglican Archbishop Thabo Makgoba greet VIP guests such as Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe, Graca Machel, Bono and Cape Town Mayor Patricia de Lille at the start of the service in honour of Desmond Tutu's 80 th birthday at the St Georges Catherdal in Cape Town on Friday. Picture Ian Landsberg

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu made a friendly jibe at Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe at a service in St George's Cathedral on Friday afternoon over the government's failure to provide a visa to the Dalai Lama.

“Thank you for coming despite some of the hiccups we have had,” Tutu said while speaking from the pulpit during a church service to mark his 80th birthday.

He had earlier stepped down from the pulpit to embrace Motlanthe, who smiled and bowed his head at Tutu's remarks.

The audience in the packed cathedral included Irish musician Bono, former president Nelson Mandela's wife Graca Machel, Cape Town mayor Patricia De Lille, and a lone Buddhist monk in an orange robe and shaven head.

They applauded and laughed as Tutu spoke to the deputy president.

“Even if we are in church and we are praying, we must ask for what we are praying,” Tutu said.

Motlanthe said earlier this week that the Dalai Lama could have been granted a visa to visit South Africa for Tutu's birthday.

His spokesman later said granting the visa was not in Motlanthe's line of duty.

Motlanthe, who recently concluded a trip to China, denied there had been pressure from Beijing to deny the Dalai Lama a visa.

The government has been accused of bowing to pressure from China – its biggest trading partner – which calls the Tibetan spiritual leader a separatist and discourages foreign leaders from hosting him.

Earlier this week, an enraged Tutu warned that people would start praying for the downfall of the ANC government like they had for the demise of the apartheid government.

There was little sign of the tension during the service on Friday.

Songs by choirs and the beats of African drums filled the cathedral during the two hour service, which started around 10am.

The peace ceremony, which took place towards the end, lasted well over 15 minutes as Tutu, Bono, and other dignitaries embraced people along the aisles of the cathedral.

Archbishop Thabo Makgoba then led the church in singing happy birthday to Tutu, who received loud applause when he paid tribute to his wife Leah.

On the steps outside St George's, a large crowd that had gathered cheered as Tutu left the church with Motlanthe.

They cheered again and snapped photographs as U2 lead singer Bono emerged with his wife Ali Hewson.

Tutu and Motlanthe shared another embrace before Motlanthe was whisked away in a black car past a large banner proclaiming: “Sold out for a few yuan”. – Sapa

<http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/western-cape/tutu-motlanthe-share-embrace-1.1152882#.VCEneBacxfg>