



# ANC TODAY

VOICE OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

9 – 15 May 2025

Conversations with the  
**President**



## We need to protect the rights of workers to build an inclusive economy

■ By **PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

**W**E have just observed Workers' Day, which is commemorated across the world in honour of the struggles of workers for fair labour standards and conditions of work.

Since the advent of democracy in 1994, we have observed Workers' Day also to acknowledge the historical role of workers and the labour movement in our broader struggle for freedom.

Over the past 31 years we have made considerable progress in improving our labour laws and protecting the rights of workers.

We emerged from a past where black workers were deliberately denied their rights. For many years, black workers could not be

organised into unions, through job reservation they were denied access to certain occupations and they often worked in unsafe and unhealthy conditions.

Today, the rights of workers in South Africa are protected and enforced. The Constitution enshrines the rights of workers as it does the rights of every person who lives in South Africa. Since 1994, we have passed progressive laws to give effect to the rights of workers.

Following extensive consultation with business, labour and civil society, in 2019 we introduced a National Minimum Wage, setting a wage below which no worker may be paid. Studies have found that since its introduction the National Minimum Wage has led to

a significant increase in hourly wages for workers, and has also played a role in reducing the gap between the highest and lowest paid workers.

We have sought to break from our apartheid past where workers laboured under oppressive conditions to swell the profits of companies without receiving even the most basic benefits. This includes measures to advance worker ownership in companies. An increasing number of workers are part of worker share ownership programmes.

We have been deliberate in our efforts to protect the rights of women workers. The Employment Equity Act prohibits unfair discrimination on the basis of sex, gender, pregnancy and

## CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PRESIDENT

marital status. Female workers are guaranteed specific entitlements such as maternity and family responsibility leave, and we have laws that safeguard against sexual harassment and gender-based violence in the workplace.

At a time of constrained economic growth and high unemployment, we have seen calls from some people, including political parties, for our country's labour laws to be 'relaxed' in response to the prevailing economic climate.

Stimulating economic growth and job creation and retaining worker protections are not mutually exclusive. In fact, worker rights have been found to improve productivity and thereby enhance the growth of companies and the economy. They also help to distribute the benefits of growth more equally and improve economic stability.

In addition, South Africa's labour laws are part of our effort to overcome the structural inequality of apartheid.

The latest report of the Employment Equity Commission shows how far we still have to go in ending the race-based disparities that exist in our economy.

Despite Africans constituting the majority of the economically active population, the majority of top management positions in the private sector are still held by white males. This trend is observed at senior management level in nearly every economic category. Black South Africans are predominantly in the semi-skilled and unskilled categories.

While there has been much improvement since the advent of



employment equity legislation, it is clear that not enough has been done to change the racial composition of the ownership, control and management of our economy.

Employment equity is not the only area where challenges remain. The International Labour Organisation has highlighted problems of compliance with labour laws in South Africa, as well as inadequate safeguards for workers in the burgeoning informal sector.

That is why part of our G20 Presidency involves engagements with labour over the consolidation of worker rights. We have held fruitful discussions in this regard with the International Trade Union Confederation and others.

Despite these challenges, as a country we will continue to use our progressive labour laws to correct the imbalances of the past, and to ensure that these protections translate into tangible benefits for workers.

We call on business in particular

to take the necessary measures to ensure that their workplaces reflect both the letter and spirit of laws such as the Labour Relations Act, Basic Conditions of Employment Act, Employment Equity Act and Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Companies should go beyond compliance by actively fostering diversity and inclusion as envisaged in our Constitution by addressing historical inequalities and create opportunities for under-represented groups among their workers, such as women, the youth and persons with disabilities. They should also ensure that their workplaces are spaces where dignity, respect and human rights are upheld in daily practice and not just in policies.

**At a time when our singular focus is on inclusive economic growth and job creation, we must continue to work together to improve the lives of every South African worker.**

**Let us use the hard-won gains of workers to create new opportunities for all.**

# DA'S ATTACK ON EMPLOYMENT EQUITY IS A BETRAYAL OF SOUTH AFRICA'S CONSTITUTIONAL PROMISE

■ By **ANC SECRETARY GENERAL FIKILE MBALULA**

**T**HE African National Congress (ANC) condemns in the strongest possible terms the Democratic Alliance's (DA) latest attempt to undermine the Employment Equity Amendment Act (EEAA). This regressive action is not only an affront to the National Constitution, but a direct assault on the very foundation of South Africa's transformation journey. A journey paved with the sacrifices of those who fought against apartheid's racial capitalism and institutionalised exclusion.

The National Constitution has correctly defined Black as inclusive of Africans, Coloureds and Indians.

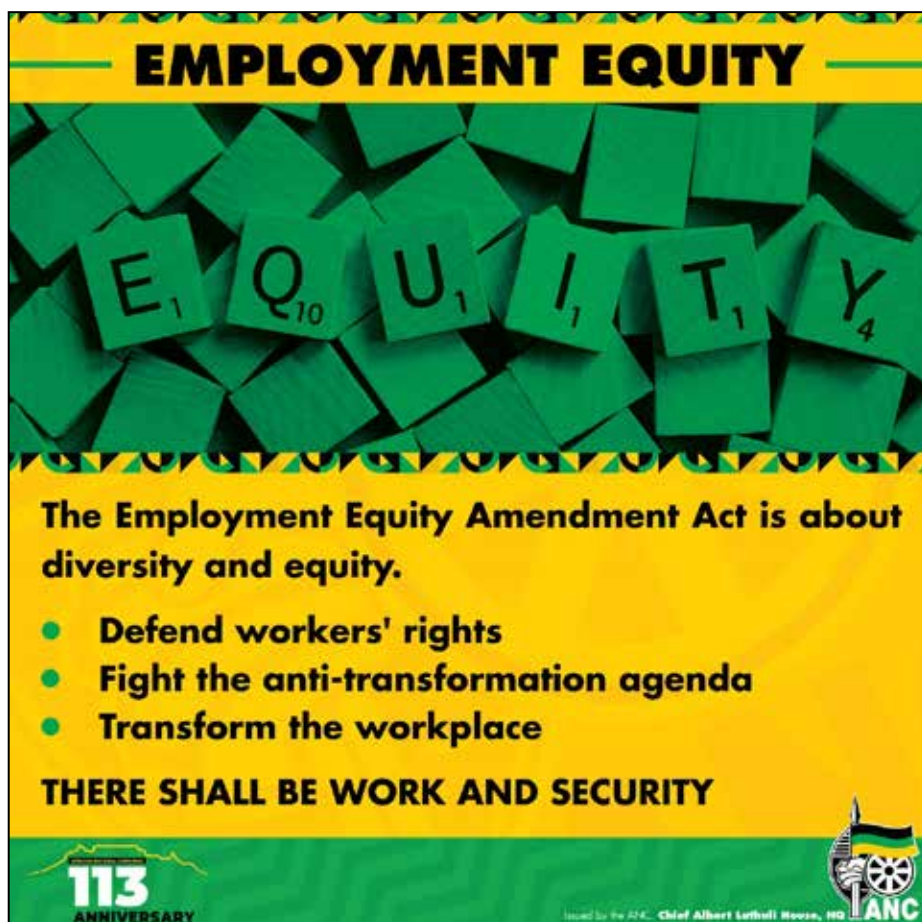
The DA's court challenge against section 15A of the EEAA which introduces sector-specific numerical targets to correct racial imbalances in the workplace reveals its enduring opposition to redress and equality. The party's campaign to label this legislation as "anti-merit" is a wilful distortion of reality. It ignores the brutal legacy of apartheid, which for centuries denied Black South Africans, the right to land, quality education, employment, and dignity. In such

a context, talking about "merit" without transformation is an insult to the millions who remain excluded.

The Employment Equity Act is not about quotas. It is about justice. It is about correcting structural imbalances in the economy and ensuring that all South Africans have a fair shot at op-

portunity. Section 15A does not eliminate merit; it creates the conditions in which merit can be meaningfully pursued by addressing the glaring underrepresentation of Africans, Coloured, and Indian South Africans in key sectors of the economy.

This is a constitutional imperative, not a political favour.



**EMPLOYMENT EQUITY**

The Employment Equity Amendment Act is about diversity and equity.

- Defend workers' rights
- Fight the anti-transformation agenda
- Transform the workplace

**THERE SHALL BE WORK AND SECURITY**

**113<sup>TH</sup>**  
ANNIVERSARY

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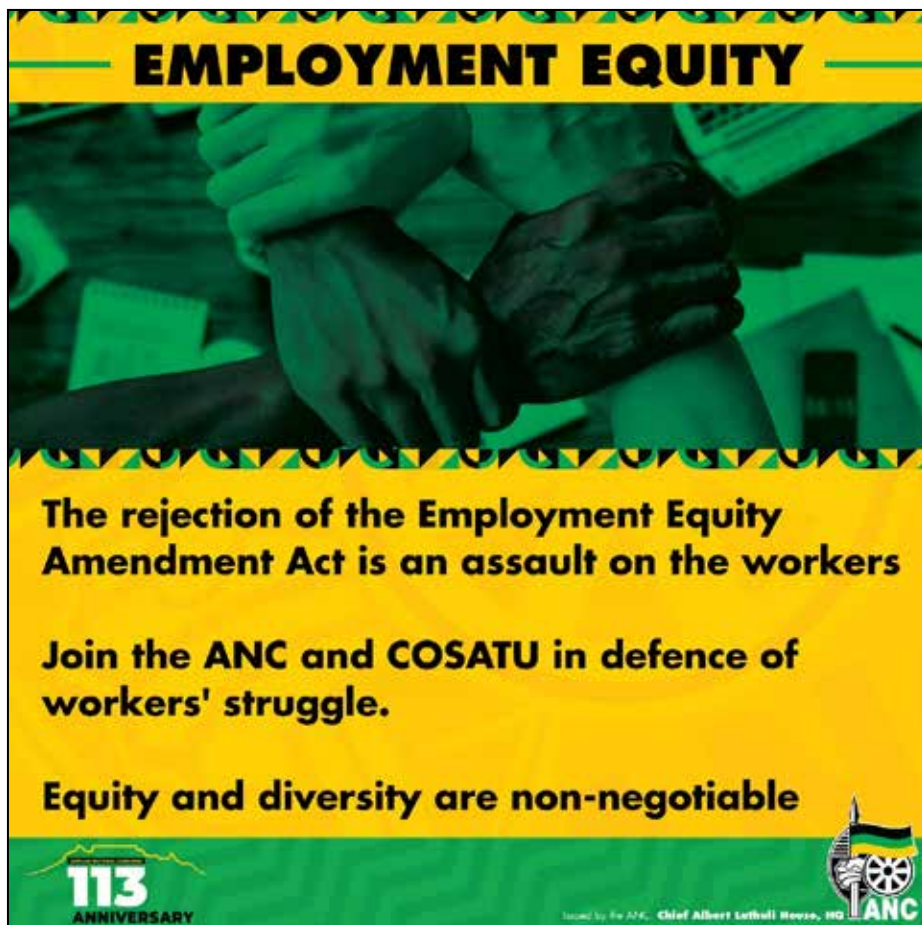


We must remind the DA and its allies that South Africa's Constitution explicitly recognises the need to redress past injustices and to achieve substantive equality. The Employment Equity Amendment Act is a critical tool in realising that vision, particularly in a country where white South Africans, who make up less than 8% of the population, still dominate top management positions in the private sector.

The DA's persistent campaign against transformation reveals its dangerous agenda to entrench the privileges of the past and preserve the apartheid-era economic status quo under the guise of constitutionalism. It is a betrayal of the democratic gains we have made and a slap in the face of the Black working class, women, and the youth who continue to bear the brunt of inequality and unemployment.

We call on all progressive South Africans, particularly the Black majority, to see the DA's actions for what they are, a calculated move to roll back the hard-won gains of our democracy. We urge civil society, the trade union movement, youth formations, and patriotic business leaders to stand united in defence of transformation and employment equity.

**The ANC will not retreat from its historic mission to build a non-racial, non-sexist, and just society. We will defend every inch of progress made in dismantling apartheid's legacy, and we will never allow those who benefited from that system to determine the future of our people.**



**EMPLOYMENT EQUITY**

**The rejection of the Employment Equity Amendment Act is an assault on the workers**

**Join the ANC and COSATU in defence of workers' struggle.**

**Equity and diversity are non-negotiable**

**113<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

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**ANC**

## Statement of the ANC Women's League on the Dehumanisation of Women in the Workplace and in Society in general

■ By **ANCWL SECRETARY GENERAL  
NOKUTHULA NQABA**

**T**HE ANC Women's League is appalled with the continued dehumanisation of the dignity of women in workplaces and in various sectors of society, which grossly infringes on the constitutional right of persons to human dignity.

The Bill of Rights as enacted in the supreme law of the land,

guarantees the right to human dignity and the extent to which the right is protected, in terms of our constitution, and the prudent use of the word "entirely" is texted to emphasise its limitlessness.

Consistent with the constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the ANC Women's League constitution has as its aims and objectives

*“to combat discrimination in public and private life and in institutions and to work actively towards the dismantling of the patriarchal system, the elimination of laws, cultures, customs, practices and structures that militate against equality and to oppose any strengthening of patriarchy.”*

The ANC Women's League is particularly outraged with the inhumane conduct where women working in Kopanong Gold Mine in Viljoenskroon, in the Province of the Free State, are subjected to a very disturbing culture of being 'explicit' for security guards as they are searched for potential stolen pieces of gold.

It is alleged that at Kopanong Gold Mine, female employees are forced to strip naked so that security guards could plunge their hands into their private parts in search of stolen pieces of gold, whenever they enter or leave the premises of the mine.

This act of dehumanisation and an infringement on the rights of persons has led to alleged suspensions and written warnings against some of the employees who refused to take off their underwear during these repugnant searches in their own working environment.

Female workers are forced to strip down to their underwear and subjected to some form of 'body inspection' which violates their privacy; whereby they *“look inside our private parts to see if they can find something there”* alleges a female employee who got suspended for refusing to be stripped naked.

This improper procedure not only infringes on the adopted legislative framework, which includes

the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, but it is a gross violation of human rights enshrined in the country's constitution, especially the right to human dignity, as enacted in Chapter two (2) of the Constitution of the Republic.

Incidents such as these are an indictment to our hard-earned democracy and undermine the advances we have made as a nation, in restoring the dignity of all our people which we fought so hard to do away with the demeaning culture that was institutionalised under Apartheid.

The ANC Women's League therefore calls on the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE) and all relevant institutions, to thoroughly investigate these allegations and act swiftly where necessary, as they might certainly cause irreparable harm to the dignity of the affected women.

Notwithstanding the upsurge of Gender Based Violence and the persistent onslaught on women, the ANC Women's League is furious with another violent incident of a man who allegedly assaulted a young woman in Maswazini area in Richmond, in the province of KwaZulu/Natal.

The suspect who was swiftly arrested soon after the incident, is alleged to have assaulted the mother before proceeding to violently attacking the young woman, allegedly poking both her eyes with a screwdriver.

We must applaud the prompt arrest from the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the spirit of Ubuntu displayed by Minister Senzo Mchunu who visited the family of the victim and has been throwing his support during the court proceedings, this is an act of a caring government.

The ANC Women's League is firm in our call for no bail for this monster and plead with the esteemed court for a conviction and an appropriate harsher sentence against the perpetrators.

We are once again offering our unconditional support to the victims in Kopanong Gold Mine, in the Free State, the mother and the young woman who are alleged to have been violated in Richmond in KZN, and each and every woman and young girl who has fallen prey to vicious attack by GBVF perpetrators.

**Malibongwe!!**





## STATEMENT

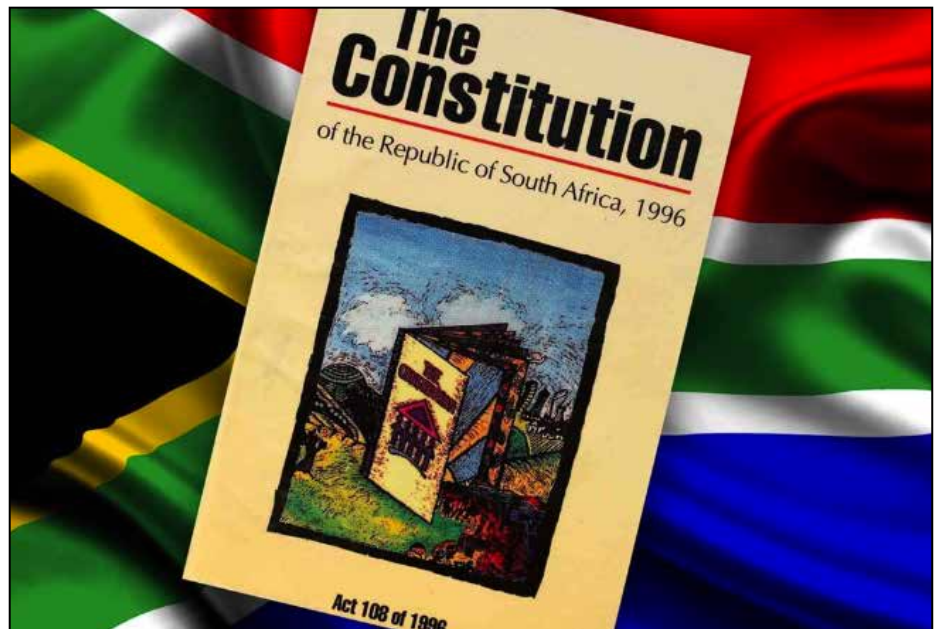
# AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS COMMEMORATES THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADOPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION



On the historic day of the 8th May 1996, the National Assembly adopted the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. This was signed into law on the 10th December 1996 in Sedibeng, the then Vaal Triangle in recognition of those who were brutally killed by the apartheid police on the 21 March 1960 and the betrayal of the 1902 Peace Treaty of Vereeniging that disenfranchised blacks, relegated them to secondary citizenship and the 1913 Land Act that dispossessed rightful owners of the land in the country of their birth.

As the supreme law, the Constitution was founded on human rights and the fundamental principles of the Freedom Charter. It is a loadstar that guides us in our journey for freedom, justice, and our quest for a united, non-sexist, non-racial democratic South Africa towards the creation of an equal society based on human rights and dignity.

It is through our Constitution that our sovereignty and territorial integrity and rights therein are guaranteed and the occupation of our rightful place in the community of nations for a better Africa and a better world and the creation of



global peaceful order based on a culture of human rights.

We commemorate the 31st anniversary of our freedom and democracy and the 70th anniversary of the Freedom Charter proud of our journey of ensuring that we fulfil our historic mission and a quest for human dignity and a better life for all. It is this Constitution that abolished the death penalty, guarantees our rights, recognize the injustices of the past, honour those who suffered for justice and freedom, our conviction that that South Africa belongs to those who live in it, the wealth of this country must

be shared to all and commitment to lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people, to heal the divisions of the past and establish an equal society.

In honouring those before us and in recognition of the injustices of the past we are committed to the reversal of the apartheid vestiges by restoring land to the dispossessed, ensure universal access to health and education, workplace equity, diversity, equality of languages and human dignity and other enshrined in the Constitution. These funda-

mental rights are non-negotiable. We believe that our revolution cannot be prosecuted through the courts but dialogue, consensus and commitment to ensure redress, common citizenship, non-racialism, non-sexism and an equal society as espoused by the Constitution as the supreme law of the land.

We commemorate this feat amidst systematic attempts and a well-coordinated scheme to subvert transformation. It is for this reason that the national dialogue is important to identify hurdles that account for the current psyche of the nation and challenges facing the nation, building a government capable of leading development, enhancing state capacity, job creation and ethical and visionary leadership.

This achievement is a product of the unrelenting struggles for which the people paid the ultimate price, a sacrifice aptly summarised by President Nelson Mandela when he said ***"It is not the kings or generals that make history but the masses of the people."***

The ANC pays tribute and salutes those who played a sterling role for this achievement as continue to honour those who suffered the injustices of the past by advancing rights contained in the Constitution. The ANC is proud of the strides made to change the lives of the people as directed by the Constitution in furtherance of the Freedom Charter and the strategic objectives around which the ANC pivots.

This milestone calls for society to join in the project of nation building and unity to defend democracy and advance freedom.

**The People Shall Govern.**

## I AM AN AFRICAN

(An extract)

*I owe my being to the hills and the valleys, the mountains and the glades, the rivers, the deserts, the trees, the flowers, the seas and the ever-changing seasons that define the face of our native land.*

*My body has frozen in our frosts and in our latter day snows. It has thawed in the warmth of our sunshine and melted in the heat of the midday sun. The crack and the rumble of the summer thunders, lashed by startling lightning, have been a cause both of trembling and of hope.*

*The fragrances of nature have been as pleasant to us as the sight of the wild blooms of the citizens of the veld.*

*The dramatic shapes of the Drakensberg, the soil-coloured waters of the Lekoa, iGqili noThukela, and the sands of the Kgalagadi, have all been panels of the set on the natural stage on which we act out the foolish deeds of the theatre of our day.*

*At times, and in fear, I have wondered whether I should concede equal citizenship of our country to the leopard and the lion, the elephant and the springbok, the hyena, the black mamba and the pestilential mosquito.*

*A human presence among all these, a feature on the face of our native land thus defined, I know that none dare challenge me when I say -  
I am an African!*

*I owe my being to the Khoi and the San whose desolate souls haunt the great expanses of the beautiful Cape - they who fell victim to the most merciless genocide our native land has ever seen, they who were the first to lose their lives in the struggle to defend our freedom and dependence and they who, as a people, perished in the result...*

*Among us prowl the products of our immoral and amoral past - killers who have no sense of the worth of human life, rapists who have absolute disdain for the women of our country, animals who would seek to benefit from the vulnerability of the children, the disabled and the old, the rapacious who brook no obstacle in their quest for self-enrichment.*

*All this I know and know to be true because I am an African!*

*Thabo Mbeki*  
8 May 1996

# Outrage by convenience: Why only the ANC's VAT proposal gets pitchforks?

■ By **ARMAND BAM**

**I**N recent weeks, we saw a fierce backlash over the ANC-led government's proposal to increase VAT, which eventually saw it suspended.

Civil society groups, opposition parties, and media pundits were quick to condemn the idea as anti-poor, unjust, and economically reckless. The fury was swift, loud, and seemingly united.

But where is this outrage on the same basis (concern for the poor) when the DA-led City of Cape Town proposes increases in property rates that could potentially reach 20-30%, and electricity tariff increases that move beyond 10%, and other above-inflation hikes for basic services?

This selectivity of the condemnation invites serious reflection.

The same DA that campaigned on eliminating VAT increases for the sake of the poor, is now passing cost-of-living increases onto residents through municipal rates.

The difference? One makes national headlines and invites moral panic. The other is absorbed quietly into middle-class budgets, grumbled about, perhaps, but largely accepted as "necessary" or as the mayor suggests "*value*



*for money*". The media punches too softly here.

The question must be asked: is the issue truly about the financial burden on the poor, or is it about who proposes it?

We have become like the villagers in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, quick to chant "*four legs good, two legs bad*" without realising that the pigs are slowly becoming indistinguishable from the humans they replaced. We denounce government excess in Pretoria but applaud "clean audits" in Cape Town, even as the poor are priced out of the city.

The City does not acknowledge this.

The City's justification for the rates hike is not dissimilar to the National Treasury's rationale for VAT: to maintain services, infrastructure, and fiscal stability. And yet, one is called prudent; the other is called predatory.

This is not a defence of the ANC's fiscal decisions. It is a call for equal scrutiny.

Where are the front-page headlines dissecting the DA's rate hikes with the same venom? Where are the policy analysts



holding the City to account for its regressive increases?

The truth is: hypocrisy wears clean clothes in Cape Town. It speaks English fluently, invokes “good governance” and promises efficiency. But it still passes the bill on to the poor.

If we are to build a just society, then our moral outrage must be consistent. We must hold all leaders, blue, green, or gold, to the same standard. Otherwise, our democracy becomes a masquerade of fairness, where only some are ever asked to explain themselves.

So, to DA leaders: If VAT increases are unacceptable because they burden the poor, what, then, do you call a municipal budget that does the same?

### A parable of hypocrisy: The clean hands fallacy

What we are witnessing is not merely budget politics but a phenomenon I call the “*clean hands fallacy*”, the belief that because one party appears more competent, their actions are inherently more ethical. But as history shows us, the veneer of respect-

ability often conceals inequality.

During the British Empire’s expansion in the 19th century, taxes and tariffs were imposed on colonies under the guise of development. Infrastructure was built, railways laid, but always with an extractive logic that served the empire first. Today, municipal rhetoric about “*service delivery*” and “*value for money*” sounds eerily similar, clean water and roads, yes, but increasingly at prices the poor cannot afford.

### Cape Town’s own Versailles

The City of Cape Town has been likened to a bastion of good governance. But what good is a “*clean audit*” when it is achieved by pushing costs upward while wealth inequality deepens below? In many ways, Cape Town resembles Versailles before the French Revolution: an immaculate palace surrounded by invisible suffering, and we should question where is the “*hope*”?

We may not have golden gates or powdered wigs, but we do have policy memos, spreadsheets, and rationalisations that achieve the same effect: obscuring the lives of those who can no longer

afford to live where they work.

### The boiling frog returns

Rate increases happen slowly. Quietly. Almost imperceptibly. Like the fabled frog in slowly heating water, residents are being conditioned to accept hardship as an inevitability. The outrage is saved for the ANC’s fire, while we remain silent in the DA’s simmering pot.

The lesson? Injustice does not need to be loud to be lethal. It only needs to be ignored.

### Accountability cannot be selective

True accountability means looking beyond our political preferences. It means asking: Who benefits? Who bears the cost? And who gets a free pass?

If the VAT proposal is anti-poor, then so too are municipal hikes. If we shout down one and excuse the other, then we are not defenders of justice, we are simply partisans, dressing up our bias as principle.

So, let’s be honest. If the DA is governing “*for the people*”, then it must be willing to answer to the people, all the people, not just the ones with garden cottages and solar panels concerned about their “*gated developments*”.

Because when rates rise faster than wages, and governance cloaks inequality in graphs and good grammar, we should all be worried. Not just as voters. As citizens.

**Dr Armand Bam** is head of Social Impact at Stellenbosch Business School.





# Through the Eye of the Needle: Rebuilding the ANC from the Branch Up

■ By **FAIEZ JACOBS**

**O**VER the last few months, the ANC has convened, postponed, and battled through countless regional and provincial elected conferences. From Limpopo to the Northern Cape, from Vhembe to Fezile Dabi, our movement has stood at a crossroads. Some of these conferences brought order and renewal. Others descended into delays, disputes, and dysfunction. But all of them told us one thing: we can no longer renew the ANC with broken tools.

Conferences are not carnivals. They are not battlegrounds for slates. They are sacred platforms for the renewal of leadership, the realignment of our values, and the recommitment to our people.

Yet too often, what we witness is the exact opposite: disputes over delegate credentials, manipulated membership lists, Regional Task Teams (RTTs) that function more as placeholders than political leaders, and a growing reliance on security, guns, knives, and violence to settle what should

be political debates. We see disturbing whatsapp videos.

These are not just administrative issues. They are signs of a deep, structural decay that threatens the soul of our movement.

## **The Real Struggle Is Within**

The 55th National Conference called our bluff. It named what many of us already knew: we are facing a strategic rupture, a crisis of credibility. Too many among us pursue leadership for the wrong



reasons: status, proximity to power, access to tenders, or factional revenge. Our membership, once the heartbeat of our liberation, has become a commodity traded, inflated, manipulated.

We cannot continue down this path. As the Conference warned: *“Organisational renewal is an absolute and urgent priority. We may go as far as to say, to the survival of our great movement.”*

### Lessons from the recent past

Let us speak frankly about what we’ve seen:

- **Vhembe Conference (Limpopo):** Delays, ethnic tensions, and last-minute interventions created an environment of mistrust. The membership portal system failed to operate smoothly, sparking rumours of interference and favouritism. Yet, even amid these challenges, branches demanded accountability and showed signs of internal strength.
- **Norman Mashabane Region:** Still without a resolved date due to persistent disputes, reflecting how unresolved conflict corrodes political legitimacy.
- **Gauteng Regions:** Raced against deadlines, struggling to balance technical preparation with meaningful political engagement.
- **Fezile Dabi (Free State):** One of the more stable conferences yet behind closed doors, we saw patterns of elite gatekeeping that still exclude the youth, women, and the poor.
- **Northern Cape:** Why was this province able to proceed smoothly when others failed? What systems worked here



and why are they not replicated elsewhere?

The answers lie not just in logistics, but in leadership. In political will. In the *“eye of the needle”*.

### Reframing Renewal: Not Just Cosmetic Change

Renewal is not about swapping one set of comrades for another. It is about changing the very culture of how we lead, how we serve, and how we organize.

The 2032 Roadmap, initiated by the Renewal Commission, envisions an ANC that is ethical, people-centered, ideologically grounded, and capable of delivering a National Democratic Society. But that roadmap means nothing if it lives only in conference papers and not in our branches.

So what must we do differently?

### Renewal with Teeth

#### 1. Rebuild the Political Quality of Membership

We must stop thinking of membership as a numbers game. Let’s return to the vision of the New Cadre: politically literate, community-rooted, ideological-

ly clear. We see green shoots. Mandatory induction within three months. We see the foundations courses happening. But we need political education cells in every region. Every BEC must be a school of theory and practice.

#### 2. Ban Weaponised RTTs

RTTs must never be used to sideline democratic structures. Their use must be limited to 90 days with clear public reporting. RTTs are not tools of control; they are meant to stabilize, not dominate.

#### 3. Modernise the Membership System Transparently

The last NEC launched the new online membership system. Let’s digitise with integrity. Build a public dashboard open to branches to track real-time data on membership status, BGM readiness, and delegate lists. Use biometric checks to avoid duplication. Let technology serve democracy, not factionalism.

#### 4. Restore the Soul of the Branch

Branches are not just voting stations for conferences. They are the heartbeat of our movement. Every branch must have sectoral subcommittees, community campaigns, service audits, and regular feedback loops with councillors. Induction, integration, and action must be routine.

#### 5. Reinforce Step-Aside and Disciplinary Integrity

No one facing serious charges should be allowed to contest or lead. Implement the step-aside rule fairly, swiftly, and without factional bias. If you are accused unjustly, clear your name. If you are guilty, step down with dignity.

#### 6. Elect Leaders Through the Eye of the Needle

Our Constitution is clear: ANC



leaders must be ethical, capable, and community-trusted. All nominations must include a political CV, lifestyle audit, and public motivation. The era of recycled incompetence must end. No more leaders with bad reputations but no record of service.

### 7. Professionalise Our Conferences

We need an independent electoral team within the ANC, separate from factions. Every conference must have trained conflict mediators, digital systems to manage credentials, real-time issue logging, and clear security protocols. International best practice in internal party elections from Brazil's PT to India's INC shows it can be done.

### 8. Build Trust Through Action

Let us launch a campaign of visibility and accountability. NEC, PEC and REC members must visit every region not only during elections, but throughout the year. Let us be seen in service not just on posters and social media.

### Healing the Psyche of the Membership

Too many of our members feel disillusioned. They feel that loyalty no longer matters. That con-

nections outweigh contribution. That their votes at BGM are manipulated, and their communities ignored once leaders are elected.

We must tell the truth: this is not paranoia it is pain. A pain rooted in real betrayal. And if we do not restore trust, we will lose the last loyal battalions of our base.

We need a new message to our members: **You matter. Your branch matters. This is your movement. And we will fight with you to reclaim it.**

### From Internal Conference to Societal Renewal

The ANC's internal renewal must ripple outward into governance, service delivery, and nation-building. Branches must monitor IDPs, track municipal performance, support community policing forums, join school governing bodies, and lead campaigns against GBVF, hunger, and social decay.

Organisational renewal is not a luxury. It is our only path to relevance.

### Closing Call: What Kind of ANC Will We Be?

Will we be a movement afraid to

change or one bold enough to confront its own contradictions?

Will we repeat the cycle of slates, court cases, and manipulated outcomes or will we finally break through the eye of the needle?

We know the road ahead is steep. But we also know this: the ANC has weathered far worse and risen higher. If we return to our values, empower our branches, and elect ethical leaders who serve not loot then this round of elected conferences could mark the rebirth of a people's movement.

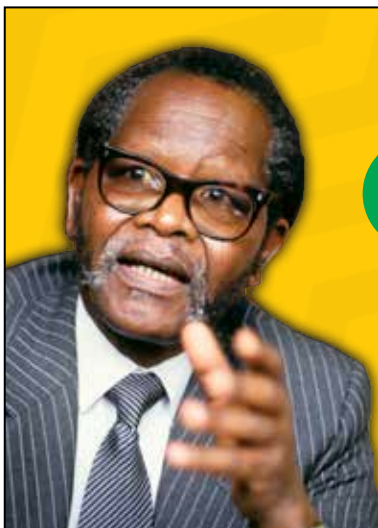
Let the conference halls not echo with violence, but with uBuntu, with innovative ways on how we going to serve our people, with debate, with democratic discipline.

Let us not fight each other for positions. Let us fight together for purpose.

Let this be the moment we stopped talking about renewal and started living it.

*Amandla.*

*Faiez Jacobs is an ANC Activist and former WC Provincial Secretary*



The distinctive feature of the **revolutionary cadre** is a **high level of discipline, dedication** and **courage** in carrying out the tasks assigned by the movement.

Such cadres are guided by our **goal of a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa.**"

**PRESIDENT OLIVER REGINALD TAMBO**

27 October 1917 — 24 April 1993



# The ANC should go back to the masses and reclaim its mantle of making every site of struggle an organ of people's power

■ By **LOYISO GANGATHA NGCESHU**

**T**HE 2026 Local Government Elections are one year away now and many political parties are lobbying the electorate to vote for them, so that they can claim their votes and win elections.

This is a positive aspect of our hard-won democracy even though it is still in its ebbs and flows; but for better or worse a lot has been achieved even though there were many negative encounters along the way.

The ANC since its inception in 1912 has always been an inclusive movement of variety of ideological strands and races in the latter part of the 20th century.

The Mandela generation is a generation that fought for our political freedom and their fight for constitutional democracy bore fruit in the 1994 epoch, whereby it was the first time people got their political franchise.

Nelson Mandela's successor Thabo Mbeki who took over the reigns in 1999; whose political and economic outlook differed with that of Mandela and on following in Madiba's footsteps, said that: "I don't imagine that there's any such requirement. I mean, he's got very big feet. The



shoes will be too big". This set the tone of Mbeki's administration, which placed more focus on the economic and development trajectories of South Africa with a sound and commendable record of economic astuteness and diplomatic prowess — who received both Military and political training in the Soviet Union and traveled both the Eastern and Western Countries and trained as an economist. To others he was seen as an enigmatic personality aloof of his intellectual credulity and to some an arrogant Sussex Boy who was privileged to be birthed by struggle stalwarts and who was labeled as an agent of "Washington Consensus".

The country's economy under Mbeki's reign increased 5% annually and the markets reacted positively in terms of economic growth even though it did not translate into radical transforming property relations and socio-economic disparities inherited from colonial-apartheid.

The Economic policies he pursued such as Growth, Employment and Redistribution program who many on the left viewed it as as Neo-liberal program that stifled the "*Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)*", of which Mbeki argued that Gear was a Macroeconomic response to the Micro-economic program

that was espoused by the RDP and Gear expounded that program. This caused friction within the structures of the Alliance whereby the Alliance partners such as SACP, SANCO and COSATU rallied around Zuma, who at the time was facing serious legal challenges, including scrutiny over his relations with the Schabir Shaik. Zuma's many legal woes followed him during his presidency.

It is under this presidency that our country's image took a nosedive. Zuma together with the Gupta cronies started to influence the running of the South African state and that collided with the interests of South Africa.

Our Democratic institutions were undermined and the country's economy declined to an extent that we got plunged into junk status.

This political exposition does not mean to discredit or make a long harangue of what the ANC did and failed to do but it is a reflection of where we are and where we are going as a country. Hence it is of critical importance that as members of the ANC and South African citizens in particular, we derive lessons from our past mistakes and not repeat them again.

### Demographic Representation and National Unity

31 years into Democracy, our country still face many challenges. The vast majority of black people of African descent still live in squalor.

This has even caused both intra-racial animosity amongst blacks (Africans, Indians and Coloureds) as both Indians and coloureds were perceived to have climbed the economic ladder whilst Africans are still at the bottom-rung of the economy. This is a serious indictment on South Af-



rica's race relations – as we saw during the 2021 July unrest.

A Major task is left for the ANC and the broader section of the Mass Democratic Movement – to regain all its prodigal sons and daughters of all races that want to see a non-racial, non-sexist and equal society binded by our country's social fabric to unite and rebuild an equal, fair and just Society based on human dignity and equality as stipulated in the Freedom Charter.

### Economic Transformation in South Africa and Addressing the Challenges

South Africa's economy faces significant challenges that require urgent attention. The structure and character of the economy are crucial in determining the country's future, and two key aspects of economic transformation are the ownership of the economy and employment equity. These elements are intertwined and essential for inclusive economic participation.

### The Ownership Conundrum

The lack of black ownership in South Africa's economy is a pressing issue. Despite the dawn of democracy, the economy remains largely in the hands of a

few, with black people under-represented. This skewed ownership structure is a legacy of apartheid and a major obstacle to economic transformation. The concentration of ownership in the hands of a few has resulted in limited opportunities for black people to participate in the economy, perpetuating inequality and hindering economic growth.

### Employment Equity and Inclusive Participation

Employment equity is another critical aspect of economic transformation. It's not just about numbers, but about creating opportunities for inclusive participation in all facets and levels of the economy. This requires a concerted effort to address the historical imbalances and ensure that the economy benefits all South Africans. Employment equity is essential for promoting social cohesion, reducing inequality, and driving economic growth.

### The Squandered Liberation Premium

The transition to democracy generated significant goodwill, which was not properly harnessed due to corruption and poor governance. This squandered liberation premium has resulted in missed opportunities for mean-



ingful economic transformation. A developmental approach, similar to Germany's post-reunification efforts, could have addressed the developmental needs of under-developed areas. By investing in development projects, South Africa could have promoted more equitable economic growth, reduced poverty, and improved living standards.

### **A Developmental Tax: A Potential Solution?**

Bishop Tutu's suggestion of a developmental tax to develop under-developed areas is an idea worth exploring. By levying a tax to fund development projects, South Africa could have addressed the social and economic disparities that continue to plague the country. This approach could have reduced urban migration, promoted more equitable economic growth, and improved living standards. A developmental tax could be used to fund infrastructure development, education, and healthcare, among other essential services.

Economic transformation in South Africa requires a multifaceted approach that addresses the ownership structure, employment equity, and inclusive participation. By learning from past mistakes and exploring innovative solutions, such as a developmental tax, South Africa can work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable economy. The time for meaningful action is now, and the future of the country depends on it. By prioritizing economic transformation, South Africa can promote sustainable economic growth, reduce inequality, and improve living standards for all citizens.

**Loyiso Gangatha Ngceshu** is Deputy Branch Chairperson of the ANC Youth League in Ward 34.



# Analysis of Challenges to South African Democracy Under the ANC

■ By **JAH-XOLANI RADEBE**

**S**OUTH Africa's transition to democracy in 1994 marked a pivotal moment in its history, promising to usher in an era of equality, justice, and prosperity for all its citizens. The African National Congress (ANC), as the leading liberation movement, assumed the reins of power with a mandate to redress the deep-seated inequalities and injustices of the apartheid era. However, three decades into democracy, the nation faces a complex web of challenges that threaten to undermine the very foundations of its hard-won freedom. A criti-

cal examination of South Africa's current state reveals a growing disillusionment with the ANC's governance, fueled by a range of interconnected issues. These challenges, if left unaddressed, risk eroding public trust, exacerbating social tensions, and potentially destabilizing the democratic fabric of the nation.

### **The Erosion of Service Delivery and Economic Management**

One of the most pressing concerns is the perceived failure of

the ANC government to effectively manage the economy and deliver essential services to its citizens. The initial promise of a “better life for all” has been increasingly difficult to realize, as many South Africans continue to struggle with poverty, unemployment, and a lack of access to basic necessities.

#### **Ineffective Economic Policies:**

Despite abundant natural resources and a relatively developed infrastructure, South Africa’s economy has been plagued by slow growth, high unemployment, and persistent inequality. Critics argue that the government’s economic policies have been inconsistent, hampered by ideological divisions, and often undermined by corruption. Issues such as land reform, Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), and nationalization have been hotly debated, creating uncertainty and discouraging investment.

#### **Deteriorating Public Services:**

The delivery of essential services, such as electricity, water, sanitation, and healthcare, has deteriorated significantly in many parts of the country. The ongoing electricity crisis, characterized by frequent power outages (“load shedding”), has crippled businesses, disrupted daily life, and undermined investor confidence. Corruption and mismanagement within state-owned enterprises (SOEs) have exacerbated these problems, diverting resources and hindering efforts to improve service delivery.

**Fiscal Mismanagement:** Concerns have also been raised about the government’s fiscal management, including allegations of wasteful expenditure and the misuse of public funds. Reports of “opulent expenditure” on

the presidential office and other government entities have fueled public anger and eroded trust in the government’s ability to manage the nation’s resources responsibly.

#### **The Scourge of Corruption and Impunity**

Corruption has emerged as a major threat to South Africa’s democracy, undermining its institutions, diverting resources, and eroding public trust. Allegations of corruption have been leveled against individuals and institutions at all levels of government, from local municipalities to national departments.

**State Capture:** The term “state capture” has become synonymous with the systemic corruption that plagued South Africa during the presidency of Jacob Zuma. This involved the manipulation of state institutions and procurement processes by private interests, often with the complicity of government officials. The consequences of state capture have been far-reaching, weakening key institutions, undermining the rule of law, and diverting vast sums of money from public coffers.

**Lack of Accountability:** A major concern is the perceived lack of accountability for those implicated in corruption. Despite numerous investigations and reports, few high-ranking officials have been successfully prosecuted and convicted. This has created a culture of impunity, where individuals feel they can engage in corrupt activities with little fear of consequences. The question, “Where are they now?” regarding implicated officials, reflects a deep frustration with this lack of accountability.

**Erosion of Public Trust:** The pervasive nature of corruption has eroded public trust in the government and its institutions. Citizens increasingly believe that public officials are more interested in self-enrichment than in serving the public good. This loss of trust undermines the legitimacy of the democratic system and makes it more difficult to address the country’s other challenges.

#### **Persistent Economic Inequality and Lack of Opportunity**

Despite the end of apartheid, South Africa remains one of the



most unequal societies in the world. The legacy of racial discrimination continues to shape economic opportunities, with black South Africans disproportionately affected by poverty and unemployment.

**Structural Inequality:** The structural inequalities inherited from the apartheid era have proven stubbornly resistant to change. Despite efforts to promote Black Economic Empowerment, the economy remains largely dominated by white-owned businesses. This has created a sense of frustration and resentment among many black South Africans, who feel that they have not benefited from the transition to democracy.

**Unemployment Crisis:** South Africa's unemployment rate is among the highest in the world, with young people particularly hard hit. The lack of job opportunities has created a sense of hopelessness and despair, leading many young people to become disillusioned with the political system. The comment about *"youth with diplomas have no degrees to employees nor the masters holders still are dust bums scavengers"* poignantly captures this reality.

**Precarious Employment:** Even those who are employed often face precarious working conditions, with low wages, limited benefits, and little job security. The reference to the *"black working class"* *"languishing"* with *"precarious"* employment highlights the vulnerability of many workers in the South African economy.

**Rise of a New Elite:** The emergence of a "black leviathan" that is perceived to be indifferent to the plight of the poor has further



exacerbated feelings of inequality. This suggests a sense that a new elite has emerged, benefiting from the transition to democracy while leaving the majority of the population behind.

### The Spectre of Political Fragmentation and Radicalism

Disillusionment with the ANC's performance has contributed to the rise of new political movements, some of which espouse more radical ideologies. This fragmentation of the political landscape poses a challenge to the stability and cohesion of South African democracy.

**Emergence of Opposition Parties:** The ANC's dominance has been challenged by the growth of opposition parties, such as the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and the Mkhonto WeSizwe Party (MKP) which have gained support by appealing to the frustrations of the poor and marginalized. These parties often advocate for more radical economic policies, such as land expropriation without compensation and the nationalization of key industries.

**Political Polarization:** The rise of radical political movements has contributed to increased political polarization, with deep divisions emerging between different segments of society.

This polarization can make it more difficult to find consensus on key policy issues and can lead to social unrest and instability.

**Threats to Stability:** The fragmentation of the political landscape and the rise of radicalism pose a potential threat to South Africa's stability. The comment lamenting the ANC for creating "bastards like MK EFF and all Redical Economic Bastards" reflects a fear that these developments could destabilize the nation's democratic institutions.

### The Unresolved Legacy of the Past

South Africa's history of apartheid continues to cast a long shadow over its present. The deep-seated inequalities and social divisions created by apartheid have proven difficult to overcome, and the legacy of past injustices continues to fuel social tensions.



**Unfulfilled Expectations:** Many South Africans, particularly black South Africans, feel that the promises of the post-apartheid era have not been fully realized. The slow pace of economic transformation and the persistence of inequality have led to frustration and anger.

**Land Question:** The issue of land reform remains a highly contentious one, with many black South Africans demanding the return of land that was dispossessed during the apartheid era. The government's efforts to address this issue have been slow and often controversial, leading to further social tensions.

**Social Cohesion:** The legacy of apartheid continues to undermine social cohesion, with deep divisions remaining between different racial groups. Efforts to promote reconciliation and healing have had limited success, and many South Africans still view the world through the lens of race.

### **Conclusion: A Critical Juncture for South African Democracy**

South Africa stands at a critical juncture in its democratic journey. The challenges outlined above pose a serious threat to the country's progress and stability. Addressing these challenges will require strong leadership, a commitment to good governance, and a renewed focus on the needs of ordinary citizens. The ANC, as the ruling party, bears a particular responsibility for addressing these issues. However, it is clear that a broader national effort is needed, involving all sectors of society. This will require:

**Strengthening democratic in-**

**stitutions:** Efforts to combat corruption, promote accountability, and ensure the independence of the judiciary and other key institutions must be intensified.

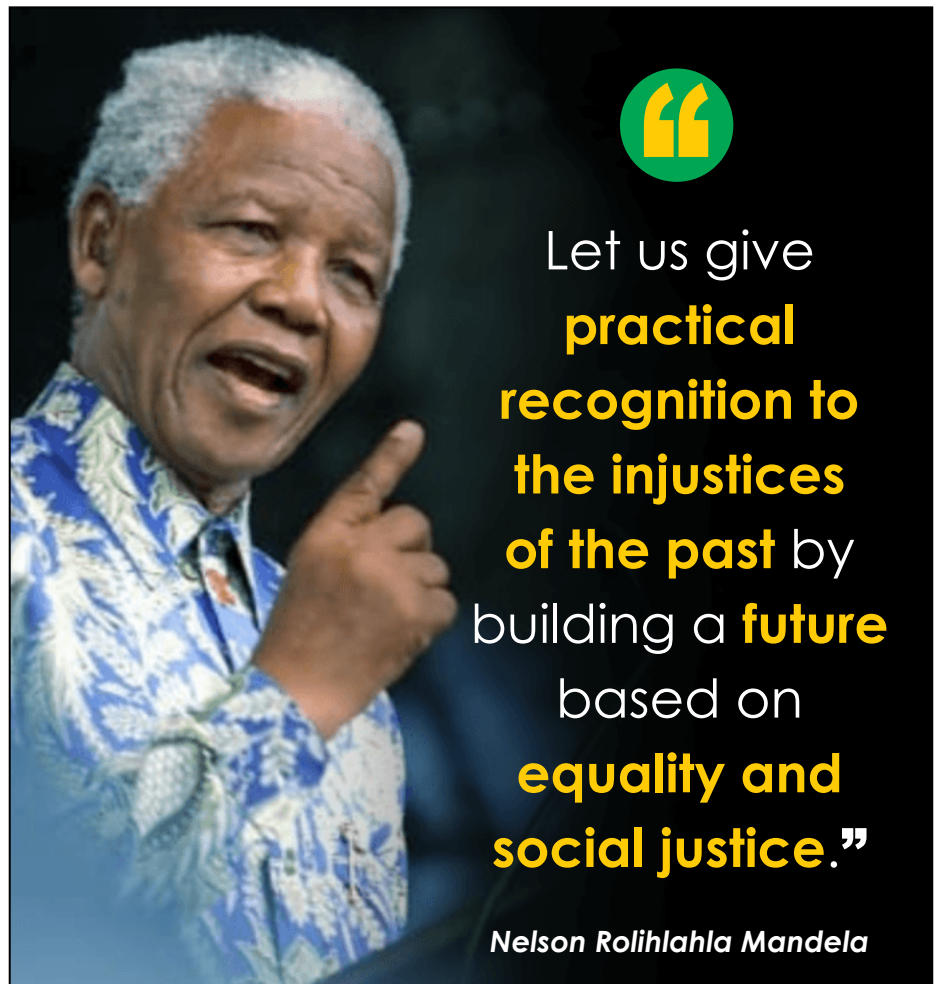
**Promoting inclusive economic growth:** Policies that create jobs, reduce inequality, and empower marginalized communities are essential. This will require a focus on education, skills development, and support for small businesses.

**Improving service delivery:** The government must prioritize the delivery of basic services, such as electricity, water, and healthcare, and address the inefficiencies and corruption that undermine service delivery.

**Addressing the legacy of the past:** Efforts to promote recon-

ciliation, land reform, and social justice must be accelerated. This will require a willingness to confront the difficult truths of the past and to take meaningful steps to redress past injustices.

**Fostering political dialogue:** Promoting inclusive political dialogue and building consensus on key policy issues is essential for maintaining stability and strengthening democracy. The task ahead is daunting, but not insurmountable. South Africa has made significant strides since the end of apartheid, and its democratic institutions, while imperfect, remain resilient. However, the country's future depends on its ability to confront its current challenges with courage, vision, and a commitment to the principles of equality, justice, and democracy for all.



# ANC Alliance Reconfiguration Tactics in the Eastern Cape Legislature

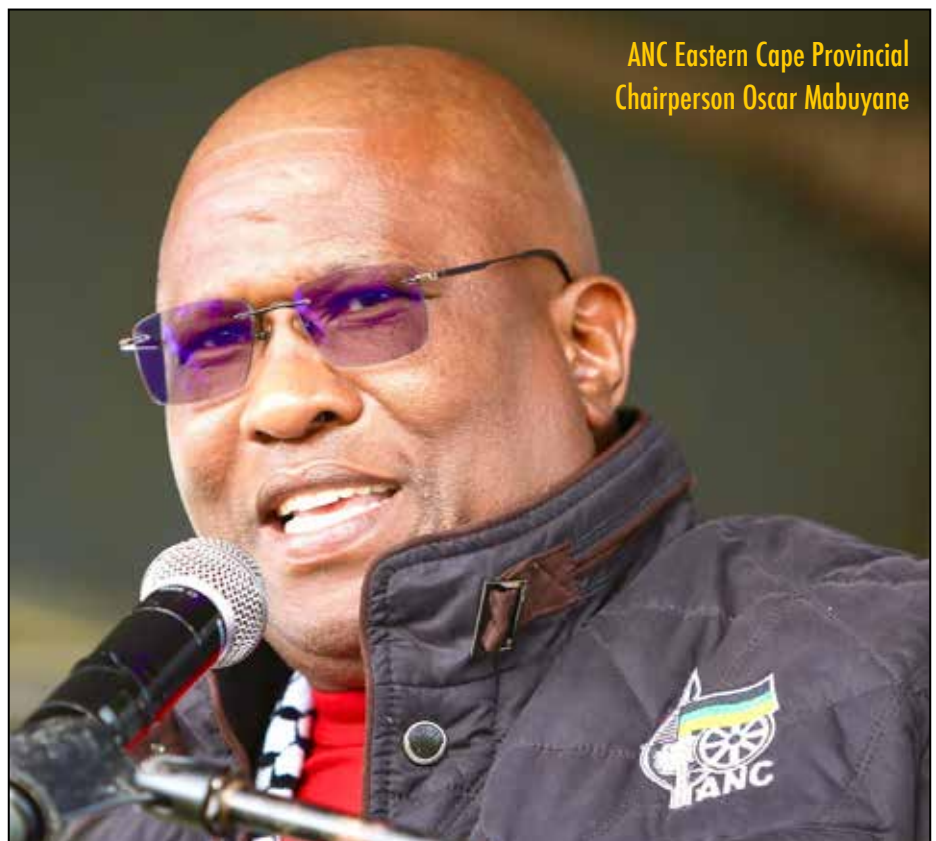
■ By **THABANG MASEKO**

ON May 1, at a COSATU rally held at Sisa Dukashe Stadium, ANC Eastern Cape Chairperson Oscar Mabuyane delivered a unifying message. He emphasized the strong relationship between the ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP) in the Eastern Cape, stating that no contestation for state power is expected in the “*province of legends*.”

Mabuyane underscored the importance of the ANC’s alliance with the SACP, COSATU, and SANCO, declaring, “*The ANC without SACP, COSATU, and SANCO is nothing. We must be one strong and solid defending the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) and advancing it to transform our country.*”

His words echo those of former ANC President Oliver Tambo, who described the ANC-SACP relationship as deliberate and unique, not an “accident of history” or an inevitable development, as similar alliances have not emerged in other African liberation struggles.

Tambo noted that the alliance, forged over decades, has faced challenges and triumphs. It is not merely a formal agreement signed at conference tables but a “living



organism” built through shared struggles. The alliance has been strengthened by joint efforts to counter the Democratic Alliance’s (DA) offensive against opposition parties and the concept of democracy within the Government of National Unity (GNU).

## **Calls for Alliance Reconfiguration**

The SACP and COSATU have repeatedly called for a reconfigu-

ration of the Alliance, particularly focusing on the question of the “strategic political centre” whether it should be the ANC or the Alliance as a whole.

The SACP’s 12th National Congress in 2007 resolved that a major reconfiguration is essential to advance, deepen, and defend the NDR and to achieve the SACP’s goal of building working-class hegemony in all sites of power, including the state. The resolution





outlined key elements of this reconfiguration:

The Alliance must establish itself as the strategic political centre.

This centre must develop a unified capacity to drive strategy, policy, campaigns, deployment, and accountability.

The reconfiguration must respect the independent roles and strategic tasks of each Alliance partner. The SACP argues that the Alliance, rather than the ANC alone, should lead policy development and implementation to ensure the NDR's success.

This position reflects concerns that the NDR will not be adequately deepened or defended unless leadership is centralized within the Alliance.

Similarly, COSATU's 9th National Congress in 2006 resolved that the Alliance should enter into a pact to influence government operations. This pact would include agreements on deployment, representation quotas for Alliance partners at all levels, independent caucuses, and mechanisms for accountability, such as the power of recall.

### Challenges and Questions

These resolutions raise critical questions. First, what happens when Alliance partners have divergent views on policy matters, and whose mandate prevails? Second, given that many ANC public representatives are also members of the SACP or SANCO, where will they account, and who will have the final say on their deployments and mandates?

Such a scenario could lead to perpetual contention, with no single partner holding the authority

to make definitive decisions. It risks creating a state of paralysis, where critical decisions are delayed or avoided due to conflicting views. Furthermore, if public representatives prioritize the positions of their respective Alliance partners over a unified stance, they might abstain from voting or, in extreme cases, align with opposition parties. Without a clear mandate to enforce discipline, maintaining a cohesive approach becomes challenging.

### Eastern Cape Perspective

Mabuyane's recent statement clarifies that the Alliance in the Eastern Cape has discussed reconfiguration. The majority of Members of the Provincial Legislature (MPLs) support maintaining the current structure, as allowing the SACP to contest state power independently could weaken the ANC's electoral performance in 2026. Mabuyane emphasized that the Alliance must continue working together as a united front to preserve its strength and advance its shared goals.





# COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS ARE CRITICAL TO IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY

■ By **HELEN SAULS-AUGUST**

**T**HE National Development Plan (2030) upholds collaborative partnerships between state institutions, organs of state and civil society as critical components to achieve a capable, developmental, and ethical state. These different, interdependent role players are central in the implementation of plans to achieve National Development Plan goals and objectives of reducing poverty, unemployment, and inequalities.

Since the 7th Term is the last term for the implementation of the National Development Plan (2030), it is important to consider the objectives of the National Development Plan (2030) against the backdrop of Legislature's own functions of conducting oversight, law-making and public participation. As espoused in the National Development Plan, the realisation of a capable, developmental, and ethical state requires cooperative and collaborative governance approaches from state institutions and organs of the state to succeed. Parliament and Legislatures were put on the spotlight at the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture regarding the effectiveness of their oversight role and holding the Executive accountable.



The transitional period to the Seventh Term sparked a lot of debates on how the Legislative Sector ought to transform and strengthen its oversight ability, enhance Executive accountability, and ensure better lives for the citizens. Subsequently, the oversight summit held last year resolved to engage in collaborative oversight between the various spheres of government, institutions supporting democracy, civil society and resolved to utilize empirical data to plan, implement and evaluate oversight activities to realize the relevant development strategies. In line

with the resolutions of the Sector Oversight Summit, the Eastern Cape Legislature has committed to work closely with Institutions Supporting Constitutional Democracy (ISCDs) and their reports and recommendations shall be utilised in support of oversight over the provincial executive and organs of state. The institutions supporting constitutional democracy are independent institutions that have been established to promote rights and to strengthen constitutional democracy. The task of these institutions is to promote and protect those rights in the Bill of Rights which fall within

their area. However, the relationship between these institutions with other state institutions and organs of state has been adversarial to the disadvantage of an effective collaborative oversight system that improves service delivery by government entities. These institutions should be part of a parliamentary ecosystem on a permanent basis, rather than external institutions that must be approached at crisis times and must be seen as the glue of scientific credibility and reliable partners, instead of being perceived as antagonistic.

Strengthening stakeholder relations and strategic international partnerships in implementing the mandate of the Legislature is one of the key priorities for the term. The role of the Institutions supporting constitutional democracy in the implementation of the National Development Plan is critical to ensure realisation of a capable, developmental, and ethical state. During the Seventh Term (2025-2029), a key focus area will be forging collaborative partnerships to enhance the mandate of the Legislature. Strategic partnerships have been formed and are to be maintained with Institutions Supporting Constitutional Democracy and other key organs of state through intensive



engagements. The outcome of these engagements produced a ground-breaking statement of intent signed between the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature and Institutions Supporting Constitutional Democracy and other Organs of the State, which entails cooperation to fulfil respective constitutional obligations and collaboration on matters of mutual interest including, but not limited to oversight, accountability, and public participation. The Legislature will work closely with Institutions Supporting Constitutional Democracy, their reports and recommendations utilised in support of oversight over provincial executive and organs of state. These

partnerships are aligned to the reviewed five-year strategic plan for the Legislature for the period 2025 to 2030 with the vision of being an activist, transformative and agile People's Assembly. We commit to exercise oversight, ensure an ethical and accountable government, legislate to protect, and empower citizens, foster meaningful participation, inclusivity, and equity through collaborations.

The role of institutions supporting democracy has been very critical in the work of the Legislature and to improve governance and service delivery. The collaborative partnership would ensure that there is effective oversight, collaboration, sharing of information, and mutual reinforcement of roles to ensure that ethical and accountable governance becomes standard practice rather than an exception. The partnership can also enhance accountable governance, transforming the ideals of democracy into tangible outcomes.



**Helen Sauls-August** is the Speaker to the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature.





# Unearthing Our Nation's Future: Why Unlocking Children's Potential Is Everyone's Responsibility

■ By **ASHLEY NYIKO MABASA**

**A**CROSS the world, governments grapple with tax policies, rising inflation, and strategies for growth. In South Africa, these concerns take the familiar shape of VAT hikes and soaring tariffs. While these economic indicators undoubtedly matter, they risk distracting us from a deeper, more transformative question: how are we truly supporting our children to become the architects of tomorrow?

It is tempting to believe that if we simply stabilise the economy, everything else will fall into place – including a brighter future for the next generation. But this line of thinking overlooks a profound truth: our children are not merely passive beneficiaries of national progress. They are the very well-spring from which that progress will flow.

As a parent, I often ponder what it truly means to equip a child for

the complexities ahead. Adam Grant's *Hidden Potential* offered a compelling reframing of this question. His central message resonates deeply: innate talent is often overemphasised. What truly matters is a child's opportunity to cultivate their abilities, to learn and grow through the inevitable stumbles, and to discover the vastness of their own potential when nurtured with care and intention.

Too often, particularly in societies that have known hardship, we inadvertently raise children with the primary goal of instilling a rigid kind of "toughness." We project our own adult aspirations onto their young shoulders – envisioning them as doctors, engineers, accountants – and invest heavily in formal education, believing it to be the sole key to unlocking their future. Education is, of course, fundamentally critical. Yet, on its own, it cannot perform

the nuanced work of identifying and nurturing the unique spark that resides within each child.

We urgently need to shift from a model of relentless pressure to one brimming with possibility. What truly ignites joy in our children? What kinds of problems capture their imaginations and hold their attention? Success does not spring forth fully formed from inherent giftedness; it takes root in the fertile ground of curiosity and persistent effort. As Malcolm Gladwell astutely reminds us, achieving mastery in any field demands at least 10,000 hours of dedicated practice. This level of commitment can only be sustained when children feel secure enough to explore, to learn from their missteps, and to rise again with renewed determination.

Grant's argument, in its essence, is both simple and powerful: it is not the circumstances of our be-



ginnings that ultimately define us, but rather the trajectory of our growth. And genuine growth invariably demands challenge. As adults, our protective instincts often lead us to shield our children from difficulty, fearing disappointment or discouragement. However, this impulse can be profoundly counterproductive. Mistakes are not evidence of inherent failure; they are invaluable pieces of feedback, guiding us towards a deeper understanding. Indeed, those who achieve the most significant successes are often those who have encountered the most setbacks, learned from them with humility, and persevered.

This mindset is particularly crucial in the realm of STEM – science, technology, engineering, and mathematics – where many South African students unfortunately lag behind global benchmarks. The core issue is not simply a lack of innate aptitude. It is often rooted in fear – the insidious belief that *“I’m just not a math person”* or that a single poor grade signifies an insurmountable lack of ability in science.

Instead of solely fixating on performance outcomes, we must begin to ask more insightful questions. Are our teachers adequately trained and consistently supported to deliver these subjects in engaging and creative ways? Are they equipped with the necessary resources to make abstract concepts feel tangible and relevant to the lived realities of their students?

Globally, many education systems grapple with similar challenges – overburdened educators, outdated pedagogical approaches, and the widening chasm of inequality. Yet, there are also inspiring mod-

els of hope. Finland, for example, has cultivated an early childhood education system that seamlessly blends structured learning with the vital element of play. Children are encouraged to be children – curious, messy, and imaginative – while simultaneously developing the crucial cognitive and social skills that underpin long-term success.

Remarkably, Finnish teachers often remain with the same cohort of students for multiple years. This continuity fosters deeper relationships and a more nuanced understanding of each child’s individual needs. Furthermore, every teacher holds a master’s degree and enters the profession through a highly competitive and deeply respected system. The result is not only superior academic outcomes but, perhaps more importantly, happier and more confident learners.

South Africa can glean valuable lessons from this model without resorting to wholesale replication. We possess our own unique context, our own formidable challenges – and our own inherent strengths. However, we must afford early childhood development (ECD) the serious attention and investment it deserves. Our ECD centres are brimming with untapped potential, yet far too many suffer from inadequate infrastructure, a lack of well-trained staff, and inconsistent funding.

Government support must extend far beyond mere financial subsidies. It must encompass significant investments in safe and stimulating learning environments, high-quality materials, comprehensive teacher training programmes, and innovative curricula that resonate with the diverse lived experiences of South

African children. The very foundation of a child’s learning journey is laid long before they step into a formal classroom. If we fail at this crucial stage, we risk inadvertently closing doors to opportunity before they have even had a chance to open.

Furthermore, we must critically re-examine our prevailing cultural narratives surrounding success. Is a child only deemed successful if they pursue a narrow range of traditionally prestigious professions? Or can success also manifest as becoming a brilliant artist, an ethical entrepreneur, a compassionate teacher, or a skilled artisan?

Unlocking the vast potential within our children demands that we see them not merely as future workers in a future economy, but as future citizens – critical thinkers, proactive doers, and imaginative dreamers who will inevitably face challenges that we cannot yet even conceive. This is a task far too significant to be left to parents alone. It must become a deeply ingrained national commitment.

Ultimately, the true measure of South Africa’s future prosperity will not be found solely in abstract GDP figures or fleeting investment flows. It will be reflected in the number of our children who feel truly seen, genuinely supported, and empowered to contribute their unique talents to the vibrant tapestry of their communities. This is how we build not just a stronger economy – but a more equitable, resilient, and ultimately, a more humane society for all.

**Ashley Nyiko Mabasa** is an executive manager in the office of the deputy minister of mineral and petroleum resources

# What Prof Zhang Reminded Us About the State – and Ourselves

■ By **BUTI MANAMELA**

**A**T a recent engagement hosted by the National School of Government, Professor Zhang Weiwei, one of China's leading political thinkers and architects of its ideological framing, offered us a presentation that was as provocative as it was illuminating. It was not a policy prescription. It was not a blueprint. But it was a challenge: to stop outsourcing our development imagination, to move past ready-made paradigms, and to confront, with seriousness, the crisis of governance that afflicts much of the Global South – including South Africa.

Zhang laid out what he describes as the key features of the “*China model*.” These include a pro-development state insulated from the short-term cycles of factional politics; a ruling party that, rather than representing narrow interests, functions as a holistic agent of national unity; a leadership selection system that prioritises performance and merit over mere electoral theatrics; a form of democracy that delivers results, not just rituals; and above all, an approach to governance anchored in improving the daily lives of ordinary people. China, he reminds us, did not get here through slogans or mimicry. It got here through coherence, planning, state discipline, and a clear commitment to building a nation capable of lifting hundreds of mil-



Professor Zhang Weiwei

lions out of poverty. And yet – and here's the most important part – Zhang cautions: “*Please do not copy our model. Find your own way.*”

That humility is not only disarming; it is profound. Because the temptation in a time of crisis is to reach for the ready-made. To borrow what seems to work elsewhere and hope that it works here. But the deeper message is that sovereignty cannot be simulated. It must be grounded in history, context, and the lived experience of our people.

The idea of a strong state, as Zhang presents it, is not the caricature of authoritarianism. It is

about a state with the capacity to plan, the foresight to adapt, and the institutional coherence to execute. It is a state that is not beholden to populist cycles, corporate interests, or international pressure, but guided by a long-term developmental horizon. What China achieved through its five- and ten-year planning culture, its digital infrastructure rollout, and its targeted poverty eradication campaigns did not emerge from market forces alone. It emerged from a conscious decision to treat governance as a strategic instrument of national upliftment.

For us in South Africa, this should feel familiar – at least in theory. We, too, have had moments in our democratic journey where we understood the value of long-term planning. The National Development Plan remains one such example. But the challenge has always been implementation. Too often, our plans are undone by institutional instability, policy inconsistency, or corrosive internal battles. If we are to move forward meaningfully, we must ask: do we have a state capable of holding the line, of absorbing shocks, and of executing developmental priorities in a sustained and ethical way?

Professor Zhang's reflections also invited us to consider the political philosophy beneath state

performance. He spoke of China as a “civilisational state,” drawing on centuries of cultural, administrative, and philosophical unity.

In South Africa, we don’t always speak in those terms. But perhaps we should. Because the legacies of Mandela, Mbeki, Tambo, and Sisulu – like the traditions of Ubuntu, the memory of resistance, and the demands of constitutionalism – are not merely political artefacts. They are fragments of a deeper project: the effort to build a capable, responsive, and people-centred state rooted in our own history. Like China, we emerged from struggle. Like China, we are trying to transform a fractured society. But unlike China, we have often underestimated the importance of institutional depth, cadre development, and ideological clarity.

Zhang’s critique of the Western liberal model of democracy – especially its overreliance on electoral rituals – was equally relevant. In much of the Global South, including in South Africa, we have free and fair elections. We have robust media. We have constitutionally enshrined rights. And yet, we remain plagued by delivery failures, economic exclusion, and deepening social fragmentation. Zhang calls this “procedural democracy” – and urges us instead to think about “substantive democracy,” where legitimacy is measured by whether people’s lives improve, whether children have food and education, whether homes have electricity and hope.

This is a hard question for us to face. Because it forces us to admit that democracy – if reduced to the act of voting every five years – can coexist with poverty, inequality, and despair. And unless

we redefine democracy to mean participation, justice, and dignity, it will continue to lose credibility, especially among the youth.

In this context, Zhang’s framing of “*performance legitimacy*” – that is, the idea that governments earn authority by delivering results – offers a useful provocation. We don’t have to choose between democratic values and capable states. But we must recognise that political legitimacy cannot rest on liberation history alone. It must be renewed through action. Through delivery. Through restoring the social contract.

At the heart of Zhang’s model lies the prioritisation of people’s livelihoods. From education and healthcare to social protection and infrastructure, the state exists to serve. This is not a technocratic point – it is a moral one.

If a government cannot ensure that a child eats, learns, and dreams, then its legitimacy is hollow. In South Africa, we must treat poverty with the urgency of a pandemic, not the rhetoric of a campaign. We must restore faith in public education, reinvest in basic services, and rebuild the machinery of the state so that it functions not as a gatekeeper, but as an enabler.

Zhang also gestures to the global dimensions of governance. In an increasingly multipolar world, the old Bretton Woods institutions no longer reflect the economic and political realities of today. Trade wars, debt crises, digital colonisation – these are no longer issues confined to any one region. They are systemic. And if we in the Global South are to defend our interests, we must do so not as isolated actors, but as a bloc.

South Africa’s current G20 Presidency offers an opportunity to help lead that bloc – not simply by raising our voice, but by helping articulate a new developmental framework that places solidarity, equality, and sustainability at the centre of global economic governance. This includes exploring alternatives to dollar dependency, championing a just digital transition, and deepening cooperation among emerging economies – not for extractive purposes, but for mutual upliftment.

What emerged from this engagement with Professor Zhang was not dogma. It was not a rigid theory. It was a provocation to think differently – and to act with greater urgency and intentionality.

The choice before us is not whether we become more like China or remain tied to the Western model. The choice is whether we continue stumbling through crisis with fragmented institutions and borrowed frameworks – or whether we finally begin the difficult but necessary work of building a uniquely South African state, capable of learning globally but rooted locally.

That state must be ethical, capable, inclusive, and unapologetically pro-poor. It must prioritise the long-term, plan for the polycrisis world, and renew the meaning of democracy through delivery. And it must do so in a way that reflects our values, our history, and our vision.

Professor Zhang reminded us – not of China’s greatness, but of what is possible when a people decide that the future will be made, not inherited.

That reminder could not have come at a better time.



# What Should Matter the Most – International Solidarity, Peace and Stability, Intertrade Relations or Individual Countries' National Interests?

■ By **SEPHOKA DAVID SEKGOBELA**

**T**HE US is undoubtedly one of the most powerful nations in the world, and so is Russia and China respectively. The South African economy is dependent on trade relations with other economies of the world, including the super-powers. It is therefore in the best interest of South Africa to maintain a cordial relationship with these powerful nations, without exception. However, South Africa remains a sovereign state that should not be undermined for any reason whatsoever.

With the return of Donald Trump as the 47th President of the US, it would seem that the world should brace itself up for global instability and insecurity. He is behaving like the proverbial bull in a Chinese shop – a lunatic wielding an axe, from whom everyone is running amok for cover, who needs to be overpowered and disarmed. If not restrained, Donald Trump would literally plunge the whole world into WWII, because the word “*diplomacy*” does not seem to be applicable in his vocabulary.

The amount of hostility meted out towards South Africa by the Trump Administration cannot and should not be attributable to any wrongdoing by the ANC-led gov-



ernment. At the heart of the hostility is the fact that Donald Trump subscribes to the so-called “*Project 2025*”, whose architects “*work to consolidate power, dismantle progressive policies, and entrench their agenda*”, not only in the US, but across the globe. Project 2025 is an “*authoritarian roadmap*” that seriously threatens, not only American civil and human rights, but also global democracy, peace, and stability. To justify imposition of Project 2025 agenda against South Africa, Donald Trump falsely accuses South Africa of all sorts of “*bad things*”, and “*policies that are hostile towards the US and its allies*”. Donald Trump has not been

in the oval office for more than 100 days, but already turned international trade relations and geopolitics upside down. He has since done more harm than good – aggressively shaking geopolitical landscape and necessitating forceful global alignment politics.

Within weeks of taking office, Trump issued numerous executive orders, abrogating more power to himself and within his inner circle. Donald Trump’s authoritarian regime has all hallmarks of autocratic and dictatorial attack on democracy – academic freedom, media freedom, independence of the judiciary, etc. Trump Administration is a danger to world peace



and stability, because some of the things he says, does, or suggests, simply do not make any sense, because they are absurd, unjustifiable, and would definitely set the US on a conflict course with other nations. For instance, he, inter alia:

- Wants to annex certain territories like Panama Canal and Greenland into the US;
- Is suggesting that, as a peaceful solution in the Middle East, Palestinians in Gaza strip should be relocated elsewhere to create room for the Israelis;
- Is unilaterally and arbitrarily imposing higher tariffs on other nations;
- Is closing borders and deporting many foreign nationals back to their countries;
- Ended birthright citizenship for children born of foreign nationals;
- Withdrew the US from international treaties and organizations such as Paris Treaty on Global Warming and World Health Organisation; and
- Imposed sanctions on the ICC for issuing warrants of arrest against Israeli warlords.

Nobody is sure what next would Donald Trump do, because he is so unpredictable. He is creat-

ing an atmosphere of uncertainty for everyone across the globe. Hence, some nations are looking at making use of their local currencies for economic trading amongst each other, expediting the process for de-dollarisation of the USD.

To dispel the myth that South Africa has done something wrong to deserve what seems to be the harshest treatment of all nations, it has to be put on record that, there is absolutely nothing wrong about South Africa or any of its policies. In fact, for some time, South Africa had been threatened with sanctions by the US and the west due to its non-aligned stance in the Ukrainian-Russian war, and also been threatened with exclusion from the USA's African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) benefits. It was therefore expected that the US and its allies would not hesitate to impose economic sanctions against South Africa should they find one good reason to do that. South Africa's referral of the Israel and its bloodthirsty warlords like Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defence Minister, Yoav Gallant, to the ICC and the ICJ for genocidal acts against innocent civilians in Gaza, just played into their hands. Other falsified allegations

of genocide against white people by the ANC-led government is just smokescreen to justify their stereotyped prejudices and preconceived ideas about South Africa.

However, South Africa cannot afford to lose hope of resuscitating civil relations based on mutual respect with the US. We are pinning our hopes on latest developments, especially personal engagements between President Cyril Ramaphosa and Donald Trump regarding the visit of the Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, in South Africa on 24 April 2025. Sanity seems to be prevailing as there seems to be some softening of attitudes from the Trump Administration towards South Africa. Therefore, South African should make use of the anticipated one-to-one diplomatic meeting between the two heads of state to negotiate for preferential trade relations based on mutual respect for each other's sovereignty. Topping the list would be AGOA trade agreement, because imposition of the so-called "*reciprocal tariffs*" actually makes it difficult, if not impossible, to maintain effective and efficient trade relations with the US, and actually nullified AGOA trade agreement, from which South Africa was benefitting immensely. There would be jobs bloodbath, especially within the South African auto industry.

In the meantime, as South Africans, we should be concerned about dealing with the impact of disruptive US tariffs on our economy, which are outside the framework for WTO trade laws for countries to compete fairly. These unstable protectionist tariffs are having wider implications for global economy – causing untold trade imbalances and uncertainties, and slowing economic growth.

## INTERNATIONAL

Hence other nations are trying to make alternative arrangements in response thereto, with a view to reduce dependence on global supply chains.

On the other hand, perhaps there is a thing or two for other nations like South Africa to learn from Donald Trump when it comes to putting one's country first on the global agenda. Donald Trump is taking the South African concept of *"Local is Lekker"* to absurd levels through his protectionist policies. His unilateral and arbitrary tariffs are pinning the US economy against other economies around the world. He is using them as unjustified punitive measures or economic sanctions against those countries that he considers as enemies of the US, or, just for the fun of it, as show of power. He alleges that he has the mandate of the American electorate to do what he does. However, trouble seems to be brewing even within the US, because there are many Americans who are not impressed by Donald Trump's so-called *"reciprocal tariffs"*, and want the US Congress to block them. In other words, even amongst the Americans themselves, not everyone is excited about Donald Trump and his Make America Great Again (MAGA) movement's approach towards international trade relations and geopolitics.

Imposition of excessive tariffs against other trading partners is another form of disinvestment, and disinvestment is a two-way traffic or double-edged sword that would inflict pain to all parties. Other nations like China retaliate with counter-tariffs against the US, resulting in full-blown trade wars. There are no winners in that regard, only the losers. American investors, i.e.



producers and service providers alike, also need to do business with other nations. No nation, no matter how great it purports to be, is an island, or, could be self-sufficient in all respects, because countries depend on one another for trade relations, and otherwise. Natural resources are not evenly spread throughout the world. There would be overconcentration and/or under-resourcing from one geographic area to the other across the spectrum. Likewise, there would be development and underdevelopment from one area to another. Therefore, interrelations amongst the nations through economic interdependence, global supply chains, and shared interests, is what keeps countries' economies successful. Countries' economic interdependence from trade relations often strengthens political and diplomatic relations as well, whilst hostile economic trade relations can equally lead to military conflicts.

As trade war between the world's biggest markets, i.e. the US and China, is escalating unabated, with tariffs ridiculously reaching up to 245%, some smaller nations continue to economically suffer consequences as collateral damages thereof. Trade wars could be self-defeatist, especial-

ly for the US itself, because the population of a country is generally strong reflection or indicator of the number of potential consumers. *"A larger population typically translates to a larger consumer base, driving demand for goods and services"*. China's current population is projected to be around 1.416 billion, i.e. more than 1.4 billion consumers, from whom Donald Trump is withdrawing American products and services with the trade war that he is waging against China. Current population of the US is 346.8 million, which is almost four times less than the Chinese population.

In conclusion, by aligning with Brazil, Russia, India and China in BRICS, South Africa subconsciously alienated itself from those who do not like Russia or China. We should therefore treat the relationship with other BRICS member countries with respect. Hence we are pleased about how the Ukrainian President's visit to South Africa, was strategically and diplomatically handled by President Ramaphosa, without ruffling feathers with both Russia and the US. We need to continue choosing sides and friends carefully and wisely.

The views expressed in this article are that of the author and do not necessarily represent the views or policies of the ANC.



# The Generation of 26 July Movement was born out of the love of the struggles for the freedom of humanity

## A Letter to Former President of the Republic of Cuba, Commander Raul Castro

■ By **AMB. PHATSE JUSTICE PIITSO**

**Dear Commander Raul Castro Ruz**

Five hundred and thirty three years ago, when the European explorer and navigator, Christopher Columbus, set his foot at the shores of the beautiful Island of Cuba, in the Caribbean archipelago, little did he know that thousands of years before, existed a monumental civilisation in the city of Caral-Supe, situated in the coastal desert of the republic of Peru.

The renowned ancient city of Caral-Supe, is amongst the oldest civilisations in the western hemisphere, long before the era of the pyramids in Egypt and Ziggurats of Mesopotamia. The historical significance of its foundations and architectural peculiarities stand to be amongst the most powerful ancient civilisations.

The simulacrum is against the backdrop of empirical evidence from archaeological discovery and research, demystifying the theoretical doctrine from the European scholarly and philosophical school, perpetuating the myth that Christopher Columbus, was



the first in the history of human civilisation, to have discovered the Antilles of the Americas.

The hypotheses unmasks the hypocrisy transfused by the pioneers of imperialism and colonialism, against the overwhelming scientific corroboration, confirming the existence of thriving cultures and civilisations, long before his adventurous journey into

the Americas.

The scramble for the colonisation of the world by the European superpowers, heralded a new era, of systematic extermination of the indigenous population in the former colonies and semi colonies, subjugating them to horrendous genocidal crimes. The system of political oppression and socio-economic exploitation of the

indigenous populations became a basis for the widespread violations of serious crimes against humanity.

The scourge of untold gruesome acts of abuse of the indigenous population, led to the scarcity of human capital to drive the material source of production to the European markets, leading to a period of a large-scale enslavement of African people into the Americas. Millions and millions of African slaves perished through the crossing of the notorious Trans-Atlantic route.

The rampant exploitation of the natural resources and imposition of free labour became the primary driving force for the development of the European industrial capitalism. Flourishing capital markets and accumulation of profits was the basis for the greater impetus on the expansion and consolidation of the world capitalist system, during the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

Throughout the historical period, many heroic battles were fought against imperialism and colonial domination, many of our heroes and heroines fought relentlessly against the brutality of the oppressive system, fighting against slavery and all its manifestations, confident that freedom of humanity shall triumph over adversity. We count on the versatility of their encounters, heroism and determination for the freedom and dignity of humanity.

My epistle enumerates the day of great historic significance in the calendar of the struggles for the independence of the Cuban nation. The day of the 4th of August 1868, when the father of the homeland, Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, convened an all-



important convention at Tirsan, making a clarion call to his nation, to take up arms against the brutality of the Spanish colonial power.

Bequeathing to his mother nation, the sacred ideals of freedom and equality, he made a clarion battle cry:

*"Gentlemen, the hour is solemn and decisive. The power of Spain is spent and worm eaten. If it still seems solid and tall to us, it is because we have been contemplating it on our knees for more than three centuries. Let get up."*

On the 10th October 1868 at his plantation in La Damajagua, he launched his battle cry of Grito Yara, proclaiming the independence of Cuba and calling for an insurrection against the brutality of the Spanish colonial power. He said: *"Rising up arms against the oppression of the tyrannical Spanish government, we are demonstrating to the world the causes which forced us take this step. Spain imposes on us an armed force on our territory, which has no other goal than to submit us to the implacable yoke which degrades us."*

He unambiguously declared abolition of slavery in Cuba, by first granting freedom to his own slaves at the family plantations. Inviting the slaves to join the struggles against colonial oppression, he called on them as new free men of the struggles of humanity, declaring that...

*"We believe that all men are equal. We admire universal suffrage which ensures the sovereignty of the people. We want gradual and after compensation emancipation from slavery. We demand religious respect for the inalienable rights of the human being, constituting ourselves as an independent nation, because in this way, we realise the greatness of the future destinies and because we are convinced that under the yoke of Spain, we will never enjoy the free exercise of our rights."*

Inspired by the ideals of Carlos Manuel des Céspedes to forge struggles for the territorial sovereignty and independence of Cuba, the Apostle of the homeland of humanity, Jose Marti, in his poem, **'To my Mother'**, dedicated to 'October 10', the day of

the cry for the independence of Cuba, expresses the following profound words: *"Thanks to God that, at last with integrity, Cuba breaks the nose that oppressed her. And active and free lifts its head"*.

Later in his life, Apostle Jose Marti, following great pathways of luminaries of the time, imbued by the ideas of Simon Bolivar and Carlos Manuel de Cespedes, became instrumental in the formation of the Cuban Revolutionary Party, urging that a revolution is not merely a passionate outburst of integrity, or the gratification of a need to fight or exercise power, but rather, a detailed understanding dependent on advanced planning and great foresight.

His great views about the achievement of a free and democratic republic, was the cornerstone for the formation of the Cuban Revolutionary Party, outlining its strategies and tactics, calling for the unity of all revolutionary formations both in and outside of Cuba, the renewal of the armed struggles and the creation of a republic capable of assuring its durable nation to its children.

The magnanimous ideas of the struggles for the total independence of Cuba free of oppression and exploitation, is what came to influence the young heroes and heroines of the July 26 Movement, under the leadership of the Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro. The attack on the Moncada garrison was part of the continuation of the epic struggles, determination to die for the ideals of the freedom of humanity.

The grandma expedition and the heroic battles fought by the Cuban combatants in the battles of Sierra Maestra mountains, were watershed events in the making

of history, demonstrating on the importance of the fundamental principle of unity of our people, for the success of the revolution. The epic feats inspired by the implacable journey of the rich history of struggles of the heroic people of the beautiful Island.

On the historic day of the triumph of the revolution, on the occasion of the 1st January 1959, addressing thousands and thousands of the citizens of the city of Havana, the Commander-in-Chief comrade Fidel Castro said the following profound words:

*"I believe that this is a decisive moment in our history. The tyranny has been overthrown; the joy is immense and yet much remains to be done. We do not deceive ourselves believing that everything will be easy, from now on, perhaps everything will be more difficult in the future."*

The victory of the heroic nation at the battle of Playa Giron and the

subsequent declaration of the socialist character of the revolution, at the doorstep of the US empire, is what will define the eternity of your generation. You have given freedom to millions of the people of the world, demonstrating outstanding feats of courage, bravery and resilience.

In Africa you were there in Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Cape Verde, Ethiopia, Somalia, Algeria, Congo Brazzaville, Congo Kinshasa, Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Namibia, South Africa and many other parts of the world. You have illuminated the horizons of humanity, representing the greatest virtuosity of our revolutionary struggles.

The entire history of human civilisation beacons the Cuban revolution, the only one to have paid back the debt to humanity, extending a gesture of solidarity to the African people, taking responsibility to what the masters of crime



Comrades-in-Arms: Che Guevara, Raul Castro and Fidel Castro



against humanity could not do, those who have slandered millions of people as slaves, building their economies on the carcasses of the downtrodden.

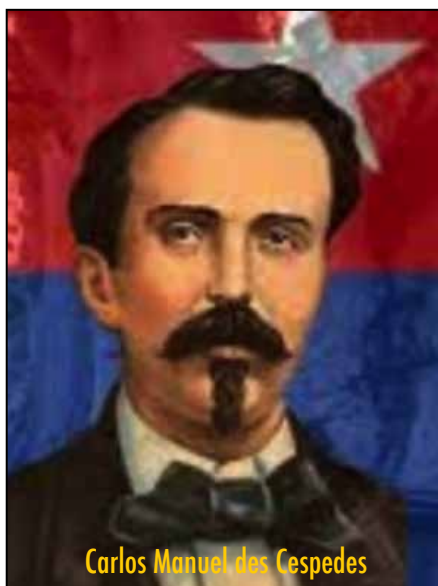
Thousands of men and women from your revolutionary Island, volunteered to fight side by side with the African people, during the difficult times of the dark hours of struggles for freedom and democracy. The greatest episodes of history, distinguish them the most outstanding revolutionaries of our epoch, having demonstrated the most remarkable feats of human solidarity and internationalism.

Your fellow countrymen and women perished their being in the trenches of our continent, fertilising our soil with the blood of liberty, contributing towards our struggles for freedom and independence. They did so highly convinced that when millennium finds the world, humanity shall breathe freedom on every shore from the fountain to the river.

Many became standard bearers of international solidarity, raising the flag of the revolutionary republic on the horizons of the world community of nations, giving to the world the best ideas the revolution represents. In the pathway of Jose Marti, the sacred ideals of the freedom of humanity.

Your revolutionary words of solidarity and internationalism during the first congress of MPLA in Luanda, Angola, will continue to blossom the minds and hearts of many generations to come. The people of Africa will always be inspired by your humble words, when you said:

*"The day our presence is no longer necessary, only the people of Angola will be able to issue that order. And when the Cubans here withdraw from Angola, we*



*will take with us neither oil, nor diamonds, nor coffee, or anything else. All what we will take, with us is the indestructible friendship of this great people, and the remains of our dead."*

This true spirit of generosity and devotion to the cause of the struggles for the freedom of humanity is what defines the exemplary leadership of your generation. Taking lessons from the father of the homeland, Carlos Manuel des Céspedes, when after his son being taken prisoner by the Spanish troops, when called to surrender his arms in exchange for the life of his son, said: *"Tell General Caballero de Rodas that Oscar is not my only son. I am the father of all Cubans who fell for the revolution."*

Like the Father of the Homeland, your generation never had doubts about the certainty of the triumph of our revolutionary struggles, you have always cherished the noble idea of the victory of the struggles for the freedom of humanity. Céspedes was always convinced that humanity shall break the bondage of oppression and exploitation:

*"The Cuban revolution, now vigorous, is immortal. The republic*

*shall defeat the Monarchy. The people of Cuba, full of faith in their destiny of freedom and animated by unwavering perseverance on the path of heroism and sacrifice, will be worthy of being, masters of their fate, among the free people of America. Our unchanging slogan is and always will be: 'Independence or Death. Cuba must not simply be free, it cannot become a slave again'."*

I take the opportunity on behalf of the millions of the young generation of my country, the African continent and the world, thanking the tremendous contribution of the 26 July Movement, for changing the paradigm of the world revolutionary struggles, illuminating the horizons of our continent which was engulfed by colonial darkness. Your generation indeed was born out of the love of the struggles for the freedom of humanity.

In the wake of the insurmountable obstacles along our odious journey to freedom, we have vowed: freedom or death, humanity shall triumph against adversity. The theatre of our struggles for freedom has been like a river which does not want to argue with rocks, flowing around them.

In the horizons of the beautiful African continent, we have risen to the hopes of our freedoms. On the mountain peak of Kilimanjaro, as the blossoming sun rises on the horizons, as the sunset at the bosom of the Cape Point where the Atlantic and Indian oceans meet, we have triumphed against adversity.

**Phatse Justice Piitso** is a former South African Ambassador to Cuba and a member of the African National Congress. He writes in his personal capacity.

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

# THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

10–16 May 2025

Source: SA History Online, O'Malley Archives, Africa Today/Yesterday, The Africa Factbook and Amazwi SA Museum of Literature

### 10 May 1994

#### Nelson Mandela sworn in as President of South Africa



After the first democratic non-racial elections on 27 April 1994, Nelson Mandela was elected as the first President by the democratic Parliament, and inaugurated at the Union Buildings on 10 May 1994. He served as President until 1999.

### 10 May 1986

#### New Nation and South Newspapers banned



The 1980s was characterised by the flourishing of an alternative press and community newspapers. As part of the State of Emergency regulations, the New Nation and South newspapers were banned.

### 11 May 1865

#### Soga's Pan African vision

One of the first Pan-African visions is proposed by journalist Tiyo Soga in the King William's Town Gazette and Kaffrarian Banner when he proposed the idea of the 'distinctiveness' of African people, which acts as a unifying force, whether Africans are found at *"the Southern American colonies of Spain and Portugal... the Negro Republic of Liberia (or) in the present struggle in America, though still with chains on his hands and chains on his feet."*

### 11 May 1959

#### Launch of Professional Football in South Africa

In 1958, FIFA officially recognised the White body of the Football Association of South Africa (FASA) as the sole governing body of soccer in South Africa. One year later, professional soccer was introduced to South Africa when, on 11 May 1959, the National Football League (NFL) was formed. The league was founded by twelve football clubs from Johannesburg and Pretoria, none of which exist today. Ted Wallace was elected

as secretary of the organisation. Two years later, FASA did include some Black players within their structure. Later, when FIFA suspended South Africa in 1962, the governing body sanctioned a landmark inter-racial match, which was played between the White Germiston Callies and the Black African Pirates before 10000 people in Maseru, the capital of Lesotho.

### 11 May 1966

#### NUSAS president Ian Robertson banned

The president of the National Union of South Africa Students (NUSAS), Ian Robertson, receives a banning order under the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 when he was banned by the government only a month before Senator Kennedy's visit. Robertson was instrumental in inviting Senator Kennedy to be the keynote speaker at NUSAS's Day of Affirmation. Because he was banned at the time of the visit, Robertson was not able to attend Senator Kennedy's speech at the University of Cape Town. Senator Kennedy visited him at his apartment on the way in from the airport.

### 11 May 1972

#### SASO adopts Alice Declaration

The South African Students' Organisation (SASO) adopted the **"Alice Declaration"** during its

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

meeting at the Federal Theological Seminary in Alice, Eastern Cape. The Declaration resolved that students nationwide should close down Black institutions of higher education through lecture boycotts in support of the expelled Onkgopotse Abram Tiro from the University of the North (now University of Limpopo, Turfloop Campus). Tiro had been expelled because of a graduation ceremony speech in which he had attacked segregated education and White domination of Black institutions.

### 11 May 1987

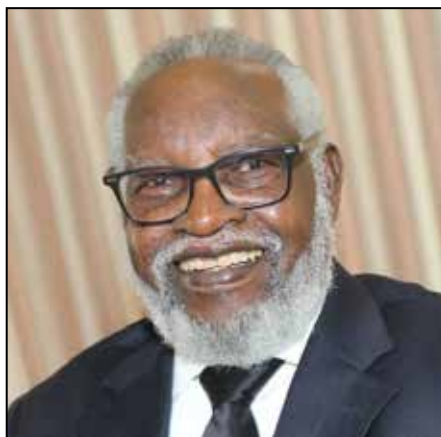
#### **Kick-box champ Kamara Usman born**

Nigerian kick-box and mixed martial arts champion, known as *"The Nigerian Nightmare"* was born in Auchi on this day. From his first United Fighting Championship fight against Leon Edwards in 2015, he went undefeated until his first professional loss to Edwards in 2022.

### 12 May 1929

#### **President Sam Nujoma born**

Freedom fighter, revolutionary and co-founder of SWAPO, Samuel Shafiishuna Daniel Nujoma was born on this day in Ogandjera. Nujoma played an important role as leader of the national liberation movement in campaigning for Namibia's political independence from apartheid South African rule. He led SWAPO during the lengthy Namibian War of Independence, which lasted from 1966 to 1989. Namibia achieved independence from South Africa in 1990 and held its first democratic elections the same year. SWAPO won a majority and Nujoma was sworn in as the country's first president on 21 March



1990. He was re-elected for two more terms in 1994 and 1999. Nujoma retired as SWAPO party president on 30 November 2007. Despite stepping down from a formal role, Nujoma remained active in the political sphere and regularly campaigned for SWAPO at various rallies and functions across the country. President Nujoma, the recipient of several honorary awards, including the Order of the Companions of O.R. Tambo, passed away on 8 February 2025 at the age of 95.

### 11 May 2006

#### **Monkey discovery**

Scientists announced that the Highland Mangabey monkey found in the remote Tanzanian mountains in 2003 is actually an entirely new genus of the African monkey, the first new monkey genus discovered since 1923.

### 12 May 1930

#### **Professor Mazisi Kunene born**



Mazisi Kunene was born on 12 May 1930 in Amahlongwa, Kwa-Zulu Natal. He studied Zulu Literature at the University of Natal and later won a scholarship to the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London University. Kunene was an ANC member and later became ANC representative at the United Nations (UN). He was appointed professor of African Literature and Languages at the University of California in Los Angeles. Banned by the apartheid government in 1966, he spent 30 years in exile, returning in 1993. Upon his return, he was appointed Professor of Zulu language and Literature at the University of Natal. Kunene has published several books including poems and several articles on Zulu Philosophy and cosmology. He passed on in 2006 at the age of 76 in Durban.

### 12 May 1968

#### **Professor ZK Matthews passed on**



On 12 May 1968, South African academic, ANC leader, lecturer at University of Fort Hare and Botswana's first ambassador to the USA and envoy to the UN, Zachariah Keodirelang Matthews died in Washington, USA. He was buried in Gaborone, Botswana. Born in Kimberley, he became one of the most influential intellectuals of this time, including championing the



## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

idea of the Congress of the People and the Freedom Charter in 1956. His autobiography *Freedom for My People* was published posthumously in 1981.

### 12 May 2010

#### Unity Bridge opens

The Unity Bridge which connects Mozambique and Tanzania over the Ruvuma River was first proposed, by Samora Machel and Julius Nyerere, 35 years earlier, finally opened.

### 12 May 2018

#### Legendary photographer Sam Nzima passed on



On 12 May 2018, legendary photographer, Sam Nzima passed away at the age of 83 in hospital in Nelspruit, Mpumalanga. Nzima was born in Lillydale, Bushbuck Ridge, growing up on a farm. Nzima's teacher had a camera, inspiring his interest and he bought himself a small Kodak Box Brownie. During school holidays, he went to the Kruger National Park and charge people to take their photographs. This legendary photographer is known for taking the iconic picture of Hector Pieterse during the Soweto uprising in 1976.

The iconic June 16 picture taken by Sam Nzima



### 13 May 1953

#### Safe medicine advocate born

Ahmed Tijjani Mora is a Nigerian pharmacist and advocate for safe medicines was born in Zaria, Kaduna state. He chaired the Pharmacist Council of Nigeria, calling for licensing of street medicine sellers to ensure safety controls.

### 13 May 1983

#### Footballer Yaya Touré born

Touré, regarded as one of the greatest African footballers of all time, was born in Bouaké, Cote d'Ivoire. He was named CAF Footballer of the Year in 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014, captained the Ivorian team in four World Cups and six AFCONs and winning the African Cup in 2015.

### 13 May 2004

#### Katima Mulilo bridge opens

The bridge spans the Zambezi river, connecting Namibia and Zambia, en route the TransCaprivi Highway right up to Walvis Bay. The route is a major

feeder for trade from inland countries to move through this Namibian port.

### 14 May 1959

#### Coloureds removed from voters roll

Various attempts were made to cancel the franchise of Coloured people in the Cape Province, by removing them from the voters roll. On 14 May 1951, members of the cabinet finally voted for the removal of the Coloured people from the voters roll, through the Separate Representation Bill. Resistance in the community against this resulted in mass campaigns, including the formation of the Franchise Action Council in Cape Town, a march by over 15,000 Coloured people through the streets of the city and challenging the Bill in the Supreme Court.

### 14 May 1964

#### Nasser and Khrushchev in ceremony to start building of Aswan High Dam

Soviet premier Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev and Egyptian premier

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

Gamal Abdel Nasser officiated at the ceremony to blow up a sand barrage and divert the Nile into a temporary canal – to allow the next stage of the construction of the Aswan High Dam. International appeals were made to save Egypt's ancient temples and tombs, which will be flooded when the dam was finally completed. The dam was completed in 1970 and commissioned in 1971.

### 14 May 2018

#### First countries ratify the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement

Kenya and Ghana were the first countries whose parliaments ratified the AfCFTA agreement, which allows for the building of an African common market.

### 14 May 2019

#### Tererai Trent statue in New York

The Zimbabwean scholar and women's education advocate, Tererai Trent, was honoured by New York City with a statue. Denied an education as a girl, she managed to earn advanced degrees despite her lack of formal education. Dr Trent's story is told in a children's book *The Girl*



#### *Who Buried Her Dreams in a Can* (2015).

### 14 May 2021

#### Burna Boy albums reach 100 million streams

Nigerian musician Burna Boy becomes the first African musician to have three successive albums (African Giant, Outside, Twice as Tall) achieve 100 million streams each on the internet music streaming service, Spotify.

### 15 May 1787

#### Freed slaves settle in Sierra Leone

Granville Town, a settlement is established with the arrival of 400 former British slaves, as part of a resettlement movement.

### 15 May 1885

#### Parliament in Cape Town in use

The parliamentary building at the top of Adderley Street, Cape Town, is occupied for the first time. It remains the seat of the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. A fire at the building in 2021 made it temporarily unusable.

### 15 May 1889

#### Founder of Sofasonke Party born

James Sofasonke (meaning 'We shall all die together') Mpanza, founder of the Sofasonke Party and a champion for better housing for Johannesburg's Blacks, is born in Georgedale, today part of Cato Ridge.

### 15 May 1948

#### Egypt attacks newly proclaimed state of Israel

The day after the new state of Israel is proclaimed, on Palestinian

territory, the Royal Egyptian Air force attacks the capital Tel Aviv.

### 15 May 1950

#### Father of Kenyan labour movement arrested

Trade unionist and founder of its first union, Makhan Singh, was arrested by the British for having spoken out against British colonial rule. Then Governor Phillip Mitchell ordered Singh's indefinite detention, and he was only released eleven years later, in October 1961.

### 15 May 1982

#### New Ellis Park Stadium opens

The new stadium opens in Johannesburg, replacing an earlier stadium built in 1928.

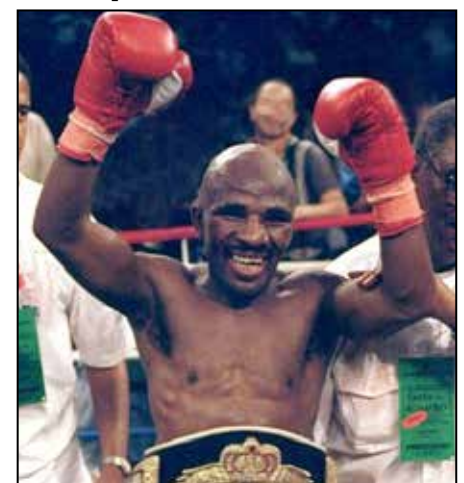
### 15 May 1991

#### Malian writer Amadou Hampata Ba passed on

One of the towering figures of 20th century African literature and oral story telling passed on at the age of 90. His famous quote: "Whenever an old man dies, it is as though a library were burning down."

### 15 May 1993

#### Baby Jake World Boxing Champion

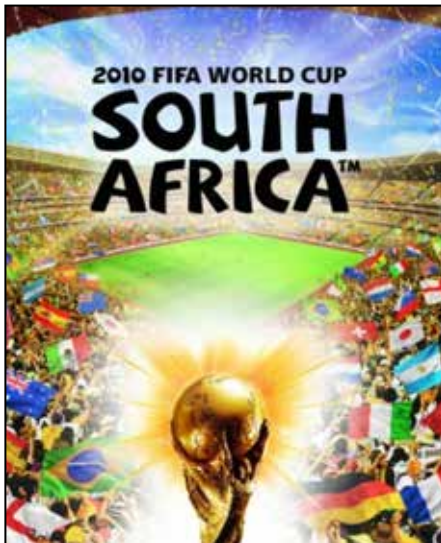




## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

On 15 May 1993, Jacob “Baby Jake” Matlala, won the World Boxing Organisation (WBO) world champion title. Matlala had been introduced to boxing at a young age by his father, and turned professional in 1979. Under the guidance of Theo Mthembu, Matlala won his first professional victory against Fraser Plaatjie in Port Elizabeth in 1980. Matlala went on to become South African Flyweight Champion, and later won the International Boxing Association (IBA) Flyweight title in 1997.

### 15 May 2004 SA wins bid to host 2010 Soccer World Cup



South Africa wins the bid to host the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup, the first African country to host this global event.

### 15 May 2004 Ousmane Sembene's Mooladé premiers at Cannes

The film directed by the renowned Senegalese filmmaker focused on female genital mutilation, and was co-produced by Senegal, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Morocco, Tunisia and France and filmed in Burkina Faso.

### 15 May 2008 Gambian leader Yahya Jammeh threatens to behead queer citizens

The Gambian president told all gay men and women to leave the country or face execution, through beheading.

### 15 May 2019 Walking on the Nile over Rod el Farag Axis Bridge

Egypt President el-Sisi opens the world's widest cable-sway bridge, according to the Guinness Book of Record. The bridge offers pedestrian walk-ways with spectacular views of Cairo and with glass floors provides the sensation of 'walking on the Nile.'

### 16 May 1956 Egypt establishes diplomatic relations with China

This move angered the Peoples Republic of China's Cold War rival, the United States who threatened to withhold promised financial aid for the Aswan Dam. In retaliation, Egypt President Gamal Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal in July that year.

### 16 May 1964 Mohammed Ali visits Ghana

Encouraged by Malcolm X, world boxing heavy weight legend Ali



arrived in Accra, Ghana for a two week, returned to the fatherland, where he also meets President Kwame Nkrumah.

### 16 May 1976 James Ranisi Jolobe, author and poet, and clergyman passed on

On 16 May 1976, South Africa lost a poet, author and a clergyman. James Ranisi Jolobe made a contribution to South African arts and culture through poetry. Born in Transkei, Jolobe was best known for his collection of poems, Umyezo (1936) and played a major role in the compilation of the English-Xhosa-Afrikaans dictionary.

### 16 May 1977 Mme Winnie Madikizela-Mandela banished to Brandfort



ANC and ANCWL stalwart Mme Winnie Madikizela-Mandela was banished to Brandfort, Free State for her political activism by the apartheid government for nine years. She was dumped unceremoniously in Brandfort with her daughter Zinzi, and throughout the period she continued to suffer harassment and not allowed to officially pursue her career as a social worker.



## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

### 16 May 1983

**Comedian Loyisa Gola born**  
Gola, specializing in stand-up comedy since his teens, was born in Gugulethu Cape Town.

### 16 May 1997

**Mobuto Sese Seko relinquishes power in the DRC**

As rebel troupes led by Laurent Kabila advanced on Kinshasha, the nearly 32-year ruler of the Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) fled the capital, and the Information services announced that he had resigned and went into exile. He died in Morocco in September of the same year of prostate cancer.

### 16 May 2018

**Bambara Traoré statue unveiled in Bamako**

The last African leader to defy colonial French conquest in West Africa, the unveiling of the statue of Emperor Mabemba Traoré in the Malian capital, was attended by Prime Ministers from Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire and Mali, which were part of the Kénédougou Empire ruled by Traoré.

### 16 May 2019

**First Black African Woman to Summit Mount Everest**

Saray Khumalo (47) hoisted the South African flag on the world's highest mountain, Mount Everest. An e-commerce executive, Saray was born in Zambia, with Rwandese parentage and a South African citizen. She scaled the 8,850-metre mountain after three failed attempts foiled by bad weather and a deadly earthquake in 2015. She has also summited six other mountains, including Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Aconcagua in Argentina and Mount Elbrus in Russia and has been on an expedition to the South Pole in 2019.

## INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

10–16 May 2025

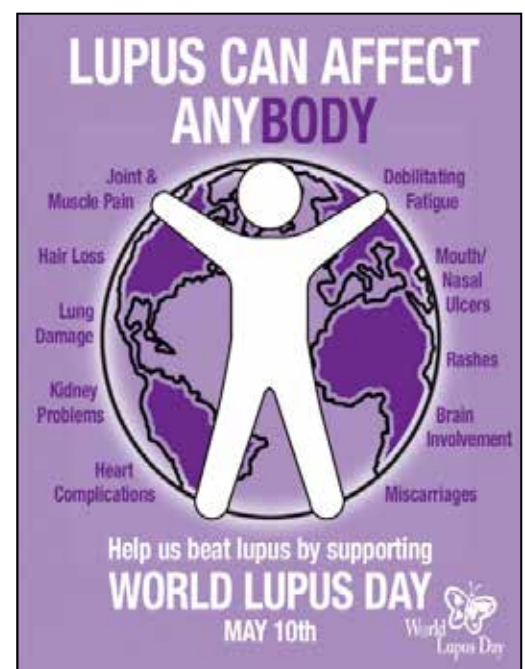
Source: [www.un.org](http://www.un.org), [www.au.int](http://www.au.int), *The Africa Fact Book* (2020), [www.daysoftheyear.com](http://www.daysoftheyear.com)

### 10 May

#### World Lupus Day

Lupus is a serious, life-altering autoimmune disease that can affect any organ of the body. Lupus is a disease which remains under-recognized and under-appreciated. An autoimmune disease is one in which the immune system is unable to recognize the difference between healthy cells in the body and the foreign cells it fights to remove. A healthy immune system produces antibodies which attack and destroy foreign and invasive cells like viruses, bacteria and germs. However, in people with lupus, the immune system creates auto antibodies which destroys healthy tissue. This can lead to damage, inflammation and pain throughout the body. Lupus is a potentially fatal disease, affecting organs and other parts of the body such as the brain, heart, lungs, kidneys and skin.

([www.whatthehealth.com/awareness/event/worldlupusday.html](http://www.whatthehealth.com/awareness/event/worldlupusday.html))



### 11 May

#### World Keffiyeh Day

World Keffiyeh Day is commemorated annually on May 11th as a visual way to raise awareness and show solidarity about the Palestinian cause through the use of the Keffiyeh – one of the most iconic symbols for Palestinians.

### 11 May

#### World Migratory Bird Day

Migratory birds fly hundreds and thousands of kilometres to find the best ecological conditions and habitats for feeding, breeding and raising their young. When conditions at breeding sites become unfavourable, it is time to fly to regions where conditions are better.

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

**12 May**

### International Nurses Day



The day is celebrated on the date of birth of Florence Nightingale, regarded as the founder of modern nursing for the improvements she made in the practice of nursing during the Crimean War (1853-1856). Nurses are frontline workers in health care systems across the world. The theme for 2025 is ***Our Nurses. Our Future. Caring for nurses strengthens economies.*** This theme underscores the critical role a healthy nursing workforce plays in strengthening economies, improving health systems, and ensuring better outcomes for communities worldwide.

**12 May**

### World Plant Health Day



Plants are life – we depend on them for 80 percent of the food we eat and 98 percent of the oxygen we breathe. Pesticides, international travel and trade, as well as climate change have been associated with the introduction and spread of plant pests.

**15 May**

### International Day of Families

International Day of Families falls on 15 May every year and highlights the importance of families. Families – in all their diversities – form the basic

“Families are like branches of a tree.  
We grow differently but our root  
remains the same.”



units and building blocks of most societies, responsible for raising and socializing children. However trends, such as the changing nature of work, education, urbanization, migration as well as new technologies and climate change have impacted on families.

**16 May**

### International Day of Living Together in Peace



Living together in peace is about accepting differences, social justice, working for the common good, and the ability to listen to, recognize, respect and appreciate others. The day focuses global attention on the ongoing need to promote and work for peace, tolerance, inclusion, peaceful resolution to conflict and solidarity.

**16 May**

### International Day of Light

The day seeks to strengthen scientific cooperation amongst scientists, professionals, countries and ultimately across the world, in order to harness science for the common good of all humanity, not just for profits. The day coincides with the first successful operation of the laser in 1960 by physicist and engineer, Theodore Maiman.