



# ANC TODAY

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## Conversations with the **President**



# **Opening Address by the ANC Secretary General, Comrade Fikile Mbalula to the ANC Veterans' League 3rd National Conference**

### **Introduction**

**I**t is indeed an honour to stand in front of you as we open this third conference of the ANC Veterans' League. This is indeed an important occasion. An organization as old as the ANC has over the years had many comrades who qualify and have earned the accolade to be referred to as veterans.

Over the decades since its founding in 1912, the ANC has produced leaders and members whose lifelong service to the movement is not only worth celebrating but also serve as our moral compass.

The ANC constitution describes an ANC Veteran as an:

"ANC member 60 (sixty) years of age or older, who (has) served the ANC and the movement over

an unbroken period of 40 (forty) years."

Accordingly, a veteran of the ANC is someone who has given the better part of their life to the work of the ANC, to the service of the people of this country and the international programmes championed by the organization particularly in the African continent.

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In the context of life in a post-apartheid South Africa, it might be easy to think of the life in the struggle against apartheid as a rumination on a bygone era, a nostalgia. This, as you know comrades is furthest from the truth.

You know, not only from books, but also from your own life long experience the price that all freedom fighters had to pay to end apartheid colonialism.

You remember as you spend time with your children and grandchildren, the pain of solitary confinement, the pain of torture and interrogation, the difficulties of armed confrontation, underground and spells of imprisonment, the collective price we paid for the freedoms we enjoy today.

It was the 52nd National

Conference in 2007 that enjoined us to establish the Veterans League of the ANC. As we assemble here today, we may as well say that that task has been completed. We are here today to meet and consolidate the work of building the ANC Veterans League.

On behalf of the Officials and the National Executive Committee of the ANC, we would like to take this opportunity to congratulate and to thank Cde Dr Snuki Zikalala and Mam Natso Khumalo and the entire National Task Team for a job well done.

As the moral compass of the organization, you duly participate in the work of the organization in order to guide against the pitfalls which from the vantage point of your lived experience could easily be understood and appropriately attended to.

Economic outlook We meet here today against a backdrop of changing economic outlooks both from the domestic and global contexts. Both our economy and the global economy have just emerged from one of the worst challenges occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been compounded by the geopolitical conflicts involving Russia, Ukraine and to some extent NATO.

Comrades, we have nonetheless made serious strides in the last 7 months to turnaround the economic situation in our country and some of the positive results are beginning to show results. In June, Statistics SA reported that the economy is operating in positive terms and was growing at the modest rate of 0,4%. Similarly, Consumer Price Inflation fell to 5.4% in June from 6,3% in May.

Yesterday, 27 July 2023, Statistics South Africa further reported that the Annual Producer Price Inflation fell to 4,8% in June from 7,3% in May and the overall Producer Price Index fell by 0,3% month-on-month. This means that the cost of producing goods in the country is beginning to fall sharply.

Both these trends in Producer Price Inflation and Consumer Price Inflation are positive indications that we are beginning to turn the curve in terms of stabilising the cost of living. This trend tells us that we are at the end of the current cycle of a sharp rise in the cost of food in the country.

One of the main focuses of our work since January has been to tackle the crisis of loadshedding. This is because energy availability has significant implications for economic productivity, price stability, job stability and expansion, provision of healthcare services as well as safety and security.

We have seen good improvements at Eskom so far. Already the severity of loadshedding has fallen a great deal as we see improvements in plant performance across Eskom. More work remains to be done to raise the availability of energy to levels equal to and beyond the levels of national demand for electricity around the clock. We are convinced that we can put loadshedding behind us by the end of December 2023 if comrades in government remain true to the Energy Action Plan adopted by the ANC NEC in February 2023.

Similarly, we have done some commendable work in improving

our logistics network. Earlier this month Transnet reported the completion of the Mamathwane crossing loop in the Northern Cape 30 days ahead of schedule, unlocking extra rail capacity for manganese exports. This rail extension is poised to take an estimated 40 540 trucks off the roads per annum.

This is good for reducing the volumes of manganese to be transported, reduce the damage caused by volumes of trucks on our roads infrastructure and essentially reduce the costs of transportation.

We have to sustain and accelerate this performance to improve especially the railway system in the country. This is important for both goods and passenger transportations services as critical levers of lowering the cost of living in South Africa.

Similarly, the South African Reserve Bank announced last week that it is keeping the Repo Rate unchanged at 8,25%.

This was in recognition of the improvements in both global and domestic goods inflation, as well as the relative improvements in energy supply that have led to improved productivity in the economy.

Importantly, the Reserve Bank warned us that we must sustain improvements in especially energy supply and the logistics system as these two factors pose medium to long-term risks to our inflation outlook. Disruptions in electricity supply and weaknesses in the logistics network for the transportation of goods impose

unnecessary additional costs to the business sector and these costs are inflationary as they are factored into the final price of goods that the public must pay.

As a matter of fact, as the ANC we agree with this perspective and have called on all our comrades in government to continue working tirelessly to improve electricity supply and the logistics systems. This brings into sharp focus the strategic role of State-Owned Enterprises such as Eskom and Transnet in the economic life of our country. Their functionality, credibility and optimal performance is a strategic task that all of us must treat with seriousness. Their continued improvement will assist improve the domestic outlook in inflation risks and help all of us avoid the negative impact of rising costs in the economy.

A stable supply of energy and an ease of goods transportation are important aspects of keeping the cost of producing goods in the economy low and are therefore critical to our pushback against inflation. Success in these two critical areas will also force the Reserve Bank to start lowering interest rates in the medium term to ease the debt burden on households and encourage greater consumer demand to stimulate economic growth.

State of the organisation In the 2012 National Policy Conference, former Secretary General Cde Gwede Mantashe presented a Diagnostic report on the state of the organization. The report said that there was:

- “Blurring of the common

purpose for the cadres of the movement

- The growing trust deficit between the people and their movement
- The decline in the ethics, values and traditions of the movement
- The impact of the perception of the ANC as entirely corrupt
- The poor quality of the branches and the membership in general
- The decline in the ideological outlook of the movement
- Divisions and factions that have become a seemingly permanent feature of the movement
- Rapid collapse of the organisational discipline
- Low levels of trust among comrades
- Failure to focus on solutions”

In the 54th National Conference we reiterated the resolution of the 53rd National which called upon us to embark on a process of renewal. We recalled that:

“The 53rd Conference affirmed an urgent need for renewal, which at its centre is about building the ANC’s resilience, enhancing its transformative and governance capacity and its ability to adapt to changing situations so that it can continue to serve, organise and lead the people.”

We would like to report to this conference that this program of renewal is on track. This program has been anchored on the following pillars:

1. ANC as the centre of all the work for transformation both inside and outside the state,
2. Clear and unambiguous stance

on the ethical behavior of ANC members and leaders,

3. Organizational building and Political Education,
4. ANC as the centre of transformative work both inside and outside the state.

Since the 55th National Conference in December 2022, we have insisted that the centre must hold. It is our view that as a collective we are responsible for the implementation of all the resolutions that we took in the 55th Conference.

To ensure that this is the case we have constituted and tightened the terms of reference of the NEC subcommittees to ensure proper oversight on the work of government as well as capacity to influence society more broadly. We have insisted that the chairperson and deputy chairperson of the NEC subcommittee cannot be the deployee in that area of work. No comrade can and should supervise him or herself.

In the same vein, we have sought to assert the integrity of the organizational views and perspectives of the movement. We have had to deal decisively with some of our deployees who seem to see their work as an unending jamboree where everything goes.

That is why those who defied the instructions of the movement had to reckon with the fact that the patience of the movement is not unending. They had to realize that the organizational culture of the movement is drawn from the revolutionary concept and practice of democratic

centralism.

There is space for democracy but when a decision is taken the majority view obtains and in instances where an upper structure has taken the decision, lower structures have to and must comply.

Those who do not understand these epithets are yet to understand the African National Congress. And in all fairness, this principle is practiced in all democratic organizations, political and otherwise, for the obvious reason of organizational coherence.

Clear and unambiguous stance on the ethical behavior of ANC members and leaders

Over the past period and as part of addressing the problems that were identified in the Diagnostic Report, we have strengthened our approach to address delinquent, unseemingly, and unethical behavior within our ranks. We have taken steps to protect the ANC from such acts.

Any comrade who has been charged in a court of law must step aside. Any comrade whose action might undermine the standing of the ANC must explain him or herself to the Integrity Commission of the ANC. We have also strengthened the work of the Disciplinary Committee.

To deal with nomination disputes, gatekeeping, etc, we have allowed and encouraged the use of the National Dispute Resolutions Committee. For those unhappy with the outcomes of these bodies there is the National Appeals Committee.

In other words, we are strengthening the mechanisms to self-govern the organization and to do so strictly. We have done our best to deploy the best and most senior comrades from the movement to execute these tasks.

**Organizational building** Since our 55th National Conference, we have sought to strengthen the organization. Firstly, the conference agreed to increase the number of elected national officials from 6 to 7 to increase the capacity of the leadership. Secondly, the NEC agreed to appoint 5 full-time NEC committee members to oversee on a full-time basis the critical areas of policy and research, organization and membership, mobilization and elections, political education and training, publicity information, and communication.

This is to ensure that elected NEC members have the primary responsibility to oversee the work of the organization on a full-time basis. As you are aware comrades, we implement conference resolutions through NEC subcommittees. Having a fully-fledged Policy, Research, and Monitoring Department enables the organization to effectively monitor and guide the various policy-implementing subcommittees to ensure that conference resolutions are implemented.

One of the primary activities of a political party in a democracy is to contest elections. By assigning this responsibility to both the 1st Deputy Secretary and a fulltime NEC member we are creating the capacity to always be in election

mode. Even in years where there are no national or local elections, we are able to oversee the work done about by-elections that are always ongoing.

We have also created and assigned an NEC member to lead Political Education and Training on a full-time basis. We are strengthening the work of the OR Tambo School of Leadership which focuses on curriculum development and the design of modules.

We have been busy inducting the newly elected Provincial Executive Structures across the country. We have inducted the recently elected National Executive of the ANC Youth

League. The same will be done with the new National Executive Committee of the Women's League. We have introduced the practice of an extra day in our NEC meetings which we use to reflect on strategic conceptual and theoretical issues facing the revolution.

You have heard in the press statements we have released on the ongoing program of NWC visits to provinces. These visits take three days. They start off with NWC visits to the regions accompanied by NEC deployees to the province. The regional meetings take a similar form to Regional General Councils. All the branches in the regions are invited including the mayors, the speakers, and the municipal managers. In these meetings, we look at both the state of the organization and the state of the local state including achievement and challenges on service delivery.

We have covered three provinces so far, Limpopo, KZN and Northwest. We have used the opportunity to confront and deal with both real and perceived problems and assisted comrades to address challenges that face them. It has helped the HQ to understand the dynamics that face our organization on the ground and address the risks that pose a challenge to the unity of the organization and the efficacy of our work.

**Organizational Renewal** We are happy to say that we are fully on the path of renewal.

For us renewal is not a pie in the sky. It is about building an organization that can execute its mission. It is about an organization of coherent members that respect themselves and respect the ethos of their organization and its traditions.

It is an organization that upholds collective leadership in which there is a synergy between a branch member and the top leadership. It is about an organization that is ideological and whose members respect and advance the values of the organization. More importantly and fundamentally it is about an organization that can oversee and direct the work of the State in pursuit of the strategic aims of the national democratic revolution, to build a people-centered society. It is our view that we are not where we would want to be yet, but we can see the envisaged future on the horizon.

**Relationship between the ANC and government** There are some who believe that a strong ANC will be overbearing to The state and may



be tempted to overreach in its relationship with the government. It is our view that a strong ANC, a strong organization is an asset to the government.

A strong organization rooted in our communities can complement the work of government. Such an organization if rooted amongst the people will be the first to see the problems that affect the people. It will be the first to see potholes on the road and the first to see the state of public facilities such as schools and hospitals. It will be the one that listens to the concerns of local businesses and formal and informal traders.

It is the duty of such a vibrant organization to raise these things with those from us who are deployed in government.

However, for us complementing government is not the same as micromanaging government. We have all the confidence in our comrades in government. We want them to do their job without having to concern themselves about a Luthuli House that is breathing down their necks. We do not support and are opposed to the micro-management of government. What we want is a routine and appropriate mechanism for our deployees to keep the movement appraised of their work and for the organization to exercise the necessary oversight.

It is in this context that now and again we will communicate with ANC deployees on issues that we feel need to be prioritized and in certain instances, we will raise our voice publicly. The ANC

cannot and should not keep quiet when society has challenges that government should be seized with it.

It is in this context that we believe something urgent must be done about the state of rail infrastructure in our country.

Currently, the predominant use of the road for freight transportation is not sustainable. It is destroying the road infrastructure and contributes to road accidents in our roads.

We call upon Transnet to pay particular attention to this challenge. Freight must be transported by rail. Period.

Everything must be done to achieve this.

#### **What we want from our veterans**

In our last NEC statement in anticipation of this conference, we said of our veterans:

"The ANC looks forward to the ANCVL serving as the moral compass of Our movement as we navigate various complex national transformation issues both on organisational and governance issues. The ANC will continue to sip from the timeless wisdom and counsel of its veterans, some of whom have been appointed into the Integrity Commission, whilst some play vital roles on various platforms including the structures of the ANC. We venerate and celebrate our veterans for the heroic role they played in our struggle and look forward to holding hands with them in the ongoing struggle to transform our socio-economic landscape".

We see our veterans as the finest products of our movement. We want them to be our place of refuge when things are tough.

A few days ago, we concluded a national workshop to address challenges of delivery at a local government level. That meeting was a response to a call from the Convener of the Veteran's League Cde Snuki Zikalala. He has repeatedly called on the ANC to pay attention to the challenges of local government. We listened.

We were particularly heartened and inspired by the presentation by Cde Mac Maharaj on behalf of the Veteran's League. That is what we want. We want advice and guidance as well as policy interventions that can strengthen the work of the movement.

We want you comrades to help us out of the problems we may stumble upon as we try to offer leadership to this great movement and great country. This high expectation presents a challenge to you as individuals. We expect our veterans to be distant from the shenanigans that those of us who are still learning may get ourselves into. We do not want to be called to intervene and solve problems at the centre of which will be veterans. We are confident that we can, and we will depend on you.

We would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the National Officials and the National Executive Committee of the ANC to wish you well in your deliberations.

We look forward to the outcomes of this conference which we know will take the movement and our revolution forward ■

# Political Report of the ANC Veterans League's 3rd National Conference

## 28 July 2023

■ By **Dr Snuki Zikalala**

I welcome you all here to the third ANC Veteran's League National Conference. We are gathered here today, nine months after we were appointed as a National Task Team to lead the Veterans' League to the conference. Upfront let me thank you all for putting your shoulder on the wheel to achieve this important milestone.

In this journey and particularly in this recent period we have also lost many veterans within our ranks and in general. Let us rise to observe a moment's silence for, amongst others, comrades:

- Sohantal Dass
- Geoff Doidge
- Phumza Dyantyi
- Nombulelo April
- Frene Ginwala
- Stephanie Kemp
- Blanche La Guma
- Beatrice Marshoff, who was the ANCVL Fundraiser in the Free State PTT
- Mziwandile Masala
- Billy Masethla
- Veliswa Mhlauli
- Mosie Moolla
- Sally Motlana
- Mbulelo Musi
- Phil Bonisile Norushe
- Juned Pahad
- Essop Pahad
- Tina Joemat-Pettersson
- Sally Senna, the former ANCVL

Provincial Treasurer in NW

Hamba kahle Mkhonto we Sizwe song

Let us welcome the recent conference of the ANC Youth League which met and elected its leadership after eight years of not having a solid structure and a credible voice of the youth.

Let us also welcome and celebrate the Women's League held its conference last weekend and elected a new leadership.

We are meeting at the end of Mandela Month where we remember and commemorate one of our greatest veterans, Nelson Rolihlala Mandela, by going out into our communities to serve them. July is also the month, where two years ago we experienced what has been called the July unrest, a week of unprecedented violent protests, looting, destruction of property and the needless loss of life. This was nothing less than an attempted counter-revolution and the instigators behind it still need to face the full might of the law. There is no home in the ANC for those who earlier this month celebrated the torching of trucks on the N3 referring to July as the month of flames.

Reflecting on the legacy of both Mandela and the more recent events in

our history makes us realise what tumultuous times we live in. One that requires leadership and wisdom. Where we have cause to celebrate what we have achieved in almost 30 years of democracy and where we have been greatly pained to witness actions that we believed would be unthinkable and which we fought so long and hard to overcome.

In this political report as convenor of the NTT, I will reflect on the political moment we are in and consequently on the role of the Veterans' League and the tasks of this National Conference.

Characterising the political moment

The political moment can be captured by reflecting on five issues.

Firstly, we are facing a democratic recession. There has been what Mcebisi Jonas has described as democratic back sliding where the democratic characteristics of a political system weaken, including when unethical leaders hijack democratic processes and contest for positions to capture power.

I would like to add that a democratic recession includes declining levels of trust in government. The well-known Afrobarometer survey in 2021 found



that only 38% of people trusted the president and 27% trusted Parliament. Two-thirds of respondents said they were happy to give up a democratic government in exchange for housing, jobs and security. And trust is lowest among young people.

This is all very worrying comrades. To address this situation, many of us were involved in the launch of the Defend Democracy Campaign. Why should we be talking about defending democracy in 2023? We should be talking about advancing democracy and people's power.

Secondly, this requires repeating although it is nothing we don't know about. We face a crisis of inequality, poverty, and unemployment which has led to our people finding their own solutions to survive which are often anti-democratic, exploitative, violent and thus harmful to others and the environment.

Our Gini coefficient is 0.63, the highest in the world. 76% of our people are chronically poor or face the threat of becoming poor. Poverty is

gendered with African women being the worst off and 22% of children going to bed hungry every night. Energy poverty and lack of supply of sufficient electricity, together with poor service delivery and an inefficient freight and public transport system have become the biggest impediments to economic growth. Apartheid's legacy, the monopoly of economic power in the hands of a few predominantly white businesses and the geo-political situation have contributed to our current socio-economic situation. So did the devastating Covid-19 epidemic.

How do our people survive in such circumstances? Some of them, unfortunately, have turned to criminal activities - they rob, hijack cars, become beholden to mafias, form cartels and construction business forums, live for months underground in illegal mines, traffic children and drugs, launder money and so on.

Comrades this is tragic. It is beholden on us to contribute to turning the situation around. We as the ANC need to do more and be more decisive in

implementing our policies in respect, particularly of land, the economy, education, health care, reform of SOEs etc. The rule of law must prevail and we have to rebuild the capacity of a caring service delivery-orientated state.

Thirdly, we face challenges of a different order, which appear out of our control, black swans, unprecedented in scale and with unknown responses and consequences such as Covid19, climate change leading to flooding, water shortages, earthquakes, cholera outbreaks etc.

However, most are a result of the damage we have done and continue to do to our ecosystems. Climate change is a result of too much carbon emissions. It has been argued that the recent earthquakes in Gauteng are due to water ingress and illegal mining activity. One can only imagine the impact of the war in Ukraine which has destroyed dams, towns and cities with women and children being displaced in their own country.

Fourthly, we face a moral crisis in



South Africa. Nowhere is this more evident than in the nature and extent of corruption. Corruption has gone beyond politicians and high-profile business persons. It has become, sadly, for many – and the poor and vulnerable – the only way they can access a place for their children at school, obtain a driver's license or a trading permit.

What is more frightening is that the Chapter Nine institutions such as the Office of the public protector, school leadership and even civil society bodies such as churches – who should provide moral and ethical guard rails for society – are broken or contested.

Fifthly and lastly, our political party environment is in turmoil, characterised by a significant decline in dynamism and democracy in all political formations, while our beloved movement is seized with internal problems and strife. We have seen opportunistic coalition building or worse with comrades assassinating each other for access to power and resources. There are allegations of vote buying in too many ANC conferences. This must be arrested and those found wanting must be disciplined by the movement.

Comrades, the strategy of deployment has become misused and abused to give those deployed access to rent-seeking opportunities. Many in the ANC no longer see themselves as servants of the people.

I would argue that one of the major reasons for the seemingly growing trust deficit referred to earlier is the increasing disconnect between the people and us as leaders. And since the ANC is the governing party, this lack of insight into the lives of our people and lack of empathy has ham-

pered progress in government and slowed down the pace of achieving a better life for all South Africans.

Having characterised the political moment, let us not be oblivious about the gains that our movement and government have made and are continuing to make. The recent developments in respect of resolving the energy crisis and in the freight and logistical sectors are welcomed. We wish the recently appointed Transnet Board well as they take over the management of this troubled SOE. We are heartened by the holding earlier this week of an ANC local government intervention workshop to turn around dysfunctional municipalities. We should also acknowledge our national leadership in government for skilfully managing the visit by President Putin to South Africa as well as pursuing South Africa's continued participation in AGOA.

### **The Role of the Veterans' League**

Many of us would rather be caring for our grandchildren or returning to our traditional homes to rest. But you have all witnessed what I have described above and made yourselves available to continue to defend and advance our struggle for the attainment of the National Democratic Revolution and socio-economic transformation through the ANC Veterans' League.

### **What then should be our response and role in these times?**

The role of the Veterans' League is set out in our Constitution. It says that the purpose is to gather together veterans who embody the organizational experience and institutional memory of the movement and the people's struggle for freedom and democracy to play an important role in reinforcing the traditions, history,

values and unity of the movement. Further, we are required to rally behind the African National Congress in the struggle to create a non-racial, non-sexist, united and prosperous society and support the ANC in the attainment of the goals and objectives of the National Democratic Revolution.

Cdes we came out of the 55th National Conference of the ANC with six priorities namely:

- Party renewal;
- Ending loadshedding;
- Economic recovery by increasing employment and investment;
- Better service delivery and the maintenance of infrastructure;
- Strengthening the fight against crime and corruption; and
- Taking action to build a better Africa.

As veterans of the movement we committed ourselves to put our shoulders to the wheel and ensure that the movement delivers on the above priorities.

In the discussions within the NTT since November, we have focused on several priorities which I believe should continue beyond this Conference.

Firstly, we have done a tremendous job in revitalising, energising and establishing credible and legitimate branch structures of the ANCVL. If Truthtruth be told, the Veterans' League was not functional and there were many complaints of gatekeeping and with no properly constituted branch structures of the ANCVL. At the provincial level, we failed to intervene authoritatively on issues that affected the integrity and dignity of the ANC.

Comrades it is only by being organised in branch collectives that vet-



erans can play a role in leading and guiding both the movement and society. Further after this Conference, we need to finalise the proper establishment of provincial structures in KZN and Gauteng, we need to set up regional structures where required and continue to build vibrant and responsive branches.

Secondly, we have been and need to continue to be at the forefront of the renewal of the ANC. This involves engaging in the battle of ideas, developing and modelling what kind of ANC cadre we want to see and in proposing concrete steps that the mother body should take and be held accountable for. We need to advise and guide the movement, particularly on issues relating to integrity, ethics and values.

We need as veterans to take a hard line on factionalism and the practice of controlling or owning members

by other members. We must push for the verification of members and the exclusion of individuals who have criminal records. All new ANC members should undertake lifestyle audits and all members, both current and new, should take the pledge of allegiance.

Thirdly, we have resolved to participate actively in resolving local issues facing our communities, including through participation in ANC branches, and community structures and guiding ANC cadres and councillors. We should advocate for monthly branch reports on the state of delivery of basic services and maintenance of infrastructure in each ward as part of branch functionality. We must ensure that there are visible interventions aimed at addressing municipalities that have operationally collapsed. This is in line with the imperative of the ANC to reconnect with the masses of our people to win

back their trust and respect as proposed by the VL NTT at the 55th National Conference.

Fourthly, we need to be involved in political education at all levels – from branch discussions to participating in provincial programmes and the OR Tambo School. We have plenty to share. Part of contributing to political education is writing up – or participating in oral history projects – recording our memories and experiences and reflecting on what lessons these experiences hold for forthcoming generations.

Next week is the beginning of August, a month when UDF veterans and stalwarts are arranging to commemorate 40 years since the launch of the United Democratic Front at Mitchells Plain in Cape Town. Under the banner of UDF40, active citizenry for accountability and transformation, activities are being arranged to reflect on our history and what les-

sons the UDF can tell us about the present. Being an active part of this initiative is part of playing a role in intergenerational political education.

And, let me add, we should be intervening in our communities to ensure proper schooling as well as encouraging our children to acquire the skills we need to revitalise our economy.

Lastly, next year is an election year for South Africa, at national and provincial levels. Thirty years after democracy, it is acknowledged within and outside of the ANC, that support for the ANC is tenuous and uncertain. However, this is not the only electoral challenge that we face. Voter registration of young people is pathetically low and voter turnout in elections has been declining, especially in respect of traditional ANC supporters.

Thus as the Veterans' League, we need to be active on three fronts. Firstly, we need to be championing and mobilising for voter registration so that members in our communities exercise their right to vote which we fought so hard for. Secondly, we need to input into the ANC election manifesto and election tactics, including positioning on coalitions as well as the process of nominating representatives to Parliament and the provincial legislatures so that the ANC is a credible party to vote for. And then thirdly campaigning for the ANC to emerge victorious as the majority party.

Comrades as we execute our role, let us do so with humbleness and humility. We have a role to play but we must be ready and willing to hand over the baton to the next generations. And in truth, there are new issues which we may not be so adept

at responding to.

The tasks of this Conference

Comrades, it has been a painstaking task to prepare for this conference. We have had to navigate the ANC membership system, verify comrades and put in place the logistics for a successful conference with limited resources. We can't allow this work to have been in vain.

We are here over the next two days to elect a national leadership that will serve us well over the next five years. This leadership must reflect the nature of the Veterans' League and be in line with our Constitution. In choosing the national leadership we must bear in mind geographic spread, we must have gender equity, even as we are all over 60, we must balance the less and more aged, and we must embrace a diversity of skills and experience. These are the criteria for the election of leadership, not who may be best placed to get access to resources.

But we are not only here to elect a new leadership. We are also here to determine a programme of action for the leadership to implement over the next five years. High on this agenda is to pursue the renewal of our mother body the ANC. There is a report from the Renewal Sub-Committee of the Veterans' League later on the Conference agenda.

Also important is to set out for both ANC members and those in the political sphere our policies and approaches to key issues facing us. The policy committee has deliberated on issues such as the energy crisis, service delivery and coalitions. Going forward we need to take positions on the universal basic income grant, the

future of state-owned entities such as the Post Office, the role of SMEs, broad-based black economic empowerment, the forthcoming procurement legislation, national health insurance and so on. We also need to articulate international solidarity with the Palestinians and other ongoing struggles for freedom and where possible follow up with practical acts.

Our success as a VL will however rest on the ongoing disciplined organisation of VL branches and structures underpinned by a workable and solid Constitution. The 2017 Conference adopted the first Constitution of the VL. A legal sub-committee has gone through this version and made amendments, some to align with the ANC Constitution such as gender parity, and others to accommodate the specific nature of the Veterans' League such as branch demarcation. Amendments to introduce regional structures have also been made. We have met the requirements in the Constitution to table amendments and thus we must leave here having finalised this important task.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I want to extend my appreciation to all of those who have brought us to this point as the VL. In particular, I would like to thank my fellow comrades in the leadership of the NTT, Comrades Mavuso Msimang, Natso Khumalo, Susan Shabangu, Moosa Ishmail, Trish Hanekom and Ilva Mackay Langa for steering this ship and ensuring that the third conference of the ANCVL is a conference of branches.

I wish you all well in the deliberations at this Conference ■

Amandla!

# Fears for Economic Sanctions against South Africa in the Aftermath of BRICS Summit in August

■ By **Sephoka David Sekgobela**

**A**re fears for economic sanctions against South Africa in the aftermath of BRICS Summit to be held in South Africa in August 2023 justified or misplaced, or, is it just paranoia? South Africa is one of important global players - politically and economically. It would be hosting the 15<sup>th</sup> BRICS Summit, and immediately thereafter, the G20 Summit in 2025. South Africa is currently the only permanent African member of the G20 and 2025 will be the first time the G20 would be hosted by an African country.

Unlike the 14th BRICS Summit that the Chinese President, Xi Jinping hosted via the video link in Beijing, President Ramaphosa has already ruled out the issue of virtual BRICS Summit. All heads of states of BRICS member countries, including the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, who has been indicted by the ICC, initially indicated that they would attend in person, before Vladimir Putin withdrew his attendance.

BRICS, particularly the supposed attendance of BRICS Summit by Russian President, was a divisive topic in South Africa due to the Russian-Ukrainian war. Others were of the view that, if South Africa would not arrest Putin on its soil, it could face economic sanctions from countries that want to see Putin arrested and tried at the ICC for war crimes. In addition, not everyone in South Africa believe that BRICS would bring about economic growth to South Africa. However, South Africa's participation in BRICS can make it become one of the world's fastest growing economies, and be able to address socio-economic triple challenges plaguing the country - poverty, unemployment and inequality.

South Africa's membership of BRICS offers both opportunities and challenges for the country. There are notable *pros* and *cons*, but the notable criticisms against South Africa's involvement in BRICS is the latter's unclear policies regarding unfair labour

practices by some of its member states like China, and the probable collapse of the local industry through cheap imports and dumping of products from another BRICS member state, Brazil. Local chicken farmers accuse Brazil of dumping cheap chicken products in South Africa, to the detriment of the local market. This, according to them, could collapse the chicken farming and lead to job losses as well.

There are also concerns that South Africa's relationship with BRICS members like Russia and China could jeopardize South Africa's international trade relations with the US and other Western countries. Why should South Africa's relationship with BRICS member countries be viewed as exclusionary to trade relations with the US and the West? Some were asking whether South Africa could withstand economic sanctions by the US and the West, given their massive investment in South Africa. The other side of that question should be, could they afford to



impose economic sanctions against South Africa, given their massive investment in South Africa? Investment is a two-way traffic, and would inflict pain to all parties. Foreign investors also need to do business with South Africa as much as South Africa does.

Economic sanctions are an effective tool to isolate recalcitrant regimes, especially those engaged in serious human rights violations. They are a powerful tool that should be applied sparingly, as the last resort, after everything has failed. What then could be the reasons for economic sanctions against South Africa – South Africa's non-aligned stance in the Russian-Ukrainian war, or, the inability to enforce the ICC warrant of arrest issued against the Russian President if he could attend the BRICS Summit in South Africa? It certainly cannot be either of those reasons.

Firstly, opting for peace, than conflict and strife, should not be punishable. South Africa's stance is simple – let us give peace a chance, and strive to save lives from all angles. In the olden school days, learners used to debate whether the pen is mightier than the sword or vice versa. In almost all instances, those who were advocating for the use of the sword than the pen lost the debates. There can never be justification for the use of violence in any situation, especially if negotiations are an option. South Africa's non-aligned stance is, being on the side of peace, and does not necessarily mean taking side of any of the warring countries. The President elaborated, "*South Africa's non-aligned stance towards the Russian war in Ukraine was not the same as taking a neutral position*".

Secondly, although South Africa is a signatory to the ICC's Rome Statute,

South Africa could not arrest the Russian President if he came to South Africa for BRICS Summit, because the government had already granted immunities and privileges provided in terms of the Diplomatic and Privileges Act of 2001, to BRICS Summit delegates, including Vladimir Putin. "*Diplomatic immunity is a principle of international law by which certain foreign government officials are not subject to the jurisdiction of local courts and other authorities for both their official and, to a large extent, their personal activities*". South Africa is sovereign state, and should not allow its founder-member status in BRICS be undermined for any reason whatsoever.

How could the South African police arrest a seating head of a nuclear power like Russia? Thus just grandstanding and cheap political point scoring. Anyway, Vladimir Putin is not coming to BRICS Summit anymore, and that does not dent the image of the forthcoming BRICS Summit or South Africa itself as the host. South Africa should now focus on successful hosting of the most important summit in the history of BRICS. It is expected that more new members could join BRICS, including OPEC countries like Saudi Arabia and UAE. Should that happen, that would be a game changer in global economy and politics, and thus the crux of the matter.

Economic sanctions against South Africa seems to be a bit far-fetched. South Africa does not need them, so are the other parties like the US and the West. South Africa is not a pariah in global politics and economy. There are many regional and international trade agreements that keep South Africa's economy afloat. AGOA is just but one of those trade agreements. Beside BRICS, South Africa is also a

member of, amongst others:

- **Southern African Customs Union (SACU)** – Comprised of Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, and Eswatini. *The main objectives of SACU as a trade organization is to promote conditions for fair competition in the Customs area, enhance economic development of the Members and promote the integration of Member States into the global economy through trade and investment initiatives.*
- **World Trade Organization (WTO)** - *WTO is an alliance of states that currently consists of 159 countries from almost all regions worldwide. All member states comprise a total area of 45.51 million square miles 117.87 million km<sup>2</sup> and about 7.33 billion people. This is 78.0 percent of the habitable area around the world and 93 percent of the world population. With an economic output of 94.399 trillion US dollars annually, they represent around 97.01 percent of the global economy. The value of all exported goods from these 159 countries was 27.116 trillion US dollars per year at last count.*
- **G20** - *(Group of 20) is an annual meeting for the leaders of the world's biggest economies (technically 19 countries plus the EU). Together these countries account for 85% of the world economy and two-thirds of its population. As of 2017, members of G20 are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union.*



- **African Continental Free Trade Agreement (ACFTA)** – A free trade area encompassing most of Africa, established in 2018 by the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, which has 43 parties and another 11 signatories, making it the largest free-trade area by number of member states, after the World Trade Organization. It is the largest in population and geographic size, spanning 1.3 billion people across the world's second largest continent. The agreement founding ACFTA was brokered by the African Union (AU) and signed by 44 of its 55 member states in Rwanda in 2018.
- **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)** - an international organisation of 38 countries committed to democracy and the market economy. OECD member countries include:

- Australia	- Finland	- Korea	- Slovak Republic
- Austria	- France	- Latvia	- Slovenia
- Belgium	- Germany	- Lithuania	- Spain
- Canada	- Greece	- Luxembourg	- Sweden
- Chile	- Hungary	- Mexico	- Switzerland
- Colombia	- Iceland	- Netherlands	- Türkiye
- Costa Rica	- Ireland	- New Zealand	- United Kingdom
- Czech Republic	- Israel	- Norway	- United States
- Denmark	- Italy	- Poland	
- Estonia	- Japan	- Portugal	

In 2007, the OECD Council adopted a resolution that led to South Africa's becoming one of five Key Partners to the OECD, along with Brazil, China, India and Indonesia.

Despite its petite economic and demographic size, South Africa is part of global international trade agreements that cannot just be ceased with a stroke of a pen. The myth that South Africa would face economic sanctions due to its non-aligned stance in the Russian-Ukrainian war, and/or its inability or unwillingness to arrest the Russian President if he came to BRICS Summit in South Africa, should be dispelled with contempt it deserves. The sooner South Africa withdraws from the Rome Statute of the ICC as per ANC's 54th Conference Resolution, the better. South Africa should never find itself in the same compromising situation again. This far, and no further.

# The 2024 National Elections and the struggle to set the National Agenda!

■ By **Mdumiseni Ntuli**

**S**tudents of propaganda are familiar with the maxim: never mind the facts; let's create a scandal! Of late, propagandists have found fertile ground in a society yet to recover from the collective national trauma of the four-year-long Zondo Commission, and frustration over the snail's pace of the criminal justice system in bringing state capture perpetrators to book.

But there are thinly disguised political elements to all this. With the 2024 national elections just around the corner, attempts by opposition forces and their milieu to liquidate the African National Congress (ANC) are on overdrive.

In this context, cannibalising the President — the face of the campaign — and his deputy becomes a prized goal. Members and leaders of the ANC had better awaken to this reality — we are fighting the toughest election since 1994. Any impression of discord amongst us is low-hanging fruit for an opposition that thinks it smells blood.

One of the commentators put the matter in these stark terms: "just

10 months before a crucial general election, you would expect the [ANC] to be a united and focused machine obsessed with extending its 29 years in office. Instead, it is still at war with itself."

In such an environment, facts, objectivity and truth are the first casualties. Here the perpetrators hide in plain sight, under a safe and convenient cover of the media as a value-free sector somehow magically unencumbered by our socio-historical experiences and, may I dare say, ideological and political commitment and how such commitment informs how practitioners frame news and commentary.

It is clear that the contest for the 2024 elections is already raging on the political and ideological field of battle. In an era of information overload and misinformation, in societal interest, we look to journalists to steadfastly remain agents of truth and critical analysis. The media's role in facilitating informed debates and encouraging diverse perspectives is crucial to ensure a healthy and robust democracy. Especially for one fledging as ours.

Activists for progressive social change would therefore be well advised to probe more carefully what is unfolding at the moment. Could it be that we are witnessing the workings of a stratagem to lure both President Cyril Ramaphosa and Deputy President Paul Mashatile, each to bend the knee and declare allegiance to certain vested interests? Whoever outmaneuvers the other would then end up a straw man, a shadow of a leader.

Indeed, some of the commentary on Mashatile as an unknown quantity, questions over what he stands for (read: is he pro-business?) and Ramaphosa as an indecisive lame duck, suggests this to be the real direction of travel.

The other trend is the hyper-vigilance of the South African public and political discourse on corruption, whereby the slightest suggestion of interactions between business and government leaders is subjected to a welter of indignation, creating a febrile social and political atmosphere.

Yet, isn't ours a capitalist economy — where government and business



cannot and ought not to avoid each other?

Secondly, for a country whose capitalist class historically developed through deliberate state support, the disposition is contradictory and as confounding as the relentless assault on Black Economic Empowerment.

It is obvious that some in our society are married to an agenda of normalising suspicion of relations between public office bearers and businesspeople, especially when the public officials are black.

Not long ago, the consensus within the commentariat held that the previous Deputy President was absent and ineffectual. Enters an active Mashatile, executing his tasks delegated by President Ramaphosa and he is immediately accused of vying for the position of President. Damned if you do, and damned if you don't, if you ask me!

But what if suggestions that Mashatile is in a hurry to become

President are intended to drive a wedge between him and Ramaphosa in order to weaken the ANC ahead of the 2024 elections?

Notwithstanding the role of individual leaders in shaping organisational and government policy trajectory, as ANC leaders, Ramaphosa and Mashatile are subject to collective party oversight; no single leader in the ANC is given a blank cheque. This will continue to be the case well after the 2024 national elections.

Our historic mission and role in shaping South Africa's democratic future underscores the urgency of internal cohesion. Petty infighting and factionalism only serve to weaken our collective strength and dilute our capacity to push back against elements which are bent on derailing the national democratic revolution. Only through cohesive collaboration and solidarity can we effectively withstand counter-revolutionary forces and advance the interests of the South African people.

Furthermore, setting the national agenda and reclaiming our role as the vanguard for progressive change will enable the ANC to restore public confidence, foster unity within its ranks, and demonstrate its commitment to shaping a more equitable and inclusive future for all South Africans.

As citizens, generally, we must not abdicate our responsibility to consume news from multiple sources, fact-check information, and hold those reporting accountable for their reporting standards.

In the meantime, we should, in the interests of accountability, free and democratic exchange of views and debate, insist on the principle of *onus probandi* — he who alleges, must prove!

Ntuli is a member of the National Executive Committee and Head of Elections & Campaign of the ANC and writes in his personal capacity ■

# Unite to Advance the emancipation of Women

## Take decisive action and unite the ANCWL to advance the emancipation of women.

■ By **Maropene Ramokgopa**

**T**he African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL) convened its 13th National Conference between 21-23 July at the NASREC Expo Centre, Johannesburg with over 3000 branch delegates and guests (including international) who participated.

The conference was convened under the theme; Advancing Decisive Action Towards the Full Liberation and Emancipation of Women". The theme requires that women think expansively about what decisive action looks like in the context of complex and challenging national and global dynamics. Underpinning these dynamics is the stubborn yet destructive patriarchal norms and values that continue to weaken and divide our call for women's empowerment.

Women taking decisive action to advance the common good is not new. In fact, women's decisiveness remains a key feature of South Africa's history, especially in the struggle for freedom. This year marks 110 years since the women's anti-pass campaign in Bloemfontein led by



**Maropene Ramokgopa, the former National Coordinator of the Women's League National Task Team (ANCWL NTT) delivering the Organisational Report at the 13th National Conference of the African National Congress at the NASREC Expo Centre, Johannesburg.**



Mme Charlotte Maxeke, which led to the formation of the first women's organization, the Bantu Women's League in 1918. We also observe 80 years since women were granted full ANC membership in its 1943 Constitution. This watershed moment was instrumental in the formation of several women's organizations, including the gallant ANCWL in 1948, the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) in 1954, the Black Sash in 1955, the Natal Organization of Women (NOW) in 1983, and the National Women's Coalition in 1991 amongst many others.

Therefore, the 13th National Conference provided a platform for delegates to take stock and reflect on the status of our organization over the past year specifically, and the past five years more broadly. In June 2023, the ANC National Executive Committee (NEC) appointed a 44-member ANCWL National Task Team after the decision to dissolve the NEC of the ANCWL that was elected during the 12th National Conference of the ANCWL in 2015.

Under the stewardship of Mam Baleka Mbete as the National Convenor of the ANCWL NTT, we have worked rigorously to; ensure the rebuilding of structures, drive effective campaigning and advocacy, and contribute to the broader mandate of the ANC to create a non-sexist, non-racial, and democratic South Africa.

At the core of our mandate as the NTT was to ensure that all organizational processes that exist must be monitored through oversight structures at the national, provincial, and regional levels. These structures were anchored on being accountable to the branches of the ANCWL.

In line with the rebuilding and renewal agenda, the conference was a place for political education and robust engagement on contemporary issues and substantive policy matters, including the ANC 55th National Conference Resolutions.

The ANCWL reaffirmed support for the resolutions, however recognizing the strategic and political action required to make the organization more decisive, resilient, and adaptive to formulate and execute a plan of action to ensure these resolutions improve the livelihoods of all women in their diversity.

To achieve this, the ANCWL must take the lead and maximize the existing legislative and policy environment, enhance institutional mechanisms that will promote equitable and inclusive practices, strengthen organizational capacity from the branch level to the national, contribute to public discourse through debate and content development, organize and lead advocacy programmes aimed at strengthening social compacts across all sectors, lobby for gender mainstreaming and responsive planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation across government, promote global and regional solidarity to tackle underdevelopment, promote equity and social justice and ensure that a more equitable international order is realized.

It is for this reason that we have a collective responsibility as members of the ANCWL to rally and support the newly elected leadership of the organization under President Sisisi Tolashe. As the biggest women's organization in South Africa, the ANCWL is able to marshal women across class, social, and racial lines to advance women's empowerment. We must be relentless in

our collective responsibility to ensure that our organization remains the mouthpiece of all women of South Africa.

As we approach the 30 years since our country's freedom, we must join the rest of the country in reflecting on our role, as the ANCWL, in advancing democracy at a political, social, and economic level. Our renewed mandate must be committed to building a battalion of women who will lead and influence decision-making processes in all spheres of society, and this must start in the ANC. The Congress Movement is faced with the mammoth task of rebuilding the hope of our branches and members.

In the words of the former President of the ANCWL Mme Gertrude Shope:

"Every generation has got a responsibility to know what its mission is. Mine was to liberate the country, what is yours."

Ours is to ensure that the shackles of patriarchy are broken, advance the political, social, and economic rights and positionality of women, strengthen the machinery of the ANCWL by building agile and strong structures, and lead, mobilize, and leverage the majority of voters being women for the decisive victory of the ANC in the 2024 elections.

Malibongwe ■

***Maropene Ramokgopa is the 2nd Deputy Secretary General of the African National Congress (ANC), Former National Coordinator of the ANC Women's League (ANCWL NTT)***



# Accelerate the emancipation of women in remembrance of Madiba

■ By **Ayanda Jam**



Our country and the world celebrated the Birthday of President Rolihlahla Nelson Mandela, an icon of the world and the first democratic and legitimate President of South Africa. President Mandela was a symbol of unity and rainbow nation. An advocate of a non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous society.

The Qunu born world icon's birthday (18 July) was declared an international Mandela day. On this day, individuals, communities and organisations took time to reflect on President Mandela's values and make positive impact in their communities. The Nelson Mandela Foundation envisions the world to unite and act decisively against the consequences of climate change and food insecurity.

Women, are the most hard-hit by these food insecurities and climate change because women carry the burden of social reproduction. Over and above that, women are affected by being part of the workforce in producing food. Women are vulnerable on all dimensions of food

security; availability, utilization and stability. Food-price spikes have negative repercussions on women as they are responsible to manage households.

Addressing the National Women's day in 1996, Madiba said "the legacy of oppression weighs heavily on women. As long as women are bound by poverty and as long as they are looked down upon, human rights will lack substance. As long as outmoded ways of thinking prevent women from making a meaningful contribution to society, progress will be slow. As long as the nation refuses to acknowledge the equal role of more than half of itself, it is doomed to failure." President Mandela appreciates that women are the most oppressed because of race, class and gender. He and his peers committed in the National Democratic Revolution (NDR).

The NDR in the main, seeks to resolve three interrelated challenges of race, class and gender. Women, are the most oppressed from these challenges. They are oppressed because of their race, class and be-

cause they are women. The emancipation of women was one of the priorities of the democratic government and the African National Congress. It committed in building a non-sexist South Africa. However, the struggle for total emancipation of women in South Africa continues to encounter hurdles and delays. This manifests itself in a number of ways in government, business, trade union movement, community structures and religious bodies.

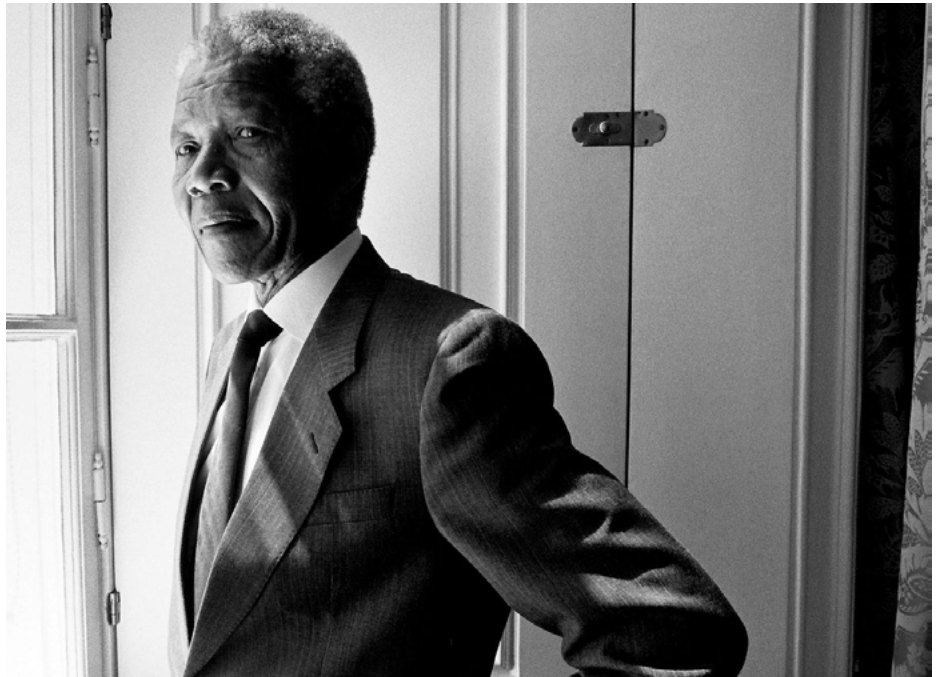
It does not appear as if we are really committed to defeat patriarchy and see women as equals to men. When women have to be elected in structures whether in the movement, government, trade union, religious and community structures, their capability is always put in question whereas when their male counterparts are never questioned as if they are born with all the capabilities. Women are seen to be good only to be elected as deputies and to make fifty percent (50%) of representation. Organisations such as the Methodist Church of South Africa and the Congress of South African Trade Unions must be com-

mended for paving the way in recognising women as equals of men in leadership by electing Bishop Purity Malinga and President Zingiswa Losi as the Head of their organisations.

There has been a debate on whether the ANC is ready to have a female President. As much as this is not surprising, it is not a debate to be had as there was never a debate on the readiness of the ANC to have a male President. This is not surprising because it is only in the 1943 conference that women were allowed to be members of the ANC, this was thirty-one (31) years after the ANC was formed. In 1948, the African National Congress Women's League was established. Seventy-five (75) years later, men still want to determine who must lead the Women's league.

Women in our country continue to be victims of a patriarchal society. There is a lot that has been done to develop female sports. South Africa successfully hosted a women cricket world cup and we are champions of the women's football in the African Continent. We are now hosts of the Netball world cup. There is however a challenge of gender pay gap that is not resolved. While Banyana Banyana was preparing to go to New Zealand and Australia for the soccer World cup, a dispute of pay was also a subject of discussion.

Gender pay gap is not the only challenge that women face in the workplace. Workplace in South Africa is not fully accommodating of the women's conditions. Women have to work while they go through a very painful first day of their menstrual cycle. Women have to wake up very early in their home because they have to prepare for their chil-



dren who will be going to school and rush back home to prepare for supper. Men want sexual favours from women in exchange of jobs and promotions in the workplace. Women in our country live to see tomorrow because of the escalation in the scourge of Gender Based Violence and Femicide. Women are on daily basis abused and killed by men.

We don't get to find a solution to this scourge. Men must start by asking, how are their Perhaps, the starting point should be to treat every man as a potential perpetrator and that they must stop this cruelty of abusing women and children. The immediate responsibility for revolutionaries in remembering Madiba is to intensify the fight against Patriarchy and create a gender equal society.

The election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as the President of Liberia paved a way for women leadership in the African Continent. Mama Charlotte Maxeke, Mama Adelaide Tambo, Mama Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, Mama Mbeki and many other hero-

ines of our struggle sacrificed their lives in fighting for the emancipation of women. This should encourage all women comrades to shape and influence the political and economic landscape of the movement and the country.

President Mandela warned us in his first State of the Nation Address in 1994 that freedom cannot be achieved unless the women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression. In celebrating Madiba, men must stop saying that they are opposed to violence against women only in podiums and start acting against oppression. The time to act is now.

Banyana Banyana and the Spar Proteas will be representing our country in the soccer and netball world cup respectively, we will cheer them to the victory. Bring it home! It is in your hands to emancipate women, end violence against women and dismantling culture of patriarchy that underlies our society■

**Ayanda Jam is a member and Activist of the ANC**

# Dikago Thebe Pule

## The Man In The Arena

■ By **Onkokame Romeo Moremi**

“The meaningfulness of a man’s life is not determined by how much he has to give. It is determined by how many hearts he has touched”

Unknown. Cde. Dikago, lived a short life but a meaningful one, many will without any iota of doubt hasten to affirm this assertion.

His life was short, but impactful and inspiring

His life was short, but full of love and empathy

His life was short, but full of wisdom and courage

His life was short, but full of frankness and integrity

Importantly, his life was short, because our aspirations and hopes had a fighting chance with him.

Cde.Dikago had immeasurable love and dedication to serve the vulnerable and downtrodden. His unflinching commitment to see the lives of our people changing for the better is something worth admiring and aspire to possess. We must all of us, if indeed we loved Dikago Pule immerse ourselves with the task of emulating him and ensure that his lifelong commitment of changing the lives of our people for the better is realized. For us to achieve this noble aspiration, Dikago Pule must multiply; we must be as committed



as he was, selfless as he was, brutally frank and honest as he was and also be empathetic, compassionate and loving as he was.

Cde Dikago lived for three (3) decades but the impact and legacy he lives behind can be likened for someone who has lived for a century. It is neither an error nor is it an exaggeration, when I say he was an exceptional human being that dedi-

cated his life to the service of others and fully understood what servant leadership is. This is affirmed by the multitudes of people from all quarters of society who are shattered by the premature departure of this true son of the soil, who fully comprehended that so long as our people are not fully liberated, none of us have the right or authority to justly claim that we are truly liberated.

Cde Dikago was an epitome of what a true comrade should be, he possessed the attributes of a true cadre of the movement. He was an honest, dependable and tolerant comrade of the Mass Democratic Movement. These are the attributes our movement is in serious deficit of, how I wish different generations in our movement can emulate this young but matured and wise comrade of the movement. He had great appreciation for divergent views and embraced comrades regardless of the views they hold.

He understood that political differences should not mean hatred of one another, he understood that telling the truth, acting honestly and ethically is revolutionary. It is by no accident that he has united all of us in grieve regardless of our subjective views or ill-feelings towards one another, he had a remarkable and unique way of getting along with everyone. It is not only his heart and soul that touched us all but his random acts of kindness and deeds drew us to him.

One of the world greatest icons Muhammed Ali once asked, for what is a MAN? "A Man is his heart! A lying cheating heart means a lying cheating man. A merciful loving heart means a merciful loving man. A living heart means a living man and a dead heart means a dead man.

Regardless of man's title, regardless of man's wealth, rank or position – if the heart is not great then he cannot be great. But if the heart is great, the man remain great under all circumstances – rich or poor, large or small" I can say without any shadow of doubt or fear of contradiction that Dikago Pule's heart was GREAT.

Cde.Dikago was The Man in the



Arena, he refused to be a spectator of a game he should be playing. He refused to be an armchair critic as many of us are, rather he involved himself greatly and daringly in the struggles of our people and in renewing the once glorious parliament of the people. He was committed in ensuring that the ANC once more becomes a true parliament of the people and a potent weapon in the hands of our people. Cde Dikago Pule as young as he was, he has played his role and his deeds gives us an account of a Man who has lived a life of purpose worthy of being honored and celebrated. He was indeed the Man in The Arena.

I must assure the Pule family, that their son was an activist and a revolutionary to the end, which has touched so many lives. We thank you from the deepest parts of our hearts for being generous enough to have shared your son with us.

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat." The Man in the Arena, Theodore Roosevelt.

You have ran your race, Goodnight Sir, Bon Voyage ; KA LERATO.....



## A Leaf out of South Africa's History

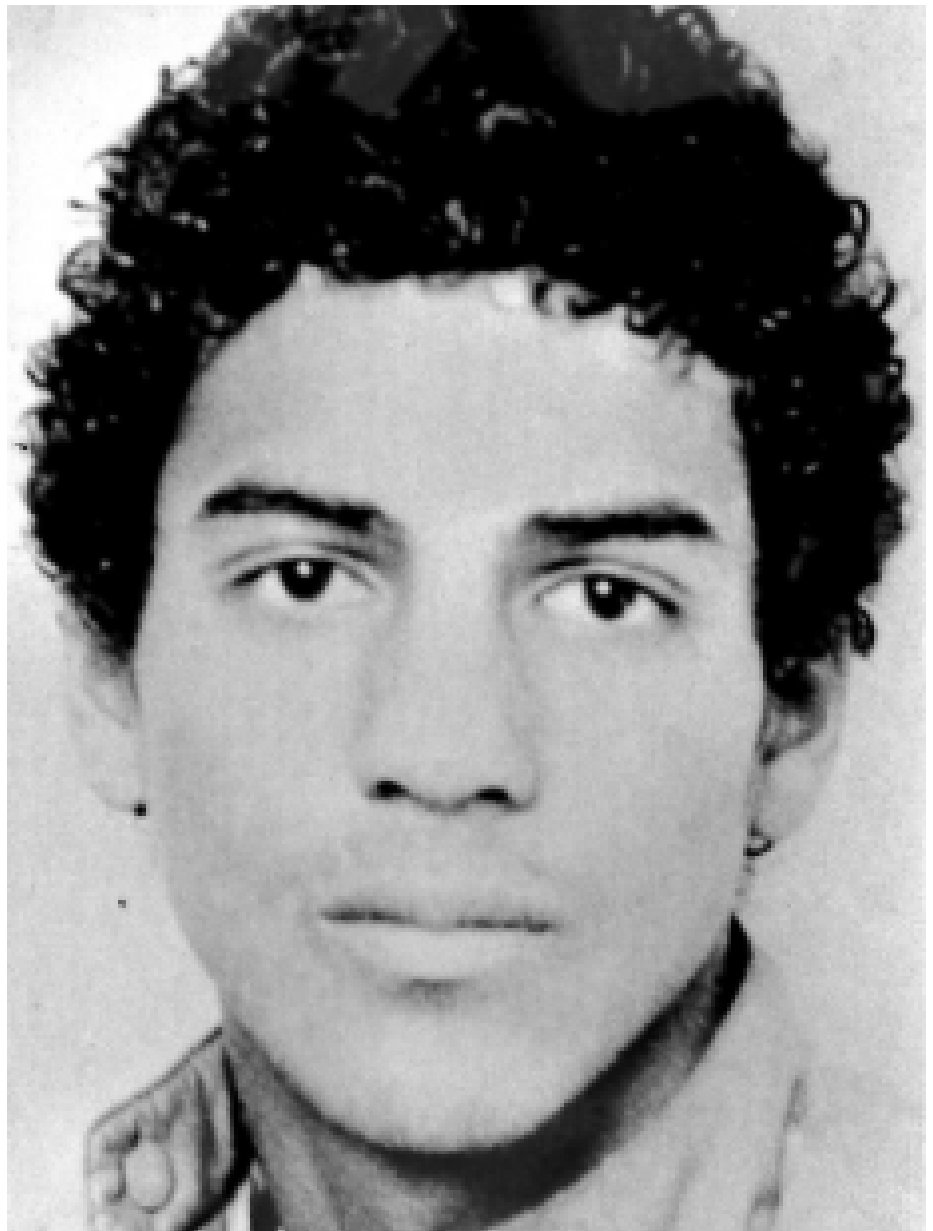
# The Western Cape's Intrepid Ashley Kriel

■ By **Castro Khwela**

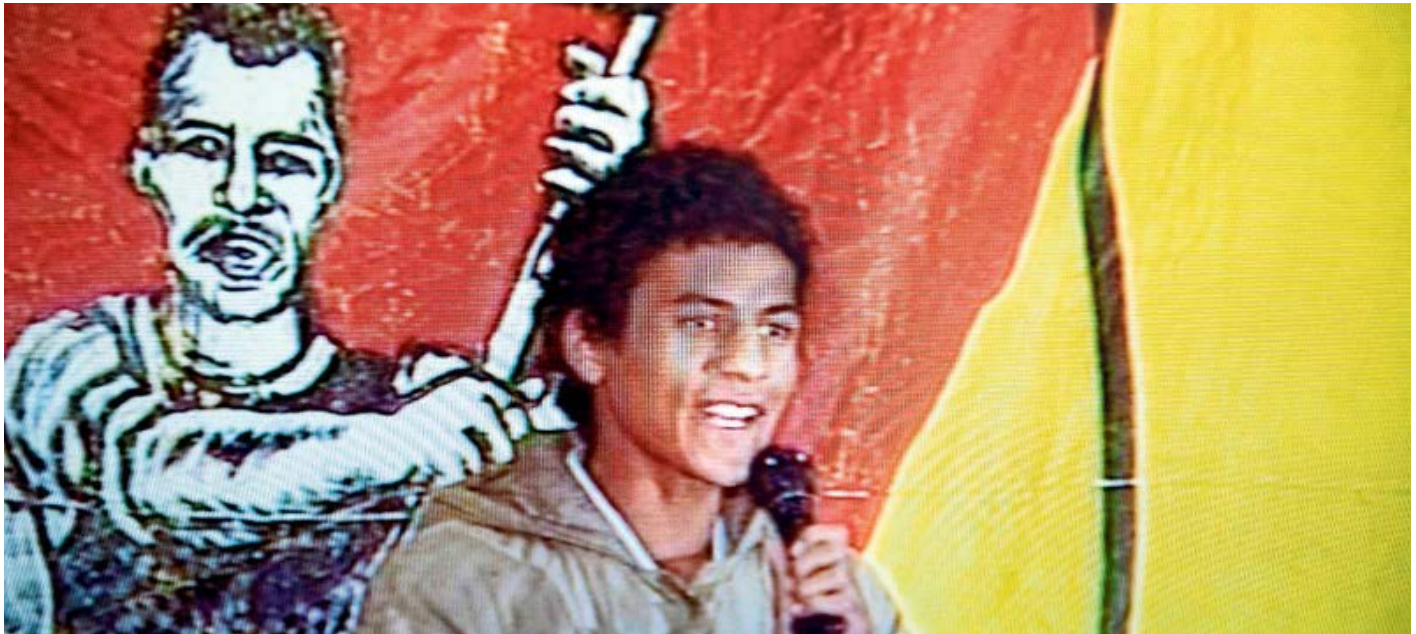


On 23 July 1989, twenty-three-year-old Coline Williams and twenty-year-old Robbie Waterwitch, of Umkhonto we Sizwe's (MK's) Ashley Kriel Unit, were killed while planting a bomb inside a public toilet across the street from the Athlone Magistrate's Court in Klipfontein Road. At approximately 21:45, an explosion at a temporary satellite police station in Mitchell's Plain caused minimal damage to the structure. Another bomb exploded at around 23:20 at the Somerset West Magistrate's Court. A man who was trying to plant a mini limpet mine was spotted by a policeman at the Bellville Magistrate's Court, who fled the scene before he was apprehended. Bomb disposal experts arrived later to defuse the device.

The magistrate courts that were targeted were earmarked to be used the following morning for the nomination of candidates for the 6 September 1989 general elections. Following these blasts in the Western Cape, Colonel Nik Heynes of the apartheid Police informed the media that the police were in-







vestigating the possibility that the incidents were part of a campaign waged by the African National Congress (ANC) against the elections.

On 5 August 1989, more than 5 000 people attended a funeral service for Williams and Waterwitch at the St Mark's Catholic Church in Bonteheuwel. Outside the church, there was a team of policemen carrying automatic weapons and teargas canisters strapped to their belts, and a police helicopter hovering above. Police began firing teargas and removing the ANC flags from the coffins. However, during the burial at the Maitland Cemetery, additional flags were smuggled past the police and placed on the coffins just prior to burial.

Subsequent to the brutal killing of MK cadre Ashley Kriel on 9 July 1987 in Athlone, activities of MK in the Western Cape began to intensify. On 25 July 1987, the Cape Times newspaper reported that it had received letter from a group calling itself the "Basil February MK Squad", which claimed responsibility for the bomb attacks that occurred in

that month in the Cape Peninsula. The group vowed to "answer racist violence with people's revolutionary violence, until the black, green and gold flag flies over the Union buildings in Pretoria".

Two days later, the London Times newspaper reported that the Basil February MK Squad declared that by its actions it was "honouring our late commander and leader Comrade Cassius Make, Ashley Kriel and all the heroes and martyrs of our struggle". Meanwhile, in Cape Town, a female MK soldier, Shirley Gunn, met Aneez Salie, who was her comrade in the MK underground, and they decided then to combine their units as a tribute to the recently murdered MK cadre, which they decided to call the "Ashley Kriel Unit".

Shirley Gunn, who was recruited into MK in 1984 by Leon Meyer – killed in the Maseru Raid in December 1985 – on 23 April 1986 entered Botswana on her way to undergo military training. On 12 June 1987, Gunn was infiltrated back into South Africa, as she was being

deployed to the Western Cape, after completing her military training in Angola. On 28 September 1988, Sidney Hendricks, Vanessa November and Coline Williams of the Ashley Kriel Unit, which was headed by Shirley Gunn and Aneez Salie, planted a mine at the Bonteheuwel Rent Office's front door, which shattered windows and tore off the office's roof tiles. Ultimately, On 25 June 1990, while Shirley Gunn was visiting the Karoo, with her family, she was arrested on trumped-up charges of her involvement in the Khotso House bombing.

The Ashley Kriel Unit was among the most successful in the history of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK). The geographic spread of their operations was far ranging, with seven units having carried out more than 30 operations between 1987 and 1990. The success of the Unit may be attributed to the fact that different members were trained inside and outside South Africa, some as far as Cuba.

"Salute to the Ashley Kriel Unit!" ■

# THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

**29 July - 4 August 2023**

Source: SA History Online, O'Malley Archives and The Africa Factbook

## ■ 29 July 1505 Portuguese invaders destroy Swahili city

Kilwa Kisiwani was one of the great East African Swahili cities, and was destroyed by Portuguese invaders. In 1981 the island was declared a UNESCO world heritage site.

## ■ 29 July 1921 Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) founded

At a public meeting held in Cape Town, attended by thousands of mainly Coloured workers, Bill Andrews announced the establishment of the CPSA, and its aims and objectives. Its founding congress followed shortly, from 30 July – 1 August 1921. The CPSA was formed mainly by radical white worker leaders and socialists, inspired by similar communist and Marxist parties in Europe. The first CPSA executive included was CP Tyler as Party chairperson, Bill Andrews as general secretary and SP Bunting as treasurer. By 1928, the CPSA and ANC started overtures to work together. The SACP was relaunched as a legal organisation on the same day in 1990, at a rally of over 45,000 people in Soweto. An interim leadership, the SACP named a 22-member interim leadership core to work on recruitment and building legal SACP structures, after decades of illegality. Members of the ILC included Joe

Slovo, Dan Tloome, Chris Hani, Ronnie Kasrils, Sydney Mufamadi, Chris Dlamini, and Moses Mayekiso.

## ■ 29 July 1931 Botanist George C Clerk born

The pioneer of botanical science in West Africa is born in Accra, Ghana. Clerk published over 250 papers particularly in plant pathology, influencing agricultural, forestry and conservation policies in the region. His study of fungi that attack cocoa beans helped West African cocoa farmers.

## ■ 29 July 1960 Dr Salim Abdool Karim born

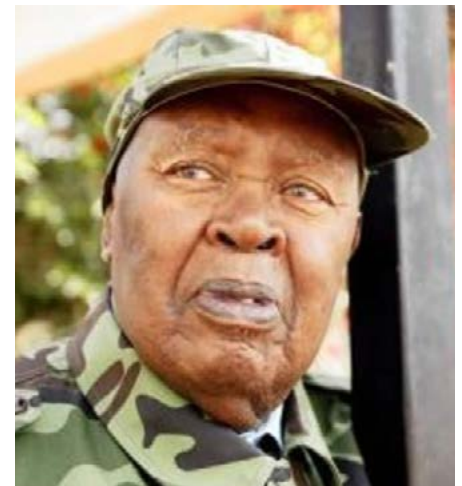
South African scientist and public health specialist, was born in Durban. Karim worked as epidemiologist and infectious disease specialist, especially on the HIV and COVID-19 pandemics.

## ■ 29 July 1990 Monrovia Church Massacre prompts ECOWAS intervention

In the single worst atrocity during the Liberian Civil War, 600 people were killed in a church in the capital Monrovia by soldiers loyal to President Samuel Doe. Only a few children survived hiding under the bodies of slain adults. The massacre pushed the Economic Commu-

nity of West African States to send an intervention force to Liberia.

## ■ 30 July - 31 July 1967 Luthuli Combat Detachment and the start of Wankie campaign



The 'Luthuli Detachment', made up of units of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) operatives, and the Zimbabwean African People's Union (ZAPU) guerrillas, crossed the Zambezi River from the Zambian banks of the river into Rhodesia (now known as Zimbabwe) on 30 and 31 July 1967, at the start of the Huange (Wankie) and Sipolilo battles which continued until late 1968. Fearing possible leakage of information to the Rhodesian and South African Forces, the area where the crossing was to take place was kept secret until the day of the event. The primary objective of this operation was to

march across Rhodesia to South Africa to set up underground operations to politically mobilise South Africans in different sections of the country. The other mission was to set up military bases, together with ZAPU forces, in north-eastern Rhodesia. The operation became known as the Huange campaign, after the Huange Game Reserve, where the ANC and ZAPU guerrillas infiltrated into Rhodesia.

■ **30 July 1947**  
**Passing of ANC Youth League first President, Anton Muziwakhe Lembede.**



Teacher, lawyer, activist and the founder and thinker of Pan Africanism, Lembede suddenly died at the age of 33 in Johannesburg. At the time of his death, Lembede was doing his doctoral thesis through UNISA.

■ **30 July 2012**  
**Works starts on iconic Gita Dam Residence**

The iconic 1500sm house is built on top of a granite rock, overlooking a large man-made dam, or reservoir for the extensive surrounding farmland.

■ **31 July 1894**  
**South Africa-Mozambique borders drawn**

The Transvaal-Portuguese Commission begins work on drawing the boundaries between South Africa and Mozambique, with implications for the borders of Eswatini.

■ **31 July 1945**  
**Germano Almeida born**

Cabo Verdean publisher and author Germano Almeida was born in Boa Vista on this day. Almeida founded two literary magazines and a publishing house, and has written historic novels adapted into films.

■ **31 July 1969**  
**Albertina Sisulu banning orders renewed.**

On 31 July 1969 Albertina Sisulu, had her banning order renewed for another five years after the expiry of a previous one. Reasons for the renewal included her activism in the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) and the then banned ANC. As part of her banning orders, she was also placed under house arrest. Ma Albertina Sisulu became the longest South African person under banning orders.

■ **31 July 2007**  
**Joint AU-UN Darfur Mission**

To prevent genocide in the war-torn Darfur region of the Sudan, the African Union and United Nations partner in a joint peacekeeping mission, the UNAMID Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). It is the first joint peacekeeping mission, and largest, at one point comprising close to 2000 military personnel, 3 772 police, and a further 3000 other personnel. The mission finally withdrew from Sudan in 2021.

■ **31 July 2018**  
**Namibia second largest intra African trade**

Namibia is Africa's second largest trading partner with other African countries, accounting for 6% of all inter-African trade, reports the World Bank. South Africa accounts for 26% of all intra-African trade, with Nigeria at number 3, accounting for 4.5% of continental trade. Namibia's second position is significant, given its small economy.

■ **31 July 2019**  
**Mosquito lab opens in Kampala**

A new laboratory in Kampala, Uganda opens to breed genetically modified mosquitoes, which will breed with and sterilize malaria-bearing mosquitoes. Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mali have joined the project.

■ **1 August 1876**  
**Sekhukhune defeats the Boers**

Sekhukhune I, King of the Bapedi, successfully resisted the Boers during a protracted Boer/Bapedi land ownership war. On 16 May 1876, the Volksraad of the South African Republic declared war on Sekhukhune and his followers. A Boer commando under President T.F. Burgers, armed with 7 pounder Krupp guns, reached the Bapedi stronghold on 1 August. The Bapedi, also armed with rifles, offered stiff resistance and inflicted a humiliating defeat on the well-armed Boer force.

■ **1 August 1936**  
**Official Launch of SABC**

In 1934, General James Barry Munik (JBM) Hertzog, prime minister of South Africa, ordered an official investigation into all aspects



of Broadcasting in South Africa. The investigation ultimately led to the formation of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), under Act 22 of 1936. The broadcasts of the African Broadcasting Company (ABC), which was formed in 1927, ceased and the broadcasts from the newly formed SABC began.

■ **1 August 1957**  
**Author Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa born**

Mozambican writer was born in Inhamainga, winner of the 1990 Grand Prize for Mozambique fiction for his novel *Ualalapi*. The novel is on many lists of the 100 Best African books of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

■ **1 August 1973.**  
**Treaty establishing CARICOM signed**

The Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) was established by the Treaty of Chaguaramas, which was signed by Barbados, Jamaica, Guyana and Trinidad & Tobago and came into effect on August 1, 1973. Subsequently, the other eight Caribbean territories joined CARICOM.

■ **1 August 1985**  
**Victoria Mxenge Assassinated**

Victoria Nonyamezelo Mxenge was a human rights lawyer, a former nurse and UDF activist and leader. Mxenge was murdered on 1 August 1985 in her home in Umlazi Durban, to silence her crusade on behalf of her people against injustices. Shortly before her brutal slaying in front of her children, Victoria Nonyamezelo Mxenge spoke at the funeral of the Cradock Four. A leader of the Natal Organisation of Wom-



en, the UDF and Release Mandela Committee, as a lawyer she fought for the rights of those denied their human dignity. At the time of her brutal death, she was also one of fifteen United Democratic Movement team members facing trial for treason, was part of the defence team of the Pietermaritzburg Treason Trial, and represented the families affected by the cross border raids by the regime at Matola and Lesotho. Mam Mxenge's assassination happened nearly four years after the assassination of her activist husband Griffiths Mxenge in November 1981. A year later, on 1 August 1996, students from Claremont, King Williams Town and Chesterville staged a protest on the day of the commemoration of her assassination. Although one of her murderers admitted to the killing during the TRC hearing, none of those in the security branch who ordered her killing applied for amnesty or were prosecuted. Victoria Mxenge was awarded the Order of Luthuli posthumously in 2004.

■ **2 August 1989**  
**Mass Democratic Movement starts Defiance Campaign**

After nearly a decade of country wide popular mass uprising, boycotts and strikes against apartheid, and four years of a state of emergency, the Mass Democratic Movement, of which the UDF and COSATU were a part of, embarked on a national Defiance campaign to defy apartheid laws, similar to the campaign led by the Congress Alliance in the 1950s. The campaign challenged segregation laws on beaches, hospitals and other facilities, as well as detainees going on hunger strike, and activists breaking their restrictions and banning orders.

■ **2 August 1894**  
**Transvaal Republic tries Chief Malebogo**

A council of war tried Chief Malebogo for refusing to allow his people to pay hut taxes and waging war against the Transvaal Boers in defence of his autonomy. Although he was never sentenced, he was kept in jail as a prisoner of war and his followers were indentured in different districts for five years, after which they were settled on a government location. Chief Malebogo languished in prison until 1900, when the British authorities allowed him to return to his people during the South African War (Second Anglo Boer War).

■ **2 August 1983**  
**Writer Davina Ittoo born**

Ittoo was born in Quarte Bornes, and was at the forefront of a new generation of writers from the island state of Mauritius. She won the 2015 Prix Jean-Franchette for her short story *La Proscrite* and in

2019 won the Prix Indianocéanie for her first novel *Misère*.

■ **2 August 2003**  
**Mkaba Bridge opens**

The bridge in Tanzania, spanning the Rufiji river is 970 meters long, one of the longest bridges in East and Southern Africa opens.

■ **2 August 2019**  
**Walvis Bay expanded port opens**

The Walvis Bay, Namibia port tripled its shipping capacity, to provide Southern African countries an Atlantic Ocean alternative to the port of Cape Town.

■ **3 August 1934**  
**Jonas Savimbi born**



Angolan rebel leader was born in Munhango. As head of UNITA, he pursued civil war in Angola from the time of national independence in 1975, till his death in 2002, which effectively ended three decades of war.

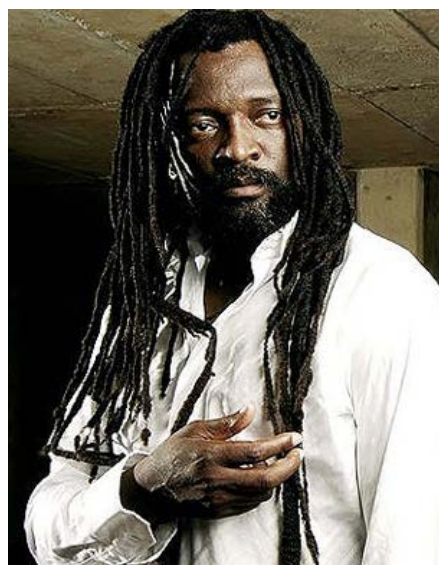
■ **3 August 1946**  
**Artist Cyprian Shilakoe born**

Cyprian Mpho Shilakoe, South African artist who studied under Azaria Mbatha at Rorke's Drift. Shilakoe was known for his wooden sculptures and etchings. One of his famous etching works was called *Loneliness*. In a short art career of just over four years, Shilakoe was prolific, with an estimated 80 prints and a number of sculptures. He died tragically in a car accident in September 1972.

■ **3 August 1959**  
**Dock workers strike in Guinea Bissau**

A dock workers strike in Bissau was the first action of the liberation, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde. Portuguese police respond with deadly force, killing more than 50 workers.

■ **3 August 1964**  
**Lucky Dube born**



South African and Africa's best-selling reggae performer was born on this day in Ermelo, Mpumalanga.

■ **3 August 1964**  
**Oosthuizen family perishes down sinkhole**

The entire Oosthuizen family, husband, wife, three children and domestic worker died when their home in Carltonville disappeared into a sinkhole. This also affected neighbouring houses, but other families escaped, some climbing through windows.

■ **3 August 1981**  
**The Ennovator born**

Kenyan record producer Tim Rim-bui was born in Nairobi. He is considered one of East Africa's leading producers in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. The "Ennovator" has worked with the region's top singers and songwriters, specializing in urban sounds with a focus on Afrobeat and R&B.

■ **3 August 2012**  
**Caster Semenya wins Gold**



South Africa's Caster Semenya wins the women's 800 meters to take gold at the Summer Olympic Games in London.



■ **4 August 1963**  
**African Development**  
**Bank established**



The AfDB was established as 23 African countries signed an agreement to join and support the institution that would provide financing to governments and private sector for development projects on the continent.

■ **4 August 1967**  
**South Africa introduced**  
**compulsory military**  
**conscription for whites**

The Defense Amendment Act came into force, under which every young white male over the age of 16 years became liable for military service. Conscripts formed part of the SADF and their services were largely used to uphold the apartheid regime. They fought against liberation movements in Angola, Namibia and Mozambique, and were often deployed to townships to quell anti-apartheid action. In 1983, the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) was formed to end compulsory military service. By 1985, the ECC held a "Troops out of Townships" campaign, in which the White dissatisfaction with apart-

heid and conscription was made clear. The government banned the ECC in 1988. In 1993, the end of conscription was announced. The SADF was replaced by the South African National Defense Force (SANDF) in 1994.

■ **4 August 1996**  
**Josiah Thugwane wins**  
**Olympic Gold**



Josiah Thugwane became the first Black South African athlete to win an Olympic gold medal award by winning the marathon in Atlanta, Georgia. Josiah Thugwane was born on 15 April 1971 in Bethal, Mpumalanga. From humble beginnings, having no schooling, yet he rose to become an internationally celebrated and respected athlete. A former soccer player, Josiah was a speedy striker, but too small to make it as a professional player, his childhood dream. At the age of 17, while watching a TV programme that featured iconic distance stars Matthews Temane and Xolile Yawa, he decided that running was the future for him. His first move was to enter a half-marathon. He won, taking home R50.00 as the winner. "That was it: I knew I was a runner and this was my way out". In 1988, Josiah ran away from a farm to pur-

sue his dream of being a marathon runner. In 1989, he found work as a kitchen cleaner in a mining company in order to run under the mining club. He ran more than 50 marathons over the next five years, before realising that through hard training and a focus on select international events, he could reap much greater rewards. His first win in an international race came in 1995 at the Honolulu Marathon in Japan. 1996 was his best year ever in his running career. He won the Old Mutual national championships in Cape Town, which qualified him to go to the Atlanta Olympic Games in the United States of America. He won a gold medal during the Olympics in Atlanta, and became the first South African to win gold after South Africa was readmitted into international sports. Thugwane received the national order of Ikhamanga in Silver. ([www.thepresidency.gov.za/national-orders/recipient/josiah-thugwane-1971](http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/national-orders/recipient/josiah-thugwane-1971)).

■ **4 August 2014**  
**First US-Africa Leaders**  
**Summit held in**  
**Washington**



The Summit, hosted by President Barack Obama was the largest meeting ever between a US President and African leaders ■

# INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

**25 - 28 July 2023**

**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)

## ■ 29 July

### International Tiger Day

Tigers are found in thirteen Asian countries and are an endangered species. They are endangered due to loss of habitat and degradation, poaching and conflicts with humans. International Tiger Day was founded in 2010, in order to raise awareness of their plight, and to launch the campaign by 13 countries to double the number of tigers by 2022. Tigers are protected species under CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

## ■ 30 July

### International Day of Friendship

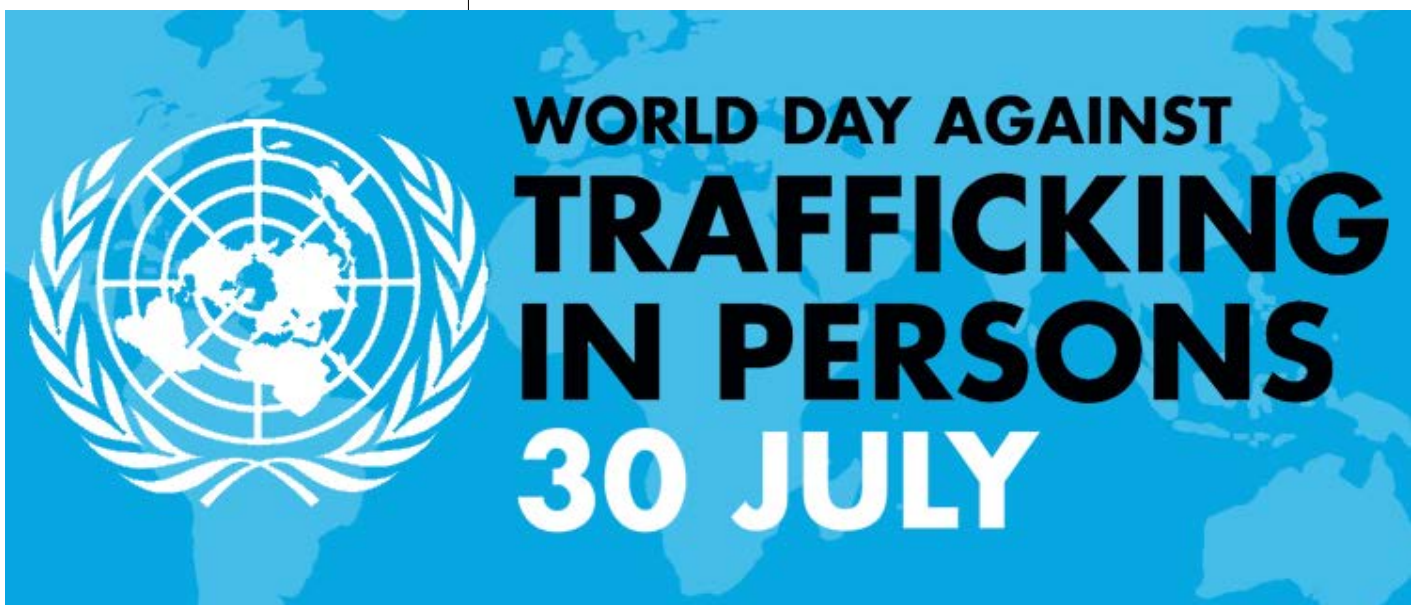
Our world faces many challenges,

crises and forces of division — such as poverty, violence, and human rights abuses — among many others — that undermine peace, security, development and social harmony among the world's peoples. To confront those crises and challenges, their root causes must be addressed by promoting and defending a shared spirit of human solidarity that takes many forms — the simplest of which is friendship. Through friendship — by accumulating bonds of camaraderie and developing strong ties of trust — we can contribute to the fundamental shifts that are urgently needed to achieve lasting stability, weave a safety net that will protect us all, and generate passion for a better world where all are united for the greater good.

## ■ 30 July.

### World Day against Human Trafficking

Human trafficking, also called 'modern slave trade' is a crime that exploits women, children and men for numerous purposes including forced labour and sex. Globally countries are detecting and reporting more victims, and are convicting more traffickers. This can be the result of increased capacity to identify victims and/or an increased number of trafficked victims. Every country in the world is affected by human trafficking, whether as a country of origin, transit, or destination for victims. Traffickers the world over continue to target women and girls. The vast majority of detected victims of traf-





ficking for sexual exploitation and 35 per cent of those trafficked for forced labour are female. Conflict further exacerbates vulnerabilities, with armed groups exploiting civilians and traffickers targeting forcibly displaced people. Data also shows that trafficking happens all around us as the share of persons trafficked within their own country has doubled in recent years to 58 per cent of all detected victims, according to the 2018 UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons.

### ■ 31 July

#### **Day of the African Woman**

The Day of the African Woman celebrates the first Pan African women's gathering, when women from all parts of the continent gathered in Dar es Salaam on 31 July 1962 to form what was then known as the "Conference of African Women", which later transformed into the Pan African Women's Organisation (PAWO). The main aim of the founding mothers was to establish an organisation which will ensure full and

effective participation of women in political, economic and social development in their countries, continent and the world. The day is used to reflect on how far the continent has progressed in meeting this objective.

### ■ 31 July - 5 August

#### **National Science Week**

### ■ 1 August.

#### **World Wide Web Day**

The invention of the internet is attributed to Tim Berners-Lee, a British scientist who in 1989 first conceived of the idea at CERN in Geneva, Switzerland. The idea grew out of a necessity for nearly instantaneous and automatic knowledge-based sharing between scientists across the globe. Today, the World Wide Web or the internet is used not just by scientists for information sharing and accessing information, but for connecting people. The global COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of the internet. However, it brought to sharp relief the deep digital inequality

that still exists, 32 years after the founding of the internet. According to UNICEF, more than one third of young people do not have access to the internet or to adequate devices or data, and over 2.2 billion young people do not have access to stable internet at home, making online learning inaccessible. As we therefore celebrate World Wide Web Day, we must continue to fight for digital inclusion through universal broadband access, as a basic human right.

### ■ 1 - 7 August

#### **World Breastfeeding Week**

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), "Breastfeeding provides every child with the best possible start in life. It delivers health, nutritional and emotional benefits to both children and mothers. And it forms part of a sustainable food system. But while breastfeeding is a natural process, it is not always easy. Mothers need support – both to get started and to sustain breastfeeding."





**ANCVL 3RD NATIONAL CONFERENCE, 28 - 30 JULY 2023**

