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Conversations with the
President



The review of our 2019 Manifesto was more than an assessment but also a call to action

Address by **President Cyril Ramaphosa** to the 2019 Manifesto Review
Closing Rally, 15th December 2023 (Abridged)

DURING the last three months, the African National Congress embarked on a process that is unprecedented in South Africa, especially with regards to the manner in which it was conducted. We walk together with South Africans to review the 2019 manifesto of the ANC. We launched the process at Dobsonville stadium where thousands of South Africans gathered.

Today, we wrap up this process and more emboldened that we are on the right track. Our structures, at all levels shared with South Africans the progress and setbacks in implementing this manifesto.

Most importantly, South Africans scrutinized the performance of the ANC and provided feedback that is helpful to deepen the democratic project. It is quite illuminating that many South Africans acknowledged the progress made and boldly asserted that the stewardship of the ANC in undoing the ills of apartheid remains remarkable.

Equally, the masses of our people were also clear on the weaknesses that needs to be given attention. Indeed, they were critical in areas where they felt we were slow, especially corruption, crime and unemployment. The masses of our people are unfazed by attempts to generate the tide of

despondency by our opposition. Clearly, our opposition was desperate to distract people away from issues that affected them.

Our people listened and responded to all key priorities outlined in the Manifesto of 2019, namely

1. Transform the Economy to Serve the People
2. Advance Social Transformation
3. Build Safer Communities
4. Fight Corruption and Promote Integrity
5. Strengthen Governance and Public Institutions
6. Build Unity and Embrace Diversity
7. A better Africa and a Better World



The last 30 years

The programmes we undertook in the last three months ride on the wave of success of three decades. Our distractors have shown lack of appreciation of what democracy has achieved under the ANC. Therefore, they have resorted to distortions of facts and lies. The biggest being that nothing has happened since democracy and that apartheid was better. We are not going to be afraid to state undisputed truths through facts.

Once again, the facts from various independent institutions, including the recent Census statistics from STATSA confirm that there has been tremendous improvement of lives of ordinary people, from basic infrastructure services to social services.

We refuse to ignore the 4million houses we built for our people. More than 80% of our households have electricity, improved sanitation and access to water. We have built schools to ensure access to education.

In this area of education, we are seeing improved matric results and we are looking forward to further success. The testimonies affirm the fact we also ensured that young people access funding to

further their studies at institution of higher learning through NFSAS.

Stating these successes is not denial to the fact that there are challenges and setbacks. Acknowledging setbacks and challenges is not failure. We have built capacity to confront all these setbacks, especially in the area of fighting corruption. We have put enforcement institutions to deal with illegal immigration at our borders.

The democratic government continues to make arrests of individuals involved in corruption. Two months ago, the Police Commissioner gave account of progress in this regard. We remain the only party that takes its members and leaders to task whenever they are accused of corruption.

Renewal in deepening democratic processes

We would like to assure South Africans that our structures are demonstrating stability and thus on a trajectory to multi-tasking. This is proven by the fact the manifesto review has been conducted simultaneously with processes that select candidates. This is dynamism of our structures that embrace organisational renewal.

The rigour of our organisation processes is improving alongside this dynamism. Indeed, there is room for improvement but the ANC remains unmatched in ensuring that participation of our members and people is central to our democracy.

The renewal of the movement targeted our organisational processes because these are intended to ensure selection of best cadres for responsibilities both in government and the ANC. We improved many processes whereby selection of councillors involves direct participation of the people. Currently, we have gone further to subject the Premiers, candidate MPs and MPLs to the interview processes.

Our decision on meritocracy is backed by action. As indicated by the Chairperson of Elections Committee, Cde Kgalema Motlanthe, the processes of interviewing members of the legislatures have been completed. The PECs are in the process of communicating their decisions on the lists to the public. Currently, the interviews for members of parliament are underway.

Clearly our journey in striving for excellence is incomplete and imperfect but it has started in earnest. Gone are the days whereby candidates only needed to garner votes to be elected without demonstrating any form of merit with regards to skills and expertise.

The current collective of the NEC is making strides in improving the quality of leadership and membership at all levels of the party. We are alive to the reality that these processes will take time. What is inspiring is that our structures are working tirelessly

to adapt to these new developments in the organisation.

These are part of the major practical developments in the context of our renewal programme.

Renewal through People's Participation

Another front of renewal of the ANC relates to participation of structures and members in the programmes of the organisation. We have seen increased participation of the ANC members in the programmes and campaigns of the organisation. The ANC is committed to taking this to another level.

There has been increase in campaigns that focus the nation on the Gender Based Violence. In this regard, the focus has been on raising the boy-child. We need to continue to raise levels of consciousness around GBV and all its associate ills. We were correct to declare GBV a pandemic in society.

We also ensured that we reclaim our space in the international arena. We did so through solidarity campaigns, which attracted thousands of people and structures. These campaigns are central to building solid activism, conscientizing the membership and supporters.

This Manifesto review reminded all and sundry that participation of the people in a democracy is mandatory. All the nine (9) provinces of the ANC convened successful rallies which saw thousands in attendance and venues full to capacity. All the 52 regions were also not left behind in convening these meetings.

The more than three thousand branches of the ANC ensured



that the review became a process of ordinary people whereby the voice of the voter is expressed outside the ballot box. The full to capacity attendance in all these activities successfully rebutted any suggestion that South Africans are less interested in the Manifesto review of the ANC.

When we kicked-off this process, we ensured that we hold engagements with all sectors of our society. Therefore, the manifesto review process was anchored on dialogue, discussion and conversations with experts and leaders at various fronts of our society. The voices of the women, youth, students and people with disability found expression in many of our gatherings. Leaders in the faith and religious sector used this process exceptionally well to guide the ANC. In addition, leaders in the business sector came to fore to share their observations and also provided a range of proposals.

It would be remiss of us not to mention that media platforms were also the backbone of the review process. These platforms provided feedback actively because in some instances current affairs were also in the radar. The innovation of various platforms have also filled the gap where mainstream is lacking in terms of reaching out. The ANC benefitted

a lot because the voices from unobvious corners were heard out loud and clear.

We enumerate some of these meetings and platforms to underscore the fact that this process was truly premised on our lode-star, the Freedom Charter, which articulates that 'The people shall govern'. This is part of our liberation heritage that challenges us to always involve the people in whatever we do.

We claim no perfection in the process but demonstrate our commitment to principles of good and effective governance. No democracy can be characterised outside participation of the people. The injunction of Moses Kotane that 'revolution is about the people' remains profound and relevant.

In addition, the focus on people with disabilities has improved although more still needs to be done. This is a community of just over 5million people. Earlier this year, the NEC had extensive conversation with the community. Therefore, programmes which were undertaken follow up on these fruitful discussions.

It is important that the renewal programmes is also steeped in ensuring that the members and supporters of the organisation stay engaged. Our members

CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PRESIDENT



The Year of Decisive Action
To Advance the People's Interests
and Renew our Movement

should become activists of note in their communities. This will ensure that renewal is far from being elitist.

Service delivery

During this period of the Manifesto review of 2019, the ANC also demonstrated its agility in dealing with some of the challenges that our people face. As an incumbent party, the successes and setbacks of service delivery lies on our shoulders.

Therefore, we have the revolutionary responsibility to respond to the needs of the people at all material times. It is in this context that the review process was also accompanied by strong responsiveness on the part of government, especially on issues that required immediate attention.

This process rejuvenated our deployees and consequently enabled us to also tackle some of the weaknesses that have been bedeviling services delivery at municipal level. The notion that a manifesto is a call to action was

also given a deeper meaning. The interventions by national departments and provincial governments are commendable.

In the light of the many challenges we face, we also gave attention to the non-functional electricity transformers in our communities. These transformers were blown out because of many reasons, including those of overloading them through illegal connections.

There are many areas where transformers are not functioning. However, we highlight the significance of this in Gauteng for example Soweto, West Rand and Sedibeng. In some instances, on average one transformer covers 80 households or less.

Our structures in Gauteng, in particular the provincial government were innovative and thus developed a mechanism to help resolve the challenge. Many of the transformers have now been installed in some parts of Soweto, West Rand and Emfuleni. The success of the availing transformers to many communities is

a function of sound inter-governmental relations.

The challenge of water in various areas, especially municipalities also received attention. The systemic issues are being attended. In our work of oversight, especially in Emfuleni we again experienced good efforts of state entities, departments and municipality to resolve the most pressing issues of water.

The Jozini Dam in KZN is another area of focus whereby water is now extended to ordinary people than being confined to farmers only. I had the opportunity to visit the sites and families where water is accessed directly from taps. This may seem very small but we all know that this development resolves a longstanding challenge of access to water in that area.

There is no doubt that unemployment is ravaging many young people. However national departments, provinces and municipalities have developed mechanisms to employ many young people in various programmes.



2019 MANIFESTO REVIEW

RENEWING OUR COMMITMENT TO THE PEOPLE



ECONOMIC REFORM:



ADVANCING: Minister of Electricity in the Presidency, Dr Kgosientsho Ramokgopa, working with the Eskom board and management towards **ending loadshedding.**

Amendments to the Electricity Regulation Bill, allowing **private developers to generate electricity**, have been submitted to Parliament.



The much talked about Nas' iSpani has been a major feature in Gauteng whereby more than six thousand young people have been employed as community guards. This social approach to fight crime through the 'Amapanyaza' is critical in reinforcing the organs of people's power, in particular the CPFs.

We applaud Gauteng for being more aggressive in creating further employment opportunities for the youth. Other provinces have also followed suite, a point in case is the Free State whereby the SETAs have been active in training and skilling young people in various programmes.

Clearly the manifesto review of 2019 was more than an assessment but also a call to action and ramp up what needs to be done.

The economy

During this review, our people demonstrated clarity of their understanding that this administration faced unprecedented challenges, which impacted negatively on the economy. They acknowledge interventions made during difficult times of the COVID-19 pandemic. They also acknowledge the fact that the economy is now performing now at pre-COVID-19 level.

Our engagement with the people asserted that some of the interventions during the period of COVID-19 should be continued. They asserted some of these views not only meetings but also through song and dance. The song uRamapohosa uyamthand'umahlalela expresses appreciation of the R350 Social Relief Grant.

These engagements have pro-

vided counsel to the ANC that radical socio-economic transformation should find more practical expression. There is firm belief that such a programme requires leadership with requisite skills and expertise to drive the economy. What remains inspiring is the deep sense that the ANC remains trusted with regards to providing leadership with foresight.

The high cost of living was also a matter that was given attention in our deliberations with society. The developments in the global arena, especially wars such as Ukraine and Russia exacerbated the very economically troubling environment. In the context of both global and domestic environment, the fiscus of the country has been put under pressure. In addition, the escalating costs on the country's debt is a cause for concern.

Undoubtedly, there were extensive discussions around the energy crisis marked by loadshedding. This challenge, including the situation in our ports are regarded as major sources of lackluster economic performance. These have also impacted on trade deficits and thus lowered our rankings.

In all these difficult and complex economic situations, there is a renewed commitment from various sectors, including business to work together with government and resolve the economy. We are confident that the next phase of the manifesto development will articulate some of the propositions.

The next phase

We are moving towards the next phase of our election campaign. We accept that we were pushed into election mode in province

such as Kwa-Zulu Natal. Our opponents have a plan to weaken us in those areas and thus pushed us into by-elections.

The resilience of the ANC is also marked by embracing challenges and confronting every situation. This strategy of the opposition is beginning to backfire because in the most recent by-election of ward 23 of Ray Nkonyeni, in the region of Tolomane Myayiza, the ANC won the by-election by 90%. The loud silence of the media is unsurprising.

We should continue to improve services of our people because our review process has reaffirmed the obvious that whenever we respond to the needs of the people, this is reciprocated by trust and support.

The success of our campaign depends on the unity of people and that of the ANC. When we work together with society, we overcome the most challenging situations. The ANC, as leader of society has the responsibility to build and unite the people.

We are in the festive season which requires a brief moment of rest so that we re-energise for future battles ahead. We wish you a very pleasant, restful festive season.

Amandla!



Update on the 2024 Candidate Selection Process

By the Chair of the Electoral Committee, **Comrade Kgalema Motlanthe**
at the Wrap-Up of the ANC Manifesto Review

15 December 2023

KINDLY allow me to convey comradely greetings from the ANC Electoral Committee which is a structure of the ANC mandated with the task of strengthening, promoting, defending and preserving internal democracy within the ANC, especially with respect to the selection of leaders and candidates during the electoral processes within the ANC.

Whilst the Elections Team is hard at work mobilizing our members, stakeholders, supporters and communities to vote for the ANC during the forthcoming general elections in 2024, it is all hands on deck for the Electoral Committee and its Provincial List Committees.

We are also busy to ensure that the best amongst our comrades are selected to represent our constituencies at the legislatures and parliament.

It is our firm belief that the credibility and integrity of the candidate selection process serves to reassure our supporters, members and the public in general that the ANC is on positive trajec-



tory towards renewal, rebuilding and strengthening its structures through the very stringent criteria approved by the NEC.

Since its inception in March 2021, the ANC Electoral Committee has delivered two important candidate selection processes, namely, the 2021 local government candidate selection process and the current National Executive Committee which was elected during the 55th National Conference held at NASREC in December 2022.

The ANC Electoral Committee is once again honored to be mandated to facilitate the 2024 candidate selection process in preparation for the forthcoming general elections at provincial and national levels. In its quest to ensure transparency, fairness, honesty and integrity during the 2024 candidate selection process, the NEC has approved rules and guidelines which are binding upon structures and members of the ANC.

The NEC approved the rules,



guidelines and procedures for the 2024 candidate selection process to achieve the following key objectives:

- A National list of 200 ANC candidates for Parliament.
- A Provincial to National ANC list of 5-50 candidates for Parliament per province (according to the number of registered voters per province).
- Nine Provincial Legislature ANC lists of a minimum of 30 and a maximum of 80 candidates (according to the population of each province).
- The ANC's selection of nine Premier candidates.

The ANC's candidate selection process must deliver the capacity we need to govern effectively, to oversee government delivery, to make policies and pass laws, and to represent the motive forces and sectors in society in all legislatures.

The process combines democratic branch nomination and political intervention to ensure that the ANC selects the best possible cohort of MP's/MPL's with requisite capacity and experience.

The Members of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures of the ANC are expected to have the capacity to:

1. Participate in making policies

and laws that aim to achieve the ANC's development and transformation goals and meet the requirements of the SA Constitution and existing legislation.

2. Represent the needs and concerns of the people by engaging in public participation, constituency, and sectoral work.
3. Hold government to account on behalf of the people.
4. Oversee government planning, budgeting and delivery.

The ANC has introduced the following criteria for the selection of its public representatives:

1. A minimum requirement for serving as an MP or MPL is that candidates must preferably possess a post-matric qualification and/or have the capacity, experience, education or expertise that will enable them to make a constructive contribution in the relevant legislature or executive.
2. All candidates must have completed the four OR Tambo Leadership School online modules before being registered with the IEC:
 - The History of the ANC.
 - Building an Organisation
 - Understanding Government.

- Economic and sustainable development.

3. Being ANC members in good standing at the time of nomination to the IEC.
4. Have a proven track record of commitment to and involvement in the democratic movement and/or government.
5. Have no criminal record or criminal charges brought by the NPA (this excludes political-related crimes committed before April 1994). Private prosecutions are excluded unless these result in criminal convictions by a court of law.
6. No candidate shall be eligible for nomination if he/she has been found guilty by a Disciplinary Committee for contravening the ANC Code of Conduct, and had their membership suspended for any period in the last ten years. This rule applies also where a member is awaiting the outcome of a disciplinary hearing or an appeal.
7. No candidate shall be eligible for nomination if he/she is temporarily suspended pending the outcome of a court case or disciplinary hearing.
8. No candidate shall be eligible for nomination if his or her case has been finalised by the Integrity Commission and the NEC has approved and implemented the IC's recommendation for a suspension of membership or stepping aside from leadership or public office.
9. Those who are already public representatives or members of government executives must acquit themselves well

in their performance review.

10. All candidates must agree to vetting of criminal records, and declarations of financial and other interests before final nomination.

11. Candidates must agree to lifestyle audit or other investigation by the PLC or EC.

12. Candidates must accept organisational decisions and abide by the ANC and Electoral Codes of Conduct.

13. Candidates must agree to sign the deployment contracts which bind them to be loyal to the decisions of the ANC including redeployment or recall as circumstances

such as performance or lack thereof may dictate from time to time.

The Electoral Committee has further provided the following directives on the resolution of disputes in order to ensure fairness, honesty and transparency during the 2024 candidate selection process:

Nature of Dispute	Responsible Structure	Appeals Structure	Timelines
Non-compliance with BGM guidelines	The Organising and Membership Department and, if not satisfied, then the Provincial Dispute Resolution Committee	The National Dispute Resolution Committee	Within 48 hours of the occurrence of the dispute or response from the responsible structure.
Objections based on vetting for criminal records, individual membership, disciplinary matters, step aside rule, Integrity Commission reports, qualifications verification and non-compliance with rules approved by the NEC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Provincial List Committee for Provincial lists. The Electoral Committee for the National list. 	The Electoral Committee	Within 48 hours of the occurrence of the event or response from the responsible structure.

Furthermore, we wish to emphasise the following terms and conditions for lodging disputes, appeals and objections:

1. All disputes and appeals which are not lodged with the responsible structures within 48 hours of the occurrence of the event or alleged misconduct shall not be entertained.
2. All disputes and appeals must be lodged in writing to the correct body or structure as outlined above.
3. No verbal or informal disputes and appeals shall be entertained.
4. All disputes and appeals must be accompanied by tangible

evidence including the names and contact details of the witnesses.

5. All disputes and appeals received by the Offices of the branch, regional and provincial secretaries as well as the SGO and other leaders of the ANC must be immediately referred to the correct body or structure as outlines above.

The BGM nomination process was successfully completed in October 2023 with disputes and appeals which were satisfactorily processed by the Provincial and National Dispute Resolution Committees.

Upon receiving recommenda-

tions from the Electoral Committee in consultation with the PECs, the NEC has approved all the Provincial List Committees, and these structures are now all firmly established and fully functional.

The membership of all the approved Provincial List Committees includes the representatives of the SACP, COSATU, SANCO, ANCWL, ANCWL and ANCYL to ensure broader participation and representativity.

All the Provincial List Committees are fully compliant with Rule 6 of the ANC constitution as each of these committees is comprised of at least 50% of female comrades. The Electoral Committee has

also appointed Elections and IEF-SA as two independent electoral agencies to capture, tally and audit branch nominations per region, province and nationally.

These independent electoral agencies also assist with co-ordination of the receiving of acceptance forms and CVs from candidates as well as the overall administration of the lists under the auspices of the Electoral Committee, the Provincial List Committee and Provincial List Administrators appointed by the Provincial Secretaries.

So far, all the Provincial List Committees have received acceptance forms and CVs from candidates who are nominated for the province-to-province list and the province-to-national list.

All the Provincial List Committees have also interviewed all the candidates in the 2 lists and the total number of candidates interviewed nationally is about 700.

The Provincial List Committees must balance and order the lists based on gender representation (50% of all candidates per list must be female as per Rule 6 of the ANC Constitution, youth representation (every 5th nominee must be under the age of 40 except for the top 10% of the electable portion of the list), disability, geographic spread, qualifications, interview results, experience, skills and racial demographics amongst other criteria.

The Provincial List Committees must present the balanced and ordered lists to the Provincial Officials who may make political interventions and add up to 20% of names within the electable portion of the list which is the current number of available seats in



the legislature or the number of current ANC seats in a particular legislature may also be used.

In terms of the rules approved by the NEC, the Provincial Officials are obliged to furnish valid reasons for their political interventions to add names of candidates to the Electoral Committee for concurrence.

The balanced and ordered lists which may have additional candidates nominated by the Provincial Officials must be presented to the Extended PEC for approval and thereafter submitted to the Electoral Committee for final ratification by the Extended NEC.

The SACP, COSATU and SANCO as the ANC Alliance partners are each allowed 5 and 10 delegates at the Extended PEC and Extended NEC respectively.

We are pleased to report that all the Provincial List Committees have completed the ordering and balancing of the lists.

We wish to commend the following PLCs which have now successfully completed their work and presented lists which have been unanimously approved by their Extended PECs:

- The Limpopo PLC
- The Eastern Cape PLC
- The Northern Cape PLC
- The Gauteng PLC
- The Free State PLC
- The Mpumalanga PLC
- The KwaZulu Natal PLC.

The North West and Western Cape PLCs are scheduled to present their lists for approval by the Extended PECs by the deadline of Friday, 15 December 2023 with no further extension to be granted unless valid reasons to do so exist.

The nomination of the three premier candidates shall be done by the Extended PECs and dates for these sessions shall be set by the Electoral Committee in consultation with the Secretary General.

The results of the Extended PEC which have also nominated 3 premier candidates are still valid provided that this was done in accordance with the rules approved by the NEC.

We wish to reiterate that at least 2 of the 3 premier candidates must be female and all female premiers serving their first term in office must be included amongst the 3 three candidates as per the rules and guidelines approved by the NEC.



In addition to the ordering and balancing of lists, the Provincial List Committees are also processing disputes, and objections arising from the process.

The Electoral Committee has commenced with interviews of 300 candidates for the national-to-national list and these shall be concluded by 20 December 2023 at the latest.

The Electoral Committee is also conducting a simultaneous process of vetting the candidates in all the 3 lists regarding criminal records, academic qualifications, disciplinary issues, reports by the Integrity Commission and financial declarations and this should be completed by 20 December 2023 at the latest.

The Electoral Committee aims to

present the balanced and ordered national-to-national list to the National Officials who, with valid reasons based on approved criteria, may add up to 20 names on the electable portion of the list by 20 December 2023 at the latest.

All these processes by the PLCs, PECs and the Electoral Committee shall culminate in the presentation of all lists for final approval and ratification by the Extended NEC on 25 January 2024 or any date thereafter as per the convenience of the NEC.

The Electoral Committee shall process appeals on the verdicts by the PLCs with respect to disputes, objections and complaints lodged with these structures.

The following are the final timeframes for the 2024 candidate selection process as approved by the Secretary General:

Milestone	Responsibility	Deadline
1. Branch Nominations	Secretary General and Provincial Secretaries	15 October 2023
2. Finalisation disputes	Provincial and National Dispute Resolution Committees	20 October 2023
3. Finalisation disputes	Extend PECs	15 December 2023
4. Acceptance, Screening, Vetting and Interviews (<i>About 1000 candidates to be interviewed</i>)	The Electoral Committee and Provincial List Committees	15 December 2023
5. Ordering and balancing of the lists	The Electoral Committee, the Provincial List Committees, Provincial Officials and National Officials	20 December 2023
6. Extended NEC to approve the National- National List	NEC, ALLIANCE and the LEAGUES	25 January 2024
7. Nomination of Premier Candidates	National Officials with recommendations by the Extended PECs	25 January 2024
8. Final Objections and Appeals	The Electoral Committee and PLCs	25 January 2024
9. Training of successful candidates	The National Elections Team	February 2024
10. Deployment of candidates to campaigns	SG and Provincial Secretaries	February 2024 until election day

COSATU STATEMENT

Creating Jobs and Ensuring Workers Earn a Living Wage

THE Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) welcomes the announcement by the National Minimum Wage Commission (NMW) of the proposed 2024 increase for the NMW by inflation plus 3%. The Federation had tabled this proposal to the NMW Commission and is pleased this progressive proposal has received its support.

This increase will help protect the value of the NMW and workers' ability to take care of their families from inflationary erosion. It will inject badly needed stimulus into the local economy spurring growth and helping to sustain and create jobs. It will provide significant relief to more than six million workers earning within the range of the NMW. Workers in the farm, domestic, construction, retail, hospitality, transport, security, and cleaning services sectors will benefit the most.

The NMW Act mandates the Commission to ensure the NMW is not eroded by inflation because this will plunge many workers deeper into debt, poverty, and despair. The NMW Commission has asked for public comments until the 8th of January 2024. The Federation will be presenting our submission to support the Commission's recommendations and push it to finalise its proposals to the Minister of Employment and Labour.



We expect the Minister to move with speed to announce the final increase and ensure it comes into effect by 1 March 2024. Workers cannot afford any delays.

COSATU is pleased with the progress that has been made with the NMW since it came into effect in 2019 at R20 per hour. Today it is R25.42 and will soon pass R27.50. It has seen domestic workers rise from R15 and farm workers R18 in 2019 to being equalised with the NMW today. This is a far cry from the poverty wages farm and domestic workers were paid a few years ago, at times as little as R6 an hour. Engagements are taking place with the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure on a road map to ensure that Expanded Public and Community Works Programmes' workers reach the NMW as well.

Whilst we have made progress, it is

critical the Department of Employment and Labour cracks down on employers who ignore the NMW Act. Equally, we expect unions across the board to work together to expose such employers. Organised Business too must play its part. It is unacceptable that an estimated 45% of employers fail to comply with the NMW. This matter should be treated with the seriousness it deserves. These employers cannot be allowed to behave like they are above the country's laws and treat their employees like glorified slaves.

Many critics of the NMW said before it came into effect in 2019 that it would lead to a job's bloodbath. Independent research by the University of Cape Town has shown this not to be the case. It has had a positive impact on reducing poverty and inequality levels and boosting the economy. Other countries which introduced a NMW like the US, Germany and Brazil have had similar positive experiences.

Beyond the NMW, government needs to tackle the other obstacles to growing the economy, in particular loadshedding, cable theft, collapsing infrastructure and endemic crime and corruption. These are critical to unlocking the economy, rebuilding public services and creating jobs as well as ensuring workers earn a living wage.

The struggle to free Western Sahara continues

■ By **NOMVULA MOKONYANE**

IT has been a year since the establishment of the International Relations subcommittee of the African National Congress (ANC) National Executive Committee (NEC), stemming from the organisation's 55th National Conference. One of the key decisions taken was to elevate and allocate all matters pertaining to International Relations to the 1st Deputy Secretary General (DSG). Among the critical work of the subcommittee, was the prioritization of policies, party to party relations, solidarity and campaigns, with a special focus on Cuba, Palestine, Western Sahara, Venezuela and Eswatini. In the past week, I led the ANC delegation to Western Sahara to strengthen the party to party relations and to promote solidarity with the Polisario Front, a mission well accomplished.

We lower our revolutionary banner to the co-founder and 2nd Secretary General of the Polisario Front, Comrade El-Ouali Mustapha Sayed, who at the tender age of 24 years, inspired and led the Sahrawi Revolution and its people. He was born in Bir Lehlou, a location that is symbolic for the Polisario Front for being the place of the proclamation of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). Sadly, he died in combat in Mauritania at the



ANC 1st Deputy Secretary General Nomvula Mokonyane with His Excellency Brahim Ghali, President of the Sahrawi Republic

age of 28 years and today he remains a symbol of solidarity and struggle for the people of Western Sahara.

It is often said that Africa is a continent that is living in a post-colonial era. Scholars and governments alike, speak of the African continent as having obtained independence. In this discourse, there is a critical omission, because not all African countries have been liberated and not all have their independence. The Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic is a colonised country – a country that is largely occupied by a colonising power which administers

the country's affairs from across the border. Morocco, which has arrogated itself the right to govern Western Sahara against the prescripts of international law and agreements, is a coloniser no different to Spain, which had occupied Western Sahara until 1975. A decade before the end of this occupation, in 1965, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted its first resolution on Western Sahara, which would ultimately result in the passing of the resolution on referendum be held by Spain on the self-determination of Western Sahara. It would take ten years for Spain to relinquish administrative control of Western

Sahara to a joint administration by Morocco, which had formally claimed the territory since 1957. And today, more than seven decades since, Western Sahara remains a colony of Morocco.

Literature on Western Sahara claims that the country is a disputed territory. While this might sound politically correct, it is in fact a language that cements the idea that those fighting for the country have equal claims to legitimacy. An occupied territory is a region distinct from the recognised territory of the sovereign states but which the occupying state controls, usually with military forces. By this definition, Morocco has the upper hand, for it enjoys its own sovereignty while the Saharawi people are denied their own. It also enjoys the monopoly of violence, for its military forces are well resourced, better connected and far more advanced. There is no equality between the occupied and the occupier, and for this reason, Western Sahara must not be called a disputed territory. It must be called by its proper name – an occupied and colonised territory.

Western Sahara is a sparse-

ly-populated area of mostly desert situated on the northwest coast of Africa. A former Spanish colony, it was annexed by Morocco in 1975. Since then it has been the subject of a long-running territorial dispute between Morocco and its indigenous Sahrawi people, led by the Polisario Front.

The conflict between Morocco and the Western Sahara's pro-independence Polisario Front goes back to the end of Spanish colonial rule. It was ignited in 1975 after Spain relinquished control of Spanish Sahara, later known as Western Sahara

The occupation of Morocco in Western Sahara benefits some superpowers in the world who seek to maintain their exploitative relations with Africa. Despite the fact that the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, led by the Polisario Front, is formally recognised by numerous states, we have seen a regression in commitment to the principle on its sovereignty. Just over a year ago, the United States, going against the position of United Nations member states, recognised Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara in exchange for Moroccan nor-

malisation of relations with Israel, an apartheid state which is also involved in illegal and unjust occupation in Palestinian territory. This is the same Israel which today, has massacred over 15 000 Palestinians in just two months – a genocide that the world is witnessing in real time.

While the USA and France can be dismissed as imperialists with a history of disregard for human rights in the developing world, it is the actions of our own people, our own continent, that begs for critical reflection. In 1984, Morocco ceased to be a member of the Organisation of African Unity, a predecessor of the African Union. Its decision to withdraw from the organisation was welcome by many states that recognised the dangers that Morocco represented as a colonialist in a continent still reeling from the effects of centuries of colonialism. Its withdrawal was not challenged, for there was a collective understanding that the principle of recognising the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic as a full member of the OAU, which Morocco was opposed to, was non-negotiable.

But in 2017, the African Union





re-admitted Morocco, arguing that the conflicting claims between Morocco and the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic would be solved peacefully. It also claimed that Morocco would be stopping the extension of its exclusive military control by building additional walls. This decision, masking itself as progressive and diplomatic, is a betrayal of everything that the AU must represent. The African Union effectively asserted that it would continue to provide peacekeeping contingent to the UN mission which is deployed to control a buffer zone near the de facto border of walls built by Morocco within Western Sahara. And even with this problematic solution has proven to be a failure because the Moroccan government continues to use its military might, as seen just over a year ago when the ceasefire broke, forcing Polisario to confront a highly armed and highly resourced Moroccan army yet again. The reality of the situation is that the Saharawi people are not fighting to have equal military presence on their land; they are fighting for their right to self-govern and to self-determine. The AU's solution will continue to be a failure for as long as it does not address the fundamental ques-

tion of justice for the Saharawi people.

While some turn their backs on the people of Western Sahara, it must remain our commitment as the African National Congress to extend our solidarity by putting pressure on our own government to lobby other African governments to take decisive action by meaningfully standing on the side of the Saharawi people. We must maintain our stance on the full sovereignty of Western Sahara – a country whose struggle mirrors our own, and which has

been an ally to us at the darkest of moments in our liberation struggle. The ANC has, over the years, protested in demand that Morocco withdraw its troops from Saharawi territory. This has not happened and instead, the military might of Morocco has been entrenched and strengthened, putting the backs of the Sahrawi people against the wall. The conflict escalated after the withdrawal of Spain from the Western Sahara and Polisario Front waged a 16 year war with its occupiers until there was a peace accord which was never honoured. After 30 years after signing the peace accord, it's becoming justifiable to return to arm struggle in Western Sahara for total independence.

And we know too well as a country whose democracy was won on the back of a protracted liberation struggle that power concedes nothing without struggle. The ANC and progressive forces across the continent must continue with solidarity work, for if we do not stand for Western Sahara in this struggle, we would have chosen the side of the oppressor.

Nomvula Mokonyane is the 1st DSG of the ANC, responsible for the International Relations subcommittee



Beyond Bias: Challenging News24's Anti-ANC Narrative with a Holistic Perspective

■ By **NKENKE KEKANA**

THERE'S a popular parable among the literate members of society. It is the story of the elephant and the six blind men. Of course, it had to be men. The first blind man put out his hand and touched the elephant's side. *"How smooth! An elephant is like a wall."* The second blind man put out his hand and touched the elephant's trunk. *"How round! An elephant is like a snake."* The third blind man put out his hand and touched the elephant's tusk. *"How sharp! An elephant is like a spear."* The rest continue to fail to describe the animal in full, basing their analysis on their own perception of what the elephant was, believing it to be the correct one.

The blind men argued until the Rajah, awakened by the commotion, called out from the balcony. *"The elephant is a big animal,"* he said. *"Each man touched only one part. You must put all the parts together to find out what an elephant is like."*

Pieter du Toit, who describes himself as News24's assistant editor of investigations, clearly has this as his side hustle. Du



Toit's full-time job is that of a regime change agent. He can't hide his anxiety to see the back of the ANC-led government. Meanwhile, the ANC, particularly du Toit's arch-rival ministers like Kgosientsho Ramokgopa (Electricity), Khumbudzo Ntshavheni (Presidency and Cabinet spokesperson), and the President of the Republic himself, President Cyril Ramaphosa, refer to the trio and their comrades as having an insufferable God complex. The audacity of a political pipsqueak masquerading as a journalist is nauseating.

Du Toit uses flowery language steeped in regime change politics, such as *"the party is inexo-*

ably closing in on its expiry date, and neither she (Ntshavheni) nor her line manager (President Ramaphosa) nor the glib Gauteng premier (Panyaza Lesufi), can do anything about it. All the crises – no, disasters – she believes they are tackling are their fault."

However, like the old dictum, there is a pattern: the dog learns from the master. In his letter to subscribers (Tue, 28 November), Adriaan Basson, News24 Editor-In-Chief, also called for a regime change. Unashamedly, Basson, a fine writer and possibly a gentleman with a trust fund from his grandparents who propped up apartheid, wrote, *"Next year, every South African over 18 holds a*

trump card for change when we go to the polls."

However, the South African Press Code disapproves of comments or criticisms driven by malice. It requires that all comments on matters of public interest consider all material facts that are either true or reasonably true. Additionally, such statements should be presented in a manner that clearly distinguishes them as commentary, not as political machination, like calling for regime change and talking about expiry dates.

Despite extreme provocation, the ANC remains a proud free press advocate. It is in the DNA of the ANC. In our (ANC) 1991 Constitutional Principles for a Democratic South Africa, we were the first political organisation to officially advocate "for the free articulation of differences within a framework of equal rights and tolerance, encouraging the functioning of non-governmental organisations and freedom of the press." This conviction was further enshrined in our 1996 Constitution.

Therefore, it is disheartening to witness the erosion of this vital institution, not through legislative suppression but by the unrelenting forces of regime change.

The aggravating factor is that Du Toit et al. are consistent in their political campaign, clothed in the guise of fair comment under the Press Code, but plainly, it is an attempt at the jugular to unseat the ANC. For instance, in his 09 November 2023 commentary, Du Toit was merely starting his stint as a regime change advocate. He wrote, *"The ANC reached the zenith of its support in 2004 when it secured almost 70% of national support. But those days*

09 Nov
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Pieter du Toit | Election brief: ANC decline gathers pace, final fall from power now only question

Pieter Du Toit

news24

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are over, the numbers show, and they won't be returning."

This is plainly not supported by any facts; elections are only next year. At present, the ANC holds a majority of 57%. To not return, it has to win 20% like the DA. The linear regression model predicts a 9.60% decrease in ANC support for 2024 without a "good story to tell" narrative, assuming no effective election campaigning, die-hard ANC supporters staying away, and no sympathy votes from ANC-led programme beneficiaries. This worst-case scenario pegs the ANC support at 47.4% – yet it will still lead a coalition government.

Thus, claims about the end of ANC rule are not only highly exaggerated but untrue, truly a campaign article by Du Toit et al. Most importantly, Du Toit misdiagnoses the ANC's electoral fortune despite polls in his own campaign piece. The trend indicates a fluctuation in ANC support, with the highest reported at 52% in March 2023 by the Social Research Foundation and the lowest at 41% in October 2023 by the Brenthurst Foundation. Ipsos shows a slight

increase from 42% to 43% between August and October 2023. Even at 43 per cent, the ANC will still form a government, much to the chagrin of du Toit et al.

It is clear to all who can see that Du Toit, Basson, and their sidekick Sikonathi Mantshantsha, of Eskom fame, write regularly for News24, driving the manufactured narrative of the ANC's disastrous 29 years in power. I don't mind Mantshantsha's drivel because that's how he applies for jobs in the public service, as he did with Eskom.

What becomes increasingly apparent is that at the helm of News24, we are dealing with three metaphorically blind men. Their commentary, while not descending into the realm of racist nonsense or intellectual dishonesty due to our lack of insight into their educational backgrounds, nonetheless betrays a distinct political leaning. This inclination is unmistakably part of a wider network that is staunchly anti-ANC, anti-transformation, and anti-intellectual rigour.

The truth of the matter is, unless



individuals like Du Toit et al. are willing to acknowledge the ANC as an entity as multifaceted as an elephant (pun not intended), they will remain incapable of comprehending the full scope of what the ANC truly represents. To understand the party in its entirety, it is imperative to piece together all its aspects rather than focusing on isolated elements that serve a predetermined narrative. Only then can a balanced and holistic view of the ANC be formed, transcending the limitations of inherently biased perspectives.

Here are a few undisputed facts released recently by the Basic Education Minister, Auditor General and StatsSA.

Minister Angie Motshekga said fewer than one in 20 black South Africans born in the 1940s completed 12 years of basic education. By 1960, this was about one in 10. For those born in the 1980s and finishing school in the late 1990s, it was about three in 10. According to StatsSA Household Survey data from 2021, the figure is now nearly six in 10.

Since 2008, the number of bachelor-level passes in National Senior Certificate (NSC) exams has tripled, and undergraduate degree completions have doubled since 2009.

Recently, Auditor-General (AG) Tsakani Maluleke's report for the 2022/2023 financial year highlighted a remarkable shift in national and provincial government audits, with a notable increase in clean audits. This change, evident across all ANC-led provinces, signifies a strengthened commitment to accountability and efficient management within government entities. This trend began four years ago and is now reaching a crescendo.

StatsSA Quarterly Labour Force Survey, 2023 South Africa's unemployment rate has significantly decreased. The latest figures (third quarter) show a drop from 32.9% to 31.9%, with nearly a million new jobs created over the past year. This progress, which surpasses pre-pandemic (COVID-19) employment levels, demonstrates the effectiveness

of ANC policies, including economic reforms, and the resilience of the South African economy.

Truth be told, when journalists cum-commentators nail their colours to the mast, they effectively transform the media outlet and commentariat space from being society's reflective "mirror" or a "festival of ideas" into a noisy regime change agents.

While it's true that politics is mainly about optics, journalism isn't. It is a distinct noble profession tasked with holding power to account, and it upholds three core obligations: its primary obligation is to the truth, its loyalty, first and foremost, is to the citizens, and its essence is the discipline of verification. Unless du Toit et al. revert to old-school journalism, we have no choice but to treat them as political adversaries; see you at the polls.

Nkenke "Nat" Kekana is Chairperson of the ANC Communication, Information & Publicity Committee.

Electricity Transmissison Key to Ending Load-Shedding and Achieving Energy Security

■ By **KGOSIENTSHO RAMOKGOPA**

ENERGY is the lifeblood of the modern economy and central to almost every economic activity and thus integral to any country's development. The failure to address the electricity deficit situation in our country will only serve to delay, and even derail the growth and transformation project in our country. Load-shedding is a substantial subtraction to a future we desire and all efforts should be made to attain generation capacity that meets demand. The last two weeks of November saw power generation experiencing various challenges resulting in the country experiencing increased stages of load-shedding. A spike in demand, an inability to replenish emergency reserves quickly enough and a significant number of breakdowns at generating units drove this change. Enabling a vibrant energy industry and empowering the country's networked industries is key to the country's growth and development.

The electricity value chain com-

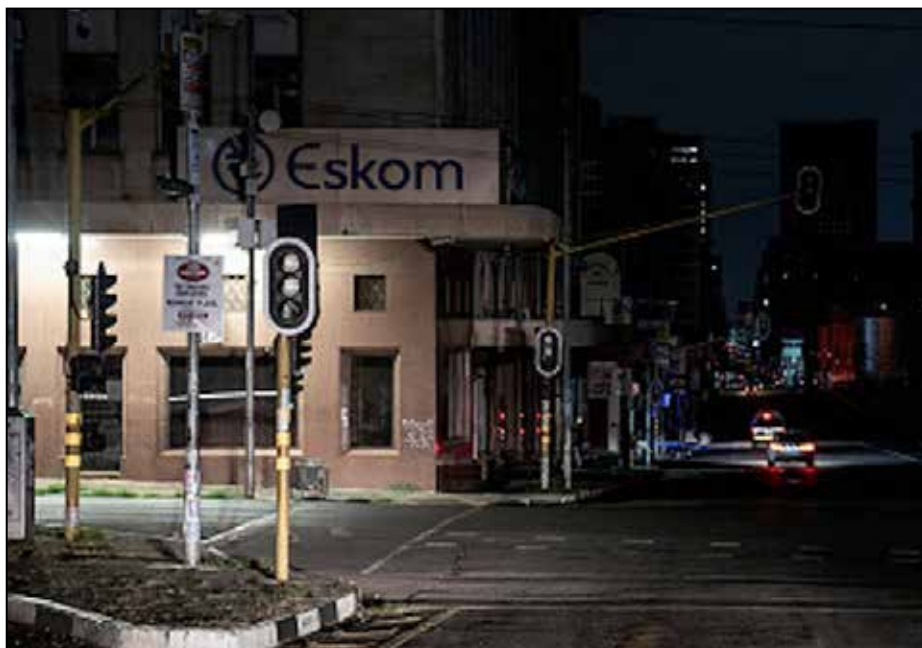
prises generation, transmission and distribution. Once a power plant generates electricity, transmission lines are the vehicles used to carry electricity over long distances while distribution lines carry electricity to consumers at a lower voltage. It is critical that we categorise the intrinsic value of our current generation assets, optimise the performance of our generation assets, address the country's transmission capacity constraints and rapidly deploy new generation assets. The inherent value of power generation assets, even if defunct, lies in its grid allocation, position, access to fuel and civil structure. Repurposing these assets through refurbishment attracts interest from international systems operators who can bring new technology, skills and capital to the fleet at a greater speed and scale.

Our newly constructed generation assets must be optimised through operational, skills and design enhancements. Some of our assets are underutilised and also, underperforming

due to high fuel costs and supply chain constraints. Through mechanisms we have identified to improve performance, the efficiency increase on the coal fleet could be as much as 8000 MW and the additional capacity that could be brought on board from interventions at the Ankerlig and Gourikwa power stations and through some IPPs amounts to 2000 MW. The low-cost abundant availability of coal distracted the country from the deployment of gas-fired generation. Gas is a vital component of South Africa's energy mix with construction less onerous and deployment periods much shorter in comparison to coal-fired power stations. Actively pursuing this opportunity holds the potential to onboard 12 000 MW of base generation within the next three years.

While South Africa has made great strides in advancing generation as a sector, actions to mitigate ailing transmission grid capacity have fallen short and are vital in ensuring the country's energy security and sovereign-

ty. The demand for grid capacity has increased substantially for various reasons, including the increase in generation capacity through renewable energy projects. Investment in the maintenance, modernisation and expansion of the national grid has been suboptimal in recent years, which has resulted in the requirement of over 14,000km of new transmission lines, according to Eskom's Transmission Development Plan, at a cost of R390 billion over the next decade, highlighting a critical need to explore competitive alternative financial solutions to encourage capital investment in a manner that is off-balance sheet within the context of Eskom's current financial position and the country's deteriorating fiscal matrix. The most suitable model for South Africa must ensure that the national grid continues with oversight from government with robust regulation. A model based on either full or partial privatisation will result in a strategic, key national asset no longer being under government control. This is an untenable situation which cannot and must not be countenanced.



We are at advanced stage of pursuing an appropriate finance and funding pathway for South Africa, through the creation of an Independent Transmission Projects Office (ITPO). Independent Transmission Projects (ITPs) have proven a globally successful model in terms of achieving off-balance sheet financing needs for the development of new transmission infrastructure. ITPs have proven successful in several emerging markets including Brazil, India, Peru, Chile and

now, Kenya. ITPs can be utilised for identified projects, to enable flexibility in addition to not requiring multiple regulatory changes and have proven to generate cost savings of between 35 and 40 percent. An ITP is responsible for building and financing, and maintaining and repairing, defined transmission infrastructure which is in turn made available to a system operator, in this case the newly licensed National Transmission Company of South Africa (NTCSA). The NTCSA remains responsible for operating the transmission system by dispatching power generation and balancing the system between generation and demand.



Based on the country's experience with Independent Power Producers (IPPs), it is envisaged that an ITP model can be implemented within a reasonable time-frame due to the model sharing similarities with IPPs. This initiative will be imperative in ensuring South Africa and the region's energy security and sovereignty. Speed, agility, inventiveness and boldness should underpin our efforts to bring to an end the existential crisis of load-shedding.

We need more electricity, not improvement of candles

■ By **YACOOB ABBA OMAR**

SOUTH Africa's challenges today are so deep-seated that we need to break the mould of the sort of leaders we are producing.

I spent the past fortnight celebrating a beautiful event that spoke volumes about the better angels of our country. The spirit of former president Nelson Mandela, who departed this world a decade ago, hovered over various marriage ceremonies – Indian, Islamic, Christian – all with a particular South African flair.

The bridal couple, as well as most of the young guests present, had cut their teeth as part of the *"falist generation"*, having stormed the barricades during the 2015 Fees Must Fall campaign.

That the policies they were protesting against were those of the ANC government has not deterred them from serving and rising within the organisation and in government. The bride, Fasiha Hassan, is part of the ANC Youth League executive and the youngest member of the Gauteng provincial legislature, while her partner, Khule Duma, serves in the presidency.

That such an event is still remarkable in our non-racial, rainbow-in-



fused South Africa and not yet a normal occurrence is unfortunate and shows how much further we have to travel as a nation. At the same time, South Africans were watching the launch of another presidential hopeful's campaign over the past weekend, with support from credible former anti-apartheid activists.

This was followed by the Inclusivity Society Institute's opinion polls showing the ANC achieving at least a solid 48%, if not 53%, at next year's general election.

The challenges South Africa faces today are so deep-seated that we need to break the mould of the kind of leaders we have been

producing. We need leaders who can build on the united, non-racial, sovereign constitutional democracy our people have achieved while taking us towards a better future.

We need leadership that moves beyond recriminations based on past behaviour and is focused on developing policies that take us out of the current economic quagmire. A leadership that dramatically improves service delivery and the quality of governance, and addresses the racial, ethnic and immigrant tensions that break down communities and the nation as a whole.

Sadly, the current leadership corps has not been particularly

inspiring — whichever part of the political spectrum we look at. It brings to mind the words of the late Oren Harari of the University of San Francisco, who said *“electric light did not come about from the continuous improvement of the candle”*.

Today's leaders are doing nothing more than trying to improve the candle. For example, over the past few years there has been a search for credible black leaders who might lead the opposition to the ANC, which has justifiably been painted as being corrupt and unjustifiably anti-business.

In an interview with the Sunday Times, banker-turned-activist Roger Jardine explained why we need his political movement, with him at the helm, speaking of South Africans needing to be saved from a government with a “schizophrenic” approach to business.

This recent cattle parade of new parties and independent candidates is not a new phenomenon — it comes in the wake of the now long forgotten Agang and the famous “sistahood” of its leader, Mamphela Ramphele and Helen Zille, then head of the DA. Then there was the ANC breakaway party Cope, led by the bromance of Mbhazima Shilowa and Mosiuoa Lekota.

The current Moonshot Pact, composed of a motley bunch of parties united by little more than their opposition to the ANC, has been struggling to find a dependable leader who can weld them into a force. This *“anyone but John Steenhuisen”* search is akin to looking for the holy grail.

In their criticism of the ANC it is easy to resort to what US ac-

ademic David Hackett Fischer called “presentism”, where present-day ideas and perspectives are used to depict or interpret the past. Erasing the achievements of a democratic South Africa since the leadership of President Mandela has thus become an essential tool. Jardine can then say the *“polarised politics of the past*

30 years have not worked”.

South Africans wait with bated breath for a leadership that will be electric, like the fallist generation, instead of being mere pinpricks of light in the darkness.

Abba Omar is director of operations at the Mapungubwe Institute.

Tribute to Zahara

■ By **VUSI MAVIMBELA**

IN South African popular music culture there are two female voices that have dominated the first 30 years of our democracy. They are Brenda Fassie and Zahara (Bulelwa Mkutukana).

Both of them are self-made icons who succeeded largely by the sheer strength of their dreams, creativity and ingenuity.

Brenda Fassie defined the euphoria of our democratic birth.





She did not only usher us onto the new dance floor of our young democracy, but also taught us the new township lingua franca of “siphuma kanje” to indicate our clever streak of adaptability and survival in whatever circumstances we find ourselves.

Zahara came on stage when the euphoria of a new democracy was beginning to run its course and the reality of the dichotomy between a Heavenly and an Earthly democracy had begun to sink in. She adopted a South African well-trodden metaphor of “Loliwe” (The train/Stimela/Shosholozza) to awaken us to this dichotomy.

The legendary Hugh Masekela and Jabu Khanyile used the metaphor of “The Train” (Stimela/Shosholozza/Loliwe) to lament and at the same time celebrate the plight and the resilience of migrant workers who, for centuries, built the South African economy. Zahara, wittingly or unwittingly, adopted the same metaphor to tell us that we are still in our Earthly democracy, that we have not yet reached the Heavenly democracy that we aspire to.

She tells us that the push of the goods train of life is inexorable (*uLoliwe wayidudula*) and therefore we should wipe off our tears (*sul’ezonyembezi mtakwethu*) because here it is coming (*nangesiza*) to bring all the good democracy that we still cry for.

But Zahara quickly extends the metaphor to tell us that the goods Loliwe of life might be coming but we shall remain imperfect practitioners in this Earthly democracy because, in the Heavenly democracy, lives only the holy (*Phezulu*

eNkosini kuhlalingwele zodwa).

She further says, for us to get there, we must “*Thandaza*” (*Pray, Renew ourselves, Cleanse ourselves of our sins, our frailties and our imperfections*).

She reminds us that, we might have attained the Earthly democracy that Brenda Fassie ushered us into, but we have not earned the Heavenly democracy because we shall remain imperfect democratic practitioners if we confine our achievement to the Earthly democracy.

Without true Renewal, Praying, cleansing ourselves of corruption, criminal activities and all other impurities of an Earthly democracy, we shall never enter the second democracy that Zahara talks about, the Heavenly democracy of economic emancipation and a better life for all.

As she says, in Heavenly democracy lives only the holy!! Dear Bulelwa Mkutukana, our hearts bleed and our eyes are bleary with tears.

One just hopes your Loliwe sermon will not fall on dry and arid land.



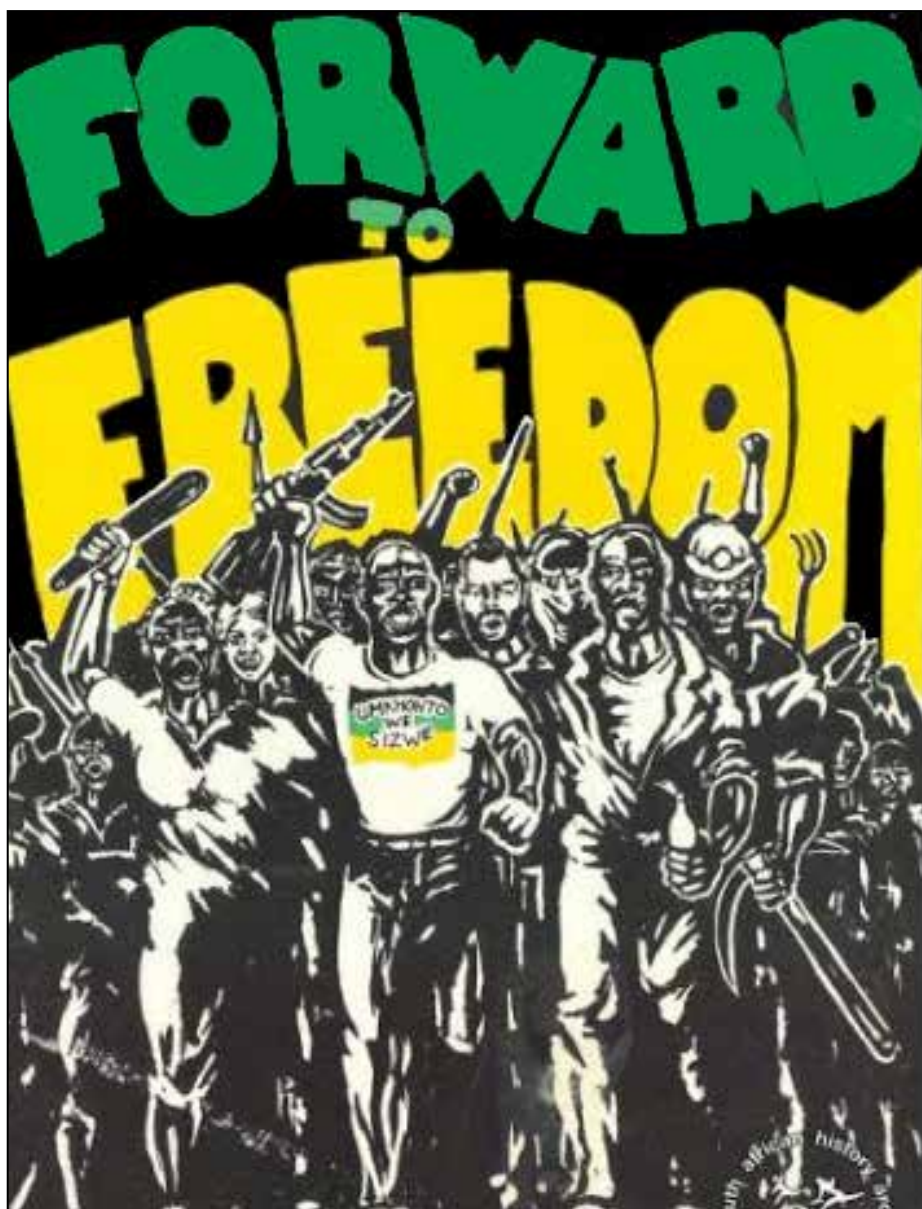
How the Armed Struggle Succeeded in Southern Africa

■ By **RONNIE KASRILS**

*Following is an abridged address delivered at the University of Witwatersrand on November 25, 2016 on the topic: **The politics of armed struggle in Southern Africa***

ANY assessment of the success of uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) needs to take into account the overall impact of its military operations; its growing capacity to strike at the enemy; its ability to inspire the people; better prospects of survival amongst the people; the linking of its actions to the mass upsurge; dealing with agents and informers, the rendering of apartheid unworkable and the country ungovernable.

To this needs to be factored in the psychological effect of armed blows on both the government and the white population; and the alarm of Western powers at the growing threat of armed revolution. The consequent pressure, aligned with other factors, on the apartheid regime and business interests, was part of the equation. To appreciate the growing confidence within MK it is necessary to bear in mind as well its battle record in Zimbabwe and presence in ZIPRA forces up to 1980 and Zimbabwe to 1990; and its intensive counterinsurgency actions against Savimbi's Unita bandits during the 1980s in Angola.





Such actions played a significant role in building MK's combat record and experience. The courage and contempt for death shown by MK cadres from Vuyisile Mini, hanged in 1964, the likes of Basil February and James Msimini who fought to the death in Zimbabwe, Ahmed Timol's underground role, young lions such as Solomon Mahlangu, the daring commander Barney Molokwane, who led the Sasol and other operations, and Phila Ndwandwe (Portia) defiant unto death, are unforgettable martyrs reflective of MK's mettle throughout its 30 years existence.

Had the cessation of MK actions in August 1990 not come about as a result of negotiations, it is evident that such operations would have increased even more so. In the new favourable conditions of mass upsurge on a scale never before seen in South Africa, the strategic objective of basing MK forces within the country, with the massive amount of weaponry

that had been smuggled in, and the linking with the increasingly militant populous, rising working-class organisation and consciousness, would have seen significant advance towards the insurrectionary possibilities foreseen in such documents as ANC's Strategy & Tactics, Green Book, the SACP Path to Power, and Operation Vula (see *Maharaj & O'Malley's Shades of Difference*).

In his paper MK combatant Patrick Mangashe argues that the ANC's armed struggle was halted in mid-stride (by the negotiation process), and can thus not be regarded as having run its full course. He further states that the advent of the UDF brought with it new impetus to the armed struggle by creating conditions that had not existed since 1961.

One is left to speculate on the extent to which the balance of forces was shifting in favour of mass insurrection. What might the outcome have been, given

the growth of MK's capacity and the rising insurrectionist mood of the masses, had negotiations not halted the process in its tracks? This certainly merits further examination. I am not saying that we should not have gone in for a negotiated settlement when the opportunity arose and which prevented civil war. Rather, I raise for consideration that arguably we could have won far more demands at the negotiating table.

Did we not allow a gap to develop between the political elite and the masses; between the ANC and the former UDF and organised labour, the former ingloriously dissolved by its top leadership (so many of whom have gone into business) while the latter, Cosatu, was at the apex of its strength? One is left to imagine the leverage those forces and an active MK with the masses on the rise could have given to the negotiation arm at the table!

True, our adversaries had much

powder in their guns but did we not have the strategic initiative? Were the masses not ready for sacrifice and revolt? Would the release of that energy not have provided a working class hegemony and assertion of discipline and control over the corruption and crony capitalism. Or perhaps it was us in the leadership who had lost the will and the belief in the masses?

Those who might contend that the Western Powers would have subjected us to vigorous arm-twisting and threat of sanctions need also to consider the support we enjoyed from international solidarity, and with regard to the USA, the backing of African-Americans. I am not contending that we should have gone for insurrection or bust. The negotiated opportunity was a prospect we could not have ignored.

The question posed is about how much more we might have gained had we not reined in the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM), the trade unions and MK. The SACP and Cosatu were up in arms against the non-negotiable introduction of Gear at the expense of the RDP and lost that battle only to ultimately suffer from a Zuma leadership that could not be managed by the left. But back to MK's growing capacity: even a critic such as Howard Barrell has evaluated MK's role as follows: *"MK's main achievement over the three decades to 1990... helped to stimulate a combative political spirit among the ANC's support base and to further militant popular campaigning. MK cadres dared to struggle, and set an example to millions. In this respect, MK played a vital role in bringing South Africa to the verge of a negotiated end to white minority political domination."* (MK:

ANC's armed struggle page 71).

What of the outcome? One indication of what has been lost relates to the fate of MK veterans. The ANC and its Military Veterans' Association (MKMVA) has to date failed to project to the South African people the outstanding achievements of MK and its operatives to the people of South Africa; a strange case of the victors failing to comprehensively write the history of the struggle and popularise the armed struggle. Now and then on anniversary dates such as the execution of Solomon Mahlangu some martyrs are glorified and medals haphazardly awarded to veterans without adequate certification.

Unlike the Chinese, Vietnamese, Cubans, Mozambicans for example, MK does not feature in school history curricula, no official films have been produced, and no military record is established. There is little contestation from government or ruling party concerning the many attempts to undermine

MK's notable achievements. Today's youth – the born-frees – know little about MK's role and the sacrifice of its cadres. This must be rectified or MK's legacy will be lost.

One other point among many about the integrity and profile of the MKMVA that must be sorted out is the age of its members, many whom appear to be extremely young. If an MK member was 18 years old in 1993 at the time it wound up then she/he would be 41 years old in 2016. It is high time that research is conducted into the MKMVA; its leadership; its structures and membership; its role which has come in for serious questioning as a private army of a particular political culture. What is quite bizarre is how its leadership stems from the intake of 1992 and how the mgwenya (1960s veterans) and 1976 intake have been left out in the cold.

Published in Daily Maverick on 05 Dec 2016



Palestine shall be free

■ By **GEORGE MAGOMA**

IN an extraordinary yet necessary move, the Secretary General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres invoked Article 99 of the United Nations Charter to avert the humanitarian crisis engulfing Palestine and her people.

The situation in Gaza has gravely deteriorated, with the collapse of infrastructure, humanitarian aid, medical services, fuel, food and other critical supplies. Akin to the annihilation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki there's collateral damage, bombs and mortars asphyxiating and vaporizing everything in their destructive path, women, children, healthcare workers, volunteers, and journalists, and everything under the copper sun.

Unflinchingly honouring their faith as they sat by the rivers of Babylon in remembrance of Zion, a deadly ideology that would commit the worst acts of genocide, the world united against these egregious acts against humanity perpetrated by Israel under their discriminatory belief.

The world rose, refused to speculate in the face of the killing of the defenceless and the innocent in a war that is not theirs. Engaging in a diplomatic effort to end these atrocities, Benjamin Netanyahu assumed a cantankerous posture, vowing, without blinking, to annihilate the entire Palestine in a repeat of the yesteryear Nak-



ba that saw thousands killed and misplaced in an act of ethnic cleansing and a systematic agenda to wipe Palestine from the global map.

South Africa and the world refused to be complicit in the murderous acts. Donning the kufiyah and waving the Palestinian flag which became symbols of solidarity and condemnation of the apartheid Israel and its heinous acts, in an act of internationalism, the world declared to isolate heinous Israel regime.

The world stood in unison, and in a collective voice called for the cessation of hostilities and a humanitarian pause.

In an act that heralded a new geopolitical shift with the potential to plunge the Middle East

into a crisis amidst the raging Ukraine-Russia conflict, military coups in west Africa, and the emergence of new alliances and multilateral relationships, South Africa invoked its pillar of a better Africa and a better world in an effort to silence the guns of the Israel against the people of Palestine.

Using its acts of diplomacy the ruling African National Congress (ANC) met with the Palestinian and Hamas delegations to explore everlasting solutions to end the genocide. This included the South African Jewish Board of Deputies which represents the interest of the Zionist state. And Jewish who stand with the people of Palestine and on the side of peace.

The ANC is known for its diplo-

matic policy of non-aggression, non-alignment, dialogue and peaceful resolution to conflict.

The situation in Palestine is unique. The ANC led government and other progressive forces took the battle to parliament. To the chagrin of the Democratic Alliance (DA), the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and other frivolous parties who confuse the biblical Israel and the modern day killing machine under Netanyahu, supported the murderous state of Israel in the killings of children and women.

The ANC was unequivocal in its stance against Israel, demanding:

- An immediate end to the shelling of Gaza;
- A humanitarian pause for necessary and urgent aid;
- Stern action by the United Nations to declare Israel an apartheid state;
- Condemning of genocidal acts against the defenceless;
- The indictment and prosecution of belligerent Netanyahu and his war generals by the International Criminal Court;
- Rallying and mobilizing progressive forces of the world for a peaceful solution to the Middle East crisis and the Israel genocide;
- The isolation of Israel and its isolation as a pariah state; and
- The immediate closure of the Israel embassy and the expulsion of its ambassador.

In a retaliatory act in the face of this cruelty, the South African government recalled its ambassadors from Tel Aviv. This is a fearless stance on the part of the ANC and the South African parliament despite resistance by the



minority who are oblivious to the genesis of this war and its implications of global peace and the stability of the Middle East.

In a surprise move that tilted the global balance of power, Turkey left the western alliance. Progressive forces and countries such as China and Jordan pledged their support for a peaceful order, standing with the people of Palestine.

In an act of peace, solidarity and internationalism Qatar entered the fray, brokering peace between Israel and Hamas. This progressive move paid dividends, culminating in the humanitarian pause and ceasefire between the warring factions, leading to the flow of aid and most importantly the release of hostages by both sides and an end to the siege of Gaza, saving thousands of lives in a conflict that had already claimed thousands of lives, mostly of children.

This imbued hope, moving the Middle East from the precipice with prospects for peace. When the billowing smoke made way for doves of peace and the tranquillity of the region, the war escalated with both parties accus-

ing each other of inciting war and flouting conditions to the ceasefire.

In the end, all efforts to mediate peace, a two state solution and peaceful coexistence between Israel and Palestine will bear fruit.

The world is undergoing gradual metamorphosis and a geopolitical political shift in the balance of power. This is a new global order of multilateralism, collaborations and partnership for shared growth and mutual prosperity. It's a new order to investment on economic growth and development, thus representing a quantum shift from militarisation, aggression, dominance and imperialism to mutual cooperation and food security.

South Africa is exerting its hegemony and reaffirming its sovereignty in the community of nations as asserted in the preamble to its Constitution and a reaffirmation of the injunction of solidarity, peace and friendship as advocated by the Freedom Charter. The people of South Africa from various walk of life, civil society, youth organisations, organized labour, business and faith based organisation will defend the people of Palestine.

The vigour and harnessed vision within which the ANC the campaigned and fought against the demise of apartheid will be invested in the freedom of Palestine.

Global efforts and support for Palestine must be intensified for a free Palestine with the right to self-determination and sovereignty.

From the river to the sea, Palestine shall be free.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

16 – 22 December 2023

Source: SA History Online, O'Malley Archives, Africa Today/Yesterday and The Africa Factbook (2020)

16 December 1913 Women's Monument opened in Bloemfontein

The Women's Memorial was unveiled in Bloemfontein, at a ceremony attended by 20 000 people from all over the country. The monument commemorated the 26 251 women and children who died during the Anglo-Boer War 2, mainly in British concentration camps.

16 December 1943 African Claims adopted at ANC Conference

At the annual conference of the African National Congress (ANC) held in Bloemfontein, the document the African's Claim in South Africa, presented by a committee appointed by ANC president Dr A.B. Xuma, was unanimously adopted. The committee was mandated to study the Atlantic Charter and draft a Bill of Rights.

16 December 1961 Umkhonto weSizwe launches its first acts of Sabotage

On this date, uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the military wing of the African National Congress (ANC) announced its existence by launching its first acts of sabotage. During the evening of 16 December 1961 five bombs were detonated in Port Elizabeth, with other actions in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town and Durban. The MK High Command selected targets for the start of the military



confrontation and insurgency, with the primary targets being power stations and government buildings. Umkhonto we Sizwe

engaged in the armed struggle, under the political leadership of the ANC, until the suspension of armed action in 1990 and its integration into the SANDF after 1994. In 2023, we celebrate 62 years since this day.

16 December 1995 Orlando Pirates won the African Champions Cup

Orlando Pirates won the Second Leg of the 1995 African Champions Cup (ACC) Final against ASEC Mimosas with a score of 1 - 0. With this victory, Pirates became the first football club south of the equator to win the ACC at first attempt. The match was later awarded the Kick Off Magazine's Game of the Decade Award.



CELEBRATING 62 YEARS OF THE PEOPLE'S ARMY UMKHONTO WE SIZWE

16 December 1961

On this day we remember and pay tribute to the heroic sons and daughters of our revolution. We honor these brave soldiers of our movement for their selfless contribution to the struggle for the freedom of all South Africans.



16 December 1998

Gugu Dlamini, AIDS activist killed by men in her community

On 16 December 1998, Gugu Dlamini, a young woman from KwaMashu, KZN dedicated to raising awareness around HIV/AIDS and fighting against the discrimination, was killed. Being HIV positive herself, Dlamini believed that in order to overcome the stigma of the virus and educate people across all social spheres it was imperative to talk openly about the disease. On World AIDS Day, December 1, 1998, Dlamini disclosed her HIV status on television and on a Zulu-language radio station. Her public disclosure was met with anger from members of her hometown, who believed she had brought shame onto their community. Subsequent to her announcement Dlamini is reported to have been threatened by her neighbours. These threats manifested into violence when, on 16 December 1998, she was stoned and stabbed to death by a group of men from her community. Since her gruesome death, Dlamini's name continues to be used in the fight against the stigmatization of HIV infected persons and HIV denialism.

17 December 1949

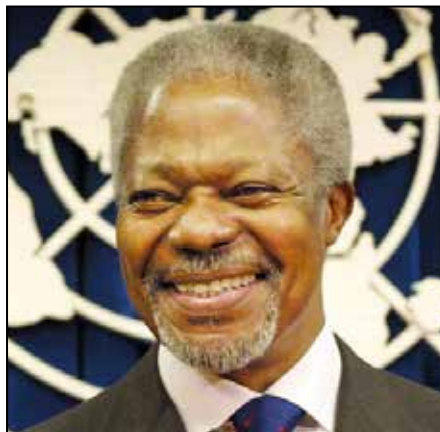
ANC Conference adopts the Programme of Action

The adoption of a Programme of Action by the African National Congress (ANC) at the December conference marked one of the most important turning points in the history of the Organisation's existence up to that time. The ANC Youth League initiated and lobbied for the programme of action, to transform the ANC into a militant liberation movement, which embarked on mass ac-

tion, involving civil disobedience, strikes, boycotts and other forms of non-violent resistance. In 1952, the young guard in the ANC, led by Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela, in alliance with the SAIC, the SA Congress of Trade Unions and the Coloured Peoples' Congress, led the ANC into the first Defiance Campaign.

17 December 1996

Kofi Annan appointed as UN Secretary General



Ghanaian citizen, Kofi Annan, was appointed as the seventh secretary-general of the United Nations (UN) replacing outgoing Boutros Boutros Ghali from Egypt, whose term of office had expired. Annan assumed his duties on 1 January 1997 and served two terms as UNSG until 31 December 2006. A UN staffer since 1962, he was the first UN member of staff elected to this position. Highlights of his tenure include the UN reforms, the fight against HIV/AIDS, and the Global Compact. He was succeeded by Mr. Ban Ki Moon. In 2001, Kofi Annan and the UN were joined recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize.

17 December 2010

Tunisian vendor sets himself on fire, sparks Arab Spring

Mohamed Bouazizi, a 26-year old

street vendor, left school early to help earn a living for his family, selling fruits on the street. He was continually harassed by the police, and shortly before the incident had his scales confiscated and his cart turned over by a government official. Mohamed went to the governor's office to try and get his tools of trade back, but the officials refused to let him in. He returned the next day, doused with petrol and set himself alight. Bystanders tried to help, but he sustained 90% burns and passed away from his injuries. This spurred the Tunisian revolution, and the broader Arab Spring from 2010 through to 2012, against uncaring and authoritarian regimes. This affected Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria and Bahrain; with protests in Algeria, Morocco, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, and Sudan.

18 December 1946

Steve Bantu Biko is born



Biko was born on this day in King William's Town in the Eastern Cape, and went on to inspire the hope for freedom among millions in South Africa and elsewhere in Africa. Founder of the South African Student's Organisation (SASO), and a leading ideologue and leader of the Black Consciousness Movement, he was banned and detained several times by the apartheid authorities, until he was killed by the police whilst in detention on 12 September 1977.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY



The Year of Decisive Action
To Advance the People's Interests
and Renew our Movement

18 December 1965 John "Shoes" Moshoeu born



South African and international soccer player John Moshoeu was born in Diepkloof, Soweto. One of the most successful footballers, his nickname came from his dribbling skills as an attacking midfielder. He started his football career at Giant Blackpool, and went on to play for Kaizer Chiefs, AmaZulu and Fenerbahçe, Turkey. He made his debut for Bafana Bafana 1993 against Botswana, was influential in the team that won the 1996 Africa Cup of Nations and went on to represent the country in six other international tournaments, including the 1998 FIFA World Cup in France. Shoes Moshoeu passed on in 2015, after a long battle with stomach cancer.

19 December 1997 Sugarboy Malinga wins World Boxing Title, Again



Tulane Sugarboy Malinga, South African super middleweight, won the World Boxing Council (WBC) title for the second time in his career. Malinga became the first South African to win a WBC belt by beating Nigel Benn in 1996.

19 December 1943 Father of Ethiopian Jazz born

Mulatu Astatke is an Ethiopian musician and arranger considered as the father of Ethio-Jazz, which combines Ethiopian music with jazz and Latin music. Mulatu led his band while playing the vibraphone and conga drums, instruments that he introduced into Ethiopian popular music, as well as other percussion instruments, keyboards, and organs. The unique sound of Ethio-jazz finds its roots in a culture with over 3,000 years of independence.

19 December 1989 Zimbabwe political parties merge

Two rival political organisations in Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), led by Joshua Nkomo, and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), led initially by the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole and later by Robert Gabriel Mugabe, merged following consensus reached in 1987 to form a new political party called the Zimbabwean African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF).

19 December 1969 Uganda Prime Minister Milton Obote shot

Apollo Milton Obote was a Ugandan socialist political leader who led the country to independence in 1962. He became prime minister of Uganda and later president.

In 1969, an attempt on his life was made when he was shot at while attending a UPC conference in Kampala. Angered and paranoid after the attempted assassination, he banned all opposition parties. His government was overthrown in 1971 and was succeeded by Idi Amin. Obote died of kidney failure in 2005.

20 December 1965 Arthur Elias Letele, medical doctor and ANC activist passed on



Arthur Elias Letele was born in Lesotho in 1916, but grew up in Ladybrand in the Free State. He finished high school in Eastern Cape, studied medicine and started a practice in Lovedale in 1947. While at medical school, Letele joined the ANC Youth League and the ANC when he moved to Kimberley in 1948. He participated in the 1950s Defiance Campaign, leading to his first arrest. Another arrest in 1952 led to a 9 month sentence, after which he was banned from leaving Kimberley until August 1953. Letele was elected to the ANC Executive Committee, was part of the Congress of the People Campaign and was an accused in the 1956 Treason Trial. After the Sharpeville Massacre, Letele was arrested for a third time, and upon his release, given 30 days to leave South Africa. He returned to Lesotho in 1961 and continued his involvement with the



ANC in exile. After suffering from an incurable disease for years, Letele committed suicide on 20 December 1965. The South African Institute of Health Care Matters was named in his honor in 2003.

20 December 1991 **Discovery of 5000 year old fleet of Nile ships**

On 20 December 1991 (some sources say 21 December) archaeologists discovered a 5000 years old fleet of ships near the Nile in Abydos, Egypt. The 12 large wooden boats were believed to be the first royal ships, possibly belonging to the second dynasty Pharaoh, Khasekhemwy. However, other archeologists believed that the boats might have been built by an earlier Pharaoh, Djer of the first dynasty. It was concluded that the boats were used for burial of royals. The boats boasted very advanced design for their era and were built to withstand rough seas.

20 December 1991 **CODESA starts**

The Convention for a Democratic South Africa starts the process of negotiations in Kempton Park with a range of political parties represented, to dismantle apartheid and usher in a democratic South Africa.

20 December 1997 **Yanok Yai born**

South Sudanese fashion model Anok Yai was born on this day in Cairo. She is the second black model after Naomi Campbell to open a Prada show. When discovered, she was a 19-year old student studying biochemistry, got her picture taken and shared on Instagram, and the rest was history.

20 December 2012 **Rwanda Minister of Planning Convicted of Genocide**

Augustin Ndirabatswe was sentenced to thirty-five years in prison by a UN war crimes court after being convicted of genocide. At the time of the genocide in 1994, Ndirabatswe was Rwandese Minister of Planning, a Doctor of Economics and Professor at the National University of Rwanda, and former General Director of the Minister of Mines and Artisanat. Gisenyi Ndirabatswe was charged with conspiracy to commit genocide, through a plan to exterminate the Tutsi civilian population and instigation of ethnic violence.

21 December 1949 **Sankara born**



Thomas Sankara (1949-1978), Pan African, freedom fighter, revolutionary and President of Burkina Faso, was born on this day in Yako. Amongst his famous quotes were: *"You cannot carry out fundamental change without a certain amount of madness."*

21 December 1967 **Louis Washkansky dies**

54-year old dentist Louis Washkansky, recipient of the first successful human heart transplant in the world, died in Cape Town, 18 days after receiving the heart of Denise Darvall. The heart transplant operation was performed by Dr. Christiaan Barnard at Groote Schuur Hospital in Cape Town on

3 December 1963. Washkansky died of pneumonia brought on by a weakened immune system. Heart transplants have become routine procedures since then.

22 December 1959 **Start of the Dusi Canoe Marathon**

The Dusi Canoe Marathon started on 22 December 1951, when 8 individuals canoed from Alexandra Park in Pietermaritzburg, through the Msunduzi, the Valley of a Thousand Hills and the Umgeni to Durban. Ian Player was the only one who reached the final destination in 6 days, 8 hours and 15 minutes. He published the book *Men, Rivers and Canoes* in 1964. The Dusi Canoe Marathon is one of the most iconic canoe races in the world, attracting between 1 600 and 2 000 paddlers each year.

22 December 1963 **ZANU-PF founded**

The Zimbabwe National Union – Patriotic Front is founded, as a political and military liberation alliance between ZAPU led by Joshua Nkomo and ZANU led by Robert Mugabe. Though with ideological differences, it presented a formidable assault against white and British rule in Zimbabwe, and became the governing party in 1980.

22 December 1989 **Somalian peace activist Ilwad Elman born**

Ilwad was born on this day in Mogadishu. Her father, a peace activist was assassinated and she was sent to Canada to stay with family. She returned to Somalia in the midst of the country's civil war to work with her mother in a social welfare foundation, and has since involved in co-founding a rape crisis centre and other social initiatives.

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

16 – 22 December 2023

Source: www.un.org, www.au.int and *The Africa Fact Book* (2020)

17 December

International Day to end Violence against Sex workers



First celebrated in 2003, the day calls attention to hate crimes committed against sex workers and to highlight the social stigma and discrimination that contribute to violence against sex workers. The day was inaugurated by Dr Annie Sprinkle and started by the Sex Workers Outreach Project USA.

18 December

International Migrants Day



Migration has been part of the experience of humanity since time immemorial, as Antonio Gu-

terres, UN Secretary General said: *"throughout human history, migration has been a courageous expression of the individual's will to overcome adversity and to live a better life."* The commemoration coincides with the adoption on 18 December 1990, of the UN International Convention for the Protection of all Migrant Workers and their Families. South Africa has a long history of migration (forced and voluntary), from colonialism and the arrival of the Dutch, British and others of European descent, slaves from Angola, Madagascar and Malaysia, the Mfecane, Chinese and Indians indentured labour, migrant labour for the mines from Southern Africa, to the current post 1994 waves of migration.

18 December

Arabic Language day

There are about 274 million Arabic speakers in the world, and is an official language in over 26 countries. In recognition of the importance of the language, in 1973, the UN General Assembly adopted Arabic as one of its six official languages. Arabic is also widely spoken in the African continent, especially north and east Africa, and is also one of the African Union official languages.

19 December

UN Day for South-South Cooperation

South-South cooperation is a manifestation of co-operation and solidarity among peoples and countries, to work towards ending the unequal and unjust global economic and political system that continues to advantage countries of the North, allowing them to continue to exploit developing countries to their advantage. The cooperation is expressed in various multilateral forums and South Africa continues to play an important role in promoting and fighting for South-South cooperation and solidarity.



20 December. International Human Solidarity Day Solidarity is identified in the Millennium Declaration as one of the fundamental values of international relations in the 21st Century, wherein those, who either suffer or benefit least deserve help from those who benefit most, in the context of a highly unjust and exploitative world order. Consequently, in the context of globalisation and the challenge of growing inequality, strengthening of international solidarity (and social justice) is indispensable.

20 December

International Human Solidarity Day

Solidarity is identified in the Millennium Declaration as one of the fundamental values of international relations in the 21st Century, wherein those, who either suffer or benefit least, deserve help from those who benefit most, in the context of a highly unjust and exploitative world order. Consequently, in the context of globalisation and the challenge of growing inequality, strengthening of international solidarity (and social justice) is indispensable.

27 December

International Day of Epidemic Preparedness

Truly global pandemics are one in a century occurrence, like the current COVID-19 pandemic and the Spanish Flu of 1918, which affects countries across the world. But, there are also more localised epidemics and pandemics, like SARS, Ebola or the Bubonic Plague. An epidemic is defined as the rapid spread of an infectious disease to a large number of people within a short space of a time. If it spread to a number of countries, it is called a pandemic.



Epidemics have been recorded in human history for as far back as 1200 BC in Babylon. The UN uses this day to focus attention on the importance of public health preparedness and coordination and for the One Health approach – the “*integration of human health, animal health and plant health, as well as environmental and other relevant sectors.*”

1 January

African Continental Free Trade Agreement. The African Continental Free Trade

Agreement (AfCFTA) on 1 January 2023 celebrates two years since its operationalization on this day. The AfCFTA is signed by all African Union Member states, except Eritrea. It lays the foundations for an African common market, with ratifying countries pledging to eliminate import tariffs on 97% of goods traded between African states. The Agreement was adopted by the 10th Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly in Kigali, Rwanda on 21 March 2018, and entered into force on 30 May 2019.

4 January

World Braille Day



Braille is a tactile representation of alphabetic and numerical symbols using six dots to represent each letter and number, and even musical, mathematical and scientific symbols. Braille (named after its inventor in 19th century France, Louis Braille) is used by blind and partially sighted people, using touch, to read the same books and periodicals as those printed in a visual font.

Umkhonto we Sizwe (16 December 1961)



ACROSS

2. Part of Eastern Cape regional commander later executed by the apartheid regime in 1964.
4. MK Camp commander in Uganda.
6. Hanged in 1986 for his role in Amanzimtoti MK blast.
8. MK's aim was to *"hit back by all means within our power in defence of our people, our... and our freedom"*.
9. 18 October 1985 execution of this MK hero, Benjamin
13. ... Portia Ndwandwe kidnapped Natal MK operative whose body buried in unmarked grave.
16. Massacre in 1960 that tipped scales towards armed struggle.
17. ANC consulted with with these allies about armed struggle and got consensus.
20. Who said "If the government reaction is to crush by naked force our non-violent struggle, we will have to reconsider our tactics. In my mind we are closing a chapter on this question of a non-violent policy."?
23. Leader of Border MK regional command executed by regime in 1963.
24. MK Chief of Staff assassinated in April 1993.

DOWN

1. Students who joined MK after 1976 formed part of this MK detachment.
3. MK hero hanged in Pretoria on 6 April 1979.
5. Who said during debate on whether to adopt armed struggle: *"There is still room for the old methods if we are imaginative and determined enough."*?
7. Cape Town MK operation in January 1980, known as the **Siege of ...**
10. 8 January 1972 MK operation against nuclear station.
11. ... and Sipolilo battles carried out by the Luthuli Detachment with ZAPU in 1967.
12. ANC President at the time of launch of MK.
14. Leader of first MK High Command in Natal.
15. 1979 OR Tambo announced on January 8 as the **Year of the ...**
18. June 1980 MK hit against this installation.
19. 16 December also falls on the anniversary of this battle.
21. Recruited Ronnie Kasrils to the newly formed MK.
22. ANC was banned with the ... Organisations Bill of 1960.

WORD BANK

Sharpeville	Blood River	Luthuli	Unlawful	Nelson Mandela
Moses Kotane	Congress Alliance	future	Curnick Ndlovu	SASOL
Vuyisile Mini	Washington Bongco	Wankie	MP Naicker	Phila
June 16	Solomon Mahlangu	Silvertown	Spear	Chris Hani
Koeberg	Thenjiwe Mtintso	Molaise	Andrew Zondo	