



# ANC TODAY

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## Conversations with the **President**

# UNITY, COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIP TO END POVERTY, UNEMPLOYMENT AND INEQUALITY

## OPENING OF PARLIAMENT ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA

AT THE CAPE TOWN CITY HALL, WESTERN CAPE, 18 JULY 2024

**W**E GATHER here in the province of the Western Cape in the aftermath of ferocious and unforgiving storms that caused damage to homes, businesses and infrastructure, affecting tens of thousands of people across the province.

In recent days, we have witnessed runaway fires in KwaZulu-Natal, in which 14 people, including six firefighters, lost their lives. The fires also caused the destruction of homes, livestock and grazing land.

The thoughts of all South Africans are with all those people who have been subjected to these terrible weather conditions

as they work to recover and rebuild.

I have asked the Speaker of the National Assembly and the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces to convene this joint sitting to formally open Parliament on a day that is full of meaning and significance.

Today, we celebrate the birth of the founding father of our nation and a global icon of peace, justice and reconciliation, President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. Across our country and across the world, millions of people are marking this day with deeds of service and solidarity.

Through their actions they are

giving life to a fundamental truth: that we derive our humanity from the humanity of others.

*Umntu ngumuntu ngabantu.  
Motho ke motho ka batho.*

*Muthu ndi muthu nga vhangwe  
vhathu. Munhu yi munhu yi vanhu.*

We are reminded on this day that we have a responsibility to each other; and that our wellbeing and our happiness cannot be separated from those of our fellow woman and man.

We are reminded that as we strive to progress and to prosper, we have a responsibility to ensure that no-one is left behind.

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We South Africans are a diverse nation, with different histories, beliefs, cultures and languages.

Yet we are one people. And we share a common destiny.

It is this common destiny that the people of South Africa have charged this Parliament and this Government to consolidate and advance.

Exactly 50 days ago, the people of South Africa went to the polls to decide the future of our country. Ahead of the elections they had expressed their concerns and their hopes, their wishes and their expectations.

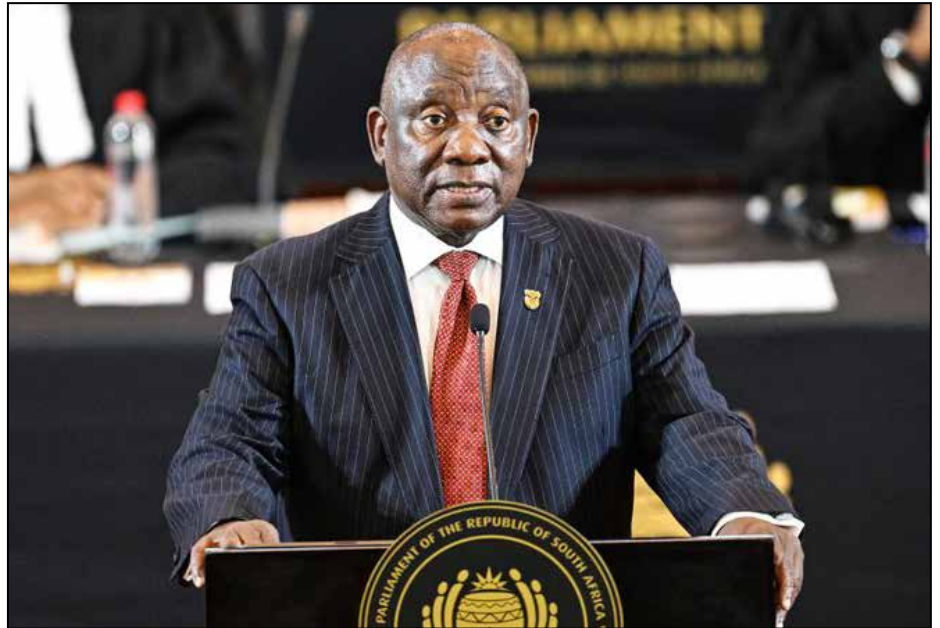
Through their votes, they determined that the leaders of our country should set aside their political differences and come together as one to overcome the severe challenges that confront our nation.

They sent a clear message that without unity, cooperation and partnership, our efforts to end poverty, unemployment and inequality will not succeed.

Guided by this directive from the people, political parties from across the political spectrum have elected to establish a Government of National Unity.

In an act that is unprecedented in our democratic history, ten political parties represented here in our Parliament have agreed to craft a common programme to build a better, more equal and more just South Africa.

They have come together, despite their differences, because they share a commitment to a nation that is united, prosperous and inclusive.



Through a Statement of Intent, the parties have made a firm commitment to respect the Constitution and the rule of law and to promote accountability, transparency, integrity and good governance.

They have agreed on a Minimum Programme as the foundation of the work of the Government of National Unity.

The priority actions that arise from this minimum programme received the full support of the recent Cabinet Lekgotla, which brought together newly-appointed ministers, deputy ministers and premiers. Local government representatives, directors-general and other key officials were also in attendance.

These are the priority actions that we outline this evening.

Cabinet will be convening a further strategy session to consider the Medium-Term Development Plan, which will translate these priorities into a detailed plan and interventions that government will implement over the next five years.

The Medium-Term Development Plan will set out a well-defined vision and strategic plan that outlines clear goals and includes specific, measurable objectives and a roadmap for achieving them. These goals will be properly aligned with the Budget, which will support the implementation of these objectives.

In all this work, the National Development Plan Vision 2030 remains the defining blueprint for our country's growth and development.

We will also draw inspiration from the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union's Agenda 2063 in crafting our Medium-Term Development Plan.

The Cabinet Lekgotla underscored the determination of all members of the Government of National Unity to work together to advance the interests of all South Africans.

It noted with appreciation the commitment and great enthusiasm with which the newly-appointed Ministers and Deputy



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Ministers as well as Premiers have embarked on their duties.

Despite the achievements of 30 years of democracy, and the work undertaken over the last five years to rebuild our economy and our society, millions of South Africans remain poor, unemployed and live in a highly unequal society. For a decade and a half, our economy has barely grown.

The circumstances of the South African people today require that we act together as the Government of National Unity and all key role players in our country with great urgency, boldly and decisively.

The Government of National Unity has resolved to dedicate the next five years to actions that will advance three strategic priorities:

Firstly, to drive inclusive growth and job creation.

Secondly, to reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living.

Thirdly, to build a capable, ethical and developmental state.

We have decided to place inclusive economic growth at the centre of the work of the Government of National Unity and at the top of the national agenda.

Our experience over the past 30 years has shown that when our economy grows, jobs are created. When our economy contracts there is no job creation and jobs are lost.

The Government of National Unity will pursue every action that contributes to sustainable, rapid economic growth and re-

move every obstacle that stands in the way of growth.

We are determined that growth must be inclusive. It must be transformational.

Inclusive growth must drive the redistribution of wealth and opportunity. It must support the empowerment of black South Africans and women, and all those who in the past had been relegated to the fringes of the economy.

This is part of the constitutional imperative to redress the imbalances of the past and deal with the slow process of development.

Through empowerment and transformation, we can ensure that the skills, capabilities, resources and energies of all South Africans are used to the greatest effect.

We will continue to pursue programmes that encourage broad-based black economic empowerment, employment equity and support to small- and medium-sized enterprises.

We will continue to protect and uphold the hard-won rights of workers, and continually strive to improve the conditions in which they work and live.

Inclusive growth demands that we affirm the position of women and youth in the economy. Inclusive growth requires that we remove the social, economic, cultural and other barriers to the full participation of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups in the economy.

We will support the growth of rural enterprises and invest in pub-

lic infrastructure in under-served areas.

We will increase funding to land reform, prioritise the transfer of state land and improve post-settlement support by strengthening the institutional capacity of responsible structures.

To achieve rapid, inclusive growth, we need to fix our struggling municipalities.

Growth happens at a local level, where people live and work. Our municipalities must become both the providers of social services and facilitators of inclusive economic growth. They must work to attract investment.

This approach can encourage businesses to expand and create more jobs in municipal areas. Investors are attracted to areas with reliable and modern infrastructure.

Simplifying and speeding up planning and regulatory processes can make it easier for businesses to invest and operate in a municipality, thus creating more jobs.

As the national government, we have both a Constitutional responsibility and a clear electoral mandate to assist municipalities in the effective exercise of their powers and functions.

We will ensure that the institutional structure and funding model for local government is fit-for-purpose, and that municipalities are financially and operationally sustainable.

We will put in place systems to ensure that capable and qualified people are appointed to senior positions in municipalities,



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and ensure independent regulation and oversight of the appointment process.

As an immediate priority, we will bring stability to governance in our metros and restore the delivery of services.

We have already begun this work.

When I visited eThekweni earlier this year, I met with residents of the city, with local business leaders and municipal officials.

They told me that they wanted to work together to build a city that they could be proud of again.

We have since put in place the eThekweni Presidential Working Group to enhance support from national and provincial government to turn the Metro administration around, to fix the problems in water and sanitation and attract new investment.

We will extend the same approach to other metropolitan cities that face serious challenges so that our cities can be engines of growth and dynamic centres of opportunity.

In the next five years, working to-

gether, drawing on our collective capabilities, we will forge a new inclusive growth path for South Africa by pursuing a massive investment in infrastructure.

Significant projects are underway around the country in areas such as transport, roads, water, energy and human settlements.

We will massively increase the scale of investment in infrastructure through a more holistic and integrated approach, positioning Infrastructure South Africa as the central institution of coordination and planning.

We are simplifying the regulations on public-private partnerships to enable greater investment in both social and economic infrastructure development.

From our largest metros to our deepest rural areas, we have a clear intention to turn our country into a construction site, as roads, bridges, houses, schools, hospitals and clinics are built, as broadband fibre is laid and as new power lines are installed.

We must work to engender a culture of maintenance of public infrastructure, and dedicate resources and establish systems

to ensure this.

As the Government of National Unity, we are resolved to intensify our investment drive, encouraging and enabling businesses to invest in productive capacity.

These investments will lead to increased employment creation for unemployed South Africans especially for young people.

We will drive growth in labour-intensive sectors such as services, agriculture, green manufacturing and tourism.

To create more jobs for South Africans, we will focus on processing our minerals so that we export finished products rather than raw commodities.

We will pursue a smart industrial policy that focuses on the competitiveness of our economy, and that incentivises businesses to expand our exports and create jobs.

We will continue to work with stakeholders to develop and implement Master Plans to grow important industries, increase investment, create jobs and foster transformation.

We are convinced that small businesses and the informal sector hold the greatest potential for inclusive growth and job creation.

We will pay particular attention to supporting small- and medium-sized enterprises in townships and rural areas. We will take economic activity to where most of our people live so that more jobs can be created.

Red tape debilitates the creation of jobs. Every department and



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every public entity has been directed to reduce the undue regulatory burdens that hold back businesses from creating jobs.

We have demonstrated the value of public and social employment in creating immediate work and livelihood opportunities.

The Presidential Employment Stimulus, the Expanded Public Works Programme and other initiatives under the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention have provided income, work experience and skills development opportunities to many young unemployed people. We will expand and institutionalise these programmes so that more and more young people can participate in job opportunities and skills development.

Through the Presidential Employment Stimulus, we have been able to create nearly 2 million work and livelihood opportunities. We aim to expand the public works programme exponentially to create more job opportunities.

We see great potential for growth beyond our borders.

As we strengthen economic diplomacy with our largest trading partners and potential trading partners, we will prioritise the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area to increase our exports to the rest of the continent.

We will do this as part of our foreign policy approach, which promotes peace, security, democracy and development across Africa and advances a more just and inclusive world order.

Over the next five years, we will

seize the enormous opportunity in renewable energy for inclusive growth.

South Africa has some of the best solar and wind resources in the world.

As we undertake a just transition towards renewable energy, South Africa must create a green manufacturing sector centred on the export of green hydrogen and associated products, electric vehicles and renewable energy components.

We have seen, for example, how the Northern Cape has already attracted billions of rands of investment in renewable energy projects.

Work is underway to set up a Special Economic Zone in Boegoebaai to drive investment in green hydrogen energy projects.

We already have a huge pipeline of renewable energy projects, representing over 22,500 MW of new generating capacity, estimated to be worth around R400 billion in new private investment. Investments such as these will create many jobs.

Just this week, we saw the largest-ever private energy project connect to the grid near Lichtenburg in the North West, with over 390,000 solar panels that will add 256 MW to the grid.

We will see more of these projects taking shape across our country in the months and years to come. As these investments reach fruition more jobs will be created.

Our Just Energy Transition Investment Plan sets out a clear path to invest more than R1.5 tril-

lion in a just transition, including support for workers and communities in Mpumalanga and other coal-producing regions.

South Africa is undergoing a renewable energy revolution that is expected to be the most significant driver of growth and job creation in the next decade and beyond.

We also have a unique opportunity to position our country as a major player in the digital economy and create jobs in digital services.

We will invest in digital identity and payments, expand access to affordable broadband, and increase training for young people in digital skills.

As we pursue these new areas of growth, we will continue with the far-reaching reforms that enable growth.

At the same time, we will launch the second phase of Operation Vulindlela, a government-wide initiative that has been essential in supporting and driving reform.

In its second phase, Operation Vulindlela will focus on reforming the local government system and improving the delivery of basic services, and harnessing digital public infrastructure as a driver of growth and inclusion.

It will also focus on accelerating the release of public land for social housing and redirecting our housing policy to enable people to find affordable homes in areas of their choice.

We will complete the most consequential transformation of South Africa's electricity industry in more than a century.

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Since the announcement of the Energy Action Plan in July 2022, we have made tremendous progress in reducing the severity of load shedding.

Over the next five years, government will focus on expanding and strengthening the transmission network.

To drive inclusive growth, we need an efficient freight rail network to carry our minerals, agricultural produce and manufactured goods to market.

Through the implementation of the Freight Logistics Roadmap, we will continue with reforms to transform South Africa's freight logistics system.

The work we are doing with business and unions through the National Logistics Crisis Committee has already contributed to improvements in the operational performance of freight rail and ports.

The well-being of our people and the growth of our economy depends on the availability of water. South Africa is a water-scarce country, and our water security is threatened by historical underinvestment in bulk water resources and distribution infrastructure.

We will therefore continue with institutional reforms in the water sector to enable greater investment in bulk water infrastructure and better regulation of water services across the country.

Just as businesses need water and electricity to operate, a growing economy needs skills.

Where the skills we need are not immediately available, we need

to attract people with the appropriate qualifications and experience.

We will continue with the visa reforms introduced in the last few years to attract skills and investment and grow the tourism sector. We will continue to pursue a macroeconomic policy that supports growth and development, in a stable and sustainable manner.

Like many other nations, we have had to borrow money to support our budgetary requirements.

We will manage public finances with a view to stabilising debt. We are firmly committed to steadily reducing the cost of servicing our debt so that we can redirect funds towards other critical social and economic needs.

Our second strategic priority as the Government of National Unity is to tackle poverty and the high cost of living.

An effective, integrated and comprehensive poverty alleviation strategy is necessary to provide protection and support to the most vulnerable in society.

Even at a time when many companies are making large profits, millions of South Africans are suffering as a result of rising prices.

As the Government of National Unity, we will look to expand the basket of essential food items exempt from VAT and undertake a comprehensive review of administered prices, including the fuel price formula, to identify areas where prices can be reduced.

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**LET'S DO MORE,  
TOGETHER.**

Issued by the ANC, Chief Albert Luthuli House, HQ





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Asset poverty is one of the underlying causes of abject poverty, which exacerbates the high cost of living amongst our people.

The provision of title deeds for land and subsidised housing provides people with assets that they can use to improve their economic position.

Income poverty is also one of the underlying causes of poverty.

The best way to deal with poverty is for people to have jobs. We have however made interventions to support the unemployed through a variety of interventions including during Covid when we introduced the SRD Grant.

The SRD Grant has provided a lifeline to millions of unemployed people. We will use this grant as a basis for the introduction of a sustainable form of income support for unemployed people to address the challenge of income poverty.

We must ensure that local governments properly implement the indigent policy so that the old, the infirm and the poor are able to get assistance with the payment of basic services.

Importantly, we will link social assistance with other forms of support to lift people out of poverty.

As a country, we need to appreciate the impact that a well-functioning and quality education system has on both reducing poverty and driving inclusive economic growth.

We will therefore focus on achieving universal access to early childhood development,

which is a prerequisite for improved learning in later years.

We will ensure schools are conducive to education, with enough classrooms, safe and appropriate sanitation facilities, clean water and a daily meal for those who need it.

To ensure that we produce the skills that our economy needs, we will expand vocational and technical training in schools and post-school institutions, and take a demand-led approach to skills development.

An important task of the next five years is to ensure that we also reduce the high cost of living through ensuring that everyone in South Africa has equal access to equitable, accessible and affordable quality health care.

As we implement the National Health Insurance, we will focus on strengthening health care infrastructure, improving training of health care personnel and using technology to improve health care management.

While there is much contestation around the NHI, there is broad agreement that we must draw on the resources and capabilities of both the public and private sectors to meet the health care needs of all South Africans equally.

In implementing the NHI, we are confident that we will be able to bring stakeholders together, and that we will be able to resolve differences and clarify misunderstandings.

With so many people living far from economic opportunities and services, transport costs take up a large part of people's income

and drive up the cost of living.

An immediate priority is therefore to complete the recovery of the passenger rail network across the country to enable people to travel from outlying areas to city centres.

Around 80 percent of commuter rail corridors are now back in operation, and nearly 300 vandalised stations have been refurbished, providing safer and more efficient services to commuters.

The third strategic priority of the Government of National Unity is to build a capable, ethical and developmental state.

We will proceed with the work already underway to professionalise the public service, ensuring that we attract into the state people with skills, capabilities and integrity.

We will continue to fight corruption and prevent undue political interference in the administration of the state.

In this administration, we will complete the work to restore the financial position and operational performance of our state-owned enterprises.

We will complete the implementation of a new centralised ownership model for SOEs. This will improve accountability, transparency, governance and oversight, while reducing inefficiency and the potential for corruption.

The establishment of a state-owned SOE holding company will give us greater capacity to build a sovereign wealth fund.

This has been done successful-

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ly by other countries whose sovereign wealth funds have built up capital from the high performance of the state owned enterprises rather than from the fiscus.

To tackle crime and corruption we must have capable, sophisticated and independent law enforcement agencies that can fight complex and organised crime.

We will deploy modern technology to assist crime fighting. A data-driven approach will be used to identify violent crime hotspots and inform the allocation of policing resources alongside prevention measures.

We will continue to tackle priority crimes like illegal mining, gang violence, cash-in-transit heists and the construction mafia through specialised police units.

We will continue to implement the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, and expand victim support services, like the Thuthuzela Centres and GBV desks in police stations.

Thirty years ago, President Nelson Mandela stood before this House to reflect on the first 100 days of the first Government of National Unity.

Recognising the different views of the diverse parties within the government, he said: *“What brings us together is the overriding commitment to a joint national effort to reconcile our nation and improve its well-being.”*

The same may be said of the Government of National Unity that has now been established by ten of the parties represented in this Parliament.

We share a commitment to reconcile our nation by advancing social justice and equal prosperity for all.

We are committed to improve the well-being of our country and its people through inclusive growth, the creation of jobs and the reduction of poverty. This is an undertaking that involves us all.

On the occasion of the Presidential Inauguration, I made a commitment that we should work together to hold a National Dialogue to discuss the critical challenges facing our nation, and to agree on what we all need to do to achieve a better future for this great country.

Across society, people have expressed their support for this National Dialogue.

They have said it should involve all key stakeholders in the life of our country, representing civil society, traditional leaders, the faith-based sector, labour, business, cultural workers, sports people and other formations representing the diverse interests and voices of our citizens.

Following the example set by historic events, such as the Congress of the People in 1955, the Conference for a Democratic Future in 1989 and the CODE-SA talks in the early 1990s, and drawing on the experience of the writing of our new democratic constitution in 1996, we envisage a National Dialogue that involves extensive and inclusive public participation.

As we have done at many important moments in our history, we will seek to forge a common



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vision and build a comprehensive social compact with a clear programme of action to realise our aspirations for the country.

Through this National Dialogue, we are called to be agents of change, to be champions of inclusive growth, to be creators of opportunity.

A few years ago, a diverse group of partners and stakeholders from across society came together to consider various scenarios for the future of our country.

These were called the **Indlu-  
lamithi Scenarios 2035**.

One of the scenarios they described was called *'The Recrimination Nation'*, using the loud Hadededa bird as its symbol.

This described a situation of inaction, where our country's problems go unresolved, and where everyone blames each other for South Africa's ills. This scenario painted a picture of our country going into decline.

The second scenario, symbolised by a vulture, painted a picture of a desperate nation governed by a populist coalition whose main objective is self-enrichment and patronage.

This scenario saw investment confidence being eroded, the growth path being low and unemployment, poverty and inequality remaining extremely high.

They also described a scenario they called *'The Cooperation Nation'*, symbolised by the social weaver birds.

This scenario paints a picture where after disruptions and protests there is a coming together



of political parties, the state, private sector and civil society in order to jointly identify priorities and leveraging the strength of each.

There is change in the form of governance and reform that leads to the economy growing, with more investment attracted, leading to the reduction of unemployment, inequality and poverty.

By establishing the Government of National Unity, by preparing for a National Dialogue, we have deliberately set ourselves along the path towards a 'cooperation nation'.

We would like all of us as South Africans to behave like 'weaver birds'. Weavers are among the most gregarious birds in that they build complex structures together and cooperate.

Despite all the challenges, despite our differences, despite all the headwinds, as South Afri-

cans we are called upon to remain firmly committed to pursue the path of cooperation, growth and inclusion.

Earlier today, a group of South African climbers reached the summit of Kilimanjaro, the highest peak on the African continent.

They did so in honour of the birth of Nelson Mandela and to celebrate the 30th anniversary of our freedom.

Known as Trek4Mandela expedition, these climbers have been joined by others from several countries around the world to help to keep girls in school by raising funds for sanitary products and other needs.

Let their actions inspire us all.

Let their achievement remind us that, as the South African nation, there is no mountain we cannot climb and no peak we cannot reach.

I conclude by remembering and paraphrasing the words of Martin Luther King Jr, when I say:

***Let us rise up tonight with greater readiness.***

***Let us stand with a greater determination.***

***And let us move on in these powerful days, these days of challenge, to make South Africa what it ought to be.***

***We have an opportunity to make South Africa a better nation.***

May God bless South Africa and protect its people.

Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika.

# GNU Partners Urged to Back ANC's Global Human Rights and Development Agenda

■ By **MAHLENGI BHENGU-MOTSIRI, ANC National Spokesperson and NEC Member**

**T**HE African National Congress (ANC) has a rich history of international relations marked by progressive and pragmatic approaches. During the anti-apartheid struggle, the ANC built strong alliances with various organisations in capitalist, socialist, and communist countries and liberation movements across Africa and beyond. This era was notably progressive, emphasising solidarity with oppressed peoples and anti-colonial movements.

Oliver Tambo, the ANC's longest-serving President, is renowned for shaping the ANC's progressive internationalism and global strategies.

Historian Luli Callinicos, in *"Oliver Tambo: Beyond the Engeli Mountains"*, highlights Tambo's diplomatic skills and unwavering commitment to the liberation struggle, which isolated and ultimately led to the downfall of the apartheid regime. As South Africa transitioned to democracy, the ANC's foreign policy remained rooted in international solidarity, progressive internationalism, non-racialism, and anti-imperialism.



The ANC's unwavering commitment to global peace, sustainable development, and the promotion of human rights across Africa and the international community is a testament to our values. Our dedication to mutual respect, cooperation, and the pursuit of equitable solutions to global challenges guides our engagement with international partners, providing reassurance of our commitment to a better world.

South Africa has actively facilitated peace talks and sent diplomatic missions to mediate conflicts in regions such as Northern Ireland,

Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Sudan. Our efforts in the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the Israeli-Palestinian war exemplify our commitment to diplomacy. South Africa initiated dialogue before many Western countries, which often took a biased stance, underscoring our dedication to impartiality and peace.

South Africa has maintained peace within the Southern African Development Community (SADC), frequently chairing the SADC Troika and leading mediation efforts in regional conflicts.



## CURRENT AFFAIRS

Our involvement in resolving the political crises in the Kingdom of Lesotho and Zimbabwe has fostered regional stability.

The ANC's 2017 national policy conference document calls for revitalising Africa and more robust engagement to achieve peace and economic development. It emphasises re-invigorating efforts to strengthen the African Union (AU), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), and SADC, advocating for standard policies and programmes across the continent to create a better Africa.

The upcoming elections in SADC countries are a positive development, reflecting the region's commitment to democratic governance and political stability. These elections allow citizens to exercise their democratic rights, strengthen institutions, and foster greater accountability. South Africa, under the leadership of the ANC-led Government of National Unity (GNU), supports these democratic processes and is ready to offer assistance in ensuring free and fair elections. Successful elections in the region, facilitated by South Africa's support, will contribute to political stability and socio-economic development, reinforcing the progressive ideals that the ANC champions.

With the Labour Party's election victories in the United Kingdom and other progressive successes in France, we are seeing a shift away from right-wing conservative policies that are anti-migrant, xenophobic, and opposed to progressive ideals. The rise of these progressive forces globally presents an opportunity to shift the discourse on issues like the Israeli-Palestinian war, where one side is heavily armed. South

Africa has been at the forefront of this discourse, exemplified by our recent case at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to force Israel to halt its genocide. The rise of progressive forces can counterbalance right-wing nationalism, fostering a geopolitical environment focused on global solidarity and cooperation. Moreover, progressive forces are generally more sympathetic to migrants and refugees, which could lead to more humane immigration policies and greater international cooperation to address the root causes of displacement.

We have noted inconsistencies within the Western world regarding human rights values. For instance, there is a stark contrast between their responses to Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The ANC advocates for a just and peaceful resolution to the Israeli war in Palestine and believes the West's responses should align with this stance.

The ANC acknowledges global injustices, including the unfulfilled self-determination in Western Sahara under Morocco, the humanitarian crises in the DRC, and the ongoing war in Sudan. As a nation, we must act to save lives and pursue long-term peace, coexistence, and democracy abroad.

Thankfully, the geopolitical landscape is shifting towards multilateralism and progressive internationalism, fostering international cooperation. This change strengthens the progressive front, aiding in pragmatic solutions to global issues through the United Nations and regional organisations, with a renewed focus on human rights to create a better world and a more unified Africa. We will also see more progressive economic policies where

governments advocate for fair trade and resist neoliberal agendas. This approach aims to foster economic growth, drive a decent work agenda, and promote technological advancements through mutually beneficial partnerships. These efforts align with President Cyril Ramaphosa's vision, as expressed in his inauguration speech, emphasising economic growth, job creation, and uplifting all citizens.

This will contribute to reducing inequality, a key goal of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and support the establishment of more equitable international trade agreements.

This shift prioritises sustainable climate change development, strengthening the Paris Agreement commitments and increasing investments in green technologies. South Africa aligns with these global efforts, aiming for net-zero emissions by 2050 and prioritising renewable energy sources like wind and solar power.

Moreover, South Africa plans to enhance climate resilience through strategies addressing water security, food production, and biodiversity conservation. As the chair of the G20 in 2025, South Africa will focus on inclusive economic growth, sustainable development, and enhanced global cooperation, addressing global inequalities, promoting human rights, and fostering a sustainable future for all.

We urge our GNU partners to join the ANC in its commitment to progressive internationalism, shaping South Africa's foreign policy.

By advocating for multilateralism, human rights, sustainable development, and equitable economic policies, we aim to build a better Africa and the world.



# PLACING SMALL BUSINESSES ON AN IRREVERSIBLE UPWARD TRAJECTORY

■ By **STELLA NDABENI-ABRAHAMS**

*Minister of Small Business Development, Comrade Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams, recently delivered her Budget Vote speech. Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams's speech made no promises, but firm undertakings and commitments. The speech resonated with the aspirations and real needs of small businesses and cooperatives. It was about urgency and the single-minded desire to hit the ground running. It was a confident and bold statement on the state of small businesses and cooperatives in the country and the long path that still needs to be walked.*

*It was a patriotic impassioned call to action – to do more together. She gave clear and measurable targets. It is now all hands on deck to grow small businesses! We invite our stakeholders to use this speech as a template to monitor our performance and hold us accountable.*

**Below is an abridged version of Minister Stella Ndabeni-Abraham's speech:**

**E**VERYWHERE we have been to, and digitally across all platforms, there are concerns about market access for small enterprises and cooperatives. We will do more to tackle market concentration and barriers to entry that exclude our SMMEs and co-operatives.

We have five main areas of focus regarding market access and localisation. Firstly, we will support 200 SMMEs through our Small Business Exporter's Development Programme to participate in ten (10) Trade events in the 2024/25 financial year. In this regard, R20 million has been allocated to exploit our AFCTA, BRICS partnerships and various global trade agreements.

Second, we will enhance our Market Linkage Programme to ensure placement of SMME products in strategic warehouses of wholesalers and the shelves of retailers. Through our partnership with Proudly SA, we are developing an e-commerce platform that is likely to go live in the second part of this financial year. The appeal is for all South Africans starting with public representatives to buy these products in the digital platforms and in shelves of retailers – LETS BUY LOCAL

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Third, we are working with the

## CURRENT AFFAIRS

public sector in order to exploit opportunities which will be presented by the Public Procurement Bill (once signed into law). We are working with corporates through Community of Practice to influence ESD programmes and procurement of products from small enterprises and cooperatives.

Fourth, we are actively building supplier capacity to meet and sustain the market requirements. Here we provide quality improvement, product testing and certification, as well as productivity improvement through Seda. Through the Small Enterprise Manufacturing Support Programme (SEMP) at Sefa we have allocated an amount of R266.8 million which deepens the black industrialist programme and ensure more participation of small enterprise in the manufacturing sector.

Fifth, priority is also given to new growth drivers with low barriers to entry. In this financial year (2024/25), we will focus on the energy sector and tech industry – while also implementing our Cannabis Support Programme that will look both at the industrial

hemp value chain as well as how to mainstream small indigenous cannabis growers for lucrative markets.

Access to finance remains one of the key constraints for small businesses and cooperatives, particularly those owned by historically disadvantaged individuals and those in the start-up phase of the business lifecycle.

To address this, we have developed an SMME and Co-operatives Funding Policy to expand access to finance and early-stage investment. We will be tabling this policy to Cabinet for final approval in this quarter. This policy will be a game changer as it also proposes an establishment Fund of Funds, which we are currently designing. The Fund will de-risk and leverage investment from the private sector and institutional investors for start-ups amongst other things. We will also prioritize the development of a Startup Policy and legislation as required. This will be done in collaboration with relevant departments.

We will also continue to build on the work we have already under-

taken in the previous administration to invest more in under-served SMMEs and co-operatives. In this regard, Sefa disbursed R2 billion funding facilities against a target of R2.18 billion, to 80 040 SMMEs and Co-operatives which led to 98 378 jobs were facilitated in the economy.

For this financial year, Sefa plans to disburse just under R2.16 billion and facilitate 130 006 jobs. The R2.16 billion disbursements comprise fiscal transfers and Sefa's balance sheet funds. It is targeted that the R2.16 billion disbursement to SMMEs and Co-operatives will result in the following development impact:

- R1.5 billion to black-owned businesses.
- R866 million to women-owned businesses.
- R649 million to youth-owned businesses.
- R64 million to businesses owned by persons with disabilities.
- R629 million to businesses based in townships.
- R1 billion to businesses in rural towns and villages.

**Think local, eat local, wear local and buy local.**

When you buy Proudly South African you are supporting companies that comply with:

-  **Good, homegrown quality**
-  **Use local content**
-  **Exercise fair labour practices**
-  **Uphold responsible environmental standards**





## CURRENT AFFAIRS



### The township and rural economy

We have reviewed our Township and Rural Entrepreneurship Programme (TREP) offerings to strengthen its impact and make it more accessible. This year we have allocated R344.2 million for the Township and Rural Entrepreneurship Programme (TREP), which will be administered through Sefa.

An amount of R255 million is allocated to our Asset Assist programme which is intended for business with less than R3 million annual turnover. We have allocated R45 million to General Dealers as part of reclaiming the township and rural retail space. To ensure safe and decent space for SMMEs and Cooperatives we will spend an amount of R153 million to build new structures.

To deal with counterfeit (fake products) that are destroying our

local economy while also exposing our people to harmful products, we will establish Township Economy Task Force this year, which will also help unlock access to local markets for quality locally produced products and the established supply chains. We will also be developing the National Township Economy Policy and a legislation that proposes mechanisms for changing townships from dormitory economic spaces into productive and dynamic micro economies.

delivery of key performance outputs.

We now receive clean audits from the Office of the Auditor General. More significantly, we delivered 80% of our performance targets.

On our big target of supporting 40 000 competitive SMMEs and Co-operatives across the portfolio, we overachieved by supporting 50 077 competitive enterprises.





# StatsSA Lies at the Cornerstone of Planning for South Africa's Development

■ By **NONCEBA MHLAULI, Deputy Minister in the Presidency**

**S**OUTH Africa faces a multitude of challenges that require a lucid understanding of the underlying realities, to enable policy makers a fighting chance at re-installing dignity and building a better life for all South Africans.

We all agree that our path to a more equitable and prosperous future hinges on our ability to tackle the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment through interventions such as educating and skilling the youth, creating an enabling environment for economic growth and job creation and ensuring redress to the injustices of apartheid, whose impact continues to be woven in the fabric of our society.

Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), our national statistical agency, plays a crucial, yet often under-appreciated role in how we craft our developmental agenda as a nation.

As the Republic's data custodian, Stats SA collects and analyses information on various socio-economic indicators. This includes critical data on demographics, income levels, labour markets, economic growth, price dynamics, education attainment, and living conditions. This rich tapes-



try of data serves as the bedrock for informed decision-making by policymakers at all levels, thereby inculcating an empirical approach to our country's development.

By analysing trends and patterns within the data, Stats SA helps pinpoint areas requiring urgent attention. For instance, data on unemployment rates can guide government initiatives towards sectors with the most significant job creation potential. Similarly, education data can highlight regions lacking access to quality schooling, allowing for targeted resource allocation.

Socio-economic development is

not a one-time event but rather an ongoing process. Stats SA's data provides a crucial tool for monitoring progress and measuring the effectiveness of implemented policies. By comparing data sets over time, policymakers can assess whether interventions are yielding desired results, allowing for course corrections and adjustments where necessary.

In a world rife with misinformation, access to reliable data fosters transparency and accountability. Stats SA's freely available data empowers citizens to hold government accountable for its development efforts. Additionally, transparency in data collection and analysis builds trust between

## CURRENT AFFAIRS

the public and policymakers, facilitating more collaborative approaches to socio-economic challenges.

Ensuring data accuracy, promoting data literacy, and keeping pace with evolving technologies, whilst protecting the independence of the organisation are some key areas of focus for this 7th Administration through this agency.

The operating model within Stats SA is being reviewed and adapted to fit the needs of an evolving society. Stats SA will continue to deploy and integrate innovative methodologies that were developed over the past years into the operating model.

Most importantly, the investment in technology to modernise the statistics value chain will continue to increase their efficiency.

The year 2024/25 will be the year when the world operates in a transformed digital space. The highest priority for the organisation is about sustaining and protecting the quality of official statistics and national indicators. Our national statistics agency is committed to delivering its suite of official statistics even amidst a challenging and declining resource environment.

Stats SA has adopted a change agenda with the strategic goals of:

- Harnessing alternative data sources to augment official statistics in the future;
- Transforming the skills set and investing in new capabilities such as data science and data analytics;
- Creating an agile operating model by modernising and digitalising the statistical val-



ue chain to unearth smarter and more sustainable ways to operate; and

- Leveraging innovative technologies and methodologies as building-blocks for an interconnected statistical system for the entire data ecosystem.

Stats SA should create change that matters, enabled by technology and sustained through capabilities.

In October 2023, Stats SA delivered the results of the first digital census to the nation. The population census offers us the most comprehensive set of statistical information to the lowest geographic level.

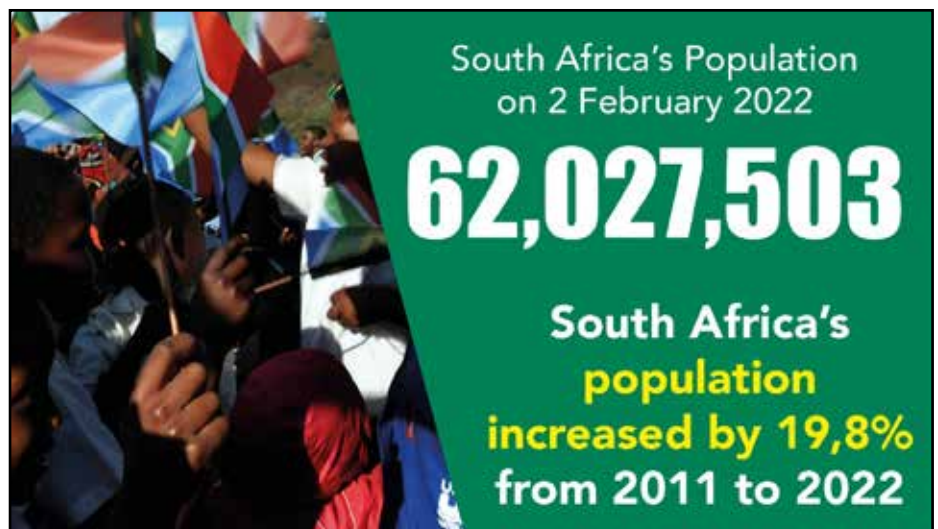
Recent concerns regarding the quality of the 2022 census data, underscore the importance of continuous debate and scientific enquiry on the products of Stats SA.

The agency has committed to upholding data accuracy through rigorous quality checks at every stage of the census process, including the Post Enumeration Survey (PES). The Statistician-General, Mr Risenga Maluleke, has openly addressed these concerns and is working tirelessly to foster public trust in data integrity.

Stats SA may not be at the forefront of every news headline, but its role in South Africa's socio-economic development is undeniable. By providing the foundation for informed decision-making, monitoring progress, and fostering transparency, Stats SA is a well-oiled, world class state institution, working towards a brighter future for all South Africans.

*This article was first published in the Business Day on 15 July 2024*

*Deputy Minister Nonceba Mhlau-li is responsible for Stats SA and other agencies.*





## CURRENT AFFAIRS



# Spirit of Mandela at Parliament's Opening

■ By **YACOOB ABBA OMAR**

**N**ELSON Mandela's spirit hovered over the opening of the parliament ceremony on what would have been his 106th birthday. Not only was the speech delivered by the man he personally identified as his potential successor, but President Cyril Ramaphosa is at the helm of a government of national unity (GNU), echoing the cabinet led by Mandela.

On July 18, internationally marked as Nelson Mandela Day, many proclaimed how they individually, or their party, best embodied the legacy of Madiba.

Judging by the lack of leaks, the first cabinet lekgotla of the GNU went off well. It seems no-one threatened to walk out of the talks, no-one made outrageous demands, and everyone seemed to have united around working

in the interests of the country — the kind of unison Madiba would have liked to see.

However, we do not need to get into the kind of deep philosophical debates scientist Carl Sagan contributed to when he argued

that “*absence of evidence is not evidence of absence*”. The proof can be found in the early utterances of the various cabinet ministers and their behaviour.

For example, in delivering her budget vote to the National As-





## CURRENT AFFAIRS

sembly Siviwe Gwarube, leading light of the DA and now basic education minister, provided evidence that she was committed to being a minister of all South Africans — very much in the way Mandela became the president of all South Africans.

Her commitment to constructively building on past efforts to address the education crisis is commendable. She emphasised that her ministry would be guided by the Action Plan to 2024: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2030, which she said “gives expression to the constitution, to the National Development Plan as well as to the continental and international conventions” to ensure “access, redress, equity, efficiency, inclusivity and quality education of opportunities widely available to all its citizens”.

Not as young as Gwarube but

also among the younger generation in cabinet, is our new foreign affairs minister, 40-year-old Ronald Lamola. His recent utterances have been Madiba-esque – telling the SA Institute of International Affairs that “SA, with its unique policy of active nonalignment, is not reactive but proactive in its pursuit of peace”, which means *“leading a unifying agenda through dialogue to achieve peace for developing countries that do not wish to take sides in great power rivalry”*.

His commitment to the AU’s Agenda 2063 and linking that to the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) will see him working more closely with his colleague and ANC comrade Parks Tau, now trade, industry & competition minister. The AfCFTA promises to eliminate trade barriers and boost intra-African trade, advance trade in value-added

production, and contribute to establishing regional value chains.

We can only hope the entire GNU relishes each passing day as a milestone to be celebrated and a commitment to improve the lives of all South Africans, and that none is tempted to walk out after just a year, as FW De Klerk did from Mandela’s GNU.

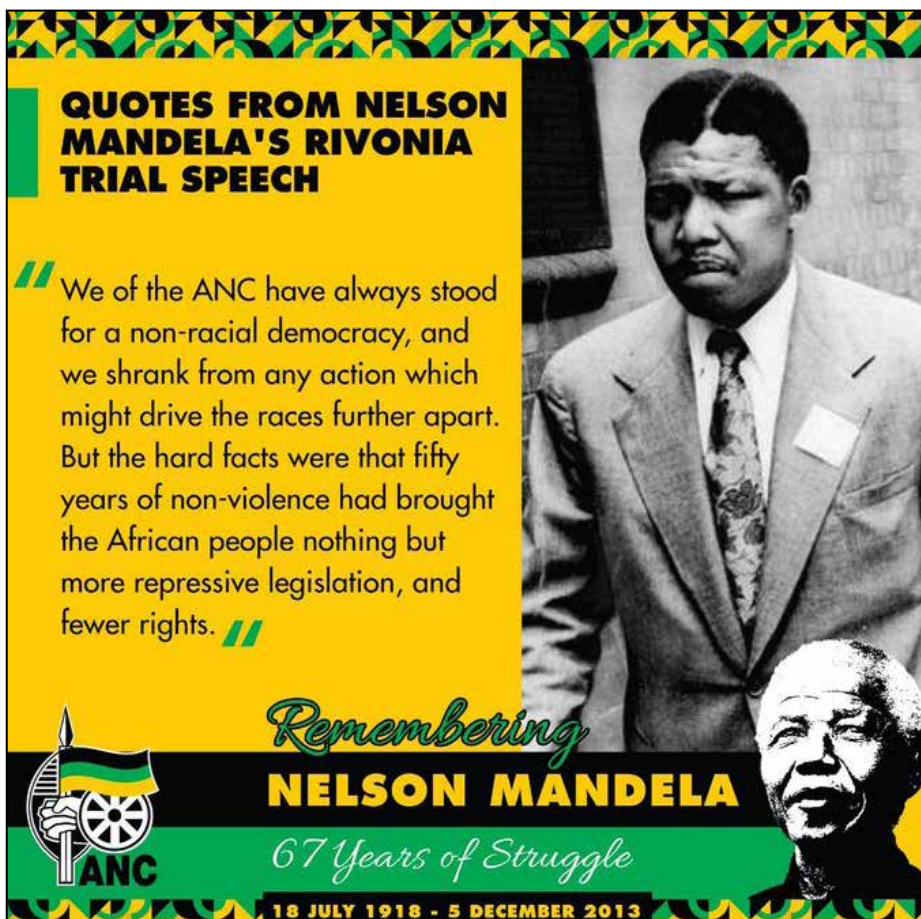
Ramaphosa will have to continue addressing the fundamental challenges facing SA — crime and corruption, poverty and hunger, debt, inequality and unemployment — while building national unity. Therefore, inclusive economic growth, a strengthened social net and an ethical, capable and responsive state will have to serve as the framework around which the rest of his opening of parliament speech is draped.

Most cabinet members, and most of the manifestos of the political parties included in the GNU, have indicated there are few differences among them, because the problems and solutions are clear.

Differences arise in how these challenges are tackled, and this is where Ramaphosa will need to wield his *“presidential prerogative stick”* over slack ministers to ensure they deliver on the mandate the electorate has given.

As he rose to address parliament and the nation yesterday, Ramaphosa surely must have recalled Madiba’s words: *“An organisation can only carry out its mandate if there is discipline, and where there is no discipline there can be no real progress.”*

**Abba Omar** is Director of Operations at the Mapungubwe Institute.



**QUOTES FROM NELSON MANDELA'S RIVONIA TRIAL SPEECH**

“We of the ANC have always stood for a non-racial democracy, and we shrank from any action which might drive the races further apart. But the hard facts were that fifty years of non-violence had brought the African people nothing but more repressive legislation, and fewer rights.” //

*Remembering*  
**NELSON MANDELA**  
*67 Years of Struggle*

ANC  
18 JULY 1918 - 5 DECEMBER 2013

# The Opening of Parliament Address – How the President crossed the Rubicon

■ By **GEORGE MAGOMA**

IT IS no easy task to cross the Rubicon, the *die is cast*. It is a fait accompli. As we so say we ponder, *quo vadis?* The people have spoken, in need of leadership and that leadership resides in the wisdom of the ANC, its art of navigating complex paths and unravelling conundrums. With the nation on tenterhooks, doubtful of tomorrow, the falling of the pin could be heard in a house that was once an arena of contestation and chaos, as opposed to a new aura of national unity and common goal of prosperity, partnerships and collaboration which is a new tapestry of Parliament, and an inclusive government reflective of the wishes of the people.

2024 is a new era of unity, a spirit of camaraderie, common citizenship and collaborations.

On 29 May 2024 the nation went to the polls to elect a government of their choice at whose primacy remained their aspirations. This was an electorate affected by a myriad of problems, from the ubiquitous crime and corruption, the scourge of gender-based violence, the high cost of living and abject poverty, unemployment, inequality, an economy incapable of creating decent jobs, dilapidated infrastructure, the electricity crisis, water shortages to a collapsed local government with



adverse effect on service delivery, amongst others.

In the run up to the elections a number of political parties presented their manifestos, varying in ideology and policy, pointing to the nature of the state they aspire to address the problems plaguing society. This was the most gruelling and highly contested election since the dawn of democracy in 1994.

For the ANC, there was a fight back and insidious plots to emasculate it through the proliferation and emergence of new political parties in the electoral milieu. This was accompanied by propaganda and misinformation, portraying it as an organisation that had jettisoned the

Freedom Charter, its values, what it represented and the essence underpinning its existence. In the end, the people spoke. There was no outright majority.

With its wisdom, among the many options on the nature of a regime and arrangement necessary to govern the country, the choice of the ANC remaining an opposition would not only have been a betrayal of those who voted for it, but a decision that would have serious ramifications on the strategic objective of building a non-racial, non-sexist democratic South Africa, the Freedom Charter and the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) and a path towards the National Democratic Society (NDS).



Notwithstanding the opposition fightback, political pundits, commentators and analysts wrote off the ANC as an organisation on its deathbed owing to its poor track record on challenges in the areas of ethical leadership, rampant corruption, health, education, which accounted for youth apathy and overall voter despondency.

In its diagnosis, the ANC subjected itself to a candid process of appraisal of its performance, interacting with communities, faith-based organisations, businesses and other sectors of society, in order to refresh its mandate, to improve its performance, to instil a culture of ethics and to build a state capable of advancing development through the Election Manifesto Review.

As this was happening, other political parties were crisscrossing the country, displaying and selling their own manifestos to the electorate. In the end, the ANC's obituary was written, with pallbearers being those who wished for its demise.

The ANC performed below 50%, with no party above the required threshold to form a government. This presented a conundrum for the ANC. In its wisdom, with so many options at its disposal, the ANC elevated the interests of the country, its prosperity and the wishes of the people above party political interests by opting for a Government of National Unity, putting the interests of the nation and unity first, based on a collaborative paradigm that would accommodate and reconcile antagonistic interests and policies and ideological differences.

To the envy of the world, a feat reminiscent of the difficult path of a negotiated peaceful settlement, national unity and reconciliation, by forming the Government of National Unity, the ANC understood the

rationale for its existence and its role in leading society. This, it did by uniting and reconciling all opposing forces behind a shared vision and mutual agenda of unity and common purpose to give effect to the will of the people.

We are reminded, that *"no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the people"* and that *"the people shall govern,"* as contained in our Freedom Charter. These dictates have a wider and impactful meaning. Firstly, this is designed to entrench our democracy, to rally, mobilize and unite society behind national interests. It is within this context that the ANC adopted *"Defend democracy and advance freedom"* as one of its manifesto priorities, buttressed by the 2024 January 8 declaration of *"The year of united action to defend our freedom and advance a better life for all."*

In giving effect to the January 8 statement and its overarching theme the ANC approached the 2024 elections under the theme **LET'S DO MORE, TOGETHER**. This was unity in purpose and, in foresight, guided the ANC in the adoption of the GNU model as a catalytic instrument to forge national unity and harmony in a hostile environment for the common good of the country.

This includes policy differences, ushering a new regime at whose apex resides the needs of the country.

President Ramaphosa stated it very clearly: *"The GNU is built on the priorities of inclusive growth and job creation, to reduce poverty and tackle the highest of living and to build capable, ethical developmental state in line with the manifesto priorities,"*





## CURRENT AFFAIRS

Secondly, the injunction of “*The people shall govern*”, which promotes and enhances participatory democracy as a fundamental tenet upon which the ANC is anchored, a loadstar that entrenched our Constitution, its institutions and the Bill of Rights since 1994, entrusting the electorate with the responsibility of building a true democratic state by participating in organs of people’s power, promoting active citizenship, finding solutions to the problems that punctuate the path towards the creation of an egalitarian society.

The new order of collaboration and partnership, a common vision of development can be sustained by the commitment of all role players to a goal of common purpose, and socio-economic transformation, building a sovereign state in the family of nations, a better Africa and a better world based on a diplomatic policy of human rights, inclusive multilateralism and partnerships for economic investment and the growth of the continent, including regional integration.

In his address to the nation, the President transcended this pristine and fragile path meticulously reconciling policy differences, uniting and committing the GNU without grandstanding and arrogance. That went beyond the humility of the ANC, reaffirmed its stature as a leader of society through its ability to navigate complex storms, urging leaders of political parties to put their differences aside to act in the interests of the country, and the prosperity of the nation. The President crossed the Rubicon, instilling the confidence of society, and reclaimed lost hopes. That was statesmanship.

Indeed, **LETS DO MORE, TOGETHER.**

**The ANC lives.**

**The ANC leads.**



# Narratives on the political landscape, missing ruptures, and political change

■ By **THOBANI MTHETWA**

**T**HE African National Congress (ANC) has been committed to stability and peace in the country since its formation in 1912. Although, for about three decades, we have witnessed the processes of radical transformations of political parties, there is also no lack of opinions about their deep crisis. When the first GNU was introduced in 1994, there was no viable alternative waiting to replace the challenges facing the country and no alternative to exploring new ideas for governance. Citing resolutions of the ANC Mafikeng conference of 1997, the ANC was faced with a quandary since historical power relations stayed the same to a great extent. The white minority remained domi-

nant and influential, constraining the ANC’s power across most sectors. Hence, today’s argument about the GNU dates back, and the 1994 and 2024 elections serve as a balancing act.

Hence, the GNU is notably argued as a legacy of apartheid, which continues to be forceful in the shaping of the country’s politics and the future. Therefore, it can be argued that the movement had to prepare its members psychologically for a new outlook and to embrace new realities. However, for years South Africa can be considered one of the countries that constitutes part of the global periphery, characterised by a Hobbesian struggle for power, where predictability based

## CURRENT AFFAIRS



on a set of shared norms does not exist.

In this regard, the South African political landscape has been characterized by a proliferation of political parties and splinter groups, and this has led to a South Africa wherein political parties in South Africa continue to prioritize regime change, and this is heavily informed by patterns of enmity when progressive approaches towards creating political, economic and governance have to be formed. The problem was not the formation of the Government National of Unity (GNU). The problem comes when political parties' relationship is unclear and systematically ordered.

Following the 2024 National and Provincial Elections, the ANC, having received the most votes, took the initiative to align all political parties and create systematic order in South Africa's politics. After careful consideration, the ANC proposed the GNU model as the best fit for the national interest. The party then reached out to all parliamentary seat-winning parties, inviting them to participate in the formation of a Government of National Unity.

Upon proposing the GNU, the ANC further solidified its influ-

ence by presenting a Statement of Intent (SOI) for the GNU.

This document invited all parties with seats in the 7th Democratic Parliament to engage with the founding principles, the minimum programme of Government, and the modalities of the GNU. In this way, the ANC not only established the GNU but also guided the processes and translated the governance rules into actual behavior.

However, the political parties' ideological postures and the ambiguity between rules and actions might lead to behavior inconsistencies. In certain instances, actors might respond precisely by reflecting institutional rules and best practices. In other instances, actors might be conflicted between their own identity, the interpretation of a situation, and institutional prescriptions of appropriateness. Furthermore, it is presumptuous to assume that the institutional design of the GNU presents a sense of common identity and belonging for all citizens.

As the debate over the GNU continues, it is clear that a unified South African position on the matter is still premature. The debate revolves around two gener-

al ideas, which generally include ideological and policy positions. However, one could argue that the GNU will adopt service delivery as the point of agreement. Furthermore, the Statement of Intention presented by the ANC prioritises service delivery, collectivism, and integrity in government affairs.

Rational choice new-institutionalism might argue that the GNU serves as a calculated strategy by the ANC to enhance service delivery capacity and to better arrogate to the institution the primary responsibility for promoting development, better governance, and sustainability in South Africa.

However, there needs to be a lucid definition of the GNU and a detailed plan on how the differing political parties with different identities will executive the country's developmental agenda. Furthermore, critics of the GNU and the position of the ANC have dominantly accused the ANC of allegedly selling out the revolution; those on the opposite end argue that no other preferences could have been attempted.

From a rational choice, new institutionalism might suggest that the GNU is a consequence of a sensible decision made by political



## CURRENT AFFAIRS

parties to solve the electoral decline problem. However, the political parties outside of the GNU might argue that the approach to form GNU was methodologically individualistic and that political parties within the GNU became rational agents who do not necessarily seek perfect equilibrium outcomes but accept satisfactory solutions for themselves.

The formulation of the GNU was influenced by competitive selection, which would enable them to derive benefits. Each political party engaged in the GNU to maximize its preferences. They are concurrently involved in collective action dilemmas, so whilst they seek to maximise their preferences, they do so in a manner where their gains would not necessarily make other actors worse off.

Furthermore, in the heat of the next election, the question that will arise is how the different political parties in the GNU will contest each other and what happens when all actors find it difficult to draw on their cognitive priors and historical experiences to determine which behaviour is appropriate for a current situation.

The GNU currently makes sense in addressing the realities facing South Africa. Still, it has to be taken into account that rules do not always determine behavior and policy outcomes precisely. Because rules might often be obscure in their formulation, actors might need help to determine between right and wrong.

The institutional design might be threatened by actors wanting to change rules and structures to accommodate shifting circumstances.



## NELSON MANDELA SPEAKS

**We know that the freedom we enjoy is a richly textured gift handcrafted by ordinary folk who would not allow that their own dignity as human beings should be insulted. In the acceptance of that gift is contained an undertaking by our people that we shall never again allow our country to play host to racism. Nor shall our voices be stilled if we see that another elsewhere in the world is victim to racial tyranny.**



## HISTORY

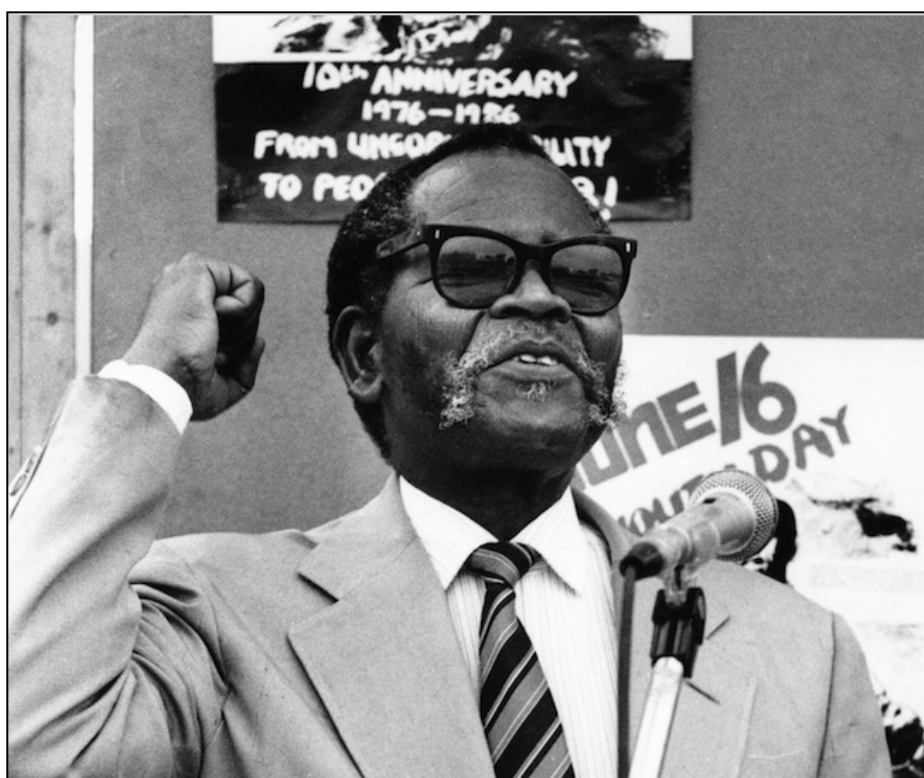
### A LEAF OUT OF SOUTH AFRICA'S HISTORY

# A proper Politico-Military thrust

■ By **CASTRO KHWELA**

**I**N March 1980, on the road to Lusaka airport, OR Tambo summoned Mac Maharaj to accompany him to discuss an important matter that was to be handled at a Revolutionary Council meeting the following day. The topic was around the creation of the so-called “70th Region” that was intended to use MK to work alongside ZAPU in Zimbabwe as a basis for establishing guerilla warfare in the north-eastern Transvaal – places like Lebowa, Venda, Pietersburg and Seshego. The Mozambicans had given the ANC a camp in northern Mozambique, which could be used as a rear base. However, OR expressed fears that the project might degenerate into a military adventure. He then mentioned that he wanted Maharaj to be at the meeting to ensure the initiative had “a proper politico-military thrust”.

In November 1977, when Mac Maharaj was working in Yusuf Dadoo’s office in London, Dadoo mentioned that at the latest Revolutionary Council meeting, it was decided to appoint him, Maharaj, as secretary of the Internal Reconstruction Department (IRD). As Secretary, he was to work under John Motshabi. Following that briefing, at the meeting of the ANC Revolutionary Council (RC) held around April 1978, John Motshabi mentioned that arrests had taken place in Pieter-



maritzburg, Pretoria, Cape Town and the Eastern Cape. He maintained that the approach taken to internal reconstruction by Thabo Mbeki when he was in charge of the similar project earlier in the decade, when working alongside Albert Dhlomo in Swaziland, was to take people who were very well known in the movement and entrust them with responsibility of finding solutions to the problems of political reconstruction.

Motshabi said that the IRD would, by contrast, seek to avoid involving known political activists during the first phase. The department would instead try to de-

velop another echelon of political cadres unknown to the state and Motshabi mentioned the need to create different compartment in this internal underground. He called these “functional units”, which would each have different responsibilities, such as propaganda distribution, trade unions, border crossings, mass work and the reception of cadres – these would all exist as separate “functional units”. Motshabi referred to some challenges the IRD was facing in conducting its work. He questioned the training that the people were undergoing, and asked where the training facilities for political work were?

## HISTORY

According to Motshabi, the operation again highlighted the saliency of the issues that induced the ANC leadership to visit Vietnam. Besides the casualties, the most worrying aspect of the situation was the number of times Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) cadres were being turned over to the police by black South Africans.

The IRD was essentially the Intelligence Service and Covert operations branch of the ANC's Revolutionary Council. They were a specific action group, running networks into South Africa, and controlling recruitment and target selection for specific tasks. One of the main tasks of IRD was the collection of information in accordance with the intelligence function. For this reason, this department ran networks into South Africa specifically for the collection of information on political activities.

A full meeting of the ANC's NEC and RC commenced in Luanda, Angola, on the 27th December 1978 with the main aim of considering the relevance to the South African struggle of the report from the delegation that travelled to Vietnam in October. Given the emphasis placed by the Vietnamese on political mobilisation as a pre-requisite for guerrilla warfare, the discussion centred on the fortunes of the IRD.

Thabo Mbeki recalled that when he was working in the RC on a similar project in the mid-seventies his structures wrote a report concerning every person they met in Swaziland. The stuff was in a trunk that he gave to Stanley Mabizela.

This implied that Maharaj had to begin building the structure from scratch.



## NELSON MANDELA SPEAKS

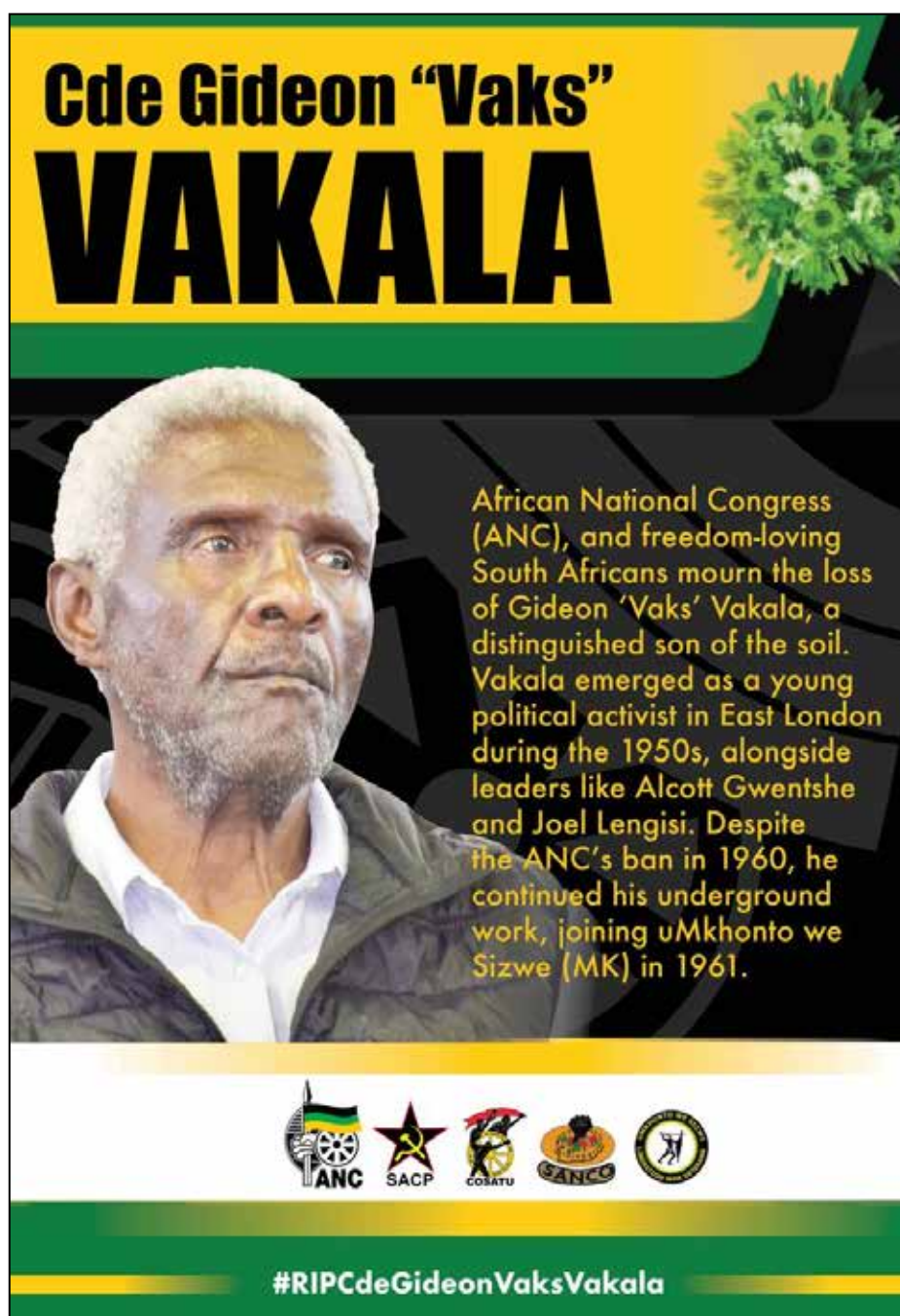
**We need to restore and reaffirm the dignity of the people of Africa and the developing world. We need to place the eradication of poverty at the top of world priorities. We need to know with a fresh conviction that we all share a common humanity and that our diversity in the world is the strength for our future together.**



**TRIBUTE**

# FAREWELL TO GIDEON MBUYISELO 'VAKS' VAKALA (AKA CONNIE DLINGCA)

■ By **CLARENCE KWINANA** (*Nom de guerre: Patrick Makhaya*)



**Cde Gideon "Vaks"  
VAKALA**

African National Congress (ANC), and freedom-loving South Africans mourn the loss of Gideon 'Vaks' Vakala, a distinguished son of the soil. Vakala emerged as a young political activist in East London during the 1950s, alongside leaders like Alcott Gwentshe and Joel Lengisi. Despite the ANC's ban in 1960, he continued his underground work, joining uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK) in 1961.

**#RIPCdeGideonVaksVakala**

Logos: ANC, SACP, COSATU, SANGCO, and another circular logo.

**T**HE Vakala family; Molteno in the Chris Hani district; the old Border Region; the ANC; MK veterans and all freedom loving South Africans; mourn the passing of an illustrious son of the soil, Gideon Vakala, at his ancestral home of Molteno, on 06 July 2024. He was born in Molteno, a town situated beneath the mountain range of Stormberg in the Eastern Cape, on 03 September 1941. In his early days in Molteno, he was best known by his nickname, Mahoyi. As a young boy, he moved with his uncle, Boyce Ganyaza to East London, where he grew up and matured as a boxer, university student and an activist – and later in life – as an economist and journalist.

He grew up in the oldest African location in East London, East Bank, also known as Kwa-Tsolo, where the present suburb of Braelyn is situated. Tsolo was mainly divided into three sections, namely: Gomorraah; Emaxambeni and Moriva where Vaks, as he was subsequently known, lived. He took to boxing at an early age, as boxing was one of the biggest sports in East Bank.

Ambassador Bizo Mngqikana, a prominent musician and Rugby player of East Bank from the 1950s, describes Vaks as an excellent boxer and the best that East London produced in his division at the time. Japan Ngesman who was also born in East Bank, says Vaks' boxing contemporaries from the second half of the 1950s included Monde Mbanxa;



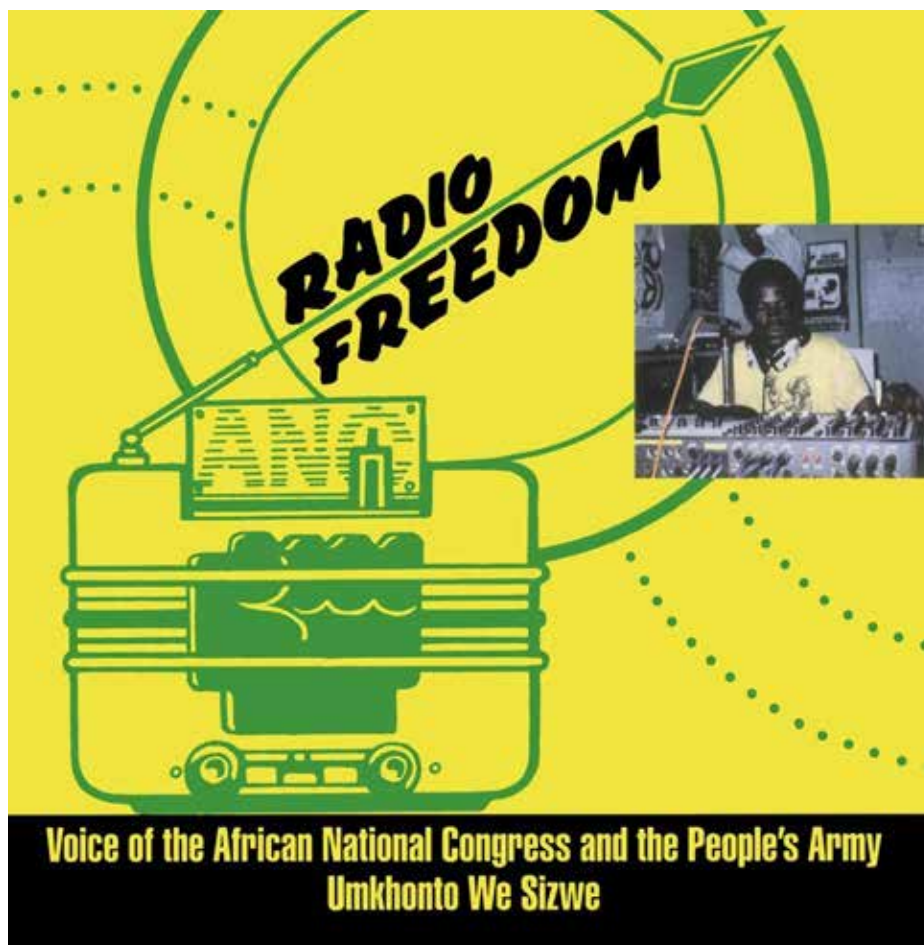
## TRIBUTE

Eric Gabelana; Joseph Menemene and many others. The latter turned to Karate and became the first African Sensei in East London. Mngqikana says Simon Ndekana 'Sofinga' Sali, was one boxer who trained and inspired Gideon Vakala.

Vakala was among the youngest political activists of the rolling fifties in East London. The ANC was initially led by the likes of Alcott Gwentshe; Joel Lengisi and J J Matotie in the region. When they were banned after the Defiance Campaign of 1952, the ANC was led by the likes of Malcomess Mgabela and Douglas Sparks. Down the line, Steve Tshwete also emerged as a strong, young leader in the ANC and MK underground. These were the leaders who inspired Vakala. He became active until the ANC was banned in 1960. He attended Welsh High School in East London and enrolled for a degree in Economics at the University of Fort Hare. He continued with the underground political activity when he joined MK after its formation in December 1961.

Ambassador Mzwandile Mdingi recalls that he first met Vaks at Fort Hare in 1962. There was Andrew Masondo who was a Maths lecturer at Fort Hare and also a member of the Eastern Cape High Command of MK. He formed a small MK unit at Fort Hare that consisted of Gideon Vakala; Mzwandile Mdingi and Thamsanqa Nelson Dick, who was a high school student who came from nearby Ntselamanzi village. They were involved in academic work at Fort Hare during the day, and conducted guerilla activities by night. They mounted a sabotage campaign in Alice, using homemade explosives and other weapons. The town of Alice was engulfed in darkness as they sabotaged power pylons.

They were subsequently arrested and tried in Grahamstown in 1963. Andrew Masondo was sentenced to 12 years. Mzwandile Mdingi and Thamsanqa Nelson Dick were sentenced to eight years each. Gideon Vakala was acquitted as the police had no



evidence that linked him directly to the sabotage activities. Those who were found guilty were sent to Robben Island. Knowing that the notorious member of the Special Branch in East London, Donald Card, would still continue to tag him, Gideon Vakala left for exile in Tanzania. There, he was best known as Connie Dlingea as non-South African communities could not pronounce Dlingca.

As he left the country, he had already inspired a younger stock of boxers who included Remington 'Colorado King' Dyantyi; Lawrence 'Slow Poison' Nzondo; Alistair Mahashe and Cyril 'Old Bones' Adams. The latter credits the sparring sessions he had with Vakala, for the dynamite he became throughout the 1960s and the 70s.

Vaks obtained a Master's degree in Economics from the Hochschule für Ökonomie Berlin (School of Economics Berlin) in the German Democratic Republic, where he studied. Not only did he fall in love with the country,

Vaks also found the love of his life, Marianne Truebenbach, a German lady whom he married. They had a son, Mikro and a daughter, Ina.

He later worked at the ANC's International Department in Lusaka.

In mid-1979, Gideon Vakala with two other struggle veterans from the 1950s, Jimmy Pitse and Vusi Shangase, moved to Luanda, Angola, where they took up residence with functionaries of Radio Freedom at Bairro Maculusso. The functionaries of Radio Freedom - Luanda at that stage included Jessica Monare; Sello Moeti; Patrick Makhaya; Richmond Ramotse and Zanempi Sihlangu.

Vusi Shangase who was the pioneer of the Zulu Service of Radio Moscow in 1966, became the new Head of Radio Freedom Luanda. Jimmy Pitse who was a prolific poetry writer from the Luthuli Detachment, also joined Radio Freedom. Vakala, who was known as Connie Dlingea at this

## TRIBUTE

stage, became the main presenter of the English programme of Radio Nacional de Angola, a programme that aired at 12:00 Angolan time. The Foreign Languages Division was headed by Hilda Carreira. Vakala's Angolan colleagues on the English desk included Um Filho and Luis Carreira.

His kindness and soft spoken nature, almost belied his erstwhile boxing prowess. He was a conversationalist who always shared his insights into various subjects with the younger generation of Radio Freedom.

While most programmes of Radio Nacional de Angola were in Portuguese, the Angolan government needed a programme that could establish the station among English speaking audiences of the Southern African region. It was also important to have a person with good command of English and with the necessary political acumen. Gideon Vakala was the first of those from the ANC.

As the majority of Radio Freedom functionaries were from the June 16 generation, they affectionately referred to the three newly arrived veterans (Connie; Jimmy and Vusi) as the Three Luthuli Musketeers. On weekends, they would be seen navigating the streets of Luanda on foot, making friends with the local population, despite their limited understanding of Portuguese. Whenever Bizo Mngqikana came to Angola, he would always pay them a visit at their apartment at Avenida de Brazil.

Vakala compiled and presented news bulletins and commentaries over Radio Nacional de Angola from Monday to Friday. He had profound insight into the liberation struggles of Southern Africa; international politics and international economic relations. He guided his younger Angolan colleagues in the craft of writing. He did such wonderful presentations that the MPLA Workers' Party wrote a letter to the ANC office in Luanda, expressing its satisfaction with the good work he did.

By 1980, Vakala was appointed the ANC Chief Representative to Angola. His programme at Radio Nacional de Angola was taken over by Christine More, also from the ANC. A member of the June 16 Detachment and a functionary of the Commissariat, James Ngculu, recalls that in 1981, an ANC Women's Section Conference took place in Luanda. A member of the National Executive Committee of the ANC and a leading figure in the ANC Women's Section, Ruth Mompoti, arrived in Luanda from Lusaka. She asked the Commissariat to write her speech. However, she vehemently insisted that Vakala had to be part of the writing. Vakala just decided to write the speech himself. He produced such a brilliant piece such that Mompoti was left visibly overjoyed. Ngculu also recalls that Vakala's mid-day programme on the radio was always something not to miss.

Vakala responded to another call of duty to return to Lusaka, where he

took up functions within the Secretary General's Office in Lusaka in 1981.

He was succeeded by Uriah Mokeba as Chief Rep. He worked in Lusaka until it was time for the exiles to return home. At the dawn of democracy in 1994, he worked at the office of the first Premier of the Eastern Cape, Raymond 'Oom Ray' Mhlaba in Bisho, as his Advisor, until he retired.

When the Department of Defence decided to award medals to the founders of MK and veterans of the Luthuli Detachment in 2015, Gideon Vakala was among the recipients.

As Ambassador Bizo Mngqikana says, the wickets of that golden generation are falling one by one.

His funeral will take place on Friday, 26 July 2024 in East London.

May Vaks' Soul Rest In Eternal Peace.





## POETRY

# Remembering Jessie...

■ By **RUBY MARKS**

I think  
there are people  
who burst into life  
like a burning meteor  
of rage and hope that flashes across the sky,  
hurling captured flames  
in Molotov cocktails that rains down on injustice and  
oppression,  
and starts little fires of revolution everywhere.

But like meteors,  
their path is brief  
and so even more dazzling  
to those lit up by their light.  
They leave behind  
the shiniest trail  
of golden dust  
for us to dance amongst  
for our freedom.  
They are not meant to stay  
Just to light up our way  
Into a brighter day.

RIP Jessie





## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

# THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

20 – 26 July 2024

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

### 20 July 1969

#### South African invention on the Moon

Krugersdorp was the hometown of engineer George Pratley who founded the Pratley research group (PTY) and went on to invent Pratley Putty in the early 1960's. Pratley Putty was used by NASA in 1969 on Apollo XI's Eagle landing craft and is the only South African product ever to go to the moon. The Apollo XI mission was the first manned mission to land on the Moon

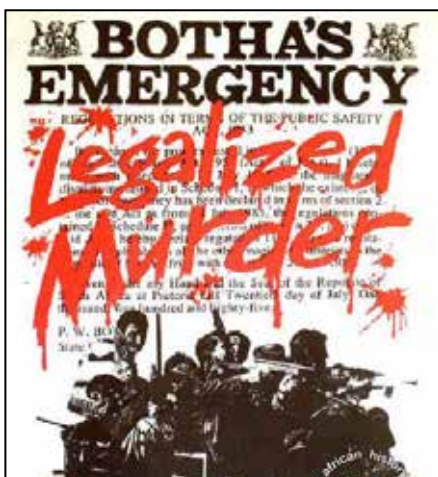
### 20 July 1979

#### PANA formed

The Pan African News Agency was founded in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia by the Organisation of African Unity, consisting of various bureaus across the continent to report news from African perspectives.

### 20 July 1985

#### State of Emergency declared



On the day after the burial of the Cradock Four, killed by the apartheid government, a state of emergency was declared in 36 magisterial districts across South Africa, to deal with the widespread popular resistance of the 1980s. The state of emergency regulations allowed for detention without trial, banning of political activities and organisations, as well as blanket ban on media coverage of activities. It also gave powers to ban funerals and impose curfews.

### 20 July 1998

#### Adriaan Vlok implicates FW De Klerk at TRC

Whilst giving testimony in amnesty hearings, the former Minister of Police Adriaan Vlok told the TRC that FW De Klerk was aware of illegal operations against the anti-apartheid organisations. Vlok, along with 30 other senior police officers were applying for amnesty. De Klerk in two earlier submissions to the TRC categorically denied knowledge of the illegal operations of the apartheid police. Adriaan Vlok applied for amnesty for amongst others the bombing of the South African Council of Churches Khotso House, the bombing of COSATU offices, and attacks on cinemas showing the Biko movie, *Cry Freedom*.

### 20 July 1904

#### Agri South Africa founded

The South African Agricultural Union, Agri South Africa since,

was formed in 1904, as a federation of agricultural organisations. The history of the union mirrors the evolution of the agricultural sector, with *“white farming built through massive state assistance – in the form of land, credit, and input and output markets (involving subsidies and financial assistance). Under apartheid, access to credit was mediated through parastatals which enabled farmers to obtain capital financing from the government at interest rates significantly lower than market rates, primarily from the Land Bank, Agricultural Credit Board and sub-sectoral cooperatives.”* (Helliiker, 2013). Today, its stated mission is to promote *“the development, profitability, stability and sustainability of primary agriculture in South Africa by means of its involvement and input on national and international policy and the implementation thereof.”*

### 21 July 1942

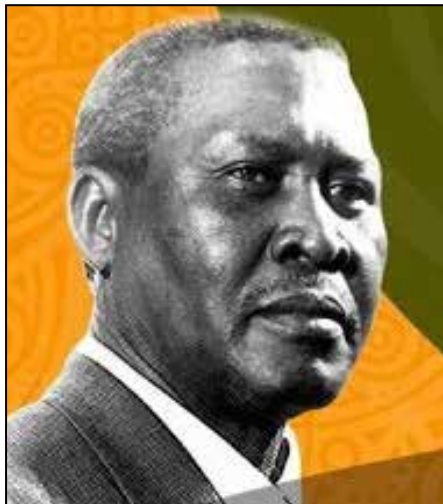
#### Job Maseko blows up German ship

Job Maseko was a lance corporal with the Native Military Corps during World War II and was captured by the Germans. Whilst forced to perform hard labour loading a German ship with other prisoners, he used his experience as a miner to improvise a bomb and blew up the ship. He was supposed to receive the Victoria Cross, but got a lesser citation because he was black.

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

**21 July 1967**

### **Nkosi Albert Luthuli, ANC President-General killed in Groutville, Stanger**



Luthuli, who was ANC President-General from 1952 until his death in 1967, was confined to Groutville by the apartheid police, under a form of semi-house arrest. He received the Nobel Peace prize in 1960, becoming amongst the most well-known African leaders of his generation. Luthuli was born near Bulawayo, Zimbabwe in 1898 and his family moved to KZN in 1908. He trained as a teacher and lay Methodist preacher, and was active in political resistance throughout his life. He was struck by a train in 'suspicious circumstances' and killed on this day. The story of his life is told in his autobiography – *Let My People Go*, originally published in 1958, with many subsequent editions.

**21 July 1977**

### **Libyan-Egyptian war begins**

This short border war between Libya and Egypt started with Libya striking Egyptian cities. The war lasted for 2 days with a ceasefire on July 24. The war was the result of enmities between the two countries leaders, Muammar Ghaddafi of Libya and

Anwar Sadat of Egypt, after the latter signed a peace treaty with Israel after the Yom Kippur war of 1973.

**22 July 1899**

### **King Sobhuza II born**

King Sobhuza II was born on 22 July 1899 in Zombodze in Eswatini, the eldest son of King Bhunu and Queen Lomawa Ndwandwe in the then Protectorate of Swaziland. After his father died, he was proclaimed king by the royal council and given the name Ngwenyama Sobhuza II, with the Queen Mother Labotsibeni as regent. He assumed the throne at the age of 22 in 1921, and reigned until his death in 1982. King Sobhuza was one of the founders of the OAU in 1963, and his kingdom gained independence from Britain in 1968. He was awarded the South African National Order of the Companions of Oliver Tambo in 2006.

**22 July 1987**

### **Murphy Morobe and Valli Moosa detained in Port Elizabeth**



Police arrested United Democratic Front national secretary-general Mohammed Valli Moosa and its acting publicity secretary Murphy Morobe in a pre-dawn raid on the home of Judge Dayalin Chetty in Port Elizabeth. The two men had been on the run from the police for more than a year. The follow-

ing year on 15 September 1988, Valli and Morobe escaped from detention in Johannesburg after feigning illness and spent thirty-seven days in the American Consulate, before securing passports and flying out of the country.

**22 July 1908**

### **Reggie Walker wins Olympic Gold**

Reggie Walker was 19 years when he won a Gold Medal at the 1908 Olympic Games in the 100 metres. He was the youngest person to win the 100 metres at the Olympic Games.

**22 July 1991**

### **ANC NWC calls for dismissal of Ministers of Police and Defense**

Following an emergency meeting of its National Working Committee, ANC called, among other things, for the dismissal of Law and Order Minister Adriaan Vlok and Defence Minister Magnus Malan, the establishment of a multi-party commission of inquiry into the authorities' involvement in the violence and the secret funding of political activity, as well as the public dismantling of all special counter-insurgency forces.

**22 July 2020**

### **41% of Businesses Owned by Women**

Forty-one percent of businesses in Rwanda are owned by women, as against the global average of 10-20%, according to a survey by Credit Suisse.

**23 July 1882**

### **Haile Selassie I, Emperor of Ethiopia born**

Haile Selassie was born as Lij Tafari Makonnen in the village of



## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

Ejersa Gor, in the Harar province of Ethiopia. Heir to a 13th century dynasty, he ascended to the throne of Ethiopia in 1930, proclaiming himself "Haile Selassie", which means "Might of the Trinity". In 1936, he led his country's resistance to Italy's invasion of Ethiopia and spoke out against the use of chemical weapons at the League of Nations. Exiled to England in 1936, he was restored to power in 1941. However, by the 1970s, his apparent indifference to the Wollo famine resulted in the loss of popular support. In 1974, he was dethroned in a military coup and murdered by his successor, Mengistu Haile Mariam.

### 23 July 1900 First Pan-African Congress held

The first of gatherings of Africans and the African Diaspora took place in London from 23-25 July 1900, to discuss common challenges of slavery, colonialism and racism. It was at this first Pan-African Congress, that WEB Du Bois made the much quoted statement, that the problem of the 20th Century, is the problem of the colour line.

### 23 July 1935 Solidarity with Ethiopia

The first meeting of the International African Friends of Abyssinia was held in London, attended by prominent Africans and the African Diaspora, including Jomo Kenyatta, Amy and Marcus Garvey, and Kwame Nkrumah, to organise solidarity with Ethiopia against Italian fascist invasion.

### 23 July 1973 Carlton Centre opens

For decades the tallest building in Africa, the Carlton Centre

opened on this day in 1973. Construction on the 50 floor building started in 1967.

### 23 July 1977 Phyllis Naidoo escapes to Lesotho



When her underground cell was arrested and detained, Phyllis Naidoo (1927-2013) escaped to Lesotho, where she joined the ANC. During her exile, she worked tirelessly with and for exiled children and assisting SACP and ANC members to escape from South Africa. She returned to South Africa in 1990. Naidoo was a lawyer, university lecturer, author, activist and a member of the Non-European Unity Movement, Natal Indian Congress, the South African Communist Party and uMkhonto we Sizwe. In 2003, she was awarded the Order of

Luthuli, in silver. Phyllis Naidoo is author of the books *Waiting to Die in Pretoria* (1990), *Izinyanya: A Millenium Diary in the Year of Older Persons* (1992), *Le rona re batho* (1992), *Footprints in Grey Street* (2002), *156 Hands that built South Africa* (2006), *Footprints beyond Grey Street* (2007), and *Enduring Footprints* (2009).

### 23 July 1989 Coline Williams and Robert Waterwitch killed

On 23 July 1989, a blast occurred opposite the Athlone Magistrate's Court and police complex, which took the lives of two African National Congress (ANC) activists. Coline Williams (22) and Robbie Waterwitch (20) from Cape Town, were killed when the explosive device they were attempting to plant opposite the Athlone Magistrates Court and Police Station detonated prematurely. During the TRC hearings, evidence was led that their MK unit was infiltrated by the security police, and that the injuries to their bodies were inconsistent with a blast, and more akin to torture.



## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

**23 July 1996**

### **Penny Heyns wins gold at Atlanta Olympics**



Penelope Penny Heyns was born on 8 November 1974 in Springs, Gauteng Province. Heyns began swimming at a young age and displayed great skills, eventually securing her a bursary to study at the University of Nebraska in the United States. In 1996, Heyns was part of Team South Africa in Atlanta. She made history by winning both the 100m and 200m events at the games, the first and to date only woman in the history of the Olympic Games to have achieved this. Heyns was named Female World Swimmer of the year in 1996 and 1999 by Swimming World Magazine. She retired from professional swimming in 2001.

**23 July 2021**

### **Prim8 local car brand licensed**

South African-based Zimbabwean Tatenda Mungofa received a license to produce the Prim8 car locally, which he designed. The manufacturing company is Murezo Auto Company, which he co-owns with an Iranian car company.

**24 July 1926**

### **President of Botswana Ketumile Masire born**

Ketumile Quett Joni Masire was

the second and longest serving President of Botswana, in office from 1980 and 1998. Before becoming President, he served as finance minister and deputy president under founding president, Seretse Khama. President Masire passed away on 22 June 2017.

**24 July 1961**

### **South Africa signs the Antarctic Treaty**

South Africa signed the multilateral agreement under article 18 of the Antarctic Treaty. This Treaty, now consisting of 53 Parties, established the legal framework for the management of the region. The Antarctic Treaty regulates international relations for scientific purposes, and the environmental protection of the territory. South Africa has had a base in Antarctica since 1959, and with two other bases on Marion and Goughs islands, as part of the SA National Antarctic Programme.

**24 July 1978**

### **Margaret Gardiner becomes Miss Universe**

The 19-year old model from Cape Town became the first South African to win the title in Mexico in 1978.

**24 July 1986**

### **Kenneth Kaunda rebukes Howe and Reagan for supporting apartheid**

Zambian President, Kenneth Kaunda publicly rebuked Britain's foreign secretary, Geoffrey Howe, accusing him and President Reagan of supporting South Africa's apartheid government. The attack by Kaunda on Howe and Reagan came at the height of popular unrest across South Africa. Kaunda's anger was prompted by Reagan's rejection of stronger United States (US) economic sanctions. Kaunda said; *"As a fellow human being, Sir Geoffrey, I must welcome you. But as a messenger of what you have come to do in South Africa, you are not welcome at all."*

**25 July 1913**

### **ANC meeting to discuss Land Act**

A meeting in Johannesburg, called by the South African Native National Congress, now ANC, was attended by a large number of men and women from South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland. The meeting was convened to discuss the conditions caused by the Native Land Act of 1913 and to chart a

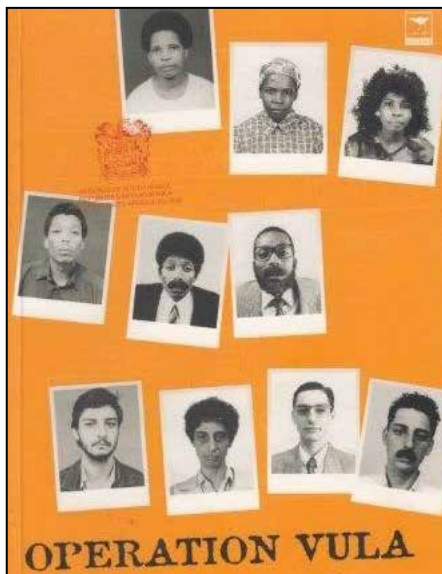




## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

way forward. The meeting heard a report from a delegation, sent to Cape Town to present African objections against the act. Dr Walter Rubusana, presenter of the report, informed the public that the government would not delay the passage of the act. The meeting decided to send a deputation to London and meet with Her Majesty's Imperial Government. The delegation included Solomon Tshekisho Plaatje, Dr Walter Rubusana, and Pixley Ka Isaka Seme.

### 25 July 1990 Operation Vula operatives arrested



Senior ANC member, Mac Maharaj, Pravin Gordhan, Sipiwe Nyanda, Billy Nair and over forty other members of the ANC and the SACP, were detained for allegedly attempting to overthrow the government, known as Operation Vula. Operation Vula aimed to get larger numbers of MK soldiers into South Africa and to ensure closer communication links amongst ANC Leaders in exile, at home and in prison. With the unbanning of the ANC in 1990, Operation Vula continued, because there were no guarantees that the apartheid government would

negotiate in good faith with the liberation movement.

### 25 July 2020 Major oil spill in Mauritius

On this day, oil tanker MV Wakashio, reported to be carrying nearly 4,000 metric tons of oil, ran aground on a coral reef on the island of Mauritius's south-east coast. According to media reports, more than 1,000 metric tons of fuel leaked from the cracked vessel into the Indian Ocean – polluting the nearby coral reefs, as well as the surrounding beaches and lagoons.

### 26 July 1847 Establishment of Liberia



The republic of Liberia was formed by freed slaves and descendants from the Transatlantic slave trade, and who repatriated back to the continent. The American Decolonization Society founded Liberia in 1822, helping to settle those who chose to return. On this day, the Liberian Declaration of Independence was signed. The repatriated returnees made up 5% of the Liberian population, and dominated the first republic, until an uprising by indigenous Liberians led by Samuel Doe in 1980. The country went through two civil wars (1989-1996 and 1997-2003). Li-

berian women through the Women in Peacebuilding Network and the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace, and the continental organisations (ECOWAS and the OAU/AU), played an important role in ending more than two decades of civil war. Liberia elected Africa's first female President, Dr Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, serving two terms from 2005-2018. In 2018, former footballer George Weah was elected as Liberia's 25th President.

### 26 July 1915 Die Burger published for first time

De Burger, an Afrikaans daily newspaper published its first edition in Cape Town on this day. Future apartheid prime minister DF Malan was its first editor.

### 26 July 1939 Poet and artist Wopko Jensma born

South African poet and graphic designer Wopko Jensma was born in Middelburg, Eastern Cape. Highly talented but suffering from schizophrenia, he studied at various tertiary institutions and majored in sculpture at the University of Pretoria. After having lived in Mozambique, Botswana and Swaziland for some time, Jensma returned to South Africa where he disappeared in 1993 without a trace from a Salvation Army Men's Home, a shelter that accommodated homeless people.

### 26 July 1977 Ousmane Sembene's Ceddo released

The Senegalese film director's film, *Ceddo*, which promotes African traditional belief systems over Islam and Christianity, is

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

released, and banned in Senegal and other countries. The film features musical score by Manu Dibango.

**26 July 2004**

### **Music legend Sipho Gumede passed on**

Born in Cato Manor near Durban, Sipho Gumede started playing music on a homemade guitar. He joined his first band at the age of 16 and soon became a

sought-after bass player. Over the course of his career he recorded 18 albums under his own name and four with his band Sakhile, formed together with Khaya Mhlangu and Mabe Gabriel Thobejane. He recorded and performed with Timmy Thomas, Kippie Moeketsi, Stimela, Margaret Singane, Abdullah Ibrahim, Winston Mankunku, Hugh Masekela, Brenda Fassie, Caiphus Semanya and Letta Mbulu.



## NELSON MANDELA SPEAKS

**As we take stock of our accomplishments and shortcomings, we should not, by the slightest of chance, lose sight of our once-ambitious dream for education, total economic participation, democracy and freedom for all.**



## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

# INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

20 – 26 July 2024

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

### 20 July

#### World Chess Day

This day has been observed by the UN since 1966, as one of the ancient games that combines competition, scientific thinking, and elements of arts. As a sport, it helps during times of crisis, improving mental health and reducing anxieties. Russia is ranked first in the world based on ranked players, and also has the most chess Grandmasters in the world. Bassem Amin (32) from Egypt is the highest ranked African in the world, ranked no. 38, achieving Grandmaster status in 2006, at the age of 18.

### 20 July

#### World Moon Day

The UN General Assembly declared International Moon Day, a United Nations-designated international day to be observed annually on 20 July, in its resolution 76/76 on *“International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space”* in 2021. The day marks the anniversary of the first landing by humans on the Moon as part of the Apollo 11 lunar mission.

### 25 July

#### African Day of Oceans and Seas

Over 80% of today’s international goods are transported in sea vessels and over 90% of Africa’s imports and exports are conducted by sea. Over the past four decades, the volume of global sea borne trade has more than quadrupled. 90% of world trade and two-thirds of energy supplies are carried by sea. The world’s oceans and seas are inter-linked, and action in one sea or one policy area with impact on the sea may have positive or negative effects on other seas and policy areas. Fish and seafood make a vital contribution to the food and nutritional security of over 200 million Africans and provides income for over 10 million. The coastal and marine ecosystems also play a significant role in mitigating the impacts of climate change as they

serve as carbon sinks. The paradox is that the marine and coastal areas in Africa are among the most vulnerable areas to the impacts of climate change in the world, mainly attributed to the low adaptive capacity in the continent. These negative effects are compounded by human pollution, especially the dumping of plastic, with devastating consequences on marine life.

### 25 July

#### World Drowning Prevention Day

Every year, an estimated 236,000 people drown, making drowning a major public health problem worldwide. Drowning is one of the leading causes of death globally for children and young people aged 1-24 years. Proven measures to prevent drowning include: barriers controlling access to water; teaching swimming, water safety and safe rescue skills; training bystanders in safe rescue and resuscitation; setting and enforcing safe boating, shipping and ferry regulations; and improving flood risk management.

