



ANC TODAY

VOICE OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

23 – 29 May 2025

Conversations with the
President



We must honour those who suffered for our freedom

■ By **PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

ACROSS the world, countries are having to grapple with their past as they confront the challenges of today. The past that countries deal with is often about atrocities that were committed against sections of their people.

Dealing with the memory of past atrocities is one of the most difficult and delicate tasks a nation can undertake. This can be a cathartic process but is vital if a country is committed to enhance national healing, cohesion and unity. The way a country remembers its painful past can shape the character of its democracy, the legitimacy of its institutions and the resilience of its people.

As a country, we have had to contend with our past in the interests of social cohesion and nation-building. We have advanced policies of restitution and redress to both acknowledge and correct the historical injustice of apartheid.

We remain equally committed to restoring the dignity of apartheid's countless victims and to bringing closure to their families.

Over the past weekend we reburied the remains of Adv Duma Nokwe, a hero of the anti-apartheid struggle and former Secretary-General of the African National Congress, who died in exile in Zambia in 1978.

Nokwe was the first black advocate to be admitted to the Johannesburg Bar, and both a defendant and a member of the defence team in the treason trial of 1956. In recognition of his contribution to the legal fraternity, we conferred him the status of senior counsel posthumously.

Duma Nokwe was one of 42 former liberation heroes and heroines who passed away in exile whose remains were repatriated from Zambia and Zimbabwe in September last year. We are grateful for the countries that gave our people shelter and support in exile and provided a resting place for those who died before they could return home.

CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PRESIDENT



Many families in this country lost their loved ones to apartheid brutality and live with these scars. The apartheid regime even pursued activists that had fled the country and their whereabouts remain unknown.

In 1994 we chose a path of national reconciliation. We established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to shed a light on the atrocities committed during apartheid.

Even as democratic South Africa attempted to unearth what happened and to hold those accountable to account, many apartheid-era security officials either refused to appear before the TRC or did not fully disclose their actions. Others resorted to delaying tactics and obstruction to evade trial.

As we recently announced, I am in the process of establishing a judicial commission of inquiry to look into allegations of interference in the investigation and prosecution of apartheid-era crimes referred by TRC.

As government we remain

steadfast in our commitment to restoring the dignity of activists who died and were buried abroad, and to our country men and women who were subjected to indignities in foreign lands.

This is being done within legal frameworks such as the National Heritage Resources Act. This framework facilitated the repatriation of Sara Baartman's remains for burial in South Africa in 2002. We have also developed a draft National Policy on the Repatriation and



Painting of Sarah Baartman

Restitution of Human Remains and Heritage Objects which will guide our efforts going forward.

The Department of Sport, Arts and Culture and other government institutions continue to engage with several countries to facilitate the return of human remains.

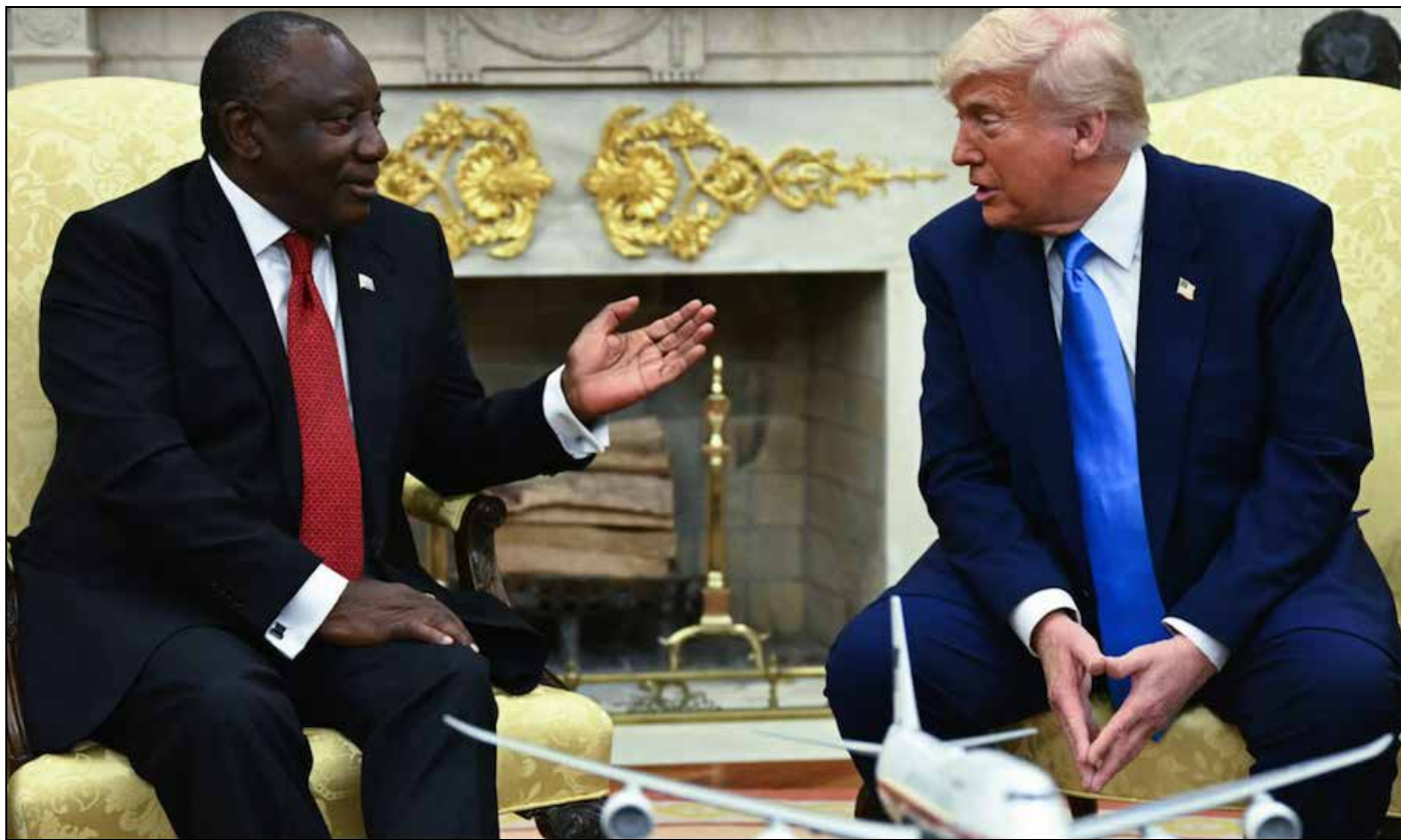
Even today some museums and universities in western Europe have collections that contain human remains of South Africa's Khoi and San people. In 2012, South Africa facilitated the return of the remains of a Khoi couple dubbed Klaas and Trooi from a museum in Vienna, after they had been illegally exhumed and smuggled abroad more than 100 years earlier.

The American novelist William Faulkner once wrote: *"The past is never dead, it's not even past."*

For the many families and communities across this country who never got the opportunity to lay their loved ones to rest or to even know how they died, the past will continue to cast a long shadow.

In the interests of national reconciliation, in the interests of moving forward, we will continue with our efforts to restore dignity to all those who were denied it in life.

A heavy price was paid by many for the democracy we have today. This should continue to inspire us as we work together towards a shared future. ■



THE ANC WELCOMES PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA'S STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT WITH U.S. PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

■ By **ANC SECRETARY GENERAL FIKILE MBALULA**

THE African National Congress (ANC) welcomes the strategic and high-level diplomatic engagement between President Cyril Ramaphosa and U.S. President Donald J. Trump, held during President Ramaphosa's official visit to the United States — his first since the recent U.S. elections and the formation of the ANC-led Government of National Unity (GNU) in South Africa.

This important engagement reaffirmed the centrality of diplomacy,

mutual respect, and the truth in building durable relations between nations. The discussions focused on deepening trade and investment cooperation, exploring new frontiers for partnership, and advancing dialogue on global development and shared prosperity.

President Ramaphosa used this platform not only to champion South Africa's economic interests, but also to confront and dispel harmful misinformation, notably the false and inflammatory narrative of a so-called "*white geno-*

cide." With clarity and composure, the President reaffirmed that South Africa faces the systemic challenge of crime, which is a by-product of inequality and historical injustice, and not racially motivated persecution. This intervention was essential to defending the truth and preserving the dignity of our democratic order.

Quoting the Freedom Charter, President Ramaphosa powerfully reaffirmed the foundational principle of common citizenship and equality before the law. He

reminded the world that South Africa is a constitutional democracy based on the rule of law, declaring: ***“South Africa belongs to all those who live in it, black and white.”*** The world listened — and applauded with envy.

Over the course of the visit, President Ramaphosa and his delegation engaged in substantive bilateral talks and a public media engagement, followed by a working lunch, where issues of trade, AGOA, and South Africa’s G20 presidency were further explored. President Ramaphosa reaffirmed South Africa’s support for the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), stating unequivocally that *“AGOA should continue,”* and highlighting its value in advancing inclusive growth and industrialisation across the continent. The ANC welcomes this firm stance, which aligns with the movement’s long-standing position on fair trade and the developmental needs of Africa.

The visit also addressed concerns regarding the United States’ recent posture towards South Africa’s G20 presidency. President Ramaphosa stressed the

importance of sustained U.S. participation in global governance platforms, noting that the G20 itself was co-formed by the United States. He extended a formal invitation to President Trump to attend the G20 Summit in Johannesburg in November 2025, stating that he looks forward to handing over the presidency of the G20 *“not to an empty chair, but to President Trump.”* This powerful symbolism reflects South Africa’s ongoing efforts to reaffirm its role as a responsible global actor and convener of multilateral dialogue.

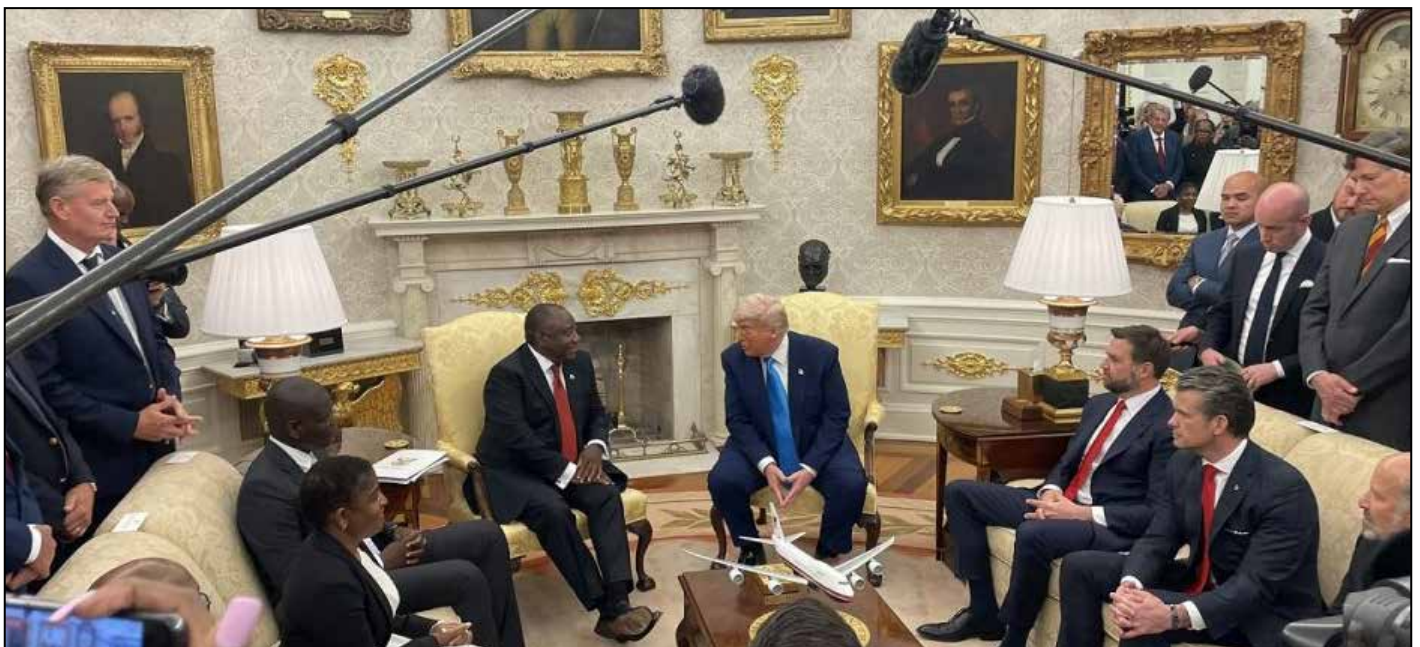
While aspects of President Trump’s public posture during the engagement may have reflected a confrontational tone, and at times, a reluctance to abandon previously stated misconceptions, President Ramaphosa remained calm, focused and unwavering. His handling of the engagement demonstrated maturity, diplomatic depth, and a steadfast commitment to truth and national dignity, a posture that reflects the values of the movement he leads and the country he represents.

This bilateral meeting also served as a moment to reset relations be-

tween South Africa and the United States — anchoring a renewed partnership on the principles of equity, shared development, and mutual understanding. It sent a clear message that misinformation, no matter how popularised, will not dictate diplomatic relations between sovereign nations.

The ANC commends President Ramaphosa for his principled leadership in confronting distortions, safeguarding our national sovereignty, and reaffirming our commitment to a peaceful, inclusive and democratic South Africa. His conduct was in keeping with the proud diplomatic tradition of President Nelson Mandela and President Oliver Tambo who taught us that dialogue must be used not to flatter power, but to advance justice, truth, and human dignity.

This engagement stands as a victory for reason over rhetoric, diplomacy over division, and truth over propaganda. The ANC affirms its full support for President Ramaphosa’s ongoing efforts to strengthen South Africa’s place in the world as a voice of principle, partnership and progress. ■



ANC STATEMENT ON THE TABLED BUDGET

This Budget reflects the ANC's unwavering commitment to improving the material conditions of the poor and working class

■ By **ANC SECRETARY GENERAL FIKILE MBALULA**



On Wednesday, 21 May 2025, the Minister of Finance, Enoch Godongwana, tabled the 2025 Budget in Parliament. In addition, the Minister introduced the Appropriation Bill and tabled the 2025 Division of Revenue Bill. This represents a critical turning point in our legislative process, following extensive consultations with political parties within the Government of National Unity (GNU), labour, business, civil society, and other key stakeholders. These engagements laid the foundation for a fiscal framework that seeks to balance the competing needs of the state whilst advancing inclusive development.

The 2025 Budget was presented amidst a complex economic landscape – characterised by a global economic downturn, constrained domestic tax base, high inflation and unemployment, increased tariffs, and limited revenue streams. Despite these challenges, South Africa has made notable progress. The country's credit rating outlook has been revised from 'stable' to 'positive', signal-



ling international confidence in South Africa's financial stability and debt-servicing capability. This upgrade reflects the country's commitment to fiscal prudence, macroeconomic stability, and the pursuit of a growth-focused agenda. It reinforces investor confidence and affirms that South Africa is on a positive economic trajectory.

A key measure in the Budget is the inflationary adjustment of the fuel levy, which is expected to boost revenue and help enhance fiscal space. Government proposes an inflationary increase in the general fuel levy for pet-

rol and diesel to R4.01c/l and R3.85c/l, respectively, effective from 4 June 2025. While this adjustment is welcome for its revenue benefits, government must also find robust and sustainable ways of reducing the overall cost of fuel without compromising the current fuel taxes that contribute significantly to the fiscus and the national infrastructure program. Balancing affordability for consumers with fiscal stability remains a critical challenge.

Additionally, we welcome the existing list of zero-rated VAT goods, which will shield vulnerable households from the high

cost of living. The allocation of 61 cents of every rand spent towards social spending is also a welcome development, reflecting a firm commitment to equity and social protection.

The Budget prioritises areas that are aligned with our national development objectives, including education, health, infrastructure, housing, early childhood development, public transport, social wage, and arts and culture.

These investments underscore the Budget's developmental and transformative nature, aimed at improving the quality of life for all South Africans.

The following are the key highlights of the budget:

SANRAL has been allocated R93.1 billion. This will be used to build new roads, maintain existing ones as part of the road infrastructure development and quality roads;

R156.3 billion allocated for water infrastructure. This will improve the existing infrastructure and build new dams and water treatment plants;

The allocation to PRASA will increase the capacity of the entity threefold.

A 5% increase for civil servants is a positive development. The civil service should be commensurate with the quality of services and the service provided to society.

Basic services have been allocated R1 trillion. This quantum underscores the importance of provision of basic services and our investment in people. The ANC will ensure quality provision of services.

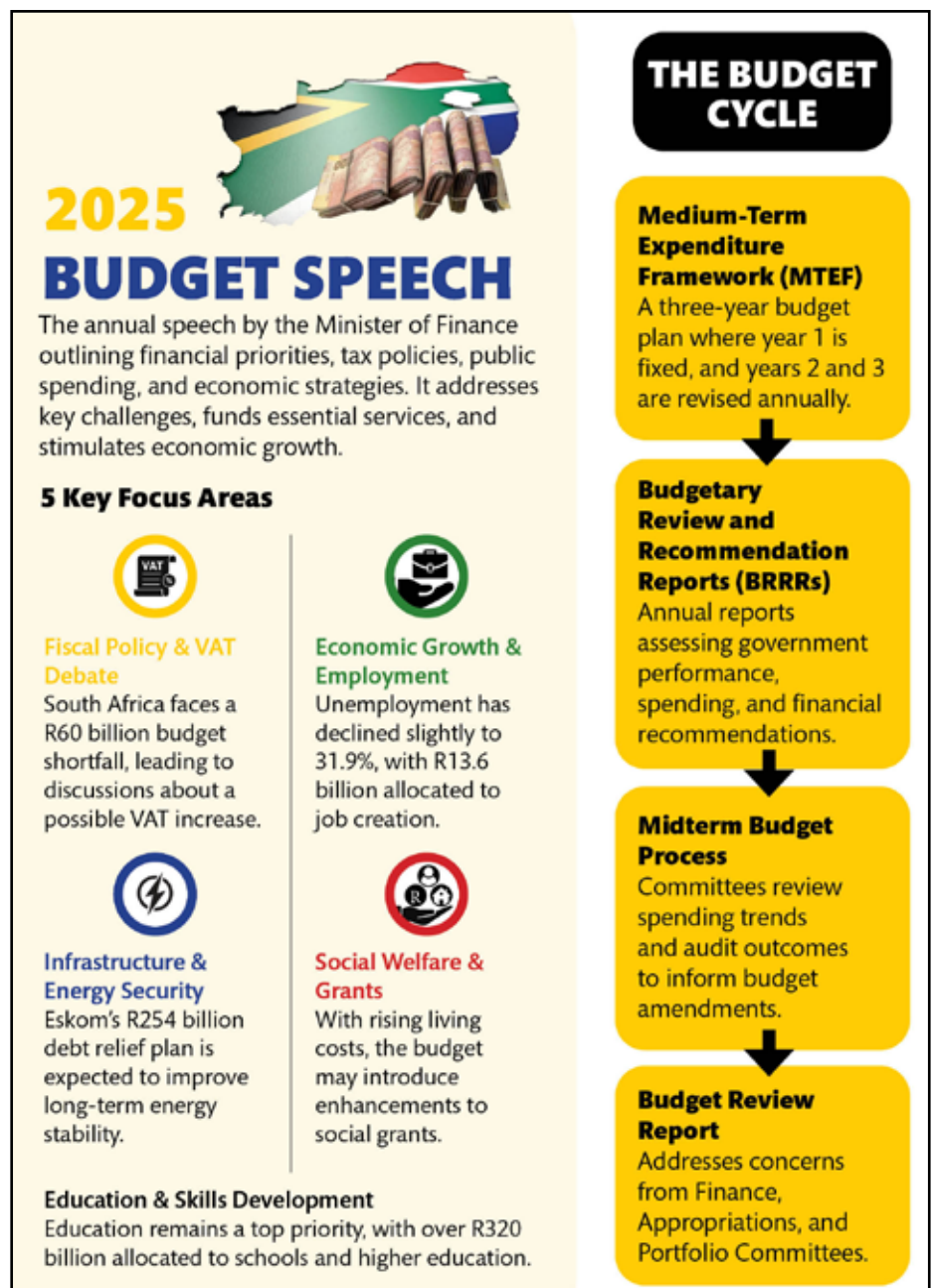
An Investment of R1.4 billion for the local government elections.

This reaffirms the resilience of our democracy, regular elections, the will of the people and the importance of local government in the delivery of services;

There is an increase in social grants allocation to protect the poor from the economic hardships; it is for this reason that the ANC regards the budget as pro-poor. This is an expansionary budget designed to address the

pressing challenges of the state and to provide service to the people whilst transforming an economy which grows at 1.4% in 2025.

Importantly, the Budget is designed to ensure the quality of spending, not just quantity. To this end, expenditure reviews must be institutionalised to re-direct resources to critical need areas and assess the effectiveness and impact of spending against national priorities. This is essential in achieving meaningful developmental outcomes and



BUDGET 2025

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

- **R19.5 billion to be spent on education and extra R10 billion on early childhood development (ECD)**
- **To transform our educational institutions**
- **Investing in the future of our children**
- **Safeguarding educator posts and improving access to quality early childhood development**
- **Building a better tomorrow**

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

ensuring that public funds deliver maximum value.

To strengthen revenue generation, the capacitation and modernisation of the South African Revenue Service (SARS) is a strategic and welcome development. Enhanced capacity at SARS will significantly improve tax collection and revenue mobilisation. While these efforts are critical, we must acknowledge the continued concern over the country's rising debt levels. Economic growth remains sluggish in comparison to the rate at which debt is increasing, placing further pressure on debt-to-GDP ratios.

Debt service costs are escalating, and urgent focus must be placed on reducing these costs and improving the efficiency of public expenditure.

The 2025 Budget is a people's budget – a budget for inclusive growth, job creation, and investor confidence. It is pro-poor and infrastructure-focused, aimed at cushioning the vulnerable

through social protection and access to existing zero-rated basic goods. The budget strikes a careful balance between supporting economic growth and exercising fiscal discipline. It prioritises strategic investment in infrastructure and public services while narrowing the budget deficit from 5% of GDP in 2024/25 to 3.5% by 2027/28.

This Budget reflects the ANC's unwavering commitment to improving the material conditions of the poor and working class. It allocates:

- R1.5 trillion to Learning and Culture over the medium term to strengthen basic education, sustain early childhood development, support NSFAS and strengthen the higher education sector.
- R845 billion to Health, including R20.8 billion in additional funding to employ doctors and nurses, improve hospital services and support the roll-out of the National Health Insurance.

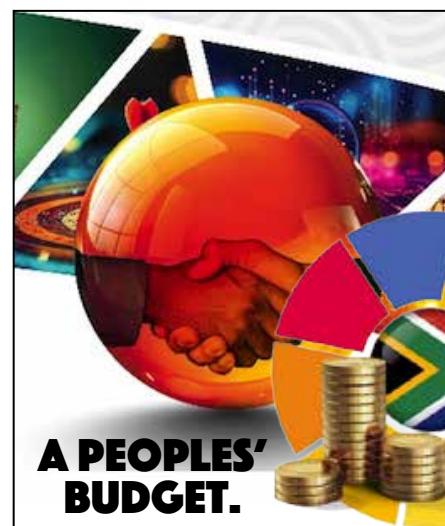
- R1 trillion to Social Development, which includes the increase in social grants and the extension of the Social Relief of Distress (SRD) Grant until March 2026.

These investments are not statistics – they are lifelines. They ensure that learners remain in classrooms, children have access to ECD, families can access quality healthcare, and the unemployed are not left to suffer in silence. The social wage remains a vital anchor of the ANC's developmental state and will be strengthened through targeted and expanded support to those who need it most.

This fiscal strategy will set South Africa on course to stabilise its debt trajectory next year, through improved primary surpluses and reduced debt-service costs.

Despite limited resources, the budget maintains a strong commitment to the social contract and the principles of equity, development, and sustainability.

Through this Budget, South Africa remains firmly on the path of economic transformation and growth. This is a developmental, transformative peoples' budget. ■



THE ANC MOURNS THE PASSING OF ISITHWALANDWE GERTRUDE NTITI SHOPE – A PILLAR OF OUR LIBERATION AND CHAMPION OF WOMEN’S STRUGGLE

■ By **ANC SECRETARY GENERAL FIKILE MBALULA**

THE African National Congress (ANC) joins the nation and the global community in mourning the passing of Isithwalandwe/Seaparankwe Gertrude Ntiti Shope, a stalwart of our liberation movement, a pioneer of women’s emancipation, and one of the most enduring symbols of revolutionary courage. Ma Shope, as she was affectionately known, passed away peacefully at her home in Gauteng yesterday, at the age of 99.

Born on 15 August 1925, Gertrude Shope lived through almost a century of South Africa’s turbulent journey to freedom. Her life, spanning nearly a century, was marked by selfless service, discipline, humility, and an unwavering commitment to the struggle for liberation, equality, and justice. From the classrooms of Soweto to the exile missions of the ANC across Africa and beyond, Ma Shope dedicated her life to the ideals of justice, gender equality, and the liberation of her people.

At the age of 29, Ma Shope



joined the ANC, leaving her profession as a teacher in protest against the racist Bantu Education system, which sought to confine black children to a future of subjugation. Instead, she threw herself into grassroots activism — working in health and youth rehabilitation, and actively contributing to political organising through the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW). As Chairperson of FEDSAW’s Central Western Jabavu Branch from 1958 to 1966, and later as its Transvaal Secretary, she was instrumental in pushing women’s

issues to the forefront of the national liberation struggle.

In 1966, Ma Shope was forced into exile, where she joined her husband, trade unionist Mark Shope, in then Czechoslovakia. The couple’s journey took them to Tanzania, Zambia, Nigeria, and Botswana, where Ma Shope undertook vital political, diplomatic, and organisational roles for the ANC. In 1971, she was appointed Chief Representative of the ANC in Lusaka — becoming one of the first women to hold such a position. Her leadership was

pivotal in advancing the role of women in the liberation struggle, and in 1981, she became Head of the ANC Women's Section, a role she held with distinction until 1991.

Isithwalandwe Gertrude Ntiti Shope played a crucial role in strengthening the political and operational capacity of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the armed wing of our liberation movement. Ma Shope was a critical organiser, political commissar, and international mobiliser who worked tirelessly to ensure that the struggle for liberation was inclusive, principled, and ideologically grounded.

She championed the integration of women into the ranks of MK, ensuring that they received both military and political training on an equal footing, and played a leading role in defending the dignity and agency of women in exile camps across Southern Africa.

As a seasoned diplomat, Ma Shope traversed the world garnering political and material support for the ANC and MK from progressive governments and solidarity movements. Her efforts helped secure resources, training opportunities, and global recognition for the armed struggle against apartheid. Within ANC structures in Lusaka, Dar es Salaam, and elsewhere, she provided critical leadership in the mobilisation of cadres and the care of families affected by exile and conflict. Gertrude Shope's legacy in MK is that of a revolutionary mother who understood that liberation was not only about arms but about building a just, equal, and humane society in the very heart of struggle

In 1985, Ma Shope was elected to the ANC National Executive



Committee (NEC), where she played an instrumental role in international mobilisation, political education, and advocating for the gendered dimensions of the liberation struggle. Through her leadership, the ANC reshaped its approach to women's participation, not only in policy-making and advocacy but also in military engagement and leadership.

Following the unbanning of the ANC, Ma Shope returned home to South Africa and spearheaded the process of re-establishing the ANC Women's League (ANCWL), becoming its first President at its inaugural national conference in Kimberley in 1992. She also served with distinction as a Member of Parliament in South Africa's first democratic administration from 1994 to 1999, where she worked tirelessly to advance gender equality and the broader transformation agenda.

A revolutionary intellectual, she was often quoted as saying: *"Every generation has got a responsibility to know what its mission is. Mine was to liberate the country; what is yours?"*

Ma Shope's legacy is one of un-

wavering dedication to the cause of liberation and equality. Her contributions were not motivated by a desire for personal recognition but by her deep commitment to justice, equality, and the empowerment of women. In recognition of her selfless sacrifice and her lifelong commitment to the struggle for freedom, Ma Shope was conferred the Order of Isithwalandwe/Seaparankwe, the highest honour bestowed by the ANC to those who gave their lives to the cause of liberation.

Ma Shope was a trusted comrade of the likes of Oliver Tambo, Albertina Sisulu, Florence Mophosho, and Bram Fischer. Her name is synonymous with the struggles of women across South Africa, and she remains a beacon of the fight for gender equality. In this month, when we commemorate 70 years of the adoption of the Freedom Charter, we remember that Ma Shope was among those who believed in a South Africa that belongs to all – and who sacrificed so that we could realise this vision.

The ANC extends its heartfelt condolences to Ma Shope's family, comrades, the ANC Women's League, the broader Alliance, and the people of South Africa. Funeral arrangements will be communicated following consultation with her family.

As we mourn her loss, we reflect on her enduring legacy and reaffirm our commitment to the values for which she fought: a free, equal, and just South Africa for all.

You lived your mission. You fought your fight. We carry your torch.

Hamba Kahle, Isithwalandwe uMa Gertrude Ntiti Shope. ■



A two-week wrap: Placing Africa in the center of our international relations work

■ By **NOMVULA MOKONYANE, FIRST DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE ANC**

AS Comrade President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa was jetting off to Washington DC to engage, as equals, with his United States of America counterpart, President Donald J. Trump, the deputy-president, Comrade Shipokosa Paul Mashatile, was in France cementing our relations with Europe's second largest economy.

Comrade President Ramaphosa is leading a strong delegation to the US which includes the minister of international relations and cooperation and member of the National Executive Committee subcommittee on international relations, Comrade Ronald Lam-

ola, among other ministers.

Four years ago, estimates suggested that the total foreign direct investment between the South Africa and the US stood at 11.7 billion US dollars (R200 billion). In 2024, South Africa enjoyed a favorable trade relationship with US exports to our country totaling 5.8 billion US dollars (R100 billion) whereas South African exports to the US was at 14.7 billion US dollars (R262 billion).

Comrade President Ramaphosa's working visit to the US was *"to reset and revitalize the bilateral relations between South Africa and the US...the visit will focus specifically on reframing bilateral,*

economic and commercial relations." At the forefront of Comrade President Ramaphosa's mind will be South African jobs.

Meanwhile Comrade Deputy President Mashatile has a member of the NEC subcommittee on international relations and deputy minister of international relations and cooperation, Comrade Alvin Botes, among other members of cabinet, travelling with him on a working visit to France.

There are about 400 French companies operating in our country and these provide thousands of jobs to our people in financial services, renewable energy, rail, chemicals, oil and gas sectors.

France is the 14th largest investor in South Africa and among others the deputy president will be attending the South Africa-France Investment Conference.

At the same time, member of the NEC Subcommittee on International Relations and deputy minister of international relations, Comrade Thandi Moraka, is in Brussels to attend the 3rd African Union (AU)-European Union (EU) ministerial meeting. The meeting engaged on issues of peace, security, governance, multilateralism, prosperity, people, migration and mobility.

One of the countries which the ANC has a long history with and which we were able to sign a new memorandum of understanding (MoU), between the ANC and the ruling party of that country, this past week is Viet Nam. As early as 1978, the ANC sent a high-level NEC delegation to Viet Nam to

study their experience of struggle and to improve our military and organizational apparatus at the time.

The ANC and the Communist Party of Viet Nam have prioritized policy exchanges, collaboration on education and research activity, promoting trade, investment in green and digital transformation as well as political education and cadre development as areas in which the two parties will cooperate. NEC member of the subcommittee on international relations, Comrade Dakota Legoete, joined us on this visit to Viet Nam.

According to the latest World Bank figures, economic growth is estimated to reach 6.8 percent in 2025 and 6.5 percent in 2026 in Viet Nam. Today, Viet Nam is said to be one of the fastest growing economies in the world in spite of its history. The Vietnamese have indicated that they want to set

and reach the 2 billion US dollars (R36 billion) target of trade between our two countries. The visit to Viet Nam follows a telephone call between President Ramaphosa and the General Secretary of the CPV, Comrade Tô Lâm. We had the honor of meeting with Comrade Tô.

Yet the engagements in Washington, Paris, Brussels as well as Hanoi was not only in the national interests of South Africa but in the pursuit of a better Africa.

On this coming Sunday, member of the NEC subcommittee on international relations and former minister, Comrade Ambassador Lindiwe Zulu, will visit China for a week-long think tank meeting on communications and research. It will be the 4th dialogue on exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations where political leaders, NGO representatives, sinologists, scholars and



cultural celebrities will engage on the theme: ***"Carrying forward the Spirit of the Silk Road and Gathering Momentum for the Implementation of the Global Civilization Initiative."***

NEC member and head of policy, monitoring, evaluation and research at Chief Albert Luthuli House, Comrade Fébé Potgieter, will lead an ANC delegation with Comrade Ambassador Jerry Matjila to the congress of the Swedish Social Democratic Party in Sweden. Again, a party the ANC has long held ties with. Preceding the congress, the ANC will participate in a seminar, under the auspices of the Olof Palme International Centre, on the democratic processes of a social democratic party.

Yet most importantly is the work we, as the NEC subcommittee on international relations, are doing on the African agenda. During Africa month, we have engaged with the Egyptians as well as the leader of the ruling coalition in Botswana, the Botswana National Front (BNF). With the Egyptians we agreed that the paltry 200 million US dollars (R3.5 billion) in trade between Egypt and

South Africa is unacceptable and should be higher. We agreed to engage on a South Africa-Egypt Business Council, the Gaza Recovery and Reconstruction Plan as well on water security in North Africa.

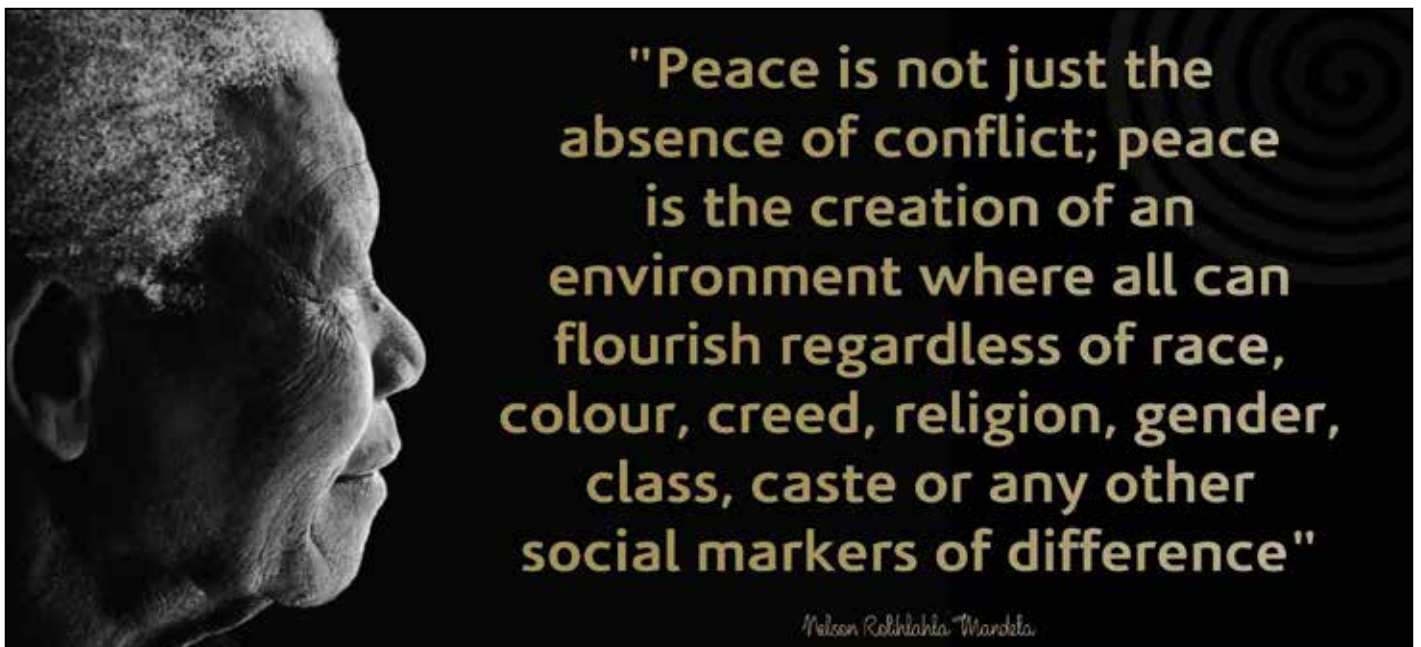
The ANC has a long and intimate history with the Botswana National Front. In hosting the BNF, we agreed to look at mutually beneficial political education programs, policy exchanges, organizational mobilization and renewal as well as ensuring exchanges between our respective Leagues. However, both sides also agreed to ensure an increase in economic activity between the two countries and the region as well as guaranteeing the effectiveness of the Africa Free Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA).

As we write this article, we are travelling to the land of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere to be hosted by the Thabo Mbeki Foundation for the Africa Day celebrations. In South Africa, the ANC has requested that provinces host cultural Africa Day events. At the same time, we will have a bilateral engagement with the Chama Cha Mapinduzi,

a sister party of the ANC and the ruling party in Tanzania, so as to strengthen the working relationship between the two parties but also the relations between South Africa and Tanzania. We will then be hosted by CCM for their congress. Another member of the subcommittee, Comrade Ambassador Dipou Letsatsi-Duba, will be representing the ANC at the Socialist International Council to be held in Istanbul, Turkey, this weekend.

Whilst we are in Tanzania, Comrade Fébé Potgieter will represent the ANC on a panel discussion at the centenary celebrations of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. As the NEC subcommittee on international relations continues to engage its international partners and re-enforces party-to-party relations, we count on partners such as FES, to help and support us in bringing about our agenda of a better Africa, a better world and ensuring the achievement of progressive internationalism. ■

Comrade Mokonyane is also the Chairperson of the NEC Subcommittee on International Relations.



LOBOLA AT THE WHITE HOUSE: President Ramaphosa, the Chief Negotiator, Delivers the Bride

■ By **BUSANI NGCAWENI**

THIS week's official visit to the White House had all the hallmarks of a high-stakes lobola negotiation. President Cyril Ramaphosa, standing tall as the head of delegation, was not just there for pomp and ceremony. He had a mission: to return home having secured the goodwill, support and symbolic bride, the rational sensibilities of the current occupant of the Oval Office and what he represents, the economic weight and global influence of the United States.

Like any respected head of the lobola delegation, the visiting head of state must navigate foreign terrain with discipline, charm and precision. Diplomacy has its own sacred code, a blend of cultural intelligence and political acumen. To succeed in such negotiations, there are five key protocols every leader must observe:

Polite and respectful communication:

Speak when spoken to, be polite and courteous at all times and resist the temptation to argue. Diplomacy is not a shouting match. It is an art of restraint and timing. Ramaphosa exemplified this last night, holding his posture and never rising to provocation, even as the tone around him shifted.



Anything contrary, and you return home empty-handed, as the father and uncles of the bride brand you rude and disrespectful. Remember Zelenskyy?

Respect for hierarchy and titles:

One must never forget the formal order. Addressing the host with their correct title and observing ceremonial protocol is not optional. It is foundational. Ramaphosa offered President Trump the deference due to a host and peer, and in return, received the same. A chief lobola negotiator must shower the would-be father-in-law with praises, even if he is a drunk. President Ramaphosa couldn't say, *"That's fake news, Donald."* That is not done. Every-

one knows the truth.

Adherence to cultural norms and customs:

Every diplomatic engagement requires cultural sensitivity. Just as one would not show up at a lobola negotiation in shorts and drunk, one does not approach the White House without understanding its tone, traditions and temperament. Ramaphosa, ever the statesman, respected every cue, from attire to timing to tone. He did not show signs of weakness. He played the body language game well under the circumstances, facing a narcissistic bully. But he called him 'partner', spoke to him like an equal and acknowledged him for past gestures. Trump needed that, always



needy, in fact, for acclamation. When leading a lobola team, you study the other side very well, give them their limelight and keep your eye on the prize, not just the price.

Observance of diplomatic etiquette:

This includes gift-giving, national anthems and the dance of protocol. The South African delegation conducted itself with dignity. Even when the other 'uncles' appeared to forget the occasion, defaulting to their nostalgia for apartheid, the structure held because the chief negotiator led by example. And there was rakgadi Zingiswa Losi, staying true to her role. Aren't they always reliable? Her message was clearer. Yes, the gift: the tome of South African golf courses. The chief negotiator knew that after the Oval Office, it is destined for the main coffee table at Mar-a-Lago. There was just one gift that one uncle left behind, an A3 size Nguni-hide-bound copy of the South African Constitution.

Confidentiality and messaging discipline:

Diplomatic meetings are not

open-mic nights or unfiltered podcasts. Ramaphosa knew that at the private meeting he will robustly engage and call out the fake news. You don't negotiate or announce lobolo (the bride price) in public. Although we may speculate, we know cows were called, but not how many and their actual price. The message must be tight, clear and consistent. Ramaphosa's post-meeting briefing reflected this. He said what needed to be said, no more, no less. And, importantly, he did not leak emotions or frustrations. The burden is not with the White House to communicate their next move.

The President's post-meeting press briefing confirmed what many had already seen, that the objectives had been met. The trip was productive. The symbolism was strong. Those cliffhanger moments in the open meeting were worrisome, but overall, the line was held. One uncle tried to give perspective, even as he crossed the line himself. Why internationalise our domestic contradictions? White privilege is their mampoor those other uncles, nostalgia their antidote.

Rakgadi Losi was poised.

As we have become accustomed to these occasions, there is always a sideshow that can distract everyone. For example, outside the ceremonial yard, the bulldogs barked. Journalists, some with more interest in drama than diplomacy, hurled questions with the subtlety of drunk cousins preferring post-lobola negotiations feast. They ignored the tone and purpose of the occasion, tried to pull the moment into a tabloid spectacle and missed the essence of what was happening inside.

And then there are the noisy neighbours. Trump can fret all he wants about the MK Party and the EFF. They shout across the barbed wire, full of energy and frustration, but they are not the government of South Africa. They are not at the negotiation table.

They are not the father-in-law. Their volume does not equate to authority.

Now, let's not pretend the Oval Office is an easy space. The hosts, like any bride's family,

can be demanding, unpredictable and, at times, blunt. In the era of Donald Trump and his political offspring, it is common for lines of diplomacy to be tested. But this is not Ramaphosa's first rodeo. He has met worse in-laws before. He knows that when you are visiting the family of the bride, the biggest microphone belongs to them. The homeground advantage is theirs and so are the interruptions. I secretly got very impatient when this happened during peace negotiations in Lesotho and South Sudan (I was his aide then). I thought we could have been harder. But the then Deputy President Ramaphosa knew what he was doing. He had a plan and carefully executed it.

In the end, the chief negotiator did his job. He came, he spoke wisely, he listened where necessary, and he returns home having secured both honour and progress. For those who understand the weight of diplomacy and of lobola, that is the very definition of success.

Let the celebrations begin. The bride has not only smiled, she has walked out to greet us. ■

MATTER OF FACT

In ANC Today 9–15 May 2025 the article *“What Prof Zhang Reminded Us About the State – and Ourselves”* was attributed to Prof Busani Ngcaweni. The actual author of that article is Buti Manamela.

We apologise for this oversight.

Ramaphosa did what a statesman should have done against a hostile attitude from the US Political Administration

■ By **MATOME MOREMI-TAUEATSOALA**

MANY commentators had different views about President Ramaphosa's working visit to President Donald Trump's US Administration amid the criticisms and propaganda spread by naysayers to the Trump administration, which he seems to believe. I equally had mixed feelings, but I understood vividly that South Africa is not an island, but most importantly, the US remains the biggest Economy in the world and over 600 operational companies in our country which contribute to Gross Domestic Products and the social well-being of our working class and as a result, South Africa could not afford to be arrogant and ignorant to the harsh reality that we needed to reach out to the US regardless of how they view us.

the harsh reality that South Africa is crime-ridden where no race is attached to crime, and that there is no genocide against white farmers. Many have criticized the selection of the President's delegation to the Oval, but I have a different view on this and yes, some may say the three gentlemen may have been there through the insistence of President Trump, but to me, I think the choice was brilliant.

The misinformation fed to the Americans is that there is white genocide in South Africa and how do you then send a black face to Trump to go and demystify that propaganda? It would not have been believable for a Mr Makinita from Polokwane to stand before Trump and say there is no genocide against farmers.

It is foolhardy to shy away from

The President took a gamble



hoping that all will stand up to demystify the propaganda, especially the Minister of Agriculture, John Steenhuisen, but equally we must not forget that Mr Steenhuisen is a leader of a political party with intentions to topple the ANC one day, therefore he could explicitly say there wasn't, he had to be smart about. The biggest disappointment is on Mr Els and Mr Goosen, who seemed to be living elsewhere in their own country, where we are 35 years of democracy while the reality is 31 years and Mr Goosen's father, who died in 1992, seems to be a victim of genocide against farmers, according to Mr Retief Goosen. Mr Rupert with his opportunistic business instinct, had use the time slot given to try and pouch a business opportunity from Elon Musk on Star Link thus softening the attitude of Mr Trump, but I must commend the President of RSA for not falling into that trap.

However, Mr Rupert was better than the other gentlemen in explaining that crime sees no colour in South Africa. I didn't expect any of them to mention the harsh reality that many of the farmers were actually killed by their Zimbabwean cheap labourers whom they prefer as opposed to South Africans who will demand the minimum wage as stipulated in the Constitution of the Republic. The platform may not be the right one because of the diplomatic considerations that come with it.

I hope the President and his delegation had the liver to explain to Trump and his people that Malema was actually taken to court back in 2022 on the "Kill the boer" chant and both the high court, appeals court and constitutional court found no wrong with the song being chanted, wrong as it may sound. ■

ANC Veterans League mourns the passing away of Ma Gertrude Ntiti Shope, veteran and Isithwalandwe recipient

■ By **ANCVL PRESIDENT SNUKI ZIKALALA**

THE ANC Veterans League is saddened by the passing away of a true veteran of our struggle, 99-year-old Ma Gertrude Shope, who served the struggle for freedom in many different capacities over her long life.

We will remember her in particular for her pioneering contribution to raising women's issues within the movement. From being a branch member of the Federation of South African Women (Fedsaw) in Central Jabavu, Soweto, in 1968 to being elected president of the ANC Women's League in 1991, she has never faltered in raising women's issues.

While in exile, she started the ANC publication Voice of the Women together with Ma Florence Mophosho, the head of the ANC's Women's Section. She also campaigned for the equal representation of women in positions of political power – now an entrenched position in the ANC, both within ANC structures and in legislatures and councils where we lead.

She was also active in building international solidarity for the struggle against apartheid, exposing apartheid atrocities and mobilising the international community to isolate the racist regime. She represented the ANC in Lusaka and Nigeria.

Ma Shope remained faithful to the ANC's values and traditions and was one of the 101 signatories who opposed the activities of former President Zuma's administration about ten years ago.

To continue Ma Shope's legacy, the struggle for women's full emancipation must be intensified. The campaign for equal representation, employment equality and against gender-based violence should be complemented by addressing gender stereotyping, patriarchy and the ongoing burden of unpaid care work undertaken predominantly by women.

This campaign is essential both within the ANC and in society. To attract new and younger members, we should consider well-organised childcare at our meetings and conferences so that women members can participate fully without concern for the well-being of their children. In society, it can be difficult to meet the Employment Equity Act targets unless the child care needs of mothers are met through proper ECD and other facilities, arranged by employers and the government.

As we dip our revolutionary flag in honour of Ma Shope, the ANC Veterans League resolves to recommit to working for women's full emancipation. ■



Africa Day:

"Let Us All Unite and Celebrate Together"

■ By **THANDI MORAKA**

“LET US ALL UNITE AND CELEBRATE TOGETHER”. These are the cherished words that are the hallmark of the African Union anthem. As we celebrate Africa Day on 25 May 2025, these words echo throughout South Africa, Africa and the Diaspora, marking a great day and moment which celebrates Africa’s uniqueness, pride and resilience.

As daughters and sons of this continent, we need to be cognisant of the deep heritage bestowed on us, requiring Africans to shoulder the responsibility and embrace the duty to promote and protect Africa’s interests for now and generations to come. It is for this reason, and many others, that Africa remains the centrepiece of South Africa’s foreign policy.

Every year on Africa Day, African peoples and friends of Africa across the world, gather and reflect, publicly and privately on this momentous day, to contem-

plate and acknowledge the great strides the continent has been making. Africa Day also epitomises the diversity, unity, rich cultural tapestry and beauty of our vast continent.

Africa is the cradle of Humankind. This day is similarly a recognition of the abundant natural resources underneath and above the African soil, in its rivers, lakes and oceans. It is for this reason that Africa is a continent on the rise, with the continent’s voice being loudly echoed in various platforms across the globe. Africa is no longer at the periphery of global developments.

This cherished day provides all Africans, besides our friends from around the world, an opportunity to forge stronger friendships and bonds of collaboration. In this context, Africa Day is a reaffirmation of the spirit of Pan-Africanism, independence and solidarity. It is equally important to harness a collective approach to promote

the historical values of self-reliance, which were inculcated by Africa’s illustrious leaders at the dawn of independence.

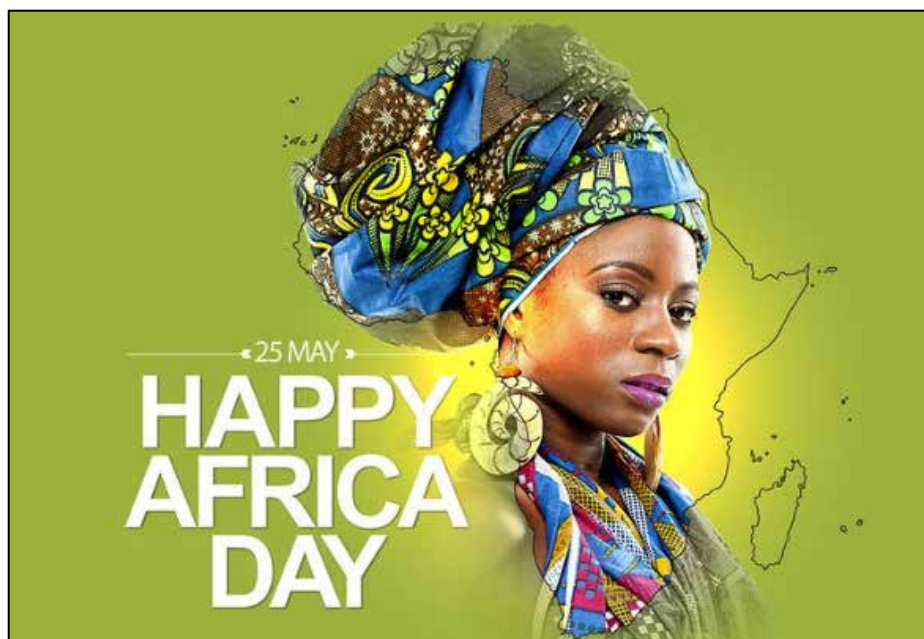
This provided the inspirational platform for the formation of the Organization of African Unity in 1963 and laid the basis of its transition into the African Union in 2002. Impetus was thus provided for the building of institutions geared towards fostering regional and continental integration, development, democracy, peace and stability. The aspirational Africa’s Agenda 2063 is worth pursuing as Africa continues to chart a stronger path for the benefit of its citizenry.

South Africa, intrinsically and inescapably, is therefore an integral part of this mosaic of African solidarity and internationalism. For the African National Congress, which is the oldest and one of the most enduring liberation movements on the continent and globally, the observance of Africa Day

is a poignant reminder of the fraternal and progressive ties this broad revolutionary organisation and movement has with other liberation movements on the continent. The liberation routes and the fruits of freedom will therefore be entrenched in the foundations of African solidarity.

Furthermore, it is therefore incumbent on us, that this celebration is also held in memory of Chief Albert Luthuli, our past renowned ANC President and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, and Advocate Griffiths Mxenge, an irrepressible human rights lawyer and stalwart of our organization, whose belated yet critical inquests, looking into their brutal deaths at the hands of the Apartheid regime, have commenced.

It is also fundamental to pay homage to the spirit of cooperation extended by fellow African countries, who have with a sense of dignity, allowed for the repatriation of the mortal remains of our liberation heroes and heroines back home to South Africa. This benevolent act, in conformity with our cultural practices and rites, made it possible for the reburials



and reinternments to take place, to reunite these giants with the ancestors and for the families to find solace.

As we mark Africa Day, it is important for South Africa, working together with fellow African countries, to recommit to resolving challenges of inequality and poverty on our continent. In addition, amidst pockets of conflict and instability in some countries, the objective of **Silencing the Guns** should be another primary priority, in pursuit of peace, security

and development. These aspects are critical, particularly in a context where Africa needs to locate its interests in the current, forever changing, complex and uncertain global environment. Let Africa thrive in peace, harmony and prosperity as we unite and celebrate together! ■

Thandi Moraka is a member of the NEC Subcommittee on International Relations and also the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Co-operation.



COMMEMORATING AFRICA DAY



■ By **GEORGE MAGOMA**

THE 25th of May 2025 is a remarkable day marking the birth of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) on this day in 1963. The founding of the OAU happened against the backdrop of colonialism, threat to the sovereignty and independent member states premised on the objectives of fostering unity and solidarity, coordination of cooperation, promotion of human rights and decolonization.

The OAU played a significant role in the liberation struggle against apartheid. This was in furtherance of its objectives of a continent free from subjugation, wars, slavery, colonialism and other forms of oppression. South Africa became the focal point of the OAU. Much

of its work was committed to the liberation of South Africa in addition to its primary objective of economic cooperation and prosperity of the continent through cooperation on a myriad of issues beneficial to the continent. This included economic integration, human rights, peacekeeping and political cooperation.

As times and conditions changed across the continent and the world the African Union was formed as a successor to the OAU, building on its foundational principles. As a continuation of the work of the OAU, this year the continent commemorates Africa Day under the theme “*Year of Justice for Africans and People of African Descent through Reparations.*”

With so many years of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, inequality, extractive capitalism, the mortifications of poverty, capital flight, colonialism, genocide, racism, sexism and other social and economic maladies that stifle freedom, unity, economic growth and prosperity a new paradigm of mutual cooperation and reciprocal benefit through collaboration and partnership with specific focus on self-determination, independence, self-sufficiency and sustainability, the AU stands out as a potent weapon towards a free continent.

Confronted by horrid challenges on a continent battered by war, perpetual rule by a corrupt few, robbed of its sovereignty, dignity,





African leaders at the launch of the African Union

independence and self-determination the unity of the continent is more urgent and paramount as a fortress against deleterious acts affecting the continent.

Mwalimu Julius Nyerere teaches us that *"If real development is to take place, the people have to be involved."* Contextually, and aligned to this year's theme, this is about elevating the people to the agenda of the AU to drive development in a manner that is people-driven and people-centred, to free them of the heavy albatross of slavery, extricating them from the abyss of exploitation and penury.

We sing the African Union anthem, agitating for unity, defending the gains of the continent since the birth of the OAU in 1963, dedicating ourselves to collectively confront challenges that inhibit transformation and strides to change the continent.

We are challenged to rise to the occasion, in an act of patriotism and insatiable thirst for prosperity, human dignity and freedom to collectively work towards a

free Africa united in the common bond of humanity.

As we commemorate this day to silence Africa of its deadly guns, entrenchment of democracy, a number of questions begs an answer, and are troubling. With the scramble for foreign dominance rife, beneficiation as a citadel against exploitation of our natural resources is under severe threat. The fight against colonialism is in full swing in Burkina Faso, led by General Ibrahim Traore after a military coup. Where does the AU stand on this in view of its policy of a continent free of military juntas? Are military juntas alternative instruments and avenues to free the continent of colonialism? How does the will of the people find expression in Burkina Faso, South Sudan and other countries?

On Wednesday the 21 May 2025 Africa and the world woke up the shocking news of a coup de' tat in Ivory Coast. Is the Traore phenomenon having ripple effects in the war prone Sahel region as West Africa disentangles itself against the colonial France? The

Ivory Coast development represents a turning point and a pivotal moment for Africa. It occurs on the eve of a key milestone, Africa Day. It happens against the backdrop of the AU's stance on coups and military juntas. It is an awakening, a testing moment questioning Africa's member states' commitment to the foundational objectives of the AU, peace and stability.

The fight for sovereignty, territorial integrity, diplomatic policy of non-alignment, South Africa's support for Palestine against Israel apartheid and its illegal occupation of Palestine, the US threats of tariffs against South Africa for its principled stance of a peaceful global order and its condemnation of the genocidal Israel is under threat.

Genocide should be widened to include diseases, slavery, effects of climate change through bold strategies for clean and sustainable energy, aiming to position Africa as a leader in the global green hydrogen economy and environmental harm and famine that account for millions of

deaths and hardships. To address these in a hostile environment and complex dynamics, an ever-changing landscape, abject poverty, exploitation, slavery and weak economies amongst others, economic cooperation pursued through the Africa Continental Free Trade Area, the African Development Bank, bilateral and multilateral cooperation, integrity and sovereignty cannot be mortgaged.

A fragmented continent cannot address these without unity, an integrated and supportive model of collaboration and partnerships. There is need for real commitment to the vision of the AU and Africa's prosperity and stability.

Africa's rebirth and revitalization, addressing historical challenges and promoting a future of progress and prosperity can be driven and achieved through a sustained model of African Renaissance. Complimented by New Partnerships for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and other developmental instruments, African Renaissance is a call for renewal, designed to overcome widespread poverty, conflict, and governance issues with a focus on social cohesion, economic growth, and cultural affirmation.

In addition to the African Peer Review Mechanism there is a need for additional monitoring and evaluation instruments in order to assess the work of the AU and its bodies, as well as progress on the implementation of the sustainable development goals towards the African Union Agenda 2063.

NEPAD is a socio-economic initiative of the African Union (AU) focused on eradicating poverty, promoting sustainable growth,

integrating Africa into the global economy, and accelerating empowerment and development. These bodies are supportive of each other to advance Africa's growth, driving the AU vision and agenda of addressing development challenges while paving a path for prosperity.

To commemorate this day, Africa needs to disentangle itself from the clutches of poverty, underdevelopment, dependency and loans by building institutions that will ensure self-reliance and self-sufficiency, industrialisation and investment on the continent through the African Development Bank and other institutions.

To reclaim a place in the community of the nations, Africa's agenda includes climate change, a seat in the United Nations Security Council, transformation of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and other institutions. Of importance is a peaceful global order, fair trade, inclusive multilateral-

ism and progressive internationalism.

With South Africa at the helm of the G20, its Presidency to this important institution will be effectively used to drive the vision of development, to unlock Africa's growth opportunities and potential in furtherance of the AU Agenda 2063. *"Let us all unite and celebrate together, the victories won for our liberation, let us dedicate ourselves to rise together to defend our liberty and unity"* as we join the continent on this day.

As an organisation committed to freedom, justice and peace we commemorate this day thinking of the people of Palestine. Africa should wake up and confront the atrocities committed against Palestine, the Sudan conflict, the illegal occupation of Western Sahara by Morocco, and demand an end to the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo and other conflicts ravaging the continent. Let peace reign.

Happy Africa Day! ■





The National Question and the New Struggle Against Recolonization

■ By **GODFREY NKOSI**

AT this critical juncture in South Africa's democratic journey, it is important to express appreciation to the leadership of the African National Congress (ANC) for demonstrating, in both word and deed, their unwavering commitment to addressing the national question. From its earliest days, the ANC has understood that the unity of the South African people – across racial, ethnic, gender and class divides – must be pursued not as a hollow ideal, but through the deliberate redress of the historical injustices wrought by colonialism and apartheid.

That the ANC has remained committed to achieving this unity through structural transformation, even in the face of adversity, must be acknowledged. The national question is not a relic of the past – it remains the very centrepiece of our democratic

project. It demands from us not a colour-blind approach to governance, but rather a programme that is unapologetically rooted in dismantling the socio-economic, spatial and cultural legacies of colonial conquest and white minority rule.

Since the watershed general elections of 29 May 2024, the conditions for achieving this have changed significantly. The ANC now finds itself in its most precarious position since 1994 – forced to share power in a Government of National Unity (GNU) with ideological opponents, many of whom are committed not to the deepening of transformation, but to its reversal.

And yet, through these daunting new circumstances, the ANC has continued to display signs that it remains capable of advancing the transformation agenda.

The post-election period has seen the signing into law of both the Basic Education Laws Amendment (BELA) Bill and the Expropriation Bill. These two instruments speak directly to the heart of the national question. The BELA Act seeks to equalize access to quality education, challenging longstanding structural gatekeeping practices entrenched in former Model C and Afrikaans-medium schools. The Expropriation Act reaffirms the principle that land redistribution is central to economic justice and the restoration of dignity to the dispossessed. Despite loud opposition, the ANC has continued to commit itself to employment equity, broad-based black economic empowerment, and the transformation of industries and professions still overwhelmingly dominated by the privileged few.

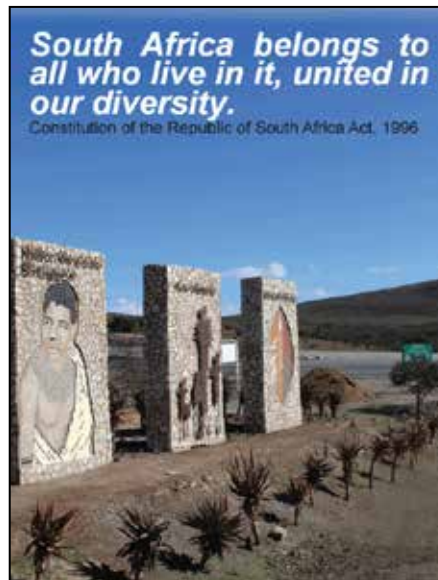
This is not the behaviour of a

party in retreat. Even its fiercest opponents – some of whom had prematurely predicted its demise – now acknowledge that the ANC remains a force in South African politics. But it is precisely because the ANC has shown that it still has the capacity to pursue transformation that it now faces renewed and dangerous opposition – opposition that goes beyond our borders and taps into deeper, global dynamics of power.

There is a new thread that we must begin to confront more directly within the ANC and broader progressive circles: the rise of modern forms of recolonization. In the minds of many right-wing elements – both domestic and foreign – the ANC cannot be defeated electorally or ideologically. Therefore, they seek to neutralize its programme through other means. They have found willing allies in powerful Western capitals that share their discomfort with South Africa's transformation trajectory, particularly as it pertains to land reform, racial justice, and economic redistribution.

Even before the 2024 elections, we witnessed troubling signs of this external alignment. Letters were sent to the United States government by certain South Africans, calling for it to monitor our elections on the unfounded suspicion that irregularities would occur. These were not neutral calls for democratic oversight, but cynical attempts to delegitimize our sovereign processes and create doubt about the integrity of our democratic institutions. No evidence was ever tabled – only suspicion manufactured to serve a narrative.

For many years now, right-wing forces have been on roadshows across Western capitals, painting a picture of South Africa as a hostile environment for white



citizens, as if the pursuit of equality amounts to persecution. This campaign of misinformation has taken hold in parts of the global North, particularly in the United States, where a new administration that came into power in January 2025 appears more sympathetic to the idea that protecting 'white interests' in Africa is a legitimate foreign policy priority.

This is where the new recolonization begins – not with gunboats and red carpets, but with narrative manipulation, economic pressure, threats of sanctions, and the cultivation of a domestic elite that acts as an intermediary between foreign powers and the South African state. If left unchecked, we may soon find ourselves governed by a modern outpost where the will of the majority is routinely vetoed by external forces seeking to preserve their kinship interests in our land.

The danger here is that democracy in South Africa will be hollowed out from the inside. On paper, we may continue to hold elections. But in practice, policy direction will be determined not by the ballot but by the fear of capital flight, ratings downgrades, or diplomatic reprimands. In this context, minority interests will rule over

the majority – not through constitutional democracy, but through backdoor influence and subtle coercion.

It is therefore critical that we, as ANC cadres and progressive South Africans, remain vigilant.

We must understand that the national question is no longer only about resolving our historical divisions; it is also about protecting our sovereignty and resisting a new form of domination. We must reject the narrative that transformation equals instability. We must build strong institutions that are rooted in our constitutional vision while also being alert to global forces that seek to shape our destiny for us.

The ANC must return to its roots as a liberation movement. We are no longer in a moment of comfort where transformation can proceed without resistance. We are in a new phase of struggle – one that requires political clarity, moral courage and international solidarity. Just as our forebears resisted foreign domination in its classical form, we must now resist its modern reappearance.

The national question is not a side issue. It is the essence of the democratic revolution. And it remains the solemn responsibility of every ANC cadre to ensure that the promise of 1994 is not betrayed – not by enemies in our midst, and certainly not by those outside our borders who think they can rule us by proxy.

Let us recommit ourselves, with clear eyes and steady hands, to completing this historic task. The road ahead will not be easy. But if we abandon this path, we will not only lose the gains of the past – we will forfeit the future itself.

A CHAPTER IN THE LIFE OF LEAH MADALANE

(KNOWN AS LULU MABENA)

*My sister, friend, comrade and the
African queen of Jena, Germany*

■ By **KHULU MBATHA**

THIS chapter in Lulu's life is one of many. She has met numerous people in various towns, cities, and countries where she has lived. From these interactions and relationships she has established with friends and comrades, I am certain that many chapters will be written about her, and this is just one of them.

Following the uprising of June 16, 1976, and the exodus into foreign lands, the number of youths arriving in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, from South Africa kept increasing as if they were being evacuated from a war zone. The youth came from every corner of the country, most were from the PWV area, today Gauteng. With such crowds in a serene town like Dar-es-Salaam during those days, the situation became unmanageable as ill-disciplined incidents increased too.

The Tanzanian government raised its concerns with both the ANC



and PAC. To address the situation, the ANC relocated some youth inland to a camp located in a place called Magadu, in Morogoro, about 195 km from Dar. Before the arrival of the youth, the Magadu camp, neighbouring the Tanzanian People's Defence Force (TPDF) camp, had been occupied by MK veterans, the 'Mgwenyas', and they had ducks, chickens and dogs in the backyard.

But then again, a similar situation of mischief arose in Morogoro. After consultations, it was decided to organise teaching classes during the day. It is in this milieu that I came to know Lulu for the first time. As it was the case, there were fewer girls than boys, and their lodge was located separately from those of the boys. Boys lived in quarters they dotingly named Lancaster House and Moscow, and the biggest place was the main house with a hall able to accommodate a large number. When the numbers increased, an open canvas tent called Karl Marx was used as a sleeping station.

Other girls with Lulu there were Mmabatho Nhlanhla (nee Molefe), Dr Mpho Nomasonto Thoabala-Motjope (nee Thoabala), Conny Tsimane, Ambassador Queen Zondo, Dr Lindi Zikalala, Thabisile Siga-Moloi and Esme Molale. Again, when the numbers increased, the girls were taken to Charlotte Maxeke and Rex Houses in town.

TRIBUTE

In this setup, a beautiful and quiet Lulu exhibited the true character of a well-moulded person. All the tasks given to her were taken with a positive attitude that expressed her willingness and enthusiasm to contribute. For example, when it was her turn for cooking, cleaning, or preparing for political discussions, she was level-headed as tasks were done effortlessly. One had a sense that she came from a stable family background. As it was proscribed to discuss personal matters, I kept these observations to myself.

One night, a snake entered the girls' quarters and joined them in their sleep. As Lulu explained later: 'When I woke up, next to our clothes, there was a snake. I did not panic, I did not wake up the others, I went out and asked one of the male comrades, who was not afraid of snakes, to come and remove it. He came, picked it up, and threw it back into the bush. That was it! When I told the others what had happened, they were shocked and started screaming after the fact.'

With time, Magadu became an important campus, changing from a military camp to a 'university' that shaped our thinking, lives, and future. Taking over from another homeboy, Stanley 'Stan' Mngadi, as commander of the camp, I led the political discussions. We started with current affairs, then came the history of struggle, the ANC, the people of Southern Africa, and the rest of Africa, among other subjects. Other senior students among us taught subjects such as mathematics, geography and physical science. On certain days, senior members of the ANC led the political discussions. Professor Keorapetsi 'Bra Kgosi' Kgosit-sile, who, with Bra Max Sisulu,



Khulu Mbatha with Lulu and friends at a book reading at her house

remained throughout our stay in Magadu, brothers, father figures, and mentors to us. Other senior leaders were Mme Gertrude and Mark Shope, Kate Molale, Johny Makatini, Ntate and Mme Mittah Seperepere, Sis' Jackie Modise (nee Mofokeng), Ntate John Nkadimeng, and many others, including the Mgwenyas – veterans who were involved in the Wankie and Sipolilo confrontations with the Rhodesian army.

Far away from home, the Qinsielanis, the erstwhile stone throwers, immersed themselves in discussions that produced a better understanding of the link between the struggle against national oppression and workers' exploitation. At the same time, the youth in Magadu confronted new challenges. Sometimes there was no rice, and the next day, no meat. The meat bought at the marketplace was from wild animals. You never asked which animal it was. All you had to do was buy quickly before the meat got finished, otherwise, comrades in the camp were without food. In this crude camp in the wilderness, the new 'enemies' became malaria, the African bee, dangerous snakes, and some reptiles

we had never seen before. Some people became specialists in killing snakes, skinning, and removing the insides using only a razor blade. Various lizards visited the camp and either fought with the dogs or were killed by them. On occasions when the dogs were successful, the killed lizard, most of the time the African monitor lizard, would end up in our pots. This was our daily life.

Among those who passed through Magadu were Jeff Radebe (former minister), Ben Mokoe-na – former mayor of Middelburg, Ambassador Ndumiso Ntshinga, Ambassador Mphakama Mbete, Bada Pharasi – CEO of the Innovative Pharmaceutical Association of SA, Dr. Abel Nhlewane, Charles Maminze, Dr. Saul Pelle – the former head of SABC News International Channel, Ambassador Bheki Langa, and some from the Kingdom of Lesotho, such as Mophete Sekamane and Bonner Nelson Seakhwa – former Consul General to South Africa.

In September 1977, it was my turn to leave Magadu to study in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Before my departure, the Tanzanian government had

just identified a one-time sisal farm in Mazimbu, about 10 kilometres from Magadu, as a plot where the ANC wanted to build a school. Once or twice, Reddy Mazimba (Mabuse Mampane), the chief representative, organised machetes for us, and we went there to clear the weeds. I left with Humphrey Quinton Magula and Mandla Pule. Two years later, Lulu, after completing her language course in Leipzig (like we did before), joined me at the Friedrich Schiller University in Jena, where I was already pursuing my studies. The reunification was awesome. She came with Zandisile 'Keith' Pase to study here in Jena.

I came to know more about Lulu during our stay as students in this town of Jena, famous as a world centre of the optical industry with companies such as Carl Zeiss Jena and the Otto Schott Glasswerk. Jena lies in a hilly landscape in the eastern part of the Federal State of Thuringia, resting next to the Saale River between the Harz Mountains in the north and the Thuringian Forest in the southwest and the Ore Mountains in the southeast.

Lulu and Keith, joined by Zolile Magula a year later, lived in the

suburb of Neulobeda Ost (New Lobeda East). Quinton and I lived in Neulobeda West. Lulu found it easy to settle in this new environment, which differed from our experiences and situation in Tanzania. The university was one of the most cosmopolitan institutions of education in the GDR, with students from all over the world in various faculties and fields of study. Besides the local Germans who were in the majority, there were those from the former Soviet Union, Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Cyprus, Yemen, Iraq, Iran, Syria, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde. Others were from Nigeria, Egypt, Cuba, Mexico, Guatemala, Columbia, Nicaragua, Greece, the UK, USA, Namibia, Ethiopia, Somalia, Tanzania and Madagascar. Coming from the racial divisions in South Africa, such a pluralistic, multinational, and multicultural social environment, combined with our studies, was ideal to cultivate a new world outlook.

I recall one incident that gave Lulu one of her first cultural shocks in Jena. One professor invited the group of South Africans to his house for dinner. Now, dinner in Germany is called 'Abendbrot', and a direct trans-

lation means 'evening bread'. In reality, this is a traditional German cold dinner that can include a meat (cold meat) and cheese board, spreads, sliced, boiled eggs, and other sliced raw veggies like tomatoes, cucumbers, pickles, and radishes served with some really good bread and butter. Sometimes salads are included, and of course, this is taken with beer. One serves it as a buffet for everyone to create their own open-faced sandwiches, and everyone gets to choose what they want to eat. On this occasion, I forgot to warn Lulu and the others what 'Abendbrot' could be. Otherwise, to be invited for 'Abendbrot' is a great honour. On our arrival, we learned at the language school that 'Abendbrot' is dinner. And we then assume dinner to be a hot meal. As it happened, Lulu and the others came with empty stomachs, hoping to get a hot meal. It was only when the 'Abendbrot' was served that I whispered, '*This was our dinner*'. All the same, they ate as little as possible, reserving space for the hot meal that never came. They were angry with our host and his wife, and on our way to our quarters, they swore – in the future – never to honour such invitations. During the many years we stayed in Germany, we got used to the eating traditions of the Germans.

Another matter of interest with the German language is that it is precise with every word and its meaning. For example, on occasions when South Africans are hosted by Germans and are asked what they want for a drink, those who don't take alcohol, like the teetotaler Lulu was, often respond by saying, "*I don't drink!*" This answer always shocked Germans. What then followed is, "*What? You don't drink? How do you survive without drinking?*"



To avoid confusion or misunderstanding with the Germans, it is better to say *'I prefer a non-alcoholic drink'*.

While focusing on our studies, it was our task to participate in the political and cultural mobilisation of the international community in support of our struggle against apartheid oppression and in solidarity with other oppressed people of Namibia, Palestine, Western Sahara and Nicaragua (before the 1979 revolution). We organised fundraising occasions in and around the university. Lulu was there all the time. She had a beautiful voice and liked singing.

Few as we were in Jena, we formed a small cultural group to sing and dance. On occasions like Africa Day (May 25th), we partnered with students from other countries and performed together to raise awareness about the struggle in South Africa. When relaxing at her students' residence or with friends, she liked crooning Mirriam Makeba's songs with such nostalgia that one felt her affection for the past and a future we, as freedom fighters, could not tell how it would end.

Without doubt, culture was the single most unifying element in our struggle for liberation. In the GDR, we had one of the best-organised cultural groups. In all the celebrations of our national days, people attended to enjoy our group's performances. Sometimes we added poetry reading. Occasionally, the group performed jointly with the likes of Miriam Makeba, Letta Mbulu and Abdullah Ibrahim during the *'Political Song Festival'* in Berlin. After Poppy Nokwe had left, Mmabatho Nhlanhla had taken over as the lead singer of the group and she never disappoint-

ed. Among those that were active members at one or other stage, were: Hans and Kgosi Seatlholo, Peter Modise, Jeff Radebe, Nomalizo Kraai, Patricia and Dr Zolile Maqetuka, Temsy Motsoenyane, Olive Sindi Mthembu, Barney Lebeloane, Philip Zandislie 'Keith' Pase, Zolile Magugu, Ambassador Thuthukile Skweyiya, Siphon Njobe, Joy Rathebe, Vuyo Madida, Timothy Motsoaledi, Joy Rabotapi, Tony Moloi, Pule Nchee, Vuyisile Vido Socikwa, Kid Sithole, Molwantwa Phasha, Cecil Ndzanga, Papi Moloto, Thami Ndzanga and Grace Lebowa.

Around 1983, our numbers in Jena increased. Besides Quinton, Keith and Zolile, we were joined by Patrick Thami Katisa (MK Guster Ranooka), Paulos Motha, Chamsa, Winzer and Terrence Gquluwe later. Later, there were Vuyisile 'Vido' Socikwa, Amen Khoza (MK Muzi Makhanda) and others in Wernigerode; Themba was in Gotha, 'Cde Wages', Gandhi Maseko and Siphon Njobe were in Weimar and Aubrey Sedibe in Bad Berka. Under these circumstances, Lulu remained the only South African female student among us as South Africans and the only African woman – the African Queen – at the university and in this town.

So, her presence in any gathering as an ANC unit or at the university was always felt. What made this distinct was that, as a political activist, she was always willing to explain the nature of the struggle against apartheid in a much uncomplicated way. She was always ready to engage others about their struggles or situations. For example, we had students from Palestine with us whose organisation, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), was an amalgamation

of various organisations that at times expressed divergent views on specific strategy questions. Lulu, an intellectual in her own right, was sharp in understanding these contradictions and participated in these conversations or debates with a level of understanding, precision, and transparency that ensured effective communication and minimized misunderstandings.

In private, she became a real sister and mother to all of us. At my wedding ceremony in 1985, Lulu sang to give the occasion a real South African touch away from home.

As I was in the GDR Students' and Workers' Committee, which worked hand in hand with our chief representative's office in Berlin, one day, she confided in me and shared a personal matter. She told me how, after leaving South Africa, she had separated from her husband when deciding to pursue her studies rather than go for military training. The understanding was that they would remain in communication as far as possible. It had been a long time, possibly more than 2 or 3 years, since she had last heard from him. This was worrying. We concluded she was to approach the chief rep, Ntate Mongalo (Anthony 'Tony' Mongalo, the ANC's longest-serving chief representative in that country and a national executive committee member), for further direction. That done, and when the leadership from Lusaka was around, she travelled to Berlin to solicit clarity on this matter. Among other frequent visitors to the GDR were Tim Maseko, the principal of SO-MAFCO and Andrew Masondo, the National Commissar. We took advantage of their visits to deal with specific issues concerning

individuals. Lulu's matter was always on the agenda. For all I can remember, there was never a satisfactory answer about the whereabouts of her husband, nor what was happening. I assume this was the case until her 5 years of studies ended. She graduated and received her Master's Degree in Philosophy and returned to Tanzania to start a new life at SOMAFCO (Solomon Mahlangu College), which was in full operation then and had replaced the Magadu camp.

My next encounter with Lulu was in London, UK, in 1989. I should rephrase this and say to hear something about Lulu. I had arrived in London en route to Athens, Greece. After finding my way to 28 Penton Street, the four-story building owned by the ANC, which was its headquarters in Europe and served as the central point for coordinating anti-apartheid activity in the UK and international solidarity against the apartheid regime. Gill Marcus took the opportunity to introduce me (the chief representative to Greece) to some of the staff assisting in the office. There was Mafa Sicelo Ngeleza, whom I had known from the GDR and others. One of them was Obbey Mabena. Who, Obbey Mabena? I wanted to establish if he was related to Lulu Mabena. 'Yes, *I am the husband*'. I was so happy they had reunited. I never asked what had happened. My stay in the office and in London was too short for such questions. He told me that Lulu was studying at Bradford University (England). My flight via London had positive results, and I was happy.

Not long after returning to Athens, the news of the moment was the *"talks about talks"*. It was not long before the first political prisoners



were released, then the political organisations were unbanned, and Nelson Mandela's release followed. Then it was time to prepare for 'the return' after 15 years. It so happened that Lulu's return to South Africa was in the same month as mine, May 1991. Lulu and her family returned from the UK, and I was from Zimbabwe after being forced to live there for 6 months, waiting for amnesty.

Shell House, the new headquarters of the ANC, was where one went to find out who had returned and who had not. Soon, we were invited to Wits (Witwatersrand University) and formed an association of former students who studied in Germany. That was in 1993. I also learned more about the circumstances of Lulu's husband, Obbey Mabena, and what had happened to him and others in Angola. Our friendship and comradeship since we met in London, developed further. He was one of the comrades who established the first computer section of the communications department of the ANC, together with Andile Ngcaba, Nombulelo Pinky Moholi, among others. In later life, we became business partners too.

I was happy when, after 1994, Lulu joined the Department of

Government Communication and Information System (GCIS). She was there until her retirement.

Our friendship here at home became stronger, too. She remained active in building the association of former students of Germany, and most importantly, the Magadu group, made up of those who were at Magadu. She organised a lunch gathering with friends and comrades at her house in Bronkhorstspuit to discuss my book.

We have been part of each other's families for a very long time. Seeing her mother reach the age of 99 was overwhelming and a celebration I will never forget.

Watching her children growing up always brought a smile to my face as I knew and appreciated how much she lived for them. Her life centred around her children and I can just imagine that while no longer with us, she will continue to look upon them with pride. All her children loved her too! What is touching to me about Lulu is the relationship she enjoyed with my own children. Whenever they are around, she availed herself to connect with them.

It was a privilege to have someone like Lulu in my life. While her passing has left a big void, I am grateful that our paths have crossed as she has been more than a comrade, but a true sister and a great friend and I am going to miss her. All your friends and comrades, especially those who found time to visit you in the hospital, will miss you dearly. I know how they all loved you.

AFTER WHAT YOU WENT THROUGH IN THE LAST FEW YEARS, GO WELL AND REST IN ETERNAL PEACE!

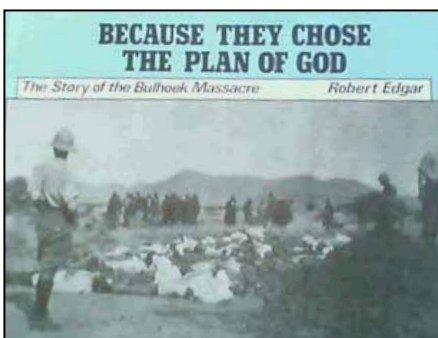
THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

24–30 May 2025

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

24 May 1921 Bulhoek massacre



In 1921, in a battle lasting less than 30 minutes between police and Israelites, followers of prophet Enoch Mgijima, more than 180 people were killed. The battle started after police issued an ultimatum demanding that the Israelites evacuate land they were squatting on and warned that if they failed to comply, their leader would be arrested and their homes demolished. Soon afterwards a group of around 500 white-robed men, armed with sticks and spears, challenged the machine guns of an 800-strong police force sent by Jan Smuts to remove the Israelites who had settled at the holy village of Ntabelanga, Bulhoek in Queenstown to pray.

24 May 1921 First Comrades Marathon

The first Comrades Marathon race is run from Pietermaritzburg to Durban, with 34 runners competing. The winner does the 87 km race in 8 hours and 59 minutes, in 2022 the winning time was 5 and a half hours.

24 May 1929 Poet James Matthews born

Poet James Matthews is born in Cape Town. A leading writer of the Black Consciousness movement of the 1960's, his poetry collection *Cry Rage* was the first book of poetry banned by the apartheid regime. Matthews established South Africa's first black-owned publishing house, BLAC, and first black-owned art gallery, Gallery Afrique.

24 May 1973 South Africa to start Uranium enrichment project

South African Prime Minister, BJ Vorster disclosed in July 1970 in the House of Assembly that the government has decided to make funds available for a uranium enrichment programme. Uranium was used to manufacture nuclear weapons by the South Africa government.

24 May 1993 Eritrean independence



Eritrea achieves national independence from Ethiopia, the date commemorates the day in 1991 when the Eritrean People's Liberation Front captured the capital Asmara, after a 30-year war for independence.

24 May 2018 MeerLICHT goes online

South African MeerLICHT, the world's most powerful wide-view visible light deep scape telescope goes online in the Karoo, with its clear skies and far from light pollution.

25 May 1922 Young Communist League (YCLSA) formed

The plans for the formation of the Young Communist League (YCL) were laid in 1921 when the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) was established. Youth groups were formed in Johannesburg and Cape Town. In 1922, the YCL played a supportive role during the great white mine-workers' strike when 25,000 white miners downed tools because the Chamber of Mines proposed to dismiss about 2000 of them. In May that year they established a national structure, the YCL. Amongst the founding members were Edward Roux, Sarah Sable and Willie Kalk.



THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

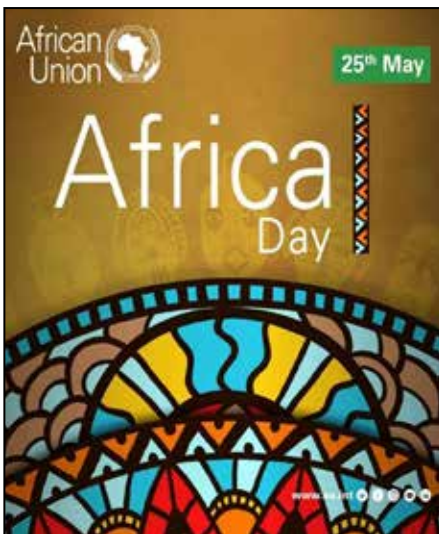
25 May 1948

Travel writer Jojo Cobbinah born

Ghananian author and travel writer Jojo Cobbinah was born in Bogoso. Providing clear historical and cultural descriptions of the continent, he has written travel guides on Senegal and The Gambia. His guides are legendary and ranked by UNESCO as among *"the best travel guides of an African country."* Cobbinah is also the author of *Dr. Amo's Lonely Planet*.

25 May 1963

OAU formed in Addis Ababa



The Pan African movement, born out of the early 19th century anti-colonial and anti-slavery movements, debated approaches to African unity after colonialism, in the context of more and more countries gaining independence. Two strands emerged, the Casa-blanca group of countries advocated for the immediate unity of the African continent (along the line of a united states of Africa), whilst the Monrovia group of countries called for a more gradual approach. Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie convened a conference of both groups, and this Pan African conference of independent African states (and an-

ti-colonial and national liberation movements) met in Addis Ababa, and on 25 May signed the Charter which gave life to the Organisation of African Unity Charter (OAU). The Charter was signed by thirty-two (32) independent states. The OAU regarded as its *raison d'être* to support the remaining countries still under colonialism and apartheid, mainly in east and southern Africa, through the liberation committee. In July 2002, the OAU was transformed into the African Union in Durban, with the adoption of its Constitution Act. 25 May is celebrated across the country as Africa Day.

25 May 1983

Panapress formed

The PanAfrican News Service, PanaPress begins service at its headquarters in Dakar, Senegal with regional offices in Kinshasa, Khartoum, Lusaka, Lagos and Tripoli and tells African news from the continent's perspectives.

25 May 1986

Witdoeke attack Crossroads



The Cape Town City Council, after years of trying to move informal settlements of Crossroads near the Cape Town Airport to Khayelitsha, eventually succeeded when on this day the so-called Witdoeke, a third force group attacked residents of Crossroads, leaving over 6,000 homeless.

25 May 1944

Term Apartheid used for first time

Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd, used the word Apartheid for the first time in Parliament to refer to his government's policy of separate development and white privilege and domination. The word apartheid became part of a global lexicon.

25 May 2010

South Africa opera tenor Siphiwo Ntshebe passed away



Siphiwo Ntshebe was born in Brighton, Port Elizabeth. He was a great opera singer, whose career ended abruptly when he died of meningitis on 25 May 2010. Ntshebe was only 35 and was only days away from what would have been one of the highlights of his career. Former South African President Nelson Mandela had selected Ntshebe to be one of the performers at the 2010 FIFA World Cup. His sudden death came as a shock to many who knew him. His album *Hope* was released in 2010.

25 May 2011

Togo students strike

Students at University of Lomé start strike and riot over poor living conditions and a new academic system, culminating in the closing of the university on 27

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

May by the government and negotiations with students starting. Finally by July that year, government acknowledges the legitimacy of the student demands and commit to finance the upgrade of the university.

25 May 2019

Mata Diop wins Grand Prix at Cannes

Senegalese/French actor and director, Mati Diop is the first black woman director to be nominated for the Palm d'Or and to win the Grand Prix award from her film *Atlantics*, a supernatural drama.

26 May 1956

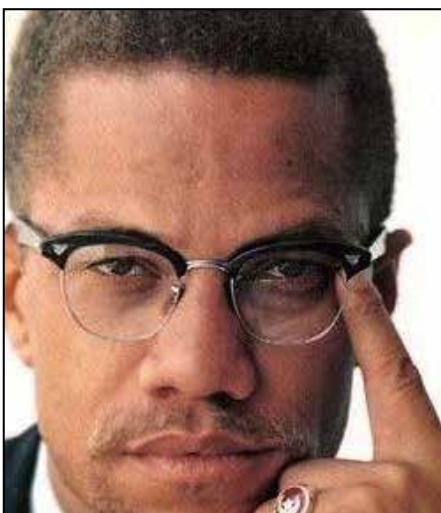
Malawi human rights activist Emmie Chanika born

Chanika was born in Lilongwe and formed the country's first human rights organisation, the Civil Liberties Committee in 1992, also focusing on women's rights.

26 May 1964

Malcolm X addresses second OAU Summit

After the founding of the OAU a year earlier in Addis Ababa, its second summit is held in Cairo, Egypt with a membership growing to 34 countries. The summit is



addressed by US civil rights leader, Malcolm X.

26 May 1966

Campaigner against rape, Rebecca Katsuva born

Born in Katana, DRC Rebecca Masika Katsuva was raped four times during the Second Congolese Civil War by government soldiers and rebels. In one of the attacks, rebels killed her husband and raped her and her two daughters (ages 13 and 14), both children fell pregnant and were expelled by their dad's family. Rebecca founded the *Association des Personnes Desherites Unies pour le Development*, providing shelter to abused women, helping over 6000 survivors before her passing in 2016.

26 May 1989

Upington 14 sentenced to death

On this day, fourteen of 25 accused – also known as the Upington 14 – were handed the death sentence by Justice J. Basson for the murder of Lucas Tshenolo Sethwala, a police constable who fired at demonstrators attacking his home with stones on 13 November 1985. The rest of the twenty-five accused, the largest group ever to be convicted of murder in a single SA trial, received sentences ranging from six to eight years imprisonment and another six defendants were sentenced to community service. The group was all convicted on the basis of the “common purpose” principle, “a legal doctrine that imputes criminal liability on the participants involved in criminal activity for all that results from such activity.” Campaigns for the release of the Upington 26, especially the fourteen on death row, amongst them one woman (Theresa Ramashamola) were conducted across the world and in South Africa.

26 May 2003

Sibusiso Vilane conquers Mount Everest summit



Sibusiso Vilane, a game ranger with dual South African and Swazi nationality reaches the summit of Mount Everest, where he plants a South African flag. 32-year-old Vilane is the first Black South African to successfully ascend Everest.

26 May 2021

Icon Mbuya Nehanda Myakasikana honoured

The 19th century Zimbabwe prophet and rebel is honoured with a 3 meter tall statue unveiled in Harare city center. The spiritual medium urged Zimbabweans to fight against the British South Africa Company's colonization of their lands. The uprising, called the *First Chimurenga* (1886-1897), ended with her defeat and death, but inspired decades of struggle for liberation. Nehanda is an icon of Africa's fight for independence.

27 May 1907

Rachel Carson, author of Silent Spring is born

Rachel Carson (1907–1964), American marine biologist, ecologist and author of *Silent Spring* (1962) was born in 1907. Her landmark book about the detrimental impact of pesticides on the environment is widely credited with helping launch the environmental movement.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

27 May 1928

Ghanaian Poet Kwesi Brew born

Osborne Henry *Kwesi Brew* (27 May 1928 – 30 July 2007) was a poet, public servant and diplomat, born on this day in Cape Coast, Ghana. He was amongst the first graduates from the University of the Gold Coast and his Afrocentric poetry widely published.

27 May 1947

France brutal suppression of Malagasy Uprising

Malagasy (today Madagascar) was a French colony and during an uprising by the indigenous people in 1947 for independence, France suppressed the uprising through a reign of terror, including torture, war rape, mass executions, burning of villages, collective punishment of families and villages, and 'death flights' where prisoners were thrown out of airplanes while alive. The Malagasy Uprising lasted until 1948, by which time the leaders were killed or captured and estimated 100,000 Malagasy killed.

27 May 1991

Comedian Mark Angel born

Mark Angel is a Nigerian comedian, scriptwriter and video producer, whose Mark Angel Comedy channel has over 8 million YouTube subscribers and 20 million Facebook followers. He was born on this day in Port Harcourt.

27 May 1992

First Hindu temple opens in Seychelles

The iconic, colourful Navasakty Vinayagar Temple dedicated to Ganesh the elephant god, opens in Victoria, Seychelles to serve the around 2% of the population who are Hindu.

27 May 2007

International Cricket Council President Percy Sonn passed on



International Cricket Council president Percy Sonn (57) passed on in a Cape Town hospital. An anti-apartheid campaigner for non-racial sports, served as vice-president on the South African Cricket Board after 1994 and president of the new United Cricket Board of South Africa until 2003

27 May 2016

Lulu Dube passed on



The youngest daughter of former ANC President John Langalibalele Dube died in Durban at the age of 84 years. Lulu Joan Dube was born in Inanda Durban in 1931 and was the last surviving daughter of John and Angelina Dube. She is well known for the community leadership she played in her home town. She was described as a humble servant, community leader and a freedom fighter. Lulu

Dube, also known as Mama Lulu is survived by three daughters, two sons, thirteen grandchildren and two great grandchildren. She was buried alongside her parents, John and Angelina Dube at the Ohlange Institute in Durban.

28 May 1913

Waaiohoek Women mass protest



started a mass protest against pass laws, meeting in the settlement of Waaiohoek and marching into the city centre. The following day they managed to meet the Mayor of Bloemfontein, Ivan Haarburchen, who told them local authorities have no choice but to implement the pass laws. The women then marched to the police station, where they burn their passes. 80 women were arrested in this peaceful protest action.

28 May 1984

Linguist Ernest Sedumedi Moloto passed on

Linguist, educationist and teacher, Ernest Sedumedi Moloto, who served as chair of both the Tswana Language Committee of South Africa and the Botswana National Language Committee, passed away in Mamelodi, Pretoria. He was buried at Moruleng, Rustenburg on 10 June 1984. Moloto was Ellen Kuzwayo's first husband.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

28 May 1991 Mengistu regime fall



Ethiopians People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), the current ruling party of Ethiopia, captured the capital Addis Ababa, overthrowing the Derg regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam, in power since 1977 when he overthrew Emperor Haile Selassie. The EPRDF was led by the **Meles Zenawi**, who became Ethiopian Prime Minister until his death in 2012. Zenawi waged a successful rebel war against the forces of Mengistu and his appointment marked the end of years of civil war in the country. 28 May is also celebrated as Ethiopia's National Day.

29 May 1887 Chief Sandile killed in battle

Xhosa Chief Sandile, born in the Ciskei in 1820 from the Great House of Ngqika, was killed in battle in the Denge Forest. During the Seventh Frontier War (1846-47) Sandile was defeated and his territory was put under British command and called British Kaffraria. His dissatisfaction with the appointment British commissioners to rule the territory led to the Eighth Frontier War (1850-53). Sandile was deposed and a White man, Charles Brownlee, was appointed in his place as paramount chief. In 1878 Sandile, joined by Krelie of the Galekas, waged war against Colonial forces, he

was defeated and fled to Denge, where he met his untimely death.

29 May 1926 President Wade born

President of Senegal (2000-2012) was born in Kébémér, Senegal. An economics and law professor and dean at the University of Dakar, he served on the opposition benches before elected as president. President Abdoulaye Wade is one of the co-architects of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD).

29 May 1935 Author Andre P Brink born



South African novelist, Andre Phillipus Brink was born on 29 May 1935, in Vrede Freestate. Brink did a BA in Literature at University of Potchefstroom (1955), a Masters in Literature (1959), a Masters in Afrikaans and Dutch literature and a PhD from Rhodes University in 1960. In the 1960s, Brink, Ingrid Jonker and Breyten Breytenbach were part of the Afrikaans literary movement, *Die Sestigters* ("The Sixty-ers"), who used literature to speak up against Apartheid and to bring about a European influence to Afrikaans literature. His books include: *Lobola vir die Lewe* (1962), *A Dry White Season* (1979), *An Act of Terror* (1991) and *The Other Side of Silence* (2002). Brink wrote in both Af-

rikaans and English. His novel *Kennis van die Aand* (1973) was the first Afrikaans book to be banned by the Apartheid government. Brink passed on away on 6 February 2015.

29 May 1976 Eskom announces plan to order Nuclear generators from France

On 29 May 1976, the South African Electricity Supply Commission (ESKOM) announced its decision to order two nuclear power reactors from France. The two reactors, ordered from France in 1976 were installed at the Koeberg power station.

29 May 1998 Gen. Meiring hands over SANDF reigns to Gen. Nyanda



Accepting a seventeen-gun salute, outgoing South African National Defence Force (SANDF) chief, General Georg Meiring, formally hands over command of the SANDF to Lt Gen. Sipiwe Nyanda in the sports stadium in Thaba Tshwane, Pretoria.

29 May 1999 Ledwaba wins International Boxing title

Lehlohonolo Ledwaba, SA featherweight, wins the International Boxing Federation (IBF) title.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

29 May 2005

Hamilton Naki passed on



Hamilton Naki, laboratory assistant to cardiac surgeon Dr Christian Barnard, who assisted during the first heart transplant, passed on.

30 May 1919

Britain and Belgium swop African territories

Belgium and Britain signed the Anglo-Belgium agreement where Britain gives Rwanda and Burundi (Ruanda-Urundi) to Belgium, in exchange for control of Belgium East Africa (Tanzania), of course without consulting the peoples about the exchange of their lands.

30 May 1921

Film maker Jamie Uys born

Uys was born in Boksburg, directing 24 films mainly in Afrikaans, including the 1980 hit, *The Gods Must be Crazy*.

30 May 1946

Annie Tempo passed away

Annie Tempo, known as Sister Nannie, was born of a slave mother and father who were kidnapped as children off the coast of Mozambique. She was born in the late 1870s and grew up in Worcester. She dedicated her life to helping the downtrodden and destitute in Cape Town, especially women sex workers. Her work resulted in the establishment of a formal 'Res-

cue House'. In 1937 Sister Nannie was honoured with one of King George's Coronation Medals.

30 May 1956

Louis Armstrong visits Ghana

On this day the legendary US trumpeter arrived in Accra, Ghana on a goodwill visit, leading his band and local trumpeters on the tarmac to When the Saints Go Marching In.

30 May 1960

Union of South Africa officially ceased to exist

In March 1961, at a Conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers in London, the South African Prime Minister, H.F. Verwoerd formally announced that South Africa was changing from a Constitutional Monarchy to a Republic. The Union of South Africa of 1910 ceased to exist at midnight on 30 May 1961, changing to the Republic of South Africa.

30 May 1967

Biafra secedes from Nigeria

The Eastern region of Nigeria, Biafra, secedes from the country, which led to the Nigerian Civil War, also known as the Biafra War (1967–1970), resulting in over 100,000 military casualties and between half a million to two million civilian casualties, mainly due to starvation. Though the war ended with a united federal Nigeria, the underlying ethnic and economic causes of the Biafra War continue to be part of the fault lines of Africa's largest country. A number of books by prominent Nigerian authors and others have been written about the war, including *Destination Biafra* by **Buchi Emecheta** (1982), *Never*

Again by **Flora Nwapa** (1975), *Survive the Peace* by **Cyprian Ekwensi** (1976), *Sunset in Biafra* by **Elechi Amadi** (1973), *The Nigerian Revolution and the Biafra War* by **Alexandra Madiebo** (1980); and more recently *Half of a Yellow Sun* by **Chimanda Adichi Ngozi** (2006), *In Biafra Africa Died* by **Emifiana Eziani** (2012) and *There was a Country* by **Chinua Achebe** (2012).

30 May 1974

President Andry Rajoelina born

President of Madagascar was born in Antsirabe. A DJ by profession, he was installed by the junta as president after a military coup in 2009, serving until 2014. In 2019 he was elected as President in a democratic election.

30 May 2012

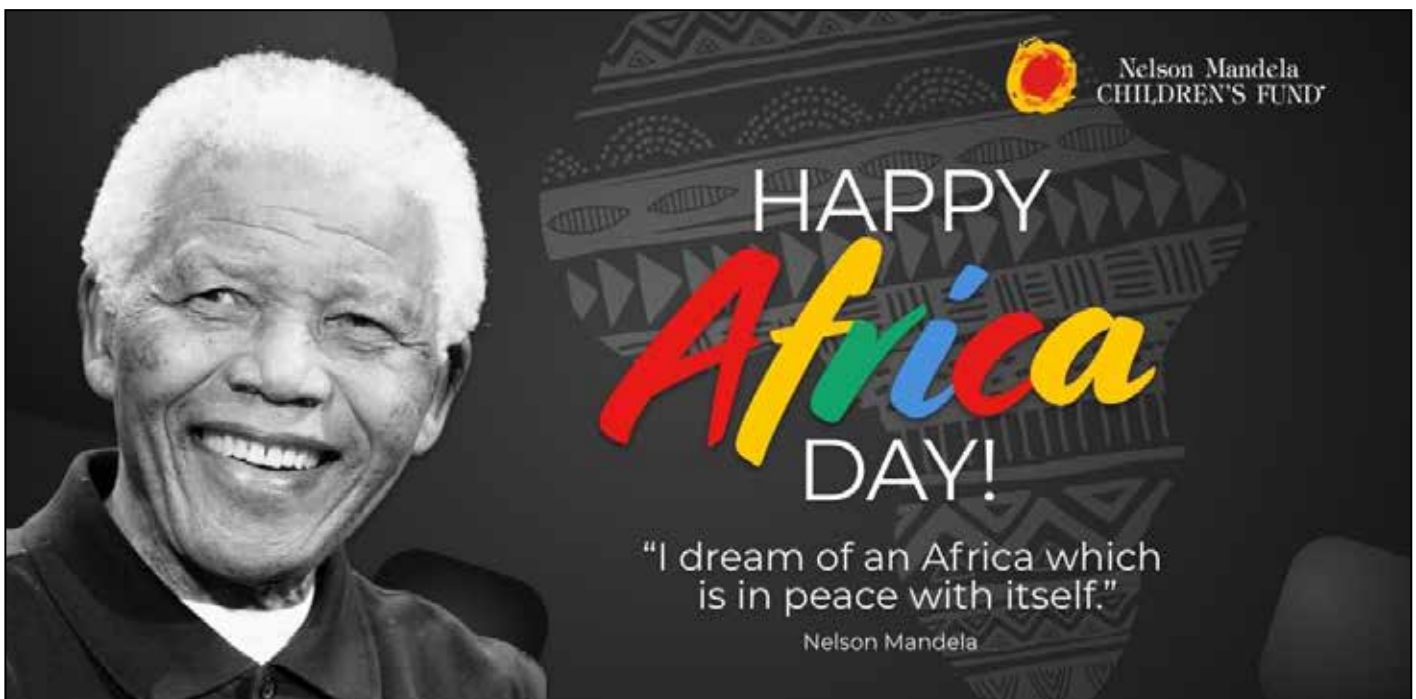
President Charles Taylor sentenced

Liberian President from 1997 to 2003, Charles McArthur Ghankay Taylor, was sentenced to 50 years in prison, after a conviction for war crimes in the Sierra Leone. He was leader of the Patriotic Liberation Front of Liberia, a rebel group which overthrew the government of Samuel Doe in 1989, starting the First Liberian Civil War (1989–1996), and was elected President after a peace agreement in 1997. In 2003, he was indicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, judicial body established by the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations, to prosecute persons responsible for serious violations of international and Sierra Leone law during the country's civil war. Taylor was found guilty on all 11 charges, and on 30 May 2012 sentenced to 50 years imprisonment, serving his sentence in the United Kingdom.

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

24—30 May 2025

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



25 May Africa Day

The day celebrates the founding of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) on 25 May 1963 in Addis Ababa. During the first few decades, the focus was on supporting the decolonization process, but after the end of apartheid in Namibia and South Africa, a greater focus was on peace, development and integration. The OAU Charter spelled out the purpose of the Organisation namely:

- To promote the unity and solidarity of the African States;
- To coordinate and intensify their cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa;
- To defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity and independence;
- To eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa; and
- To promote international cooperation, having due regard to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The OAU was officially transformed into the African Union

(AU) at a historic launch in July 2002 in Durban, South Africa. It has 55 member states that make up the countries of the African Continent. The AU is guided by its vision of **“An Integrated, Prosperous and Peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.”** The theme for Africa Day 2025 is: **Justice for Africans and People of African descent through reparations.**



THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

25-31 May

International Week of Solidarity with Non-Self-governing Territories



The UN Charter defines a 'non-self-governing' territory as a territory "whose people have not yet attained a full measure of self-government." In many of these territories, the UN Declaration on Decolonization of 1960 apply, and there is a UN list of such places. In Africa, Western Sahara is still on this list, and we must therefore during this week reaffirm our solidarity with the Saharawi people, and their right to self-determination.

25 May

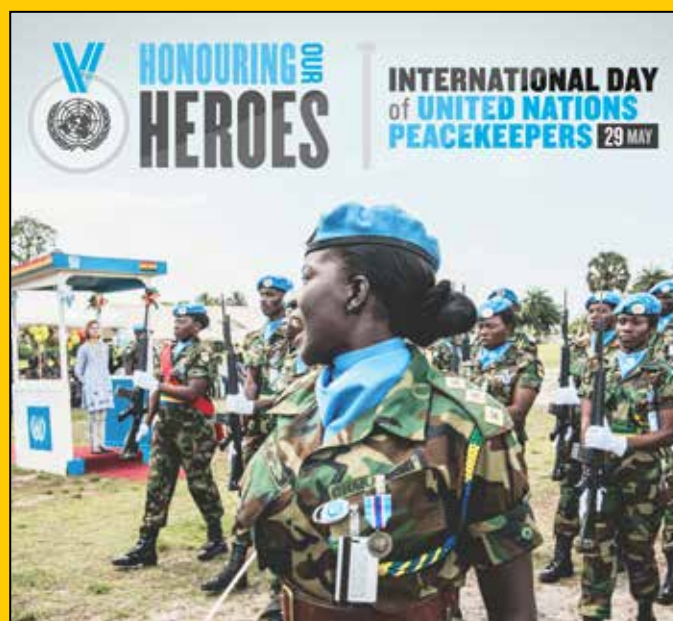
World Football Day

Football, as a prominent global sport, holds a unique position. Its broad appeal and accessibility make it a potent tool for health and well-being. It also serves as a vital platform for advancing gender equality and empowering women and girls, both on and off the field. Football serves as a catalyst for social inclusion, fostering unity and breaking down barriers between diverse communities

29 May

International Day of UN Peacekeepers

For nearly 80 years, United Nations peacekeepers have delivered tangible change to communities worldwide. From Liberia and Namibia to Cambodia, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste, their presence has been life-saving and transformative in some of the most volatile political and security contexts, guiding countries from conflict towards lasting peace. Observed under the theme "**The Future of Peacekeeping**" this year's International Day looks at the invaluable contributions military, police and civilian peacekeepers have made over the last nearly eight decades. It encapsulates the spirit of progress and



collective action towards creating a more equal, just and sustainable world. Today, more than 68,000 civilians, military, and police personnel serve in 11 UN peacekeeping missions, confronting increasingly complex and interconnected challenges shaped by a shifting geopolitical landscape. Despite the challenges, peacekeepers remain steadfast in their pursuit of peace. The International Day pays tribute to their unwavering service and sacrifice, as well as the resilience of the communities they support. It also solemnly honors the more than 4,400 peacekeepers who have lost their lives in the cause of peace, including 57 in 2024 alone.

“Now more than ever, the world needs the United Nations – and the United Nations needs peacekeeping that is fully equipped for today's realities and tomorrow's challenges.”

UN Secretary-General António Guterres

30 May

International Day of Potato

A 1000-old food with origins in the South American Andes region that made its way to Europe in the 16th century then spread around the world, the potato is much more than a source of nourishment. Potatoes are an important to accessible and nutritious food and improved livelihoods in rural and other areas where natural resources, especially arable land and water are limited and inputs expensive. The crop's versatility, climate friendliness and ability to grow in a variety of conditions make it an advantageous crop choice.