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Conversations with the
President

The National Dialogue must be a place for women to raise their voices

■ By **PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

ON 9 August each year, we celebrate Women's Day, where we commemorate the 1956 Women's March on the Union Buildings. The march was a political protest against the apartheid-era pass laws, but it was also a powerful assertion of women's agency.

It signalled that the women of South Africa, who were at that time relegated to the status of perpetual minors by the apartheid regime, would not be passive bystanders as their lives were profoundly affected by policies made about them, without them.

On Friday this week, organisations from across South

Africa will gather at the National Convention in Pretoria to kickstart the National Dialogue process.

Given the history of women's struggles in our country, it is therefore to be expected that at this critical moment in our history, women will once again come to the fore and participate actively in the National Dialogue process.

When we announced the National Dialogue we said that it will bring together individuals and organisations from across society to find common ground and new solutions for our country's many challenges.

Women make up more than

half of our country's population. Women are affected by every political, social and economic issue in the country. Likewise, every crisis, whether it is unemployment, crime or climate change, affects women equally and, in some instances, more than men.

Recognising that the lives of women are bound up with the future of the nation as a whole, we are counting on women's groups and organisations to mobilise around the National Dialogue process.

As government, working in partnership with the various stakeholders, we have committed to ensuring women are equally represented across

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the structures supporting and guiding the process.

If we are to remain true to our objective of giving all sectors of society a voice as we build the South Africa we want, we have to ensure that all women are represented. This means a concerted effort to mobilise young and old, urban and rural dwellers, women from different ethnic and linguistic communities, women with disabilities, and LGBTQI+ people.

The reality is that women's struggles are not all the same and we should not assume they are. Although they may be similar in certain respects, the issues and challenges facing rural women and women in traditional communities differ vastly from those of women in urban areas with access to education, resources and public services.

This was one of the points made at last year's South African Women's Pre-National Dialogue convened by the Institute of Justice and Reconciliation. It emphasised that the National Dialogue process should focus on all issues affecting and impacting women, and that diverse perspectives and priorities of all South African women must be reflected.

As the Government of National Unity we seek to drive the strategic priorities of inclusive growth and job creation, tackling the effects of poverty and the high cost of living, and building a capable, ethical and developmental state.

We remain committed to ensuring that gender is mainstreamed in all government



policy and that a gendered lens is consistently applied to every challenge when developing and implementing solutions. No government decision should be made without due consideration of how it impacts women specifically.

Throughout periods of profound change in the history of South Africa, women have organised to ensure that their voices, consent and participation remained central to all decisions affecting them either directly or indirectly.

The inclusion of the gender equality clauses in the Freedom Charter was heavily influenced by the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) formed in 1954. More than three decades later, the Women's National Coalition, which was

formed in 1992, played a formative role in ensuring that these passages were reflected in South Africa's democratic constitution.

From the protests against the pass laws, to the so-called beer-hall protests of 1959, to the rent boycotts of the 1980s, to the contemporary protest movements against gender-based violence, South African women have a proud history of standing up and being counted.

With the first National Convention taking place during Women's Month, we call on all sectors of society to come together to ensure the full participation of all women in the National Dialogue. This would be the most fitting and powerful tribute to the legacy of the pioneers of 1956. ■

“Let us be brave.”

LILIAN NGOYI MEMORIAL LECTURE

DELIVERED BY THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE ANC
PAUL MASHATILE

Gqeberha City Hall, Nelson Mandela Metro,
Eastern Cape, 14 August 2025

WHenever one hears the thought-provoking phrase, “*Let us be brave*”, without a doubt, the matriarch of Black Resistance, Mama Lilian Ngoyi, comes to mind. We have heard of men shaking in their trousers, but whoever heard of a woman shaking in her skirt?

These words clearly demonstrate that the fight for freedom was a shared battle, waged by both men and women, side by side. Across Africa, women have been vital in the fight for freedom in our nations.

Lilian Ngoyi and women like Mūkami Kimathi in Kenya bravely faced the harshness of colonial oppression, refusing to let their gender hold them back from taking up arms against an unjust system.

As we mark Women’s Month in South Africa, it is appropriate that we gather to honour and reflect on the lives and legacies of the giants of our liberation struggle. Women actively participated in early resistance movements against colonial rule and racial discrimination, including the fight against pass laws in the Free State in 1913.



It was in the Free State in 1913 when the first mass movement by African and Coloured women started, and Mama Charlotte Maxeke was one of the women who was in the forefront.

As you all know, the Land Act of 1913 made us outcasts in our own country; where we were forcibly moved to what we now call townships and the then Bantustans. As such, the 1913 Land Act was the original sin, visiting untold misery and landlessness never seen before. In this regard,

women in our country understood and took it upon themselves to raise their voices against the enactment of this draconian law. The women who participated in the resistance against the 1913 Native Land Act inspired many more other women.

Thus on the 9th of August 1956, a date that will forever live in the consciousness of our nation, Lilian Ngoyi, along with Sophia Williams-De Bruyn, Helen Joseph and Rahima Moosa, led around 20,000 women to the

Union Buildings in Pretoria. That anti-pass march, one of the largest demonstrations in our history, was not merely a protest against unjust laws; it was a declaration of the dignity, agency and power of South African women.

These women, many of them mothers, workers, and community organisers, left their homes, braved police intimidation, and stood together to demand a South Africa free of oppression.

The 1956 march was an unequivocal statement that the women of South Africa would no longer be silent in the face of oppression. Under apartheid, African women bore the heaviest burdens: denied urban residency rights, excluded from many forms of formal employment, and subjected to laws designed to push them to the margins of society and confine them to the reserves.

Under apartheid, African women were at the very bottom of the social and economic hierar-



chy. The influx control laws and the pass system restricted their movement, making it far harder for them than for men to acquire urban residency rights or secure decent accommodation. Most were confined to domestic service or precarious work in the informal sector, vulnerable to being labelled “idle Africans” and forcibly removed from urban areas.

Lilian Ngoyi broke through these

barriers with extraordinary resilience. She became the first woman elected to the ANC’s National Executive Committee and co-founded the Federation of South African Women. She was a brilliant orator, a fearless organiser, and a deeply compassionate human being who also cared for her family and the community at the same time.

She endured detention, banning orders and 18 years of house arrest, years in which she often turned to her sewing machine, making outfits for Women’s League members, sustaining herself and others in the struggle in the process.

Her courage was not only in public defiance but also in the quiet, unrecorded acts of solidarity: sheltering Comrades from police, caring for the children of detained activists, and standing by her community through hardship. Those who knew her speak of her not just as a political firebrand but as a “lamb at home”, someone whose love and care were unconditional.

Some who viewed her with another lens describe her as a tiger





who could electrify a crowd and the lamb who nurtured those she loved. Despite detention, banishment and house arrest, she never stopped contributing to the Movement and never stopped believing that women must stand at the forefront of liberation.

Today, although we have not yet arrived at the destination that we had hoped to reach, we have achieved significant advancements and leapfrogged in a variety of areas pertaining to women's rights and advancement. We have ensured that women are fully integrated, represented and at the centre of decision-making and leadership in our country.

If she were alive today, she would be satisfied with the progress we have made since 1994. It is my belief that she would consider the removal of apartheid laws, the inclusion of equality articles in our Constitution, and the provision of the right to vote for all South Africans to be significant successes. However, she would also provide us with a challenge, both as

a Movement and as Comrades. She would have challenged us by the factions that always mushroom whenever there is a disagreement in the Movement.

Like Chris Hani, she was a committed member and leader, dedicated to carrying out and upholding the decisions of the leadership, even when her personal views differed from them.



For our Movement to remain unshaken, we must understand that unity lies in implementing and defending our decisions.

Through its structure, policies and decisions, the ANC has the responsibility to sustain the unity of the organisation as well as the human rights of women, just as Mama Lilian Ngoyi did.

As the ANC, we concede that more work remains in closing the gender gap and ensuring women take their rightful place in all sectors of society, as Mama Ngoyi had wished.

Yesterday, I had the opportunity to address the first P20 Women's Parliament of the 7th Administration, an essential event for Parliament but also for the Global Women's Movement in the year that South Africa chairs the G20 Presidency.

We committed that women, youth, and other marginalised groups must not be left behind in the transformation process of our country and indeed global institutions.

We learnt from Mama Lilian Ngoyi that it is necessary for us to construct a strong and unified Alliance, as she was able to accomplish this by making contributions to the formation of a powerful and forward-thinking organisation known as the Garment Workers Union.

Mama Lilian Ngoyi, an activist for the ANC, instilled in us the importance of being activists not only for our branches but also for the broader community. In all of our endeavours, the ANC should prioritise the empowerment of individuals within communities to generate opportunities for growth

and transformation.

Taking lessons from Mam Lilian, we must use this period to intensify the renewal of our Movement. To make the ANC a strong, relevant Movement for the people, we must invest in rebuilding and strengthening all our structures.

We must ensure that the ANC of Lilian Ngoyi is at the centre of resolving the challenges of GBVF, unemployment, poverty and inequality, which primarily affect women. In essence, the challenges facing women today may be different in form from those of 1956, but they are no less urgent.

In honour of Lilian Ngoyi and her generation, we must lift people out of poverty. This includes investing in rural development by supporting the growth of agriculture, manufacturing, construction, telecommunications, finance, and service industries.

In practical terms, we must ensure that we implement BBBEE and all policies aimed at transforming and uplifting communities, especially women.

Sadly, the 30% target we set for procuring services to support women is not being met, and this decline must be addressed, as the state, being the biggest spender, plays a crucial role in uplifting communities, especially women.

The tasks of economic transformation are urgent, and more urgent because many of our people are not economically active. Thus as we prepare for the National Convention, which will kick-start the National Dialogue country-wide for the next twelve months, we must ensure that women are at the centre of this process.

The National Dialogue process is important in that it must redefine who we are as people. We have always believed that dialogue is the best form of finding each other and a critical contributor toward nation building.

In honour of Mama Lilian Ngoyi, let us look beyond Vision 2030 and instead cast our eyes to the 100 years of the Freedom Charter, 2055. In this regard, we must work towards building a South Africa that belongs to all who live in it, Black and White.

We must build a South Africa where all have access to free education and quality healthcare.

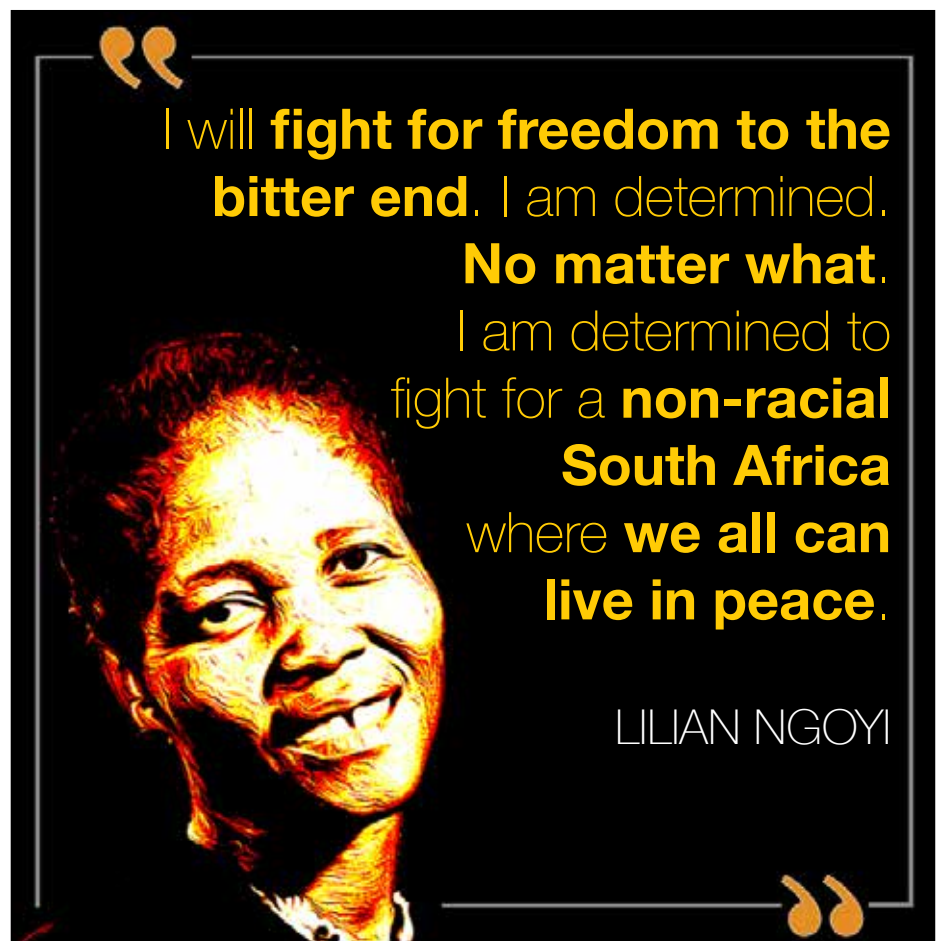
We must never fail in this task, because if we fail, we would have failed Mama Lilian Ngoyi.

Therefore, let us honour her leg-

acy not only with speeches and memorials but also with tangible action. This means increasing women's presence in structural processes of planning, confronting difficult truths about our shortcomings, expanding opportunities for financing women in agriculture and business, valuing the care economy, and eradicating gender-based violence.

Lilian Ngoyi and her generation marched so that we could walk in freedom. It is now our responsibility to guarantee that the path we pursue results in complete economic and social emancipation within our lifetime. Comrades, that will be the most authentic tribute we can offer to her life and sacrifice.

Asinimona! Asinanzondo! Siyayidumisa iANC!



Let's raise our hands for the dialogues and ensure that we go through an inclusive process

■ By **BATHABILE DLAMINI**

WE acknowledge and deeply respect the principled decision by the National Legacy Foundations to withdraw from the Preparatory Task Team and the upcoming National Dialogue Convention scheduled for 15 August. Their concerns around credibility, accountability, and citizen-led processes are valid and speak to the very heart of what a true national dialogue should be.

But let us also be clear, this moment calls for unity, not retreat because we must not create a situation where South Africans lose trust of the process. South Africans have been through a lot and after the Truth and Reconciliation we never went through a healing process – we never had such a moment and that too has contributed to the many challenges we are faced with today. We still carry that which was pushed through our throats by the colonialists, the invasion, and the dispossession of our land and the violations of our human rights. With a democratic government in place since 1994, communities were demobilised with the hope that maybe everything will always be fine and people that once fought tirelessly and fearlessly for their liberation took the



backseat and maybe lost interest and did not invest in monitoring service delivery.

South Africa is at a critical juncture – the past 30 years have brought both progress and painful shortcomings. Gender-based violence, poverty, youth unemployment, inequality, and substance abuse continue to ravage our communities. We owe it to ourselves and future generations to get this Dialogue right, not as a show for the elite, but as a shared national platform to listen, learn, and lead together.

The Power of the People

Across the country, in townships, rural villages, informal settlements, and overcrowded cities, ordinary people especially women have shown extraordinary resilience. In the face of hunger, violence, and social exclusion, they have not only survived but organised. Many have created local safety nets where the state and markets have not succeeded to include them.

That lived experience must form the bedrock of any national dialogue. The people are not just

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stakeholders, they are the solution. Their knowledge, their survival strategies, and their dreams for their children must shape our path forward. We cannot afford a dialogue that speaks about communities but not with them.

A Call for Unity and Grounded Action

We therefore urge all South Africans, from civil society and business to religious institutions and government, to commit to a genuine National Dialogue. Not one dominated by protocol and titles, but one that listens deeply to the street vendors, the grandmothers raising children alone, the youth battling addiction, the activists fighting GBV, and the workers barely surviving on a wage.

Let us ensure this process does not become a performance. Let it be a turning point. That means:

- We need to ensure it is credible, inclusive and well-resourced.
- Valuing existing grassroots efforts – many NGOs, CBOs, and community leaders have already been engaging on the ground, funded by partners such as the UN, the Global Fund, government, business, and private philanthropy. Their work should be a pillar of this Dialogue.
- Recognising community leaders not for their titles, but for their selflessness and everyday commitment to rebuilding society – one school, clinic, and street at a time.

Resilience as Our National Strategy

If we are serious about building a South Africa that works for everyone, then resilient communities must be the foundation. That

means placing women, youth, and community-based structures at the centre. It means viewing poor and working-class people not as passive recipients of aid, but as active agents of change.

This is our chance to co-create a national vision that reflects our deepest values – Ubuntu, justice, and dignity for all. Let's not squander it in the name of expediency.

We call on all South Africans to stand together – to speak, to listen, and to lead. The future we want is only possible if we build it together.

It is also important to learn from countries that had dialogues. The following countries had very successful dialogues that suited their conditions:

TUNISIA – National Dialogue Quartet

Four civil society actors formed the National Dialogue Quartet: the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT), the Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts (UTICA), the Tunisian Human Rights League (LTDH), and the Tunisian Order of Lawyers.

They served as neutral mediators during a political crisis in 2013, bridging the Islamist-led government (Ennahda) and secular opposition. Their leadership led to the formation of a technocratic interim government, the ratification of a new constitution, and new elections.

The government itself wasn't the initiator but became a participant under the Quartet's guidance – not the lead – allowing a citizen guided path to democratic restoration.

COLOMBIA – Peace Dialogues with FARC & ELN

The Colombian government directly led peace negotiations, initially with the FARC under President Juan Manuel Santos. The government delegation included high level figures: chief negotiator Humberto de la Calle, the High Commissioner for Peace Sergio Jaramillo, ministers, former generals, and other prominent public figures.

Talks were hosted in Oslo and Havana, and supported by regional allies – e.g., support from Venezuela, Ecuador, Brazil, and others – plus an international



guarantor group including Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Switzerland, and Sweden.

For the ELN (another guerrilla group), dialogues resumed in 2022, and were backed by Norway, Mexico, Chile, Cuba, and Venezuela as guarantors, reflecting expanding international mediation and civil society influence.

RWANDA – Gacaca Courts (Post Genocide Dialogue)

Rwanda's government established the Gacaca community courts in the early 2000s to manage genocide-related prosecutions locally. These courts were run by lay community judges in public spaces and aimed at reconciliation and accountability.

Though community-based, the process was government sanctioned and supported, and heavily funded by international donors – such as the World Bank, the UK, USA, EU, Austria, Belgium, and others – for justice, civic reform, and capacity-building.

So while dialogues occurred at the grassroots, they were backed by both state structures and foreign partners.

Safeguarding the National Dialogue: A Call for True People's Power in South Africa

As we reflect on the principles that should guide South Africa's National Dialogue, we must draw from these powerful lessons with one unshakable commitment: the process must not be hijacked by elites or captured for private gain. We must learn from other countries and look at how they ended up choosing their own dialogues. We must also consider the challenges they were faced with that



led them to arrive at different approaches.

In Tunisia, it was not politicians or government departments who turned the tide of political crisis in 2013. It was a coalition of civil society organisations that forced open space for democratic restoration. The National Dialogue Quartet, made up of trade unions, human rights defenders, lawyers, and business associations, stood between rising authoritarianism and national collapse. They facilitated a dialogue by the people, for the people, and their leadership won them the Nobel Peace Prize, not because they hosted the biggest event, but because they protected the integrity of the process.

In Colombia, peace negotiations were state-led, but were only legitimized when victims' groups, rural communities, and civil society were given a voice. Dialogues that excluded the people would have failed and nearly did. But through community consultations, international mediation, and public referenda, the country slowly began to rebuild trust and move forward. The lesson is that government participation does not mean government control.

In Rwanda, the Gacaca court system taught us the importance of community-based justice. The state played a role, yes but it was communities themselves who sat in circles, told truths, and rebuilt social fabric after genocide. Healing came from the people not imposed from above.

The above examples remind us that dialogue can transform nations if they are honest, inclusive and rooted in justice.

South Africa must learn from these examples and also from our own history. The Women's Charter of 1954, the spirit of the 1955 Congress of the People, where the Freedom Charter was adopted, the 1956 Women's March, these were rooted in grassroots participation. Our own transformation in the 1990s was made possible by years of people's resistance, democratic organizing, and community-led mobilisation.

We are therefore calling for the following principles to anchor the National Dialogue process.

1. No Elite Capture

This process must not become a conference of elites speaking

in isolation while the majority of South Africans remain spectators. We cannot afford another initiative that serves as a political football theatre rather than real transformation. Dialogues must be decentralised, taking place in churches, schools, community halls, streets, factory floor and digital platforms and must be intersectional where real South Africans live, struggle, and dream.

2. Grassroots Leadership

True power lies in our communities. Women-led NGOs fighting gender-based violence, youth groups tackling substance abuse, informal settlement committees negotiating for land, these are the people who have kept this country together during times of crisis. They are not just participants, they are leaders. Their lived knowledge is policy gold.

3. Recognition of Ongoing Work

There are organisations, many of them already funded by the UN, Global Fund, and other international partners business and government who have spent years doing work in the most poverty stricken parts of our society.

Their programmes reach where few government services do into rural villages, informal settlements, and overcrowded townships. Their voices must not be drowned out or ignored.

4. Integrity Before Deadlines

Yes this must not be a tickbox process but the government must be given an opportunity to explain itself before other actors continue to drive the process and take it to communities and it is also important for the government to set the tone. Women must also know about women's foundations that have been invit-

ed to serve in the organising and preparatory committees. There are many women's formations that are grassroots based that must not be left behind. Yes we know leaders, analysts and researchers are very important in this process but they are not the end and all.

Let the whole process be put on the table and it is for South Africans to agree or make additions as groups or individually to the issues that might have been an oversight. As we speak, we can see from afar that there is disagreement but we don't know how far government, eminent persons and foundations are about discussions and that is why the process must be open and transparent to develop trust and confidence amongst stakeholders and the populace.

5. Resilient Communities as the Goal

Let this Dialogue be more than a conference. Let it be the start of building resilient communities, communities that are self-organised, economically included, and protected from violence. Our ultimate goal must be that South Africans become their own libera-

tors, just as they were during the darkest days of apartheid.

A Final Call to Action

To every South African – this Dialogue is yours. Claim it. Shape it. Demand accountability. Don't let it be diverted and become a battleground. Decisions must be reached through consensus and no one must demand a bigger stake, because our Constitution is very clear on issues of equality before the law.

If we get this right, we have a generational opportunity to reset our social contract, learn from the mistakes of the past 30 years, and build a country that truly leaves no one behind.

The power must not reside in government offices, donor boardrooms, or private strategy sessions. It must reside with the people, as it always should have been. Government must play its role as an elected government of the day. It is difficult to leave out government in this process because much as we have challenges, government still has the responsibility to ensure that this process is driven till the end. ■





THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE

A shared voice to shape a better tomorrow for us all

■ By **ASIVE DLANJWA**

THE National Convention starting this weekend officially marks the inauguration of the National Dialogue as proclaimed by President Ramaphosa on the 10th of June 2025. There has already been an extensive discourse as it pertains to the need for the Dialogue, and also recently the organising of the dialogue, especially after the withdrawal of the “*legacy*” Foundations from the preparations and the National Convention.

A number of South Africans have posed the question: “Is there a need for the dialogue? We must attempt to answer this question. Some citizens have even touted the dialogue to be redundant, attributing this redundancy to the notion **“Why and what must**

we speak about””, when “*we all in fact know what our problems are.*” And there is no reasonably logical person who can dispute that, we in fact for the most part all know where the challenges are, therefore to this end this lends undeniable weight to the skeptics with respect to the relevance of the dialogue.

Many others have proffered the idea that we have for far too long been engaged in interminable and seemingly ‘useless’ discussions and conversations, and comparatively when you evaluate the amount of time and resources that we have invested in ‘talking’ against the quality of life and the living conditions of our people, a numbing incongruency emerges. So equally there’s no disputing

the merits of this argument and subsequently the reluctance of some South Africans in engaging in yet another ‘dialogue’.

I however want to suggest that on principle, notwithstanding the contiguous nuance, having a dialogue or a conversation of any kind, particularly in a time of turmoil and apparent dissonance, innately can never be wrong. One of the inherent risks of any deliberation is that its participants might indeed post such a ‘dialogue’ shun its outcomes, which probably is the crux of the misgivings of many. However, the probability of this risk should never overwhelm the possibility that out of the conversation could emerge, for the betterment, an alternative reality for our people.

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To the degree that we can establish the prevalence of failed conversations, we can equally derive plenty evidence where some of the greatest moments in the advancement of our society were a product of dialogue, the very foundation of our democracy, albeit not perfect, bears witness to this fact.

Before I address some of the logistical issues and the politics of logistics, yesterday morning I listened to a caller on SA FM (could've been a voice note), arguing fervently that there was in fact, no need for a dialogue because we all know what needs to be done. The caller went on to argue that the time for talking has lapsed and it is now time for action. The merit in his argument isn't amiss to any thinking mind. He however, went on to suggest that what we in fact need now are people who will act and do that work, emphatically buttressing "even if it's a dictatorship". Now at first glance, you could easily dismiss him and his latter submission as an isolated view and adventurous, even ridiculous, however when you look at the 'love' and appeal that the likes of Capt. Ibrahim Traore of Burkina Faso have enjoyed amongst many of our own citizens, both formally educated and uneducated, political and apolitical, it should reveal to us that there's maybe not necessarily a budding appetite for a dictatorship in South Africa, but definitely its perceived outcomes and 'effectiveness'. There has emerged a dangerous connection that our people have made with decisiveness and a more dictatorial type of leadership towards radical transformation.

Take our political parties, which have relatively grown significant-



ly in support and appeal in the last couple of years, for example. If you were to employ a typical 'democratic scale' by which to measure the most 'democratic' political organisation to the least, using typical indicators, you'd on that spectrum realise that the least 'democratic' parties have enjoyed considerable growth and support amongst our people.

When Donald Trump took office in his second stint, before *umbhobho abheke kithi*, many South Africans were charmed by those seemingly 'decisive' declaratory orders dictating what was going to happen.

I don't think our people yearn or have an affinity towards being under a dictatorship over a constitutional democracy, but this tells us that owing to the failures of a democratic government and the subsequent erosion in the trust coefficient and ballooning dependency, the people, if the situation isn't arrested, will begin to prefer anything that they believe will improve their livelihoods. The value and currency of a democracy will depreciate to a point that it will be worthless and thus not worth defending, with no affinity towards it.

I therefore argue that not only can this dialogue not afford to fail but also a betrayal of its resolutions

might rupture our already fragile democracy and will definitely erode the tentacles on which our democracy is built.

On to the logistics and the toy-throwing olympics by the Foundations. It would seem obvious, also by the President's own admission that there are prevailing challenges with the logistics and planning around the National Convention set to take place over the next two days, from the 15th–16th of August 2025. And to this extent I think all responsible parties must do all that is within the ambit of their power to ensure that they cover sufficient ground in ensuring that the convention can sit with the least possible amount of snags.

Whilst I firmly believe that government must with the Foundations find each other, I want to however caution against the behaviour of these Foundations, a behaviour that seemingly wants to suggest that outside of them South Africans can't convene to deliberate, especially when we are made to understand that the core of the National Dialogue isn't the Convention, but in fact the conversations that will ensue across various parts of the country. Furthermore we have been taken into confidence by the Steering body of the Dialogue that represented at the Convention to map a way

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forward for the actual Dialogue are many organisations from 31 sectors from across civil society organisations, faith-based institutions and organisations, political organisations, student and youth formations and many other grassroots formations.

By design Foundations are interest groups deriving their existence on the whim and will of an individual or a handful of them. Therefore, the suggestion that, purely based on the gloom of a few private foundations of individual(s), we must therefore undermine the successful sitting of the Convention, even to call for its halting is not fair, particularly contrasted against the many organisations that will be participating, having derived their existence from democratic processes and grassroots mobilisation.

There is obvious discord and divergence in how we see things, but in the shadows of these differences, we must not allow opportunists to abuse that to sow further divisions. The reality is that, South Africans in the Convention, but more so at the broader Dialogue, will speak and express themselves, as they do every day on various platforms. And the reality, as scary as this might be, is that government will either yield and adjust its sails and work to achieve the outcomes of the Dialogue or they will betray it, whether wilfully or by omission. But the possibility of the latter mustn't relegate us to a posture of despondency where we lose faith in our shared voice to shape a better tomorrow for us all. ■

Asive Dlanjwa is member of the ANC Ward 23 Branch in Mangaung. He writes in his personal capacity.



The Leadership We Needed, The Leadership We Have, The Leadership We Must Become

■ By **FAIEZ JACOBS**

LAST week I wrote about “*becoming the ANC the people deserve*”. Today the National Dialogue begins. I write, as Biko said, what I like. I write to discipline my mind, to face contradictions, to separate signal from noise, and to stay calm in the storm. I also write with a worry: do we still read in order to act? And are those trusted to lead applying themselves with seriousness, humility and consistency?

History and lived struggle have taught me a simple law: every epoch produces its leadership type. Some build a moral surplus. Others spend it and manage decline.

If we want renewal, we must be honest about what was forged, what was lost, and what this moment demands.

1980s: The courage to sacrifice

The eighties were a furnace. Under the States of Emergency, the Apartheid regime detained people en masse; by late 1986 many thousands, including minors, were being held without trial, and by 1988 civil groups estimated the total had climbed into the tens of thousands. Torture was routine, and fear was policy. Leadership in that decade was collective, disci-

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plined and brave. We in the UDF and MDM organised through civic structures, unions, youth congresses and underground networks. We knew the stakes and we gave everything.

I am of that generation. Our slogan was simple: **Freedom or Death, Victory is Certain.** In 1989 I was detained, held in solitary, and later at Victor Verster. I remember the Conference for a Democratic Future at Wits, Great Hall alive with possibility. That gathering was more than a meeting; it was a rehearsal for transition and proof that a people can organise themselves from below.

1990s: The courage to negotiate

Unbanning brought a new repertoire. We had to turn moral authority into a constitution, and underground discipline into public administration. The ANC Youth League's re-establishment in late 1990 created by the merger of SAYCO (formed in 1987) and the ANC's Youth structures in exile signalled a generational handover from resistance to institution-building. A first national Youth League conference followed in April 1991 to adopt a constitution and elect office bearers. Thereafter we saw the 20th in 1998.

Student politics mirrored the wider shift. SASCO's formation carried struggle credibility into non-racial campus organising, teaching us to move between a committee room and a community meeting with equal care. In those years I studied at UWC, served in community and union spaces, joined the National Peacekeeping Force at De Brug, and volunteered through the 1994 elections. It was



a strange light: we won our country's freedom and lost the Western Cape, my home. Even then the question pressed on me: can we negotiate without losing our soul, and govern without losing our edge?

2000s: The courage to deliver

By the 2000s we were incumbents. The task was to build services, professionalise the state and deliver. Much good was done. But incumbency carries temptations. Careerism crept in. Bureaucratic caution blunted imagination. The movement's centre of gravity shifted from people-anchored organising to apparatus-anchored maintenance. The ANC Youth League's 21st National Congress was in 2001, the 22nd National Congress was in 2004 and thereafter a rocky 23rd National Congress in 2008, reflected the turbulence of a generation learning to turn mobilisation into governance.

Like many peers I came to Yeoville, Johannesburg, with little but a dream to contribute to our new democracy. I also learned how quickly purpose dulls when systems reward compliance over initiative. That vulnerability set the stage for the next decade's decline.

2010s: The courage we lacked

The 2010s exposed the anatomy of a captured state. Institutions bent to private interests. Policy was distorted to enrich a few. Accountability was weakened by design. It was not only money that was stolen, it was focus and trust. Inside our movement we lived through factional wars and the now familiar "festival of chairs," conferences where violence replaced debate and rules were treated as obstacles. A movement that cannot run peaceful, rules-bound meetings will struggle to unite a fractured country.

For the youth who came of age then, this became a template. They saw loyalty to patrons rewarded above loyalty to the Constitution. Political protection began to function like currency. Many started as idealistic councillors, activists and public servants. Some stayed true and took the harder road. Too many adapted and perfected the rot. The Youth League's 24th National Congress in 2011 raised big economic slogans but could not reverse deepening organisational decay; the 25th Congress in 2015 adopted a new constitution and elected leadership, yet the years that followed saw instability and court challenges.

This is also the decade of the Fees Must Fall generation. Between 2015 and 2017 they led

VIEWPOINT

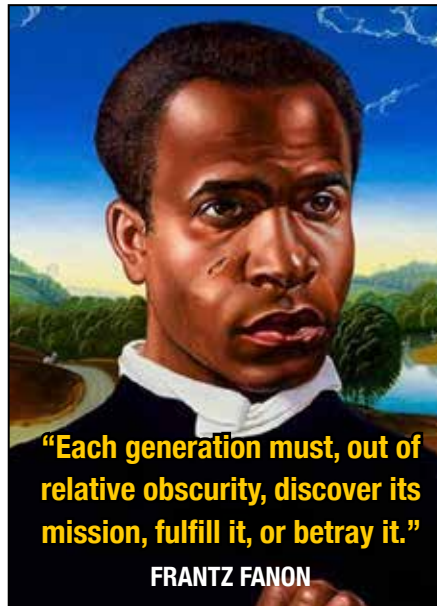
the most significant student mobilisation since 1976, demanding decolonised, affordable education and real inclusion on campus. Their courage was real and their organising effective. But courage in the street does not automatically become courage in the state. When absorbed into formal politics, many faced a choice: confront the system or become part of its survival machinery. Too often the latter won. The tools of manipulation were updated for social media and lawfare, while ethics remained unchanged.

2020s: The courage to change

Now we live inside the stress test. Electoral dominance is over. Coalition politics demands competence, patience and honesty. The liberation dividend is spent. Poverty, unemployment and violence remain entrenched. In a Government of National Unity, we can no longer hide weakness behind a majority. Renewal cannot be a paragraph in a resolution; it must be visible in the ward office, the council chamber, the bargaining process and the procurement file.

The ANC Youth League finally convened its 26th National Elective Congress in mid-2023 after a long gap an essential reset for a structure that had gone years without elected national leadership. New leaders were chosen with a promise to rebuild presence in communities and campuses. The gap itself is the warning; whether we turn it into a lesson is the test.

So are we better or worse? Both and that is the danger. We are better in policy frameworks and constitutional guardrails, and richer in governing experience. We are worse in ethical consistency, internal discipline and the daily



craft of people-centred organising. We have more tools than our elders, but we use them with less purpose. We have more information, but turn too little of it into wisdom and outcomes.

What this generation must choose

If the 2020s are to be a decade of renewal rather than repetition, leaders now stepping forward must make three hard choices.

Break with the rot, publicly and practically. Refuse protection deals. Dismantle patronage circuits in departments. Defend oversight bodies before you need them. If you cannot say no to a benefactor, you cannot say yes to the people.

Redefine leadership as service, not status. A councillor is a community organiser, not a careerist. A mayor is a steward of resources, not an owner of them. A minister is a servant of the Constitution, not the head of a faction. Legitimacy is earned by track record, not title.

Turn movement energy into institutional reform. The same tenacity that shut down campuses

must now fix procurement rules, budgeting processes and consequence management. Without institutional change, yesterday's victories dissolve into tomorrow's frustrations.

A personal stitch in the tapestry

I remember the detentions and the defiance of the eighties. I remember Wits Great Hall during the CDF, the first home Youth League and ANC conferences in 1991, the strange pride and pain of the 1994 elections, the service in the National Peacekeeping Force at De Brug, and the long years building in communities, unions and government in different capacities. These memories interrogate me daily. Am I living up to the discipline of those times? Are we raising cadres who can negotiate hard without losing their soul, and organise humbly without losing their edge?

Some say I'm flogging a dead horse. I say we've never truly tried being the ANC the people deserve with the discipline, urgency, and courage that history demands. Failure is not an option. Renewal won't come from catchy slogans or conference speeches; it will come from hard, disciplined habits, practised quietly and relentlessly in every branch, every week. Let the National Dialogue be our mirror even if it hurts and become our marching orders. No more waiting for perfect conditions. We must lead, in our branches, councils, and caucuses, as if the soul of the movement is on the line. Because it is. ■

Faiez Jacobs is an ANC member, Community Activist and Organiser. **Still building. Still learning. Still believing.**



The ANC Cannot Remain a Spectator in the Growing Tensions Between South Africans and Immigrants

■ By **GODFREY NKOSI**

LONG before the ANC became the governing party of South Africa, it stood shoulder to shoulder with a family of liberation movements that together challenged colonialism and apartheid. This solidarity was not a matter of polite declarations at conferences – it was a lived sacrifice. When the apartheid regime closed in on ANC members, FRELIMO in Mozambique opened its borders and shared its hard-won independence to host our camps. The MPLA in Angola, itself under constant attack, provided training grounds and logistical support for our armed struggle. ZANU and ZAPU in Zimbabwe offered safe passage and coordinated strategies at

the height of the war against Ian Smith's regime. SWAPO in Namibia worked hand-in-hand with us to isolate apartheid South Africa on the world stage.

These were not one-way acts of charity. When our comrades in Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia faced incursions and destabilisation from colonial or apartheid-backed forces, ANC members were among those who helped with training, political lobbying, and moral support. Our common understanding was clear: the liberation of one African nation was bound to the liberation of all, and the pain of one was the pain of all. This was the essence of African solidarity,

forged in shared trenches, safe houses, and in the quiet resolve of leaders who knew that history would judge their unity as much as their victory.

It is this deep tradition of mutual aid and solidarity that makes the current tensions between South Africans and our fellow African brothers and sisters so concerning. We are faced with a situation in which the bonds of unity that were once unbreakable are being strained by distrust, frustration, and in some cases, open hostility. The challenge is particularly pronounced when it comes to undocumented individuals living in South Africa, where debates over legality, access to services, and



criminal conduct are becoming increasingly volatile.

Across many communities, activist groups have begun to take matters into their own hands, barring undocumented fellow Africans from accessing public health facilities. The stated reasons range from perceptions that foreign nationals are overburdening already strained services, to accusations that some are involved in crimes such as drug trafficking and violent offences. Whether these perceptions are accurate or exaggerated is not the only question we must answer; the more pressing concern is what happens to a society when its disputes are no longer mediated through law and civic dialogue, but instead become battlegrounds of direct confrontation?

We have seen throughout history, both in South Africa and elsewhere on the continent, how quickly unresolved community tensions can escalate into violence. Once that point is reached, the capacity to manage the conflict diminishes rapidly, and even the most well-intentioned interventions can arrive too late. The ANC, both as a movement and

as the governing party, cannot afford to be reactive in this moment. Leadership is most urgently needed not after the eruption, but in the careful work of preventing that eruption in the first place.

The ANC carries a dual responsibility. As a liberation movement, it has always stepped forward to engage on matters that touch the lives of ordinary people, offering guidance, mediating disputes, and building consensus. As a governing party, it holds the constitutional duty to enforce the laws of the Republic, protect the rights of all who live in South Africa, and maintain public order. Both roles are essential in addressing the current tensions.

In its movement role, the ANC must once again go into communities – not merely to condemn acts of hostility, but to lead honest dialogue. Where South Africans hold legitimate concerns, those must be acknowledged and addressed. Where misinformation or prejudice distorts reality, that must be corrected through clear and consistent engagement. It is counterproductive to dismiss all concerns as “xenophobia,” because such blanket labelling only

fuels resentment and shuts down the possibility of meaningful conversation.

In its governing role, the ANC must ensure that the law is applied firmly and fairly. This means that criminal conduct, whether by South Africans or fellow Africans, is dealt with decisively. It also means that immigration laws are enforced in a manner that upholds both the sovereignty of the state and the dignity of individuals. This is not a contradiction – it is the balance that every democratic society must strive to achieve. South Africa cannot afford to allow its laws to be ignored, because when that happens, it sends a dangerous message that the rules are optional, and it erodes the very foundation of social trust.

At the same time, South Africa must use diplomatic channels to address the root causes of irregular migration. Many of our fellow Africans come here not to exploit, but to survive – fleeing conflict, economic collapse, or political instability in their home countries. The ANC-led government has an obligation to engage constructively with these governments,

offering partnership where possible to address these drivers, and pressing for action where necessary to ensure that the movement of people does not become a source of instability for either country.

African solidarity is not blind loyalty, nor does it mean tolerating lawlessness. It is about recognising our shared destiny as African nations and understanding that the stability of one state affects the wellbeing of all. True solidarity requires mutual respect, and respect is only possible when there is adherence to laws and norms that protect communities from harm. This principle applies equally to South Africans and to those who come from elsewhere on the continent.

The current vacuum of clear and consistent leadership on this matter has allowed populists, opportunists, and extremists to dominate the narrative. These actors exploit legitimate frustrations, weave them into dangerous conspiracy theories, and direct them against entire groups of people. The longer the ANC allows this space to remain unchallenged, the more entrenched these toxic narratives will become.

We should remember that South Africa's own liberation struggle was sustained not only by the courage of our people but by the generosity and sacrifice of our neighbours. We did not win our freedom in isolation. We won it because there was recognition that the success of South Africa's democratic project was a victory for all of Africa. It would be a grave betrayal of that history to now allow divisions between Africans to fester without intervention.

What is needed is a multi-

pronged approach that blends community-level engagement with strong, principled governance. At the community level, structured dialogues, led by credible ANC cadres and supported by civil society, can provide safe spaces for grievances to be aired and solutions to be developed collaboratively. At the governance level, immigration enforcement must be strengthened, law enforcement must act impartially, and public services must be managed transparently to reduce the perception that resources are being unfairly allocated.

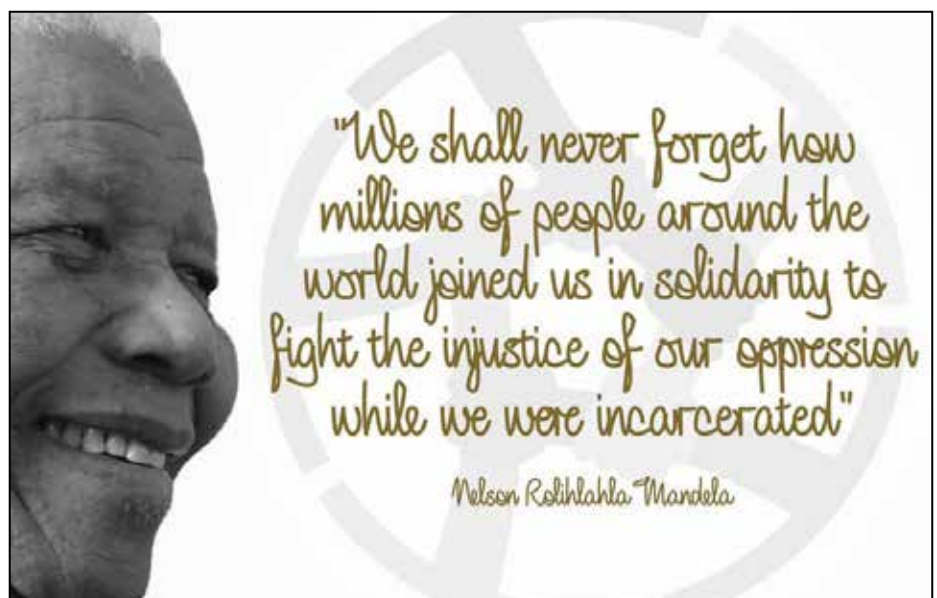
The ANC must also be prepared to speak plainly when conduct by fellow Africans in South Africa undermines social harmony.

This is not about demonising anyone, but about setting a standard of mutual responsibility. Just as we call on South Africans to act with fairness and humanity, we must also call on those who have come here to respect the laws, customs, and communities of their host country. Silence on such matters only fuels the belief that the government is unwilling to act, which in turn deepens the mistrust between groups.

We cannot afford a passive stance. If we fail to address these tensions now, we risk allowing them to become permanent features of our social landscape. That would not only damage South Africa's internal cohesion but would also undermine the very African unity that so many fought and died to achieve.

The history of Africa's liberation movements teaches us that unity was never a passive state – it was actively built, defended, and renewed through conscious effort. The same is true today. The ANC must reclaim its role as a mediator, educator, and enforcer, drawing on its proud history of shared African solidarity while meeting its responsibility to ensure peace and order in South Africa.

The time to act is now. Not in response to the next flashpoint of violence, but in the daily, deliberate work of rebuilding trust, enforcing the law, and affirming that African solidarity and social order are not mutually exclusive. To do anything less would be to stand as a spectator while the bonds of our shared African identity unravel – and history will judge us harshly if we allow that to happen. ■



The Forthcoming G20 Summit In South Africa Should be a Resounding Success and Provide Opportunity to Explore Alternative Trading Markets for South Africa

■ By **SEPHOKA DAVID SEKGOBELA**

SOUTH Africa successfully hosted the BRICS Summit in 2023, and would once again be hosting the G20 Summit in Johannesburg on 5 November 2025. G20 or Group of 20, is an annual meeting for the leaders of the world's biggest economies (technically 19 countries, plus the EU). Together these countries account for 85% of the world economy and two-thirds of its population. As of 2017, members of the G20 are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, UK (United Kingdom), US (United States), and EU (European Union).

South Africa is currently the only permanent African member of the G20. The G20 Summit is coming to African soil for the first time, and it would for the first time ever be hosted by an African country. It is therefore supposed to be an exciting experience, not only for South Africa, but for the whole of the African continent. G20 Presidency rotates annually. Brazil handed over the G20 Presidency to South Africa on 1 December 2024. The theme for this year's



G20 Summit in South Africa is "Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability". It is envisaged that South Africa will hand over G20 Presidency to the US after the Summit in South Africa.

Against the backdrop of the prevailing US's 30% tariffs, and a further 10% imposed against South Africa for being associated with BRICS, which would impact negatively on the South African economy due to jobs bloodbath, particularly in the automotive and agricultural sectors, it is prudent for South Africa to make good use of the opportunity to host the G20 Summit to reverse its for-

tunes against unilateral and arbitrary economic sanctions meted against it by one of its major trade partners, the US.

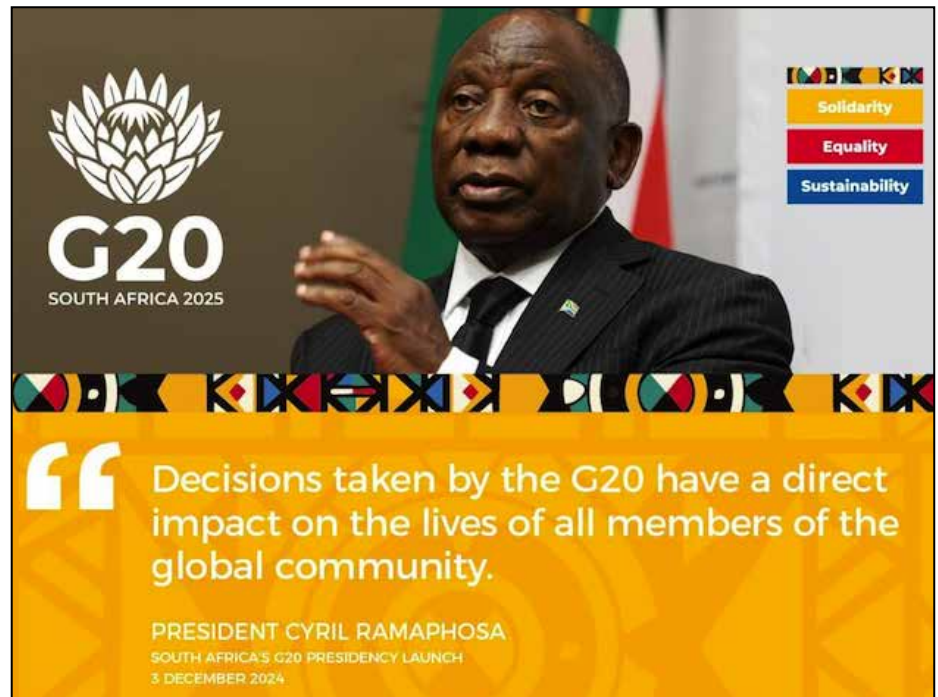
The US seems to be targeting BRICS through its weakest link, South Africa. South Africa is just a mere collateral casualty in the equation. The US-South Africa Bilateral Relations Review Act of 2025 was tabled by pro-Israel Republicans and neoconservative hawks in the US Congress, to punish South Africa for exercising its sovereign foreign policy, i.e. the country's engagement with BRICS, its solidarity with Palestine, and economic partnerships

with China and Russia. The deterioration in diplomatic relations between the US and South Africa under Trump administration stems from a variety of factors, including, but not limited to the following:

- South Africa's land expropriation policies that are aimed at redressing historical land imbalances, which the Trump administration erroneously perceives to be unfairly targeting white farmers;
- Maliciously false claims of non-existent "genocide" against white South African farmers;
- South Africa's economic transformation policies to bridge inequality gap created by unjust apartheid policies of the past, which apartheid apologist, Elon Musk, calls them "openly racist"; and
- Referral of the genocidal Israeli regime and its bloodthirsty warlords, Benjamin Netanyahu and former Israeli Minister of Defence, Yoav Gallant, to both the ICJ and ICC respectively.

Nevertheless, it is not worth it continuing to lament over spilt milk, as South Africa should make good use of the forthcoming G20 Summit to strive to diversify into new trade markets amongst BRICS member states and other like-minded countries within international trade relations, which would be coming to attend the G20 Summit in South Africa.

After a successful BRICS Summit in 2023, there is just no way that South Africa would not successfully pull off the G20 Summit later in the year. Hosting the G20 Summit is a significant opportunity for South Africa to promote its economic growth, create



jobs, and showcase its capabilities to the world. Therefore, the G20 Summit is expected to bring numerous tangible benefits to South Africa, including, inter alia, the following:

- **Economic Growth** – Will attract thousands of delegates from around the world, and generate significant revenue for tourism, transport, hospitality, and entertainment industries.
- **Job Creation** – Contributing to sustainable growth in the tourism sector.
- **Global Visibility** – Will showcase South Africa's cultural heritage, tourism, innovation, and technological advancements to global audience.
- **Foreign Direct Investment** – Provide opportunities for South Africa to attract foreign investment, particularly within the tourism and hospitality sector.
- **Infrastructure Development** – Just like it happened with the 2010 FIFA World Cup, there would be upgrading of infrastructure, including transportation and telecommunica-

tions, to support the summit, leaving a lasting legacy, especially in the host province, Gauteng.

However, as potential successor to whom South Africa should hand over the baton for the 2026 G20 Presidency, the US does not seem to cooperate with South Africa in preparation for the 2025 G20 Summit. The US attitude towards the 2025 G20 Summit in South Africa leaves much to be desired, and seems to be wanting to be the party pooper in that regard. For some strange reasons, better known to themselves, the US wants to frustrate and/or sabotage even preparations thereof.

For instance, the US Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, indicated that he would not be attending the G20 Summit in South Africa. He started by skipping the G20 Preparatory Meeting in Johannesburg on 20 and 21 February 2025, citing South Africa's "anti-US agenda", whatever that means. What could be South Africa's anti-American agenda? The US is apparently also not happy

with the theme that South Africa adopted for its 2025 G20 Presidency, namely “Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability”. Marco Rubio is dismissing this theme as tantamount to, “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)”, which seem to be swear words for Donald Trump’s administration. “The origin of DEI stems from the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, which pushed for equal rights and challenged systemic discrimination”. DEI are organizational frameworks that seek to promote fair treatment and full participation of all people – sounds excellent.

The Trump administration’s stance against DEI initiatives stems from concerns that DEI programs promote “*race- and sex-based preferences*”, and undermine merit-based opportunities. Critics of DEI challenged these initiatives in courtrooms and on social media as illegal discrimination – so called “*reverse discrimination*” against white people, the same way equity and BB-BEE transformation policy directives and pieces of legislation are criticised by some selfish apartheid beneficiaries in South Africa, who wants to maintain the unequal status quo as “*apartheid in reverse*”.

According to Donald Trump, DEI policies violate the principle of equal treatment, and introduce preferences or quotas based on group identity. Trump administration views DEI as “*illegal*”, “*immoral*”, and “*contrary to the country’s civil rights laws*”. They argue that these programs create and amplify prejudicial hostility and exacerbate interpersonal conflict. Instead, Trump administration emphasizes “*the importance of individual merit, skills, and hard work in hiring and promotions*”.

Trump administration’s opposition to DEI initiatives reflects fundamental disagreement over the role of diversity and inclusion programs in promoting equality and fairness in the workplace. To address these concerns, Donald Trump issued Executive Orders 14173 and 14151, which aim to eliminate DEI programs in federal contracting and spending. These orders direct federal agencies to enforce civil rights laws and combat private sector discrimination, while also promoting merit-based opportunities.

But what could be wrong with this year’s G20 Summit theme by South Africa – “**Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability**”? What is wrong with “*Solidarity*”? How could the word “*Equality*” offend anyone? How about “*Sustainability*”? How does it irk anyone?

Marco Rubio also raised doubts as to whether the US President would also attend the G20 Summit in South Africa in November 2025, where it is expected to pass the baton to the US for the next G20 Presidency for the following year, 2026. When asked, Donald Trump himself expressed doubts whether he would be coming down to South Africa for handing over of the G20 Presidency to the US, because “*bad things*” are happening in South Africa.

Besides, why should it matter whether Trump attends the G20 Summit in South Africa later in the year? It is actually immaterial if he chooses to come or not. That is his choice. That is what freedom of association is all about. In its broader sense, freedom of association includes freedom not to associate. If the US wants to withdraw from the G20 or any of the international relations organ-

isations, like they have already done with other international bodies such as the World Health Organization (WHO), they should be shown the right station where to get off.

As a sovereign state, South Africa cannot afford to be subservient at all times, nursing bruised egos of people who think that they have an inherent right to rule over us, or, dictate to us how we should lead our lives, or, would like to choose friends or enemies for us. South Africa cannot cower down in fear everytime Donald Trump retorts at us as if South Africa is one of the US’s colonies or states. South Africa is a sovereign state whose foreign policies are well-thought and based on human rights principles. South Africa should therefore not allow itself to be bullied by anyone, including the US, for the sake of trade relations. After all, trade relations is a two way traffic. The Americans also need us as much as we need them. South Africans of goodwill need to support the government for the stance it is taking against bullying by imperialists and colonialists.

In conclusion, the US should comprehend that, with or without their involvement, South Africa will successfully host the G20 Summit with relative ease, just like it happened with other events, e.g. BRICS Summit in 2023 and FIFA World Cup in 2010. US bullying tactics should be scorned and condemned with the contempt they deserve. ■

Sephoka David Sekgobela is a member of the ANC (King Nyabela Mahlangu branch, Ward 5, Montana, Greater Tshwane Region). He writes in his personal capacity.



Strengthening South Africa's Future Through Collaboration and Science

■ By **KUTLWANO HUMA** and **MANDISA MBELE**

RECENTLY, Electricity and Energy Minister Dr. Kgosientsho Ramokgopa led the unveiling of four new science laboratories in township schools in Atteridgeville, namely Bokgoni Technical Secondary School, Hofmeyr High School, Edward Phatudi Comprehensive School, and Seaparankwe Primary School. What makes this development particularly meaningful is not merely the brick and mortar, but the spirit of collaboration behind it. Public and private partners such as the SA Nuclear Energy Corporation, Huawei, Avon, and Dedisa joined hands to equip these schools with modern science infrastructure.

This is more than an infrastructure upgrade. It marks a pivotal moment in a broader national effort to close opportunity gaps and

enhance our country's competitive edge through science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Public resources alone cannot meet all challenges; thoughtful collaboration multiplies impact, particularly in underserved communities. Partnerships with the private sector

for these projects are crucial for improvement in our communities.

Learners at Seaparankwe Primary are being introduced to STEM concepts at an early age.

They gain hands-on experience through experiments rather than



memorizing formulas from textbooks. That sparks curiosity, innovation, and a sense of belonging in fields they might not have previously considered.

When young minds learn to question, test, fail, and try again, we are not just growing scientists. We are nurturing critical thinkers, problem-solvers, and future leaders. STEM subjects influence innovation, particularly in technology and science, and are foundational to both economic growth and competitiveness.

South Africa's economy will thrive when our industries and institutions are powered by local talent solving local problems. To do that, our classrooms need well-equipped labs, trained science teachers, and external partners bringing resources, mentorship, and pathways to further opportunities.

While this Atteridgeville initiative is a promising start, built during Mandela Month to affirm the power of education and community upliftment, we must scale this model. Replicating similar partnerships across provinces, expanding to technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions, and catalysing STEM pipelines are essential steps.

Science and innovation are competitive levers in a global economy. Nations that excel invest early in their youth, enable practical learning, and build ecosystems where curiosity is rewarded. South Africa has the talent; these laboratories show we now have the partnerships to unlock it.

If we want a future where our learners are creators, not just consumers, where our innovations serve communities and drive economic transformation, then we must keep building, together. ■



COMMEMORATING NATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

The voice of a woman... From Palestine to South Africa

THE Robert Waterwitch Thornhill branch of the African National Congress (ANC) commemorated National Women's Day on Saturday, August 9, at the Samaj Centre in Gatesville, Cape Town with Palestinian visual artist, graphic designer and business graduate, Mai Shaer, as the keynote speaker.

In his welcome address, Abdul Majid Mowzer, the branch secretary, linked the commemoration of the 1956 march, led by Lillian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa, and Sophia Williams-De Bruyn, to the current struggle against the occupation of Palestine.

The commemoration of the march by "20 000 courageous women to defy apartheid oppression" was not only "a celebration of South African women's strength but also as a call for justice, unity, and shared resistance with our Palestinian sisters."

Mowzer added that this year's commemoration of Women's Day to honour the legacy of the women who marched on the Union Buildings in Pretoria was to express solidarity with the women of Palestine, "who endure displacement and loss, but remain

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ANC Veterans and the Freedom Charter

INTERVIEW WITH JOY COPLAN

From a 17 year old who attended the Congress of the People

■ **ELSABÉ WESSELS**, ANC Veterans League member interviews Joy Coplan, ANC member and former City of Johannesburg Councillor

JOY Coplan, was seventeen when she joined thousands of comrades from the Congress Movement at Klip-town to approve the Freedom Charter. Now as an 87-year-old veteran, Cde Joy recalls the revolutionary event as an extraordinary milestone and, as then, singles out the *'land clause'* as the most critical right left unresolved.

As a Jewish girl growing up in Fresnaye in Cape Town, Joy Maraney was never far from politics. After World War 2, South Africa was a hotbed of political contestation as racial segregationists and progressive voices squared up over the racist policies gaining traction with most white South Africans.

Cde Joy's father Sam Maraney was a Communist Party cadre. She joined him at many house meetings where opposition to



'all-white rule' was always the main point on the agenda. When she boarded the train from Cape Town station to Johannesburg in June 1955 to make her way to the venue in Kliptown, it was without her parents' knowledge. She was fearful they would stop their 17-year-old daughter from embarking on a political action

that could invite the wrath of a violent apartheid police force. They were not far wrong – on the second day of the Congress, mounted police charged the people at Kliptown.

The gathering of thousands of like-minded human rights activists under the banner of the Congress Movement, remained Cde Joy's political lodestar. She still reveres the Movement for launching the Freedom Charter that defined a united political way forward and, for the first time, brought South Africans across race and class together under one umbrella.

Those present knew they were pioneering a groundbreaking vision of a united South Africa based on dignity and equality. She cherishes the photograph of the Cape Town contingent at

the Congress of the People, taken by the renowned activist and photographer Eli Weinberg, who documented the iconic event.

After attending the Congress of the People, Cde Joy honed her political and organisational skills at the University of Cape Town (UCT). She graduated in English Literature and History and also received a post-graduate higher education diploma. At university, Cde Joy joined ANC study groups on dialectical materialism guided by UCT academic and anti-apartheid activist Jack Simons. She was also the secretary of the 'Modern World Society' at UCT, where they discussed the unequal socio-economic landscape of the 1950s in South Africa and it was here that she met fellow student Albie Sachs (now retired Constitutional Court Justice) who encouraged her to attend the Congress of the People.

Marriage followed university and Cde Joy and her husband Milton lived in various towns in then Rhodesia and in South Africa, before finally settling in Johannesburg in the early seventies. Throughout marriage and motherhood, and often moving house, Cde Joy worked as a teacher. Her favourite subject was that of a guidance teacher, where she shared her progressive world view with her pupils and encouraged social responsibility.

Moving to Johannesburg suited Cde Joy and she loved her Oaklands home where she raised her children and saw them leave the nest as successful professionals. Here she spread her socio-political wings and involved herself in social justice projects, both within the Jewish community and various anti-apartheid initiatives burgeoning in a politically vola-



tile South Africa. She created the Oxford Synagogue Social Committee where she spearheaded an advice office and literacy school for domestic workers. She was also active in Jews for Social Justice who campaigned for the release of Nelson Mandela. She regularly joined protests on the corners of Oxford and Glenhove roads with her "Release Mandela" poster.

After her children had left home, Cde Joy wanted a new career. A chance meeting with estate agents drew her into the hotbed of property deals in the city, and she felt that she could make a difference in bringing aspects of the Freedom Charter's land clause into the profession. As an estate agent in the Johannesburg Central Business District (CBD) she gained first-hand experience in the cyclical rise and fall of commercial property in Johannesburg's vibrant city centre.

As a property broker, her main aim was to find the right fit between prospective buyers and sellers to reinvigorate South Africa's most vibrant political and

economic hub. Over time she forged synergies between those looking for domestic or business premises in the CBD and Braamfontein, including the ANC. She is proud that she found a home for the ANC's Johannesburg Regional Headquarters, now known as Connie Bapela House, at 124 Marshall Street.

It was this involvement in the CBD property world that forged her relationship with ANC comrades and party-political structures in broader Johannesburg where she took part in the launch of several ANC branches in predominantly white wards and entrenched herself in election affairs, especially as a party agent at her local voting station.

The ANC victory in the first democratic election of 1994, is still a fond memory for Cde Joy. She voted at Orange Grove High School and vividly recalls the long queues in the leafy suburbs as well as in the townships where thousands of black South Africans waited patiently to cast their first vote in a democratic South Africa.

Cde Joy was a founding member of the Ward 73 branch that covered the suburbs of Orchards, Killarney, Lower and Upper Houghton, Orange Grove and Mountain View. Through her branch work and contact with ANC leadership, Cde Joy was nominated a 'proportionally elected' or PR councillor in 2006, a position she held for ten years.

In 2016 she was asked to stand as the ANC ward councillor candidate in Ward 90, a strong DA area which incorporated Hurlingham, Hyde Park, Illovo, Sandhurst and Dunkeld. She had co-founded the ANC Ward there soon after moving to Dunkeld, but the by-election confirmed the area as a DA ward.

Cde Joy is proud of the progress made since 27 April 1994 but feels burdened by the fact that we still have not achieved the ideals of that first election or the goals expressed in the Freedom Charter, especially that "*The Land shall be shared among those who work it.*"

This is still Cde Joy's vision for South Africa:

Restrictions of land ownership on a racial basis shall be ended, and all the land re-divided amongst those who work it, to banish famine and land hunger; The State shall help the peasants with implements, seed, tractors and dams to save the soil and assist the tillers; Freedom of Movement shall be guaranteed to all who work on the land; All shall have their right to occupy land wherever they choose; People shall not be robbed of their cattle, and forced labour and farm prisons shall be abolished. ■

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The voice of a woman... From Palestine to South Africa

resilient under the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

"Let us honour the countless women and men of South Africa and Palestine who have sacrificed their lives in the pursuit of justice. We also hold space in our hearts for the thousands of innocent Palestinian children lost to violence, their stolen futures a call to our collective conscience. In solidarity, we commit to continuing their struggle."

Mai Shaer's address

This is a slightly abridged version of Mai Shaer's keynote address:

My name is Mai Shaer. I'm a Palestinian visual artist, a graphic designer, and a business graduate.

I was born in Khan Younis and raised in Rafah, and today I live here in South Africa.

I carry with me everything that the word 'homeland' means. I believe that art and words are among the strongest tools for change.

I stand before you today not just to celebrate Women's Day, but to say: We, as women, are not just participants in history – we are the ones writing it.

From Palestine – where a woman is born already knowing what resilience means – to South Africa – where women stood bravely against an unjust apartheid system – our struggles intersect. Our stories may be told in different languages, but they echo the same spirit.



In 1956 is a day engraved in the memory of this country, when over 20 000 women of all backgrounds marched silently to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to protest the pass laws that restricted their freedom of movement.

They stood there – not with weapons, but with silence, strength, and faith.

And how similar that history is to our present...

In Palestine, women are not just part of daily life – they are present at every stage of the struggle. Mothers, sisters, grandmothers, students, farmers, prisoners, refugees... All resisting in countless ways.

Today, the Palestinian woman is not only a mother, sister, or wife – she is a lawyer, teacher, journalist, artist, doctor, and activist. She works across every field. And in every place she stands, she carries a single message: Palestine. Her role has grown far beyond preserving history – she now defends it.

She writes, documents, and speaks about her country – with a voice that is loud, clear, and brave. She is not only a witness to injustice – she now tells the world our story, demands our rights, and plays a powerful role in shaping the future of Palestine.

From past to present, she teaches her children the meaning of freedom. She may be working in a school, a hospital, or an office but her heart is always focused on how to protect dignity in a brutal reality.

She carries within her the strength of generations of women who never surrendered.

And in Gaza today, amidst relentless bombing, siege, displacement, and hunger, the woman has not broken. She is the one searching for bread for her children under fire, the one who turns rubble into life. She nurses the wounded, comforts the orphaned, and stands tall – no matter what.

We see her in schools turned into shelters, organising, cooking, healing, mourning.

In the recent assaults, we saw her holding her children tightly, screaming the name of her homeland – without fear.

Throughout our history, Palestinian women have stood firm in the face of occupation. From mothers of martyrs and prisoners, to women who have led movements, documented truths, spoken out, resisted in silence and in voice.

Women like Leila Khaled, who challenged the world's perception of Palestinian resistance, and Dalal Mughrabi, who symbolised the deep connection between land and sacrifice. These names are written in the memory of our people. But beyond them are thousands of women whose stories the world may not know, yet they've all carried the same mission: freedom.

I am not here today just to speak about suffering – I'm here to share resilience. To speak of hope. Of how a simple woman can build a home in the middle of destruction, create life from nothing, and smile through her pain.

But I believe in something even deeper: this resilience cannot survive alone. It needs the solidarity of women. To learn from

one another. To listen to one another.

South Africa taught us that freedom is taken, not given.

And Palestine shows the world every day that the woman does not stand behind the man in the struggle – she stands beside him

In my homeland, girls grow up loving the land. They are raised knowing that a homeland is not just a place – it is a voice, a colour, a story, and a seed of hope.

And when that woman is forced to leave her country – like I was – and live in a new culture, she finds herself redefining who she is, carrying the love for her land, with the hope of returning someday.

Identity is not just geography – it is a feeling. And as a Palestinian woman, wherever I go, I carry my identity in my voice, in my art, in my words, and in my solidarity with every free woman in the world.

My sisters, we women know how to turn pain into light. How to rise from beneath the rubble. How to plant roses in stone. How to sing in the face of oppression. And how to dream – even behind walls.

Let us celebrate Women's Day, not just as a memory, but as a call to action. A call for change, for solidarity, and for continuation. Hand in hand, from Palestine to South Africa, and across every land where women refuse to be silenced.

To every woman – may we grow stronger, truer, and closer to freedom. ■

MARIA OLOFA, THE WARRIOR SLAVE WOMAN, MOTHER OF ALL BATTLES

Reflecting on her Embodying Spirit of Courage and Heroism

■ By **AMBASSADOR PHATSE JUSTICE PIITSO**

SYNCHRONISING the fascinating episodes of history, Maria Olofa, the warrior African slave woman in the mountain forests of the Antilles, pioneer of the illuminating testament, hope of the universe, noblest dream to have traversed the path, most resilient to have found the world by demanding freedom, mother of all battles, woven in the fabric of revolutionary struggles. Paradigm of the revolutionary age, from the darkest moments of history, transforming herself into a titanic freedom fighter, shaping the course of events, for future humanity.

At the mouth of the Sierra Leone River, the world largest natural harbour, deadly hands of the European colonial marauders, harvesting human beings like tropical fruits, forced into slavery, unarmed, chained, tortured, raped, thrown into the deep sea at the desire of the master, enduring wrenching atrocities of human abuse, the new beginning of the unknown world of the American archipelago.

Emboldened acts of courage, resilience and heroism, never



The first recorded African slave rebellion of 1521 was led by Maria Olofa and Gonzalo Mandinga.

stopped them from learning, never stopped teaching them, wisdom the path to humility.

Embracing the unknown, far beyond the horizons of the imaginations, at the far spectrum of the universe, breaking the frontiers of the new world of the Antilles, fostering the dreams of hope of what the new world hold for them, free from the confines of their motherland Africa. Treasure store of history, thousands of miles away, where nature has never ceased

to be, making the impossible possible.

In the linguistic proverbs of the indigenous Taino people of the Hispaniola, their soul would have no rainbow, if their eyes had no tears, conquering the new horizons of the middle passage, by conquering their own souls, knowing well that even the darkest night will end and the sun will rise. The long walk of their path to wisdom, through the Atlantic, brightly illuminated by the possi-

REFLECTION

bilities, of the unknown shores of their destination.

Metamorphosis of history, forgotten wars of the world of slavery, what the new world cannot remember, not knowing that the new is born out of the old, the old out of the new, what is of today is of tomorrow, the world of today is the world of yesterday, to be part of the past for the past to be part of us, shaking the foundations of imperialism and colonialism, fundamental feature of the struggles

for freedom of humanity. Their tenacity is the pride of who they are, African slave women and men of the Antilles, sons and daughters of the soil.

Encompassing horrors of slavery, stealing the beauty of the human soul, the greedy imagining to buy the home of the stars, the struggle between darkness and sunshine, walking through planets where the eyes cannot see, unending horizons of the universe. Their names stand high on the rostrum of benefactors of human race, towering the strength of all obstacles, the triumph of human struggles against adversity.

Maria Olofa is the panther of freedom, the symbol of the struggles of humanity, warrior slave woman of thousands battles, raising the glorious flag for the downtrodden, her example, beacon of hope, resilience and determination.

Harnessing the aspirations of freedom into the world of slavery.

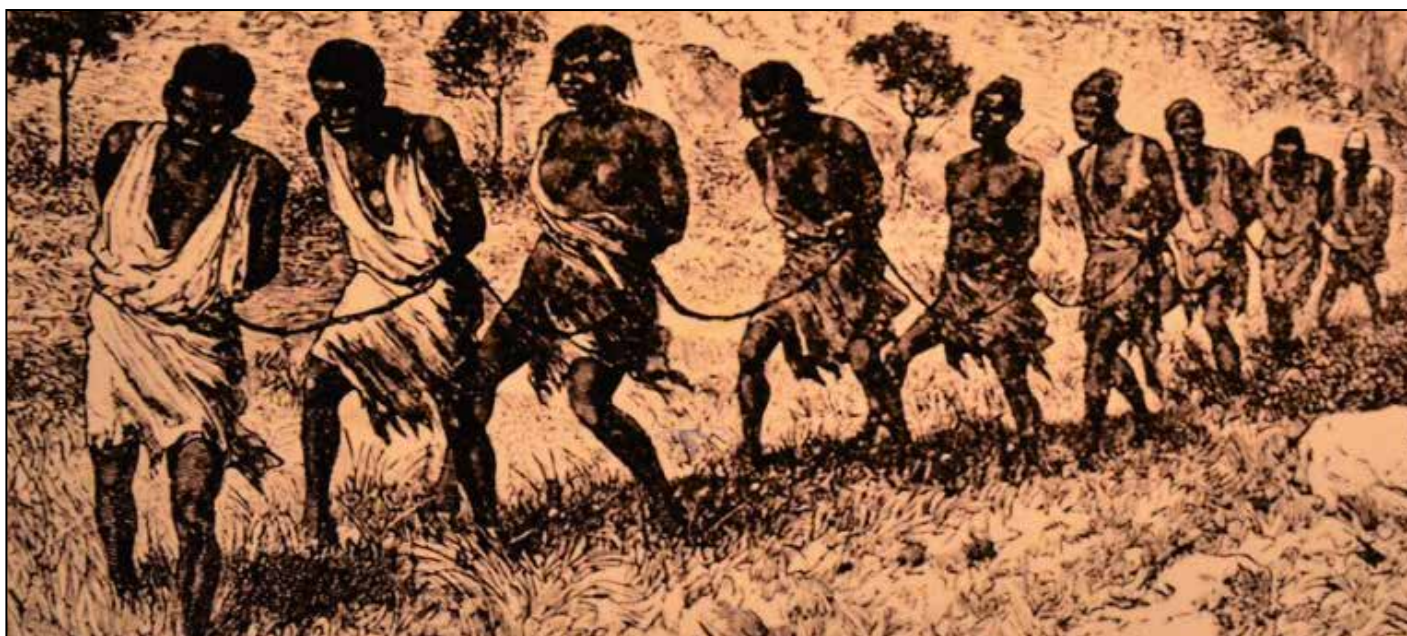
The 1521 slave rebellion of Santo Domingo, professed her the first slave woman, to have led the first slave revolt, in the history of the transatlantic trade. Over five hundred years since the epic event, I dedicate the day of the 9th of August, embracing her embodying spirit, expanding horizons of struggles for freedom of humanity. The lyrical melodies of the orchestra from the balcony of the mountain kingdom, a special day, signifying the beauty of creation, my wife, Delsey Madume Piitso, whose birthday, we celebrate.

On occasion of the historic day, dedicating our memories to the legendary slave woman, the mother of all battles, Maria Olofa, I am making a call to all organic scholars, historians and intellectuals, whom I refer philanthropists of enlightenment, to

choose the truth over falsehood, challenging the dominant mind of the European oligarchy and empire, by so doing, liberating future generations mankind, true facts about the history of struggles, for development of human society.

They were called slaves, but were freedom fighters, they were called maroons, but were rightful citizens of our mother earth, heroes and heroines of future humanity, truth be told, early slave rebellions enculturated new trajectory of struggles for freedom and equality, fermenting revolutionary nationalism, contributing towards the demise of feudal aristocracy, reconstructing a new age of our modern society. Defining moments of the universe, the hope of humanity, to which shall bestow, the glory of the soul of freedom, on their shoulders.

It was not the American war of independence or the French revolution, which unleashed Latin American wars of independence or the African liberation struggles, but the new trajectory of Maroon revolutionary nationalism, which inspired European nationalism, against feudalism. The truth is



REFLECTION

that the new world of democracy was found by those who demanded freedom, celebrated slave men and women, enlightening the European oligarchy, necessity of struggles for emancipation.

Few months upon arrival of the first contingent of recorded African slaves in the Hispaniola in 1502, most of the African slaves, enduring harsh enslavement conditions in the hands of the colonial masters, had to escape to the mountain forests, establishing maroon communities. Working in solidarity with the Taino people, liberating themselves, from systematic and indiscriminate rampant acts of massacres, rape, torture.

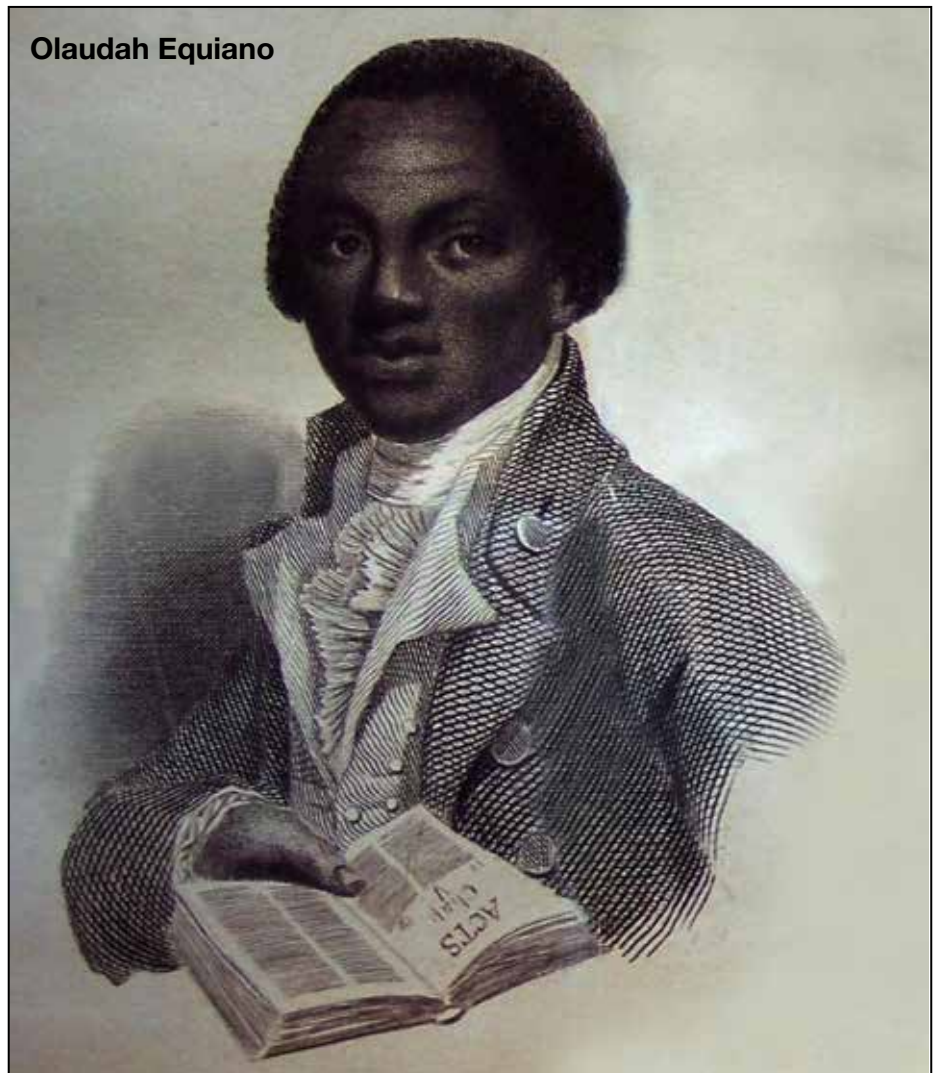
Appalling working conditions, harshest conditions of existence, having lost their being, without any rights, property of the slave masters, working deadly hours without enough food or remuneration, masters killing slaves for whatever reason not a crime, women and girls raped at the pleasure of the master, whipping and torture. In her book the story of an enslaved person, the renowned slave author, Olaudah Equiano, had to say the following about her own living experiences:

"It was very common for a slave to be branded with the initial letter of the master's and a load of heavy iron hooks hung about their necks. They were loaded with chains and often instruments of torture were added, the iron muzzle, thumb screws, were sometimes applied for just a slightest fault.

"I have seen a Negro beaten till some of his bones were broken for letting a pot boil over."

Exemplifying horrible tales about the cruelty of slavery, Frederick

Olaudah Equiano



Douglass, says the following:

"I have often been awakened at the dawn of day by the most heart-rending shrieks of an own aunt of mine, whom my master used to tie up to a joist, and whip upon her naked back, till she was literally covered with blood.

"I remember the first time I ever witnessed this horrible exhibition, it was the first of a long series of such outrages, of which I was doomed to be witness and participant, it was a blood stained gate, the entrance to the hell of slavery."

The unbearable conditions of atrocities and abuses, left most of the slave workforce, with no option

but to fight for their own liberation, most fleeing the prison cottages in the plantations, wondering wild animals in the thick of the forest mountains, having to survive as a minute passes. They have to use the inch of the eye, dark hours of the unknown, seeking freedom, life greater than we see.

The African slaves together with the local Taino indigenous communities, built sustainable autonomous maroon states in the mountain forests, cultivating rice, sugar, vegetables and other basic necessities. They employed guerrilla tactics, of sabotage, destroying the infrastructure, killing of owners of plantations and families, livestock and burning of farm produce.

REFLECTION

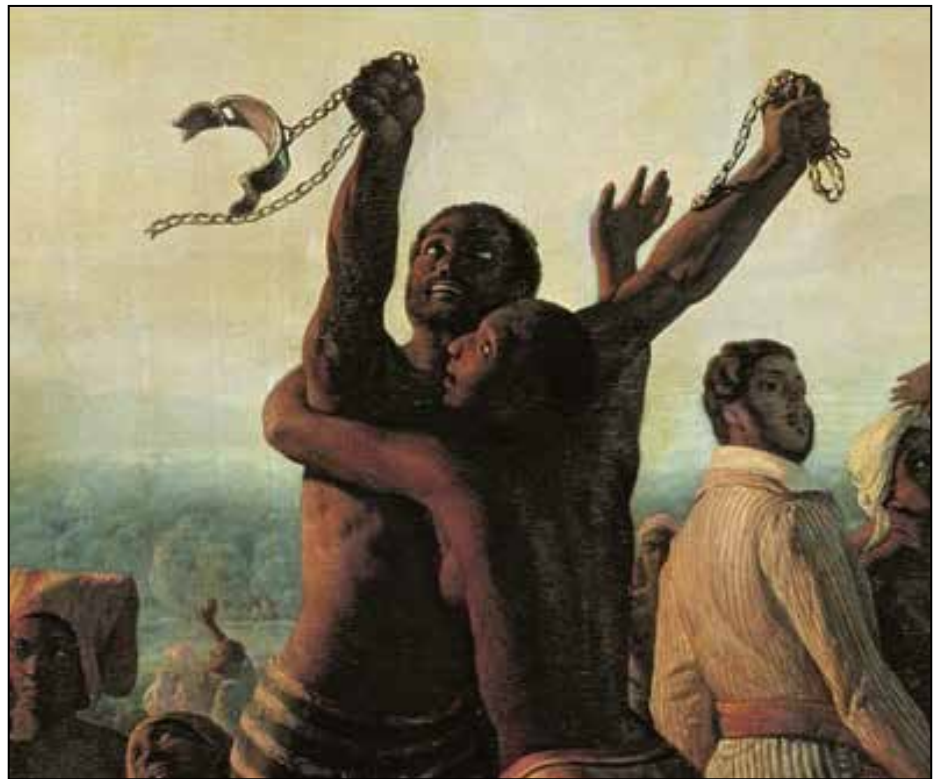
Overwhelmed by the colossus spirit of resistance by the African slaves, and strong alliance with the indigenous Taino communities, the new Governor of the Hispaniola, Governor Avando, wrote a letter to the King of Spain, complaining of African slaves, fleeing to the Baoruco mountain forests, forming maroon communities, forging movements of liberation against Spanish colonial authorities. In the letter he says:

“They fled amongst the Indians and taught them bad customs and never would be captured.”

On Christmas eve of the year 1521, in Nueva Isabella sugar plantation, owned by Governor Diego Columbus, the son of the renowned Christopher Columbus, Maria Olafa, working in alliance with the local indigenous communities of the Taino, led an unprecedented insurrection against their colonial masters, burning properties, killing Spanish Christians, stealing precious belongings, poisoning water resources and destroying infrastructure, the most bloody event untold, against colonial authorities, in the history of the colonial American archipelago.

Few days after dispatchment of thousands of superior colonial forces, using sophisticated armoury, the Spanish authorities suppressed the rebellion, those involved receiving harsh punishment of death penalty or hard labour, and with the leader of the slave insurrection, Maria Olofa, executed before the eyes of them all, her head put at the main entrance entering the state complex, a deterrent to other slaves not to repeat the same treason.

On January the 6th 1522, the colonial authorities introduced



a code of strict laws, prohibiting free movement of both the African slaves and local Taino people, prohibiting them from ownership of weapons, punishing those assisting slaves escape to the mountains, giving colonial masters indiscriminate powers to execute and inflict heavy punishment, to those found to be involved in activities, undermining colonial establishment.

On the occasion of this day, we pay tribute to her magnanimity, courage, selfishness, heroism, her everlasting vigour to the cause of struggles for liberation. We pay tribute to her heroism, leading the forefront trenches of the struggles, against imperialism and colonialism.

We dedicate her living memories, to the struggles waged by women throughout the world, facing insurmountable difficulties, fighting for their place in the realms of power relations, dreams of a better future. We shall forever be encouraged by the remarkable

feats of courage and heroism, the universe home of peace.

Her journey is a symbol of human solidarity and internationalism, triumph of human spirit against adversity, defining the necessity of freedom. We owe her generation, what history cannot give, the souls of our hearts, building the path to a better future.

Our legendary leader, the mother of all warriors, Maria Olofa, was larger than history itself, higher than the stars, planet of the moon, the august house of human progress, her courage and felicity, the world shall be, our struggle is our freedom, triumph against adversity, we shall achieve. The sounds of the trumpet, on the cutting-edge of the horizons, shall call those to have been true apostles of the future world of peace and tranquility. ■

Ambassador Phatse Justice Piitso is a member of the African National Congress. He writes this article in his personal capacity.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

16–22 August 2025

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

16–20 August 1976

Non-Aligned Movement calls for Oil embargo against France and Israel

At the 5th Conference of Non-Aligned Nations in Colombo, Sri Lanka, a resolution is adopted calling for an oil embargo on France and Israel because of their arms sales to South Africa.

16 August 1976

Students in Cape Town join 1976 student revolts



Pupils at Alexander Sinton High and Belgravia High boycott classes. 500 UWC students marched to the Bellville Magistrate's Court where 15 students appeared on a number of charges arising from the recent events. There was a fire in Arcadia High and classes were boycotted at Somerset West after permission to hold prayer in solidarity with those killed in the 1976 uprising was refused.

16 August 1993

South Africa hands over Walvis Bay to Namibia

After 84 years of control over Walvis Bay, the South African government relinquished sovereignty over Walvis Bay to Namibia, after the country's independence in 1990.

16 August 2012

Police shot mineworkers at Marikana

Police opened fire killing 34 striking mine-workers at Marikana, North West Province. As a result, 78 people were left wounded while more than 250 people were arrested. The protesting miners were demanding a wage increase at the Lonmin platinum mine. A Commission of Inquiry, the Farlam Commission was appointed to investigate the events, including the deaths of at least 44 people from 11–16 August 2012. The Commission submitted its report on 31 March 2015.

17 August 1972

Ruth First assassination in Maputo

Ruth First, journalist, academic, author, anti-apartheid activist and member of the South African Communist Party, was brutally killed by a letter bomb in Maputo, Mozambique, sent by South African government agents. At the time of her death, First was a lecturer at the Eduardo Mondlane University. Her funeral in Mapu-



to was attended by presidents, members of parliament and envoys from 34 countries. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) granted amnesty to Craig Williamson and Roger Raven, two men responsible for the death of Ruth First.

17 August 1996

Ruth Perry, first African female head of state

History was made in Western Africa when, for the first time, a



THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

woman, Ms Ruth Sando Perry, was unanimously elected at a meeting of West African heads of state to become the third chair of Liberia's ruling council. Perry, victorious over two male contestants, became head of the transitional government, thereby making her Africa's first woman to act as head of state. Perry was mandated to execute the daunting task of leading her country from a devastating seven-year civil war, to peace under a sub-regional plan of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Although serving in a non-partisan capacity, Perry was a member of the National Democratic Party of Liberia. She was leader of Liberia from 3 September 1996 until 2 August 1997. Perry has since served on the board of a children's hospital, been instrumental in the development of infrastructure in Liberia and has received numerous awards for her efforts in the advancement of women and for her national development endeavours.

18 August 1972 First Bantu Affairs Administrative Boards Gazetted

The first four Bantu Affairs Administration Boards are gazette, intended to tighten influx and administrative control of black people in so-called 'white South Africa', especially to facilitate the mobility of cheap labour on farms and mines.

19 August 1955 First Sudanese civil war starts

One of Africa's longest conflicts, between north and south eventually led to the split of the Sudan, and the birth of the Republic of South Sudan in 2011. The

First Sudanese Civil War was a twelve-year conflict between the two regions of Sudan between 1955 and 1972, a year when the country was declared independent from Great Britain. The main belligerents in the war were the central government of Sudan and the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM). Great Britain, Egypt, and the Soviet Union supported the central government while the SSLM was backed by Ethiopia, Uganda, and Israel. An estimated 500,000 people died during the twelve-year conflict. The second Sudanese civil war started in 1983 and continued till 2005, when peace process facilitated by IGAD, eventually led to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and the referendum leading to South Sudan independence.

19 August 1963 Hector Pieterse born

The 13-year old school boy, Hector Pieterse, was shot by the police during the 1976 student march, sparking the historic events of that year. The iconic picture of Hector's lifeless body by photographer Sam Nzima carried by Mbuyisa Makhubo, next to his sister Antoinette Sithole, immortalized the young martyr.

19 August 1981 Gulf of Sidra incident

In 1973, Libya claimed the Gulf of Sidra as part of its territorial waters. The USA in response conducted freedom of navigation operations in the Gulf, leading to a number of skirmishes. On this day, the US deployed a large naval operation in the Gulf, and two Libyan fighter jets shot at an American aircraft. The Americans in return shot down two Libyan fighter jets.

19 August 1982 Bekeme Masade born



Masade, a Nigerian advocate for sustainable growth and corporate responsibility was born in Lagos. She worked to bring together all stakeholders to address challenges of resource extraction that ruined the environment and impoverishes communities. In 2021 she won an award for her advocacy work from the Nigerian Institute of Mining and Geosciences. She is the first West African to become a board member of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), and is the convener of the sustainability in the extractive industries (SITEI) conference.

19 August 2002 Amina Lawal sentence upheld



THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

On 19 August 2002, an Islamic high court in the Katsina state of Nigeria, upheld a sentence of death by stoning for Amina Lawal. The 31 year old woman had been convicted of adultery by a village court for having a child more than nine months after her divorce. She was not represented by a lawyer at the hearing and the man who allegedly fathered her daughter denied the offence and was acquitted. Following the intervention of lawyers appointed by Amnesty International, Lawal was granted 30 days to appeal against the decision. Amina's lawyer filed another appeal to the Upper Sharia court of appeal in Katsina. Her sentence drew worldwide condemnation. Human rights campaigners branded the sentence inhumane and discriminatory towards women. According to some interpretations of Sharia law, for a man to be convicted of adultery, he either has to confess to the crime or four men have to have witnessed the act. The law favours men. A man is allowed to beat his wife if she is disobedient, provided he does it within the guidelines prescribed by Islamic scholars. According to these guidelines, he must not break any bones or hit her in the face. In February 2004 the Sharia Court of Appeal ruled that Amina Lawal's conviction was invalid because she had been pregnant already when the harsh Islamic Shariah law was implemented in her home province.

19 August 2013

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka takes helm of UN Women

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka was sworn in as the Executive Director of UN Women during a ceremony on 19 August 2013 at United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York City, presided



over by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Mlambo-Ngcuka was South Africa's first female Deputy President (2005-2008), led the UN's work on advancing gender equality and women empowerment. Ngcuka, a gender activist and educationist, was the first President of the Natal Organisation of Women (NOW), formed in 1983.

19-22 August 1963

Indonesia, Sudan, Mauritius tightens Apartheid sanctions

Indonesia announces the severance of diplomatic and commercial relations with South Africa, and the closure of Indonesian ports to South African vessels. Sudan closes her sea and airports to South Africa and Portugal; and so does Mauritius on 20 August 1963. South African Airways (SAA) announced on 22 August 1963, that it will be re-routing its flights to Europe via Luanda (Angola), Brazzaville, the Cape Verde Islands, and Las Palmas (all still Portuguese colonies).

20 August 1919

Author Noni Jabavu born

Helen Nontando (Noni) Jabavu was born in 1919 in the Eastern



Cape into a literary family. From the age of thirteen, she was schooled in England, and continued to live there for many years. She went on to become one of the first African female writers and journalists. *The Ochre People* is one of her two autobiographical works; the other is *Drawn in Colour* (1960). Both were written early in her literary career and have been hailed by critics as being brilliant and fascinating. The works indicate that she preferred positioning herself as being simultaneously an African and a European, tracing her origins in both England and South Africa. In her books she looked at the alienation she felt, issues of identity and the impact of the West on Africa. Jabavu died on 19 June 2008 at the age of 88.

20 August 1935

Dulcie September born in Cape Town

Dulcie September was born on this day in Cape Town. She became active in the student movement in Cape Town, linked to the Non European Unity Movement. She campaigned against Bantu Education, and as a teacher, joined the Teachers League of South Africa and the African Peoples Democratic Union of Southern Africa (APDUSA). After leaving

This Day in History



Anti-apartheid activist and ANC stalwart **Dulcie September** was born on this day in 1935.

Comrade September would've celebrated her **90th birthday** today.

20 August 1935 – 29 March 1988

the Unity Movement, September together with Neville Alexander, Marcus Solomon, Andreas Shappingo, Fikile Bam and Xenophon Pitt formed the anti-apartheid paramilitary Yu Chi Chan Club. She was arrested for her political activities and served five years, together with Doris van Heerden, Dorothy Alexander and Elizabeth van Heyden. September left the country after 1976, joining the ANC in the UK and becoming active in the ANC Women's League. She campaigned around children and women's issues, and worked at the ANC Lusaka headquarters from 1981, chairing its Regional Preparatory Committee. At the end of 1983, Dulcie September was appointed ANC Chief Representative in France, Switzerland and Luxembourg, and in this position, she was a leading organiser of the international campaign to isolate apartheid. On 29 March 1988, September was assassinated outside the ANC's Paris office.

20 August 1950 Anthropologist Tidiane N'Diaye born

Senegalise anthropologist, economist and author Tidiane N'Diaye was born on this day. He is the author of a number of publications on the history of Black Africa

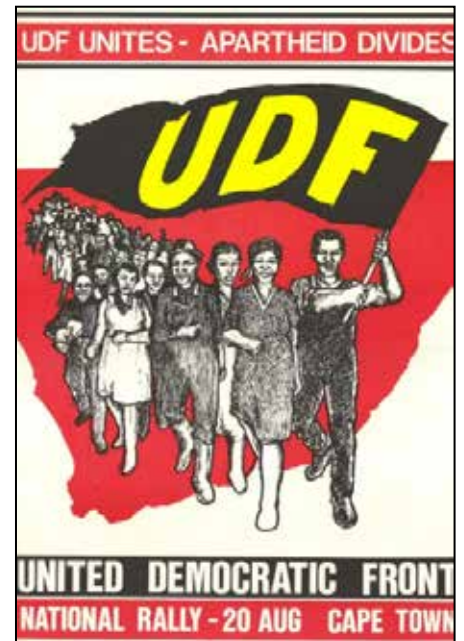
and the African diaspora, as well as numerous economic studies of the *Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques* on the French overseas departments (Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique). N'Diaye's essays on the Arab slave trade (*Le génocide voilé* "the veiled genocide", *Étude de la traite négrière arabo-musulmane* "study of the Arab-Muslim negro slave trade") were nominated for the Prix Renaudot in 2008.

20 August 1976 Nordic countries call for arms embargo against South Africa

At a Nordic Council meeting in Copenhagen, the Foreign Ministers of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden recommend an international weapons embargo against South Africa.

20 August 1983 UDF launched in Mitchells Plain

The United Democratic Front (UDF), a front of over 400 civic, women's, youth, faith-based, rural and other organisations was launched, in opposition to the racist South African regime, under the slogan **UDF Unites**.



Apartheid Divides. It campaigned against the tricameral parliament.

21 August 1927 4th Pan African Congress held in New York

The continental and diaspora movements against slavery and colonialism evolved as a global Pan African movement, with the holding of six Pan African Congresses between 1900-1945. The fourth Congress was held in New York, USA sponsored by Addie W Hunton and the African-American women's organisation, Circle for Peace and Foreign Relations. The 4th Pan African Congress included delegates from the United States, the Caribbean and from Africa, on delegates from the Gold Coast (Ghana), Nigeria, Liberia and Sierra Leone, due to travel restrictions.

21 August 1929 Trade unionist Emma Mashinini born

Veteran trade unionist and political leader Emma Mashinini was born on this day in August 1929. Living in Johannesburg, her family was forcibly displaced several

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

This Day in History

Trade Unionist and ANC stalwart **Emma Mashinini** was born on this day in 1929.

Comrade Emma would've celebrated her **96th birthday** today.

21 August 1929 – 10 July 2017



times during her childhood. She started working at age 14 and soon became a union organiser at her garment factory. She became active within the African National Congress (ANC) in 1956. Mashinini served for 12 years on the executive of the National Union of Clothing Workers (NUCW) and founded the South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU) in 1975. She was arrested and detained without charges for six months in 1981–82. Mashinini played several important roles in the transition to ANC rule in the 1980s and 1990s. Mam Mashinini served on the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission and went on to become a Commissioner for Restitution of Land Rights. Her autobiography, titled *Strikes Have Followed Me All My Life*, was published in 1989 and republished in 2012. She received numerous awards and decorations, including the **Order of the Baobab** and the **Order of Luthuli**.

21 August 1982

King Sibhoza II passed on

In 1982, the Kingdom of Swaziland (now Eswatini) was plunged into mourning, when His Majesty,

King Sobhuza II, passed away at the age of 83 at the Embo State House. The king died after a successful reign of sixty years and was the longest reigning monarch in the world at the time. King Mswati III ascended the throne in 1986 at the age of 18 – as the youngest reigning monarch in the world.

21 August 1998

PW Botha found guilty of contempt

George Magistrate Victor Lugaju found former President PW Botha guilty of contempt for repeatedly ignoring subpoenas to testify in public before the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the body responsible for investigating human rights abuses committed during the apartheid era. Botha was fined ten thousand rand and given a one-year prison sentence, suspended for five years, which could be brought into effect if he defied another TRC subpoena. The TRC wanted to question Botha about human rights abuses perpetrated by security forces during the apartheid era, as he chaired the State Security Council from 1978 to 1989.

21 August 2008

Hargeisa International Book fair launched

This is an annual cultural event held in the Somaliland and has become amongst the largest book fairs in the Horn of Africa. The main goal of the festival is to promote a culture of reading and writing in the region by producing and publishing high quality Somali literature and translating international classical literature (including fiction, poetry and drama) into Somali.

21 August 2020

Kenyan camel population quadrupled

Over a period of two decades, the camel population in Kenya have increased from 1 million in 1999 to over four million in 2020. Camels are reared by pastoral tribes in north east Kenya, and provide transportation, fur, meat and milk.

22 August 1788

Sierra Leone created for freed slaves

The colony of Sierra Leone was conceived by British philanthropists and abolitionists as a home for African slaves freed in England. A Temne king sold a strip of land on the north shore of the Sierra Leone Peninsula to the Sierra Leone Company for the "free community of settlers, their heirs and successors." A few years later the settlers were also joined by settlers of African origin from other parts of the empire. Sierra Leone became a British crown colony in 1808. Throughout the 19th century, the colony steadily grew through various "treaties of friendship" and cessions from the local chiefs. Sierra Leone achieved its independence on 27 April 1961.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

22 August 1856 Djidjelli earthquake causes Tsunami around Mediterranean

An earthquake which destroyed the Algerian city of Djidelli also caused a tsunami that floods Mediterranean islands and the coastal towns of North Africa and Europe.

22 August 1894 Natal Indian Congress formed

The Natal Indian Congress (NIC) is formed by Mahatma Gandhi in order to fight discrimination against Indian traders in Natal. It became the first permanent political organisation to strive to maintain and protect the rights of Indians in South Africa. The NIC, Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC) and the Cape Indian Congress later went on to form the South African Indian Congress (SAIC). Thereafter, many joint activities between the SAIC and African National Congress (ANC) were organised.

22 August 1924 Agatha Christie novel set in Africa

The Man in the Brown Suit is published on this day, one of the first European detective mysteries set in Cape Town, Bulawayo and other African locations.

22 August 1925 Sculptor Nelson Mukhuba born

Nelson Mukhuba, a versatile and talented South African artist, was born in Tshakhuma village, Venda. He worked as a carpenter, welder, gardener and house painter until he chose to promote his own Vhavhenda culture through his music and woodcarv-



ing skills. Mukhuba used mainly Marula and Jacaranda trees to produce his craftwork. During the 1960s, as a migrant worker in Johannesburg, he formed various Marabi dance bands and made recordings. Mukhuba committed suicide in 1987; he set his storeroom alight and many of the works that survived bear the scars of this tragic event.

22-26 August 1977 World Conference against Apartheid in Lagos

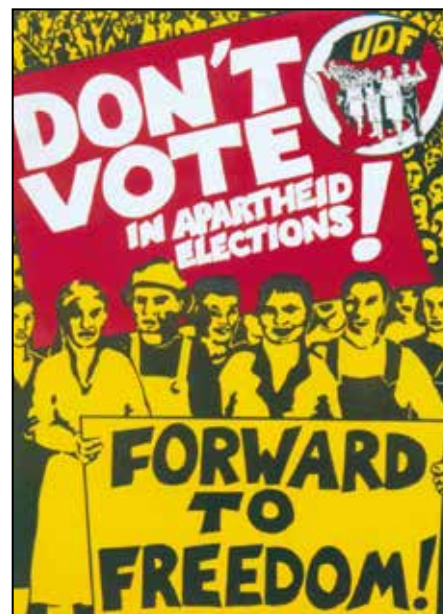
World Conference for Action against Apartheid, Lagos, organised by the United Nations in cooperation with the Organisation of African Unity and the Federal Republic of Nigeria took place on this day.

22 August 1977 Pretoria Show opens to all races

The Pretoria show is an annual event that began in 1939 as a whites only, agricultural show and grew to include arts, entertainment, education and exhibitions over the years. However, on 22 August 1977 the show was officially opened to all races. The show is the largest springtime show in South Africa, now called The Spring Show taking place every year between late August and early September at the Tshwane Events Center (previously

Pretoria Show Grounds).

22 August 1984 UDF organises boycott of Tricameral parliament elections



On 22 August 1984 the United Democratic Front organised highly successful boycotts of the Coloured and Indian elections to parliament in 1984. The UDF was against the exclusion of African people from the Tricameral parliament and saw this as part of the racist divide and rule segregationist rule of apartheid. In early 1984, the UDF claimed a membership of more than 600 organizations and 3 million individuals and in that years mass action had rendered SA ungovernable. This led to a state of emergency being declared by PW Botha in 1985.

22 August 2010 Iconic Athlone towers demolished

The iconic Athlone cooling towers also know by locals as "The two ladies of Athlone" were demolished in just eight seconds during a "surprise" implosion on 22 August 2010 by the City of Cape Town.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

16–22 August 2025

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

18 August

Never Give Up Day

The day aims to cultivate a mindset of never giving up and supporting those who are still working hard to reach their goals. Its often easier said than done, but some of the tips to help master the art includes pausing, but not giving up; motivating yourself, surrounding yourself with people who are resilient and choosing to be positive.

19 August

World Humanitarian Day



On 19 August 2003, a bomb attack on the Canal Hotel in Baghdad, Iraq, killed 22 humanitarian aid workers, including the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello. Five years later, the General Assembly adopted a resolution designating 19 August as World Humanitarian Day (WHD). Each year, WHD focuses on a theme, bringing together partners from across the humanitarian system to advocate for the survival, well-being and dignity of people affected by crises, and for the safety and security of aid workers. This year's theme is **"Strengthening Global Solidarity and Empowering Local Communities"**. As the world celebrates Humanitarian Day, it is faced with a grim reality of the situation in Gaza. The UN agency for Palestine refugees (UN-



RWA) has warned that the Gaza Strip faces a "catastrophic" humanitarian crisis, with no agency aid allowed in for more than five months and malnutrition deaths climbing sharply. Amidst this worsening humanitarian crisis, it is essential to work towards a lasting solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict as the international community addresses the reality of starvation on the ground in Gaza.

19 August

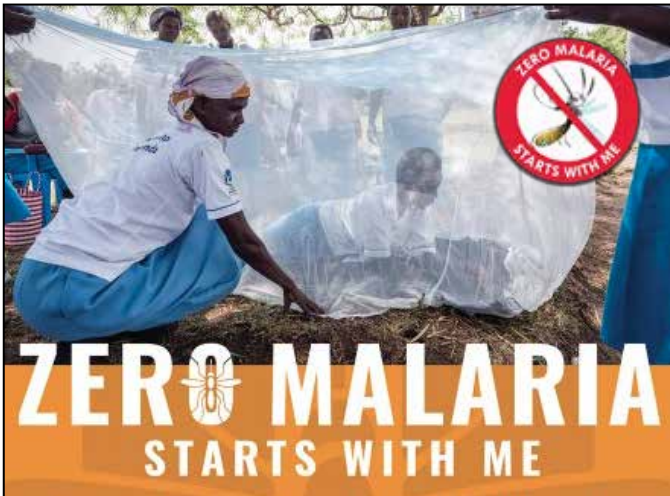
World Photography Day

This is an annual, worldwide celebration of the art, craft, science and history of photography. Founded in 2009 by the Australian photographer Korske Ara, 19 August was chosen to celebrate World Photo Day, the day that the patent of the daguerreotype (an early method of photography) was purchased by the French government.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

20 August

World Mosquito Day



The day celebrates the occasion on 20 August 1897, when Sir Ronald Ross discovered the link between the mosquito and malaria. Mosquitoes kill over 600 000 people every year, responsible for malaria, dengue fever, yellow fever and encephalitis. The African Union has a **'Zero Malaria Starts with Me'** campaign in member states. The mosquito is the most dangerous insects in the world (even more than humans and snakes, who respectively kill about 475,000 and 50,000 people a year). Mosquitoes kill 725,000 people a year. The theme for World Mosquito Day 2025 is: **"Accelerating the Fight Against Malaria for a More Equitable World."** This theme emphasises ensuring equitable access to malaria prevention, diagnosis, and treatment, especially in vulnerable, resource-limited communities.

21 August

International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism

The General Assembly, in its resolution 72/165 (2017), established 21 August as the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism in order to honor and support the victims and survivors of terrorism and to promote and protect the full enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

22 August

International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence based on Religion or Belief

Freedom of religion or belief, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to peaceful assembly and the right to freedom of association are interdependent, interrelated and mutually reinforcing. They are enshrined in articles 18, 19 and 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is also enshrined in the South African Constitution and Bill of Rights. Upholding these rights plays an important role in the fight against all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief.



“ **OUR FIGHT IS NOT QUITE DONE.**

LET US FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT TO BE LITERATE, QUESTIONING, EDUCATED. ONLY THEN WILL WE TRULY BE ABLE TO CLAIM THAT WE HAVE WON OUR LIBERTY.

EDUCATION, EDUCATION, EDUCATION - ALL THE WAY! ”

ADELAIDE TAMBO



AUGUST 2025 WOMEN'S MONTH

TO ALL SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN

HAPPY WOMEN'S MONTH

**WATHINT' ABAFAZI,
WATHINT' IMBOKODO!**

