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Conversations with the
President



The public service and the people need to work together

■ By **PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

 NCE a year, in September, South Africa marks Public Service Month, a time to focus on the essential contribution that the country's 1.7 million public servants make to meeting the needs of the people.

It is through public servants that government provides health-care, education, policing, social services and countless other essential functions that touch every South African's life. When our public service operates at its best, it is a powerful instrument for social and economic development. When it falters, it is often our most vulnerable citizens who bear the brunt.

There are many dedicated public servants who work tirelessly in service of our nation. We thank them for the work they do to improve the lives of South Africans. But our public service faces significant challenges. These include skills gaps, outdated systems and processes, inconsistent service delivery and corruption. In many parts of the state, the values of *Batho Pele* – putting people first – have been eroded.

That is why we are strengthening the professional foundations of our public service. Through the reforms underway we are working to attract the right skills, implement rigorous

performance management and create career pathways that reward merit and excellence. Through the National School of Government we are investing in training and development.

As we work to build a more professional, accountable and capable public service, we need to bring the public service closer to the people they serve. We must challenge the idea that public servants are providers and citizens are mere beneficiaries of goods and services.

The National Dialogue, which was launched in August, provides an opportunity to change the relationship between public

CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PRESIDENT

servants and the public.

Over the next few months, South Africans will be meeting as communities across the country. They will be discussing the issues that most concern them and will together be forging a vision to take the country forward. These conversations will culminate in a National Convention next year, which will finalise a social compact that outlines clear actions and responsibilities for all sectors of society.

The thousands of public dialogues taking place across the country will also provide an opportunity for communities to address the immediate challenges that they face where they live. These challenges may include anything from electricity cuts to overcrowded schools, a lack of water provision to poorly maintained roads, or an increase in violent crime or drug use.

Through the National Dialogue process, each community is encouraged to work with all relevant stakeholders – ward councillors, municipal officials, civic bodies, community organisations and provincial and national departments – on a common plan to address these challenges.

By working together in an integrated way, drawing together resources from within and outside the state, these stakeholders can find ways to solve local problems. Public servants have a vital role to play in working towards solutions alongside and



I call on every South African to hold government accountable, to engage constructively with public institutions and to recognise the vital role that a professional public service plays in building the society we all want.

in cooperation with communities.

This approach is closely aligned with the District Development Model, which is about bringing government closer to the people and ensuring that local needs inform service delivery priorities.

It is about building a public service that listens to citizens, adapts to their needs and continuously improves its services. Such a public service requires the active participation of citizens as partners in development, growth and transformation.

I call on every South African to hold government accountable, to engage constructively with public institutions and to recognise the vital role that a professional public service plays in building the society we all want.

Together, we can build a public service that serves with excellence and integrity and works with South Africans to realise the promise of a better life for all. ■

CELEBRATING

PUBLIC SERVICE MONTH

"Growing South Africa together for an ethical public service"

BATHO PELE

PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST

- Good Ethics
- Professionalism
- Service Delivery



The ANCYL is still as relevant as it was when it was formed in 1944

Address by Deputy President of the African National Congress, **PAUL MASHATILE** at the **ANC Youth League 2nd National General Council**

LET me begin by reminding you that the African National Congress (ANC) is weaker without a strong and vibrant ANC Youth League that can do two things: get young people to support the ANC's past and present mission and championing the needs and aspirations of South Africa's youth.

The ANC Youth League was formed on the 2nd of April 1944 by amongst others, Anton Lembede, who became the League's first President, Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, AP Mda, Oliver Tambo and William Nkomo.

This generation of youth established the ANCYL at the time as a body to focus on the development of young people to make a meaningful contribution to the growth and development of the ANC and society in general. At the time of the formation of the ANCYL, the ANC was at its weakest and moribund.



The formation of the ANCYL thus led to the transformation of the ANC into a formidable, more radical organisation, leading mass struggles against colonialism and apartheid. It was because of the influence of the newly formed ANCYL that the process of developing and ultimately adopting the

Freedom Charter was initiated, leading to its eventual adoption as a policy document framing the outlook of the ANC in 1955.

As the ANC, we continue to view the ANCYL as a political preparatory school of young activists of the ANC. More importantly,

we view the ANCYL as a critical mass in shaping the ANC's policy outlook.

We believe that the convening of this 2nd NGC of the ANCYL provides an opportunity for us to collectively reflect and respond to the socio-economic and organisational challenges that confront us. This NGC must emerge with a ten-point plan, similar to Nelson Mandela one, that the ANC will implement through the government machinery. As the ANC, we stand ready to carry forward the tasks emerging from this NGC.

We make this commitment because we believe that the youth, led by the ANCYL, is best positioned to develop a plan that will guide both the ANC and the nation's future, in a manner similar to how the youth of the 1940s did. We are equally making this commitment because there is evidence to the fact that consistently, the ANCYL has played this role effectively, informed by different conditions of struggle for the liberation of South Africa.

Comrades, the growth and development of the ANC is due to the visionary leadership and bravery of the leadership of the ANCYL to date. The ANCYL is still as relevant as it was when it was formed in 1944.

The leadership of the Youth League in different phases or epochs of the struggle has taken it upon itself to ensure that there is 'nothing about the youth without the youth'. This has been done historically within the structures of the ANC because the ANC remains the strategic centre of power and the leader of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR).

Fundamentally, it is of necessity

that the ANCYL never loses its revolutionary compass that sets it apart from not only the ANC and its partners, but also from other youth organisations in the South African political landscape.

The League must continue to play this role, particularly in strengthening the ANC and preserving the status of the ANC as a champion of the motive forces driving change towards the society we aspire to, that is, a society that is non-racial, non-sexist, democratic, and prosperous.

We must consider that this second NGC is being held in the aftermath of the 2024 General Elections, where the ANC suffered a strategic setback, receiving 40% of the electoral support.

We must also take into account that the gap between eligibility and registration has been between 6 and 8 million voters since 1999, and it increased to 10 million by 2019. By the year 2024, the figure had escalated to 12 million voters. From 80 per cent in 2014 and 72 per cent in 2019, the registration level in 2024 was 69.9 per cent.

Another critical factor is that voter turnout has also been declining: it was 58.64 per cent in 2024, compared to 89 per cent in 1999, 77 per cent in 2004 and 2009, 74 per cent in 2014, and 66 per cent in 2019. Additionally, across the provinces, the lowest turnout was in the North West province, followed by Limpopo and the Eastern Cape.

In terms of age categories, the younger cohort remains under-represented. MISTRA's study suggests that the reasons for youth underrepresentation are due to poor political engage-

ment by young people, including their lack of participation in civic organisations or activities.

There have also been various research institutes that have been releasing data, including IPSOS, which suggest that eight in ten South Africans say the country is heading in the wrong direction. This means there is a greater need for us to restore confidence, not just through speeches, but through action.

The study concludes that the upcoming Local Government Elections in 2026 will be a crucial test – not just of party politics, but of whether South African democracy can evolve to meet citizens' clear demand for competent, collaborative governance that delivers services. The challenge before us as the ANC, is to translate the public's appetite for collaboration into the effective leadership that South Africans urgently require.

Comrades, the question is, how do we turn the corner? What can we do to ensure that the youth are actively involved in their own development? I suppose this is one of the tasks that NGC must confront.

We must further acknowledge that despite our considerable progress in tackling the issues of unemployment, poverty, and inequality, the economy remains stagnant and fails to generate the jobs necessary to absorb our youth.

Nonetheless, we have made a commitment to transform the economy, through various initiatives, policies and programmes such as, Operational Vulindlela. Others include investment in Energy Reform to ensure long-term

energy security through market restructuring and grid expansion. We are also investing in Water Reforms to guarantee sustainable access to quality water through institutional transformation and investment.

Furthermore, we are investing in Freight Logistics Reform to restore efficiency in the rail and port systems and unlock export growth. Key among these reforms is the Visa System Reform, which has helped attract global talent and investment to support economic expansion.

Similarly, we are making good progress with the Local Government Reforms, aiming to strengthen basic service delivery and financial sustainability of municipalities. This is complemented by Spatial Integration and housing reforms, enabling us to create integrated, dynamic cities that foster inclusive growth and job creation.

Lastly, we are investing in Digital Public Infrastructure Reforms to harness digital technologies, improve service delivery, and unlock new economic opportunities.

We are pleased that, in response to these initiatives and reforms, there is marginal growth of 0,1% in the first quarter of 2025, and real gross domestic product (GDP) strengthened by 0,8% in the second quarter (April–June). This growth was driven by the manufacturing, mining, and trade sectors, with household consumption also contributing positively.

Nevertheless, our economic growth is not consistently cre-



ating enough jobs to keep pace with the growing number of working-age individuals. Comrades, the issues mentioned above are the real matters we believe should be included in the deliberations with the aim of reaching clear solutions.

As progressive activists across the board, we must never betray the commitment that we have towards achieving a National Democratic Society. This requires that we continue to strengthen the ANC and build capacity to build a developmental state that has the capability and political will to redirect resources towards the development and growth of our people, more importantly, black Africans, the working class, women, the LGBTQIA+ and other systemically isolated and marginalised groups.

This National General Council must serve as a political platform for youth activists of the ANC, under the leadership of the ANCYL, an autonomous body of the ANC, to reflect, strategise, and shape a vibrant and relevant mass of young people with a political con-

sciousness. It will to turn the tide for the majority of youth in South Africa.

More importantly, it must allow the youth to debate robustly on key strategic political issues towards our shared future. Globally and nationally, there are various shifts in the geo-political and economic landscape which are related to, among other things, climate change, technological advancements, gender inequality and inadequate opportunities for the youth, more specifically in a context that is primarily affected by what is known as the youth bulge, a phenomenon that depicts a high population among the youth between 15 -25 years old.

This must happen because the ANCYL has a task to broaden its base and deepen its political and organisational strength, as well as that of the ANC, to lead society effectively.

This ANCYL NGC, like other conferences, must determine to resolve the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality. The resolution of this

problem will require a thorough analysis so that we emerge with concrete and tangible interventions in this regard.

The ANC **Strategy and Tactics** document adopted in Polokwane 2007 says:

“...the main content of the NDR is the liberation of Africans in particular and Blacks in general from political and socio-economic bondage. It means uplifting the quality of life of all South Africans, especially the poor, the majority of whom are African and female. At the same time, it has the effect of liberating the white community from the false ideology of racial superiority and the insecurity attached to oppressing others. The hierarchy of disadvantage suffered under apartheid will naturally inform the magnitude of impact of the programmes of change and the attention paid particularly to those who occupied the lowest rungs on the apartheid social ladder.”

Furthermore, it says;

“A nation’s success depends also on its ability to encourage, harness and incorporate into its endeavours the creativity, daring and energy of youth. This relates to such issues as access to social and economic opportunities, engendering activism around issues of development and values of community solidarity and creating the space for youth creativity to flourish.”

I am extensively referring to the **2007 Strategy and Tactics**, because it articulates the critical tasks that we must focus on in this epoch of the National Democratic Revolution.

We must, however, caution that the task of building a nation is an ongoing process. I would therefore like to congratulate the leadership of the ANCYL for placing



on the agenda the liberation of Africans, in particular, and Blacks, in general, from political and socio-economic constraints, and for emphasising economic freedom.

This year is more than 30 years since the advent of our freedom and democracy. The task of transforming South Africa into a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic, united and prosperous society remains the agenda of the ANC and indeed the the ANCYL. I am very confident that this NGC will take resolutions that will contribute towards the renewal of the ANC as an organisation, so that it can respond to the challenges of our ever-changing and dynamic society.

The leadership of the ANCYL must always remember that the league must strive to galvanise and place itself at the centre of the broadest spectrum of youth organisations for reconstruction and development. Having said all this, some of the key tasks and areas that we believe must be central to the discussions throughout this NGC include the following:

Firstly, we must recognise that the political programme of the ANCYL of the 1940s remains a guide for navigating present challenges. The emphasis of African Nationalism and the self-determination of Blacks in general, and Africans in particular, is a political discourse that should never be lost in the structures of the ANCYL.

More explicitly, the commitment and emphasis on the struggle for economic, cultural, educational,

and political emancipation of the African people should never be lost!

While we acknowledge that over the last thirty years, we have made significant achievements in building a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic, united and prosperous society, the most relevant task for the ANCYL and the youth of South Africa remains around Economic Freedom and Empowerment. In keeping with the commitment made in the 1940s, this generation must, together with the leadership of the ANC, prioritise job creation, skills development, and entrepreneurship opportunities to tackle the high unemployment rates among young South Africans.

Secondly, we must emphasise the importance of quality education, vocational training, and digital literacy to equip the youth with the skills required for the modern job market.

Thirdly, we must emerge with innovative ways to promote economic empowerment through initiatives like youth-owned businesses, access to funding, and mentorship programs to foster economic growth and reduce inequality. We know that this is not a new discussion; however, an honest reflection, as informed by the high unemployment rates, especially among the youth, suggests that different, and more drastic measures are required, and these must be provided by the youth, for the youth.

Fourthly, we must encourage the youth to embrace diversity, promote social justice, and work towards a united South Africa. Both the anti-apartheid and post-apartheid struggles that have been waged over the years provide evidence that South Africa, in many

ways, epitomises a commitment to social justice, and as activists, this remains paramount.

Lastly, we must advocate for transparency, accountability, and effective governance to ensure that the youth's concerns are addressed and their futures are secure. We believe that by focusing on these key areas, the ANCYL can reinvigorate its message, inspire the youth, and contribute to a brighter future for South Africa.

Comrades, we are approaching the year 2030, and an important year for South Africa, as it marks the deadline for the goals outlined in our National Development Plan, but also a momentous year for the global Sustainable Development Goals.

Regrettably, we have not achieved the yearly goals as outlined by the United Nations process, nor have we made the needed progress to give a positive report on the National Development Plan's targets. This calls for action that leaves no one behind and can speedily lurch into what could be the possible areas where much progress can take place.

As a country, we have traversed challenging and tumultuous times, where we were able to see the collective strength and resilience that we possess. Apartheid, our transition towards democracy, an HIV epidemic, and the COVID-19 pandemic, among others. This means that with the correct revolutionary compass, we have what it takes to tackle the stubborn challenges that confront us now.

This NGC is indeed one of the most important meetings that the ANCYL will hold. It takes place in a political climate that has seen among other things; electoral support for the ANC significantly dwindling, the increased emergence of the number of political parties, the intensified onslaught on the ANC and what it stands for and the reality of a coalition government under the Government of National Unity (GNU), which further sharpens contradictions and challenges the hegemony of the ANC and our progressive politics. We must never see this as defeat, but rather a strategic setback that must once more galvanise us into action to rebuild our structures and reconnect with our people.

We must therefore be more strategic in determining the key tasks to address, in order to shape our programme of action going forward. These should include, but not limited to:

- **Accelerating Economic Growth** by developing a strong and diverse economy that creates jobs and reduces inequality;
- **Investing in Education and**

Skills Development by fostering a culture of lifelong learning, and providing quality education and training programs that equip citizens with the skills needed to thrive in the 4th Industrial Revolution;

- **Promoting Innovation and Entrepreneurship** by encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship, and the development of new industries, with a focus on technology and digital transformation;
- **Building a Capable and Effective State** by strengthening institutions, improving governance, and enhancing the capacity of the state to deliver services and drive development, fight crime and corruption;
- **Fostering Social Cohesion and Inclusion** by promoting social cohesion, reducing inequality, and ensuring that all citizens have access to opportunities and resources.

In reconstructing what the approach to these tasks should be, we must also jealously guard the gains we have made in key areas, specifically as it relates to



addressing inequality in the multiple ways that it shows itself, and also ensuring that the inclusion of women, youth, the rural majority, LGBTQIA+ and the marginalised, remains a priority.

I also urge you to use this opportunity to cast your eyes beyond 2030 and think of the South Africa we want by 2055, which will be the centenary of the Freedom Charter. This year, we are celebrating 70 years of the Freedom Charter. In this regard, we must revisit the Freedom Charter and internalise what it envisions for South Africa.

The ANCYL must organise activities that will draw young people to learn and act in line with the vision of the Freedom Charter. When the year 2055 arrives, as the ANCYL and ANC of OR Tambo, we must be able to share a story of victory, a story of hope, and a story that resembles the future society they envisioned. We must be able to say that the blood and sweat of those who died for this country was not in vain.

In history, we have learnt of countries such as the Asian Tigers – Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan who have successfully grown their economies and have been able to change the trajectory of their countries in a short space of time through decisive leadership and action.

The changes in the global political economy, the strengthening of BRICS countries, and the challenges that confront the United States of America, for example, are testament to the fact that things are and have been changing. South Africa must have a story of its own to tell in this context. As the Trump Administration im-

poses 30% tariffs on SA goods, we must explore other destinations and diversify our markets. We are therefore engaging countries like China, India, Russia, other countries in the East and the European Union. We must however continue to engage the US to achieve an agreement that will be beneficial to our country. We should not go to the White House on our knees, begging!

In November this year (2025), South Africa will host the G20 Summit as we occupy the G20 Presidency. Many meetings have already taken place, viz. meeting of Central Bank Governors, Ministers of Finance, etc. The fact that we are currently holding the G20 Presidency is of significance, because we are the first country in the African continent to do so. Despite the prevailing geopolitical environment, we remain steadfast in our commitment to our G20 Presidency, which we have themed “Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability”.

We believe that this is an opportunity for us to advance the economic, social, and political cause of not just South Africa, but the entire African continent.

We will ensure that the programme of the G20 also assist in advancing Agenda 2063, the Africa We Want.

We have also started the process of the National Dialogue. The first National Convention was held from the 15th to 16th August at the University of South Africa (UNISA). It is envisaged that the process will culminate in a National Dialogue to be held in June 2026. This is a citizen-led process, and meetings will be convened in most of the Wards in the country. I urge the ANCYL

members to participate in these meetings.

Indeed, much more still needs to be done; however, I am confident that the resolutions you will adopt in this NGC will chart a better way forward for the youth of this generation and those to come. I call upon the ANCYL to get involved in building strong branches of the ANC and make sure that all members of the ANCYL undergo the foundation course.

As I close, I would like to quote from one of the founders of the ANCYL, President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, when he said, *“Young people are capable, when aroused, of bringing down the towers of oppression and raising the banners of freedom!”*

I urge you, Young Lions, to ensure that Radical Economic Transformation will happen in your lifetime.

No surrender, No retreat, Victory is certain!

I wish you a successful National General Council, may revolutionary ideas for change be born amongst you!

Let me leave you with these profound words of Frantz Fanon, a philosopher and Marxist, when he said, *“Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfil it or betray it!”*

Fellow delegates in this National General Council (NGC), it is your opportunity to decide whether you will fulfil your mission or betray it!

I have no doubt that in the spirit of Peter Mokaba you will rise to the occasion! ■

ANC STATEMENTS

■ By **ANC SECRETARY GENERAL FIKILE MBALULA**

ON NERSA AND ESKOM ERRONEOUS INCREASE

THE African National Congress (ANC) welcomes the decision by the Minister of Electricity, Dr. Kgosientso Ramokgopa's intervention and his demand for consequence management over the R54 billion tariff blunder.

The ANC is deeply concerned by the passing of the tariff blunder to the heavily burdened consumer in an inflationary economy that affects society. This blunder comes at a time when electricity is exorbitant, having reached unaffordable proportions.

In line with our commitment to reduce the high cost of living, the ANC will resist and reject any attempt to pass this to consumers, considering the high cost of electricity and living.

The ANC promotes clean gover-

nance and prudence in the administration of state entities including government departments.

As an organisation acting in the best interests of the people, to improve the quality of life and reduce the high cost of living we will monitor and interact with those at the helm of government and the electricity sector to address this issue. This includes illegal connections, incorrect billing and the challenges faced by the municipalities in their inability to service the ESKOM debt as part of our Action Plan post the ANC Roll Call as a call to action to improve the lives of the people.

We welcome the department's plan to address the surging electricity costs and the plan to mitigate the high electricity costs which erode the household income. ■

We welcome the commencement of the MADLANGA COMMISSION

THE African National Congress (ANC) welcomes the commencement of the Madlanga Commission as further evidence of our nation's resolve to confront corruption whenever and wherever it rears its ugly head. The ANC has always been clear that corruption undermines public trust, weakens institutions, and diverts resources meant for development and service delivery. The work of this Commission will therefore play a vital role in restoring confidence in governance and strengthening democratic accountability.

The ANC calls on the Madlanga Commission to fully exercise its mandate and powers, acting without fear, favour or prejudice. We urge all individuals and organisations called before it to cooperate fully so that the truth may emerge and justice can take its course. The Commission must leave no stone unturned in exposing wrongdoing and recommending corrective measures.

The ANC reaffirms that the fight against corruption is not negotiable. The commencement of the Madlanga Commission is a significant milestone in building an ethical state, and ensuring that the interests of the people of South Africa remain at the centre of governance. ■



THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS THANKS THE PEOPLE FOR RENEWED CONFIDENCE IN EPHRAIM MOGALE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, WARD 9

THE African National Congress extends its heartfelt gratitude to the people of Ward 9, Ephraim Mogale Sub-Region, Sekhukhune Region, Limpopo, for delivering a dominant victory in the by-election held yesterday. This victory is even more significant as it was accompanied by a higher voter turnout than in 2021, affirming the growing confidence of the people in the ANC's renewal and service delivery agenda.

We congratulate Cde Collins Nkwane Maleswene on his election as councillor. He must lead with

humility, accountability, and an unshakable commitment to improving the daily lives of our people.

We also thank the people of Ward 56 in eThekweni, KwaZulu-Natal, who voted for the ANC in the contest.

The people's support is a reminder that the ANC continues to be the people's movement, trusted to deliver transformation in every part of the country.

The results in Limpopo and KZN once again confirm that renewal is not an idea in theory, but a living

practice embraced by the masses. The ANC is reconnecting with communities, restoring trust, and demonstrating that when the movement is disciplined, united and people-centred, the people respond decisively in our favour.

The ANC recommits itself to honouring this trust by intensifying service delivery, ensuring accountability, and working side by side with the people to build a South Africa that is equal, just and prosperous.

The ANC lives. The ANC leads. Renewal continues. ■



Forward to a united COSATU!

*Address by COSATU President, **ZINGISWA LOSI**
to the **COSATU 8th Central Committee***

BEFORE I commence let us remember those giants of the liberation movement and the Federation who have passed on since we last met at Congress in 2022, including the founding President and General Secretary of SADTU, Membathisi Mdladlana and Randall Van Der Heever; former FAWU General Secretary Katishi Masemola, and Ministers Pravin Gordhan and Tito Mboweni, amongst many others.

Comrades we meet here today at a defining moment for workers in South Africa, on our continent, and across the Global South and indeed the entire world. The question before us – as Vladimir Lenin once asked – is simple yet profound: What is to be done?

Who we are and why we exist

COSATU was not born for comfort; it was born for battle, to champion the needs of workers and advance working-class struggles. Our task has never been about survival, but about transformation – transforming workplaces, communities, and society itself.

We exist because the working class needs a shield and a spear: a shield to protect against exploitation, and a spear to advance the cause of justice.

We have come far indeed from Durban 1985. Today ours is an



internationally respected constitutional democracy, underpinned by the clarion call of a South Africa that belongs to all who live in it, Black and White.

No longer do workers need to fear being shot and detained by the police for exercising their fundamental right to withhold their labour and to go on strike. Today that and many other rights are enshrined in our hard-won, progressive Constitution and labour laws.

We have emerged from the days when workers would be paid a slave wage and consigned to the most menial of jobs with no prospects of a better life merely because of the colour of their skin and their gender.

Today employers are compelled

by the Employment Equity, National Minimum Wage and Basic Conditions of Employment Acts to respect workers' hard-won rights to dignity.

We have travelled far from the days when the state and all its machinery and resources were geared to enriching a minority at the expense of the majority. Today with all of the challenges and own goals of the democratic state, 60% of the Budget is spent investing in working-class communities.

Today, the cause of the emancipation of the working class faces new and brutal tests. Many of our hard-won gain achieved through the sacrifices of Gert Sibande and the leadership of JB Marks, are under severe threat and if we

are not careful may be lost.

The reality facing workers and their families

Across many economic sectors, workers are being stripped of their dignity through job losses. At Goodyear, ArcelorMittal, Ford, Mercedes-Benz, Glencore – factories and foundries are closing, production is shifting, and livelihoods are being torn.

Each retrenchment is not just a statistic; it is a family left without bread or electricity, the loss of a home or car, plunging further into debt, the disruption of a child's opportunity to study further, a community sliding deeper into despair.

This is not only about the individual workplace. It is about value chains collapsing – from suppliers to transport and logistics, to local shops. When one sector bleeds, the economy haemorrhages. Ghost towns are created where the only economy left are a few farms, taverns and sex workers, struggling public and municipal services and SASSA pay points.

When the economy weakens, the state follows: wages of public servants shrink, social grants are threatened, health and education services are starved. Farm workers, domestic workers, and taxi drivers – already on the margins – are further denied the dignity of a real living wage.

Some falsely claim that COSATU and workers are an elite. Yet they forget that it is workers who carry this economy, from the mine workers who dig our mineral wealth and the factory workers who sew our clothes and assemble our cars, to the farm workers



who create the food we eat to the teachers who educate our children, the police who protect the vulnerable and the health workers who nurse the sick.

Our critics are blind to the reality that workers' wages often do not keep pace with inflation, that each worker supports on average seven relatives, that workers are drowning in debt to increasingly unaffordable electricity, transport and the cost of living.

This is the lived experience of the working class in 2025.

We must also recognise that these realities are not gender neutral. Women workers remain concentrated in the lowest paid and most precarious jobs and continue to face the gender wage gap that devalues their labour. Whilst the law demands equal pay for equal work and prohibits unfair discrimination, too many women in our banks, our supermarkets and our hotels will tell you a different story and it is not pretty.

Beyond their paid work, women carry the unpaid burden of care in households and communities, holding together families in times of crisis. Without maternity protection, childcare support, and

parental rights, women are forced into a double shift of exploitation.

The fight for a living wage must also be a fight for recognition of this unpaid labour, and for a stronger social wage that supports all workers and their families.

Violence and harassment in the world of work remain daily threats. After relentless campaigns by this Federation of Nana Abrahams and Violet Seboni, government led by our Alliance Partners, ratified Convention 190 prohibiting sexual harassment and violence at the workplace but all too many women domestic, farm and restaurant workers will tell you about the trauma that they encounter from male bosses and colleagues and customers. Even we here in the trade union movement are not immune from this shame.

Parliament in 2021 overhauled our criminal legislation to escalate the war against gender-based violence in our homes, work and communities. Yet have we done our bit as the trade union movement to make sure our members are aware of their rights and obligations? Are teachers, health workers and police officers empowered to win this war?

ALLIANCE

Global trade, tariffs, and the Green Transition

Comrades, these crises are not isolated. They are shaped by global currents. Tariffs and trade agreements are not abstract – they are political weapons. They protect the profits of the industrialised North while exploiting and risking the jobs of the South.

Up to 100 000 South African manufacturing and agricultural jobs, from citrus farms of Limpopo to the clothing factories of Cape Town and the motor-manufacturing plants of Gqeberha and Buffalo City are now at risk due to the global tariff crisis and the 30% tariffs imposed on South African exports to the United States, the world's largest economy.

These require not only smart negotiations at the highest level of government, but also an affirmation of the importance of multilateralism and most critically to address the many structural barriers inhibiting our economy and the expansion of trading opportunities across the world, and in particular Africa and Asia.

And then there is the energy transition. Yes, we accept that the future must be green. But if the transition destroys more jobs than it creates, then it is not just. A *“Just Transition”* must mean justice: for miners in Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the North West, for communities eMalahleni and Thabazimbi, for autoworkers in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, for the youth searching for a better future.

We must demand energy democracy: that our resources, our minerals, our sun and wind, benefit our people and not multinational corporations. COSATU must champion NUM's long standing and bold call for worker and com-



munity owned generation capacity.

A just transition must speak to creating new economic sectors and decent jobs for workers, from the waste pickers in our streets to the recycling of plastics and metals. It must speak to investing in the skills of workers, not only for the needs of the economy of today but also that of a tomorrow that will be increasingly dominated by the 4th industrial revolution and artificial intelligence.

This necessitates a thorough interrogation into the education crisis from the overcrowding of our classrooms to the wastage and corruption in the SETAs, to the low graduation rate of our TVETs, to our increasingly unaffordable universities. The Freedom Charter spoke to opening the doors of learning and culture. We have come far, but we have much more to do to make this a lived reality for the child in Phillipi and the worker in Madibeng.

The importance of COSATU's unity

Against these challenges, one truth stands tall: divided, workers fall; united, workers rise. COSATU's strength has always been its unity. Our unity is the

most powerful weapon we have to confront retrenchments, exploitation, and poverty.

From our founding, we have upheld the principle that the Federation must be a home for all workers. We recognised that workers may hold different political affiliations, but what unites us is our class and our common struggle. It was this principle that allowed COSATU to withstand repression, divisions, and attempts to weaken the labour movement.

To maintain that unity today, we must continue to put workers first, above party loyalties, ensuring that COSATU remains the voice and home of the entire working class.

This demands that we recruit in every factory, restaurant, hospital, police station, military base and mine. Yet we seem to be afraid to venture outside our comfort zones. Over 10 000 jobs have been created in the call centre, where is our plan to recruit them? When are we going to recognise that Uber and taxi drivers need the protection of COSATU?

We have adopted a vision of

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what COSATU should look like in the next decade. Where are our recruitment drives to take us from 1.4 million back to 2 million by our next congress? Are we engaging the various splinter unions that weaken the strength of workers to join our Affiliates and realise the vision of Elijah Barayi of one industry, one union, one country, one federation?

Whilst we unashamedly champion the cause of workers' unity, we must be principled. When COSATU and our Affiliates are under attack, we will respond and do so decisively. We will defend this Federation of Chris Dlamini and Dora Tamana without fear or favour.

We must strengthen our engagement with communities in mining towns of Mpumalanga, where the Just Energy Transition is already displacing thousands and the smelters and plants being shut down across rural towns. We must organise with rural communities in the Eastern Cape, linking the struggles of farm workers and the unemployed with the battles we wage in Nedlac and Parliament.

Our cause is not only to defend jobs but to fight for a new economy – one that prioritises people over profit, dignity over exploitation, sustainability over destruction.

It must be one that provides a pathway towards the goal of a socialist society from our campaigns for a living wage and decent work for all to reindustrialising our economy and enabling workers to own the means of production, to providing universal healthcare through the National Health Insurance and ensuring access to education from our schools to our universities and laying the foundations for com-

prehensive social security.

COSATU at 40

In December we celebrate 40 years of COSATU. From our founding in 1985, through the dark days of apartheid and into democracy, COSATU has been the shield and spear of the working class. These four decades teach us a vital lesson: the most difficult moments in our history came when the bonds of unity within the Federation were weakened.

When we stood together, we overcame repression, division, and attacks on workers' rights. Today, we once again face a profound test – to safeguard the cohesion of the Federation and to draw on our collective strength in the face of the most challenging struggles confronting the working class. If we remain united, if we hold firm to solidarity, then no

matter how heavy the storm, we can face whatever lies ahead.

We must reflect on how we are going to organise the unorganised, to rebuild CEPPWAWU, CWU and other struggling Affiliates. We cannot be complacent with militant slogans when we see the state of many Affiliates and Locals. COSATU was launched as a fighting Federation and that it must remain.

When we celebrate at Dobsonville on the 6th of December, we must ensure that there is not a single empty seat, that not only can Soweto but the entire nation feel that COSATU lives, COSATU leads!

Women's Herstories

The COSATU Women's Herstories Project is a landmark initiative to mark 40 years of our



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Federation by documenting and celebrating the lives and struggles of 40 women who built COSATU from its earliest days to the present.

Later this year, COSATU will launch the Women's Herstories Project: to mark 40 years of our Federation by documenting and celebrating the lives and struggles of 40 women who built COSATU from its earliest days to today. These stories remind us that COSATU's victories are not only found in resolutions, but in the courage of women workers who led strikes, challenged discrimination, demanded parental rights and maternity protection, and fought against violence and harassment long before laws recognised these struggles.

This project honours workers courage, resilience, and vision, while ensuring that new generations of shop stewards can draw strength and lessons from their example.

As this gathering of the COSATU Central Committee reflects on the implementation of COSATU's resolutions, the Women's Herstories remind us that resolutions only come alive when they are carried by organised workers, with women workers at the centre of struggle, leadership, and renewal.

COSATU is a Federation founded upon the principles of internationalism and solidarity

Our liberation was aided in no small way to the safe harbour that the workers of Zambia, Tanzania, Mozambique and other frontline states provided the liberation movement. It was won through the sacrifices of the people of Angola, the internationalist bri-

gades of Cuba and the solidarity of the Soviet Union, Scandinavia, the workers and students' movements across Europe, the United States and elsewhere.

Today we must continue to show that same principled solidarity to the people of Cuba, Venezuela, Western Sahara, eSwatini and most of all Palestine where thousands are dying and subjected to the most cruel human rights violations daily.

Alliance and political direction

Comrades, we also meet at a time when the Alliance faces its own tests, even existential. Our unity with the ANC, SACP, and SANCO has always been rooted in the struggle for a National Democratic Society. But unity is not a slogan – it must be a living practice.

We must elevate the Alliance to be a vehicle that delivers for workers and the poor, not a platform of convenience for politicians.

We love the ANC of Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela. We love the SACP of Joe Slovo and Chris Hani. We need our Alliance Partners to resolve their challenges and to engage the Federation on these. We need the Alliance to be united and radically reconfigured to ensure that it is the anchor of government, the centre of political direction for the nation.

We need both the ANC and the SACP to appreciate the unity of the Federation. Do not divide workers or COSATU comrades. This is a unity that has taken workers decades to build. It has been severely tested at times. We cannot afford at this time when the National Democratic

Revolution is under such severe strain nor when workers are under siege on so many fronts, to be divided.

We have seen the ANC splinter and shed votes each election over the past two decades, yet if we examine the collective votes of all these parties it speaks to our historic 60% plus base. We need a plan to reunite the liberation movement not to further fragment it. There is no transformation that can take place when you are a 40% or worse less party.

This cleansing and renewal of the movement must be accelerated if we are to ensure that the Alliance emerges victorious in the 2026 local government elections.

Equally we must insist that the budgets and bills government tables before Nedlac and Parliament speak to the daily lives of our people: ending unemployment, ensuring decent wages, and uplifting women and youth.

We must not be shy to claim our victories

It is natural to dwell on our disappointments and correct to examine where we went wrong, but we must not lose sight of the many victories we have won against all odds.

We must remember the wise words of Amilcar Cabral "Always bear in mind that the people are not fighting for ideas, for the things in anyone's head. They are fighting to win material benefits, to live better and in peace, to see their lives go forward, to guarantee the future of their children".

Since we held our 2022 National Congress, we have pushed the

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National Minimum Wage up by more than 20% giving relief to 6 million vulnerable workers.

The Compensation of Occupational Injuries and Diseases Amendment Act has come into effect covering 900 000 domestic workers for the first time and increasing protections for all workers, in particular women. The Employment Equity Amendment Act has come into effect advancing the transformation of our workplaces and requiring employers to do more to break down the barriers of discrimination.

Parliament has passed the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act further opening the doors of learning to the poor. The National Health Insurance Act laying the foundation towards universal healthcare and the Expropriation Act enabling government to accelerate land reform have been assented to by President Matamela Ramaphosa.

Last September the Two Pot Pension Reforms initiated by SACTWU and COSATU came into being releasing over R60 billion into the pockets of more than 3.5 million highly indebted workers whilst boosting savings in the

long run.

The Companies Amendment Act Regulations are being drafted to compel companies to disclose their finances to workers and unions as well as their pay gap as part of naming and shaming those who still embrace apartheid wage gaps.

COSATU has shown time and again, that it is a Federation that does not lament, but delivers. When others chant slogans, we deliver solutions.

Lenin challenged us on what is to be done?

- First, we must reassert COSATU's identity: we are the voice of workers, the home of the working class, and the conscience of the nation.
- Second, we must campaign relentlessly against job losses, wage theft, gender-based violence and harassment, and the erosion of rights. No retrenchment should be uncontested. No sector should be abandoned.
- Third, we must engage globally as part of the Global South, refusing to be dictated to by those who thrive on our

poverty while exploiting our minerals.

- Fourth, we must build deeper unity with communities – the unemployed, the youth, professionals without work, women in informal economies. COSATU must not be a fortress; it must be a movement of the people.
- Fifth, we must demand recognition of unpaid labour, expansion of the social wage, childcare support and parental rights for all workers.
- Lastly, we must defend and strengthen the Alliance as a revolutionary tool, but always with clarity of purpose: COSATU's loyalty is to workers first.

Comrades, this Central Committee must leave here not only with resolutions, but with conviction and clarity. The working class is watching. The nation is waiting. The continent is listening.

Let us rise to the moment. Let us educate, organise, and mobilise. Let us lead with unity, dignity, and courage.

Forward to the struggle of workers! Forward to a united COSATU! Forward to a just transition and a new economy! Amandla!





Usual Liberal Arrogance: The DA's Misplaced Crowing

■ By **FÉBÉ POTGIETER-GQUBULE**

THE crowing of the Democratic Alliance (DA) following President Cyril Ramaphosa's remarks at the ANC Councillor Roll-call on 15 September 2025 is a classic case of liberal arrogance. At the gathering of over 4,800 ANC councillors in Soweto, the President drew from the wisdom of Oliver Reginald Tambo, reminding us that we must never shy away from learning, even from our enemies.

The DA's triumphalism over this statement is not only misplaced, it is a distortion of the context and meaning of the President's marching orders.

Learning from Others, Without Illusions

President Ramaphosa was unequivocal: the ANC **must and can do better**. In his marching orders, he compared clean audit outcomes of ANC municipalities with those governed by the DA. He acknowledged that in this regard, the ANC falls short. Hence, financial management improvement forms a central pillar of the ANC Action Plan. Learning from others, even our opponents, is not a weakness but a strength of a movement secure enough to reflect, self-correct, and renew.

But the DA's boastful response

implies that clean audits alone equate to good governance. That is a dangerous simplification. A clean audit is an important marker, but it does not capture the lived experience of communities.

Just ask the residents of Khayelitsha, Delft, Langa, Kayamandi, Manenberg or Philippi about their daily struggles under DA city governance. Or look at the Western Cape, with the highest number of informal settlements in South Africa, while the provincial government routinely underspends its human settlements budget, leaving the poor without shelter

The Real Record of DA Governance

As Gauteng Provincial Coordinator Comrade Hope Papo reminded the Roll-call, when the ANC lost Gauteng metros in 2016, those municipalities had healthy budget surpluses. During DA-led coalitions, those surpluses were rapidly depleted. Yet, under ANC leadership, the metros closed the 2024/25 financial year with a R1.8 billion surplus. An undeniable turnaround compared to the aggregate R52.1 million deficit in 2023/24.

This is what the DA doesn't say in its crowing: it governs for privilege, not for people. Its "*clean governance*" is often little more than a façade, masking a failure to address the deep inequalities and basic needs of the majority.

Claiming No Easy Victories

The ANC Roll-call was not an exercise in self-congratulation but in accountability. We



revisited the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) commitment to meet basic needs. StatsSA's Census 2022 shows the progress since 2011:

- Access to piped water has increased from 73.4% of households to 82.4%.
- Flush toilet access has grown from 60% to 71%.
- Formal housing has im-

proved from 77.6% to 88.5%.

- Electricity access now stands at 94.7%, up from 84.7%.
- Informal dwellings declined from 13.6% to 7.9%.
- Households without internet access dropped dramatically from 64.8% to 21%.

These gains are significant and measurable. Yet, the ANC did not shy away from highlighting failures.

The Limpopo Provincial Secretary, Cde Reuben Madadzhe, for instance, reported that access to water declined by 6.5% between 2011 and 2022. Far from sweeping this under the carpet, he laid out concrete projects underway which include new treatment plants, bulk water pipelines, boreholes, sewer upgrades, and mega water schemes, showing how the ANC addresses setbacks with action, not excuses.






A Movement Big Enough to Admit Mistakes

This is the essence of the ANC's approach: we claim no easy victories. We face shortcomings with honesty, while mobilising the will and resources to address them. We are a movement big enough to admit mistakes, to learn, and to grow stronger in service to the people.

The liberals, on the other hand, beat their chests in smug self-congratulation. They mistake privilege for governance, audits for transformation, and arrogance for leadership.

The ANC's Roll-call demonstrated a commitment to the hard, unglamorous work of renewal and delivery. While the DA crows about its image, the ANC is doing what it has always done – working to transform lives, guided by the principle that the people come first. ■

Fébé Potgieter-Gqubule is a member of the NEC of the African National Congress and Head of Policy and Research







ROLL CALL OF ANC COUNCILLORS

BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

THE SIX PILLARS OF THE ANC ACTION PLAN

- **PILLAR 1.** Tackle core service delivery commitments to citizens: water, sanitation, refuse removals, potholes, electricity and human settlements.
- **PILLAR 2.** Effective and sustainable infrastructure: ensure proper budget spending and improve capacity for maintenance, prevent vandalism, build infrastructure project execution, new infrastructure projects in the NIP Phase 2.
- **PILLAR 3.** Reconnect with the people and restore trust and accountability: community meetings, door to door and campaigns, ANC/Alliance Day of Community service, strengthen accountability and community involvement in local development.
- **PILLAR 4.** Capable local Government and institutional capacity: financial management, debt, billing systems, bylaw enforcement, employ capable people and fill critical vacancies, war on corruption.
- **PILLAR 5.** Inclusive Local economic development and jobs: strengthen conditions for investments in local industry and jobs, support SMMEs and cooperatives, township enterprises, expand public and private employment, develop skills.
- **PILLAR 6.** Strategic communications: communicate challenges, interventions and implementation.

The ANC Lives and the ANC Leads.

Issued by the ANC, Chief Albert Luthuli House, HQ

ANC CADRES MUST UNDERSTAND AND DEFEND ANC POLICIES AS ESPOUSED BY THE ANC LEADERSHIP

■ By **SEPHOKA DAVID SEKGOBELA**

It is trite that not everyone is suitably qualified to comprehend or make fair and objective analysis of current polarised political landscape. It should not be difficult to acknowledge mistakes of the ANC without making oneself a target of a barrage of criticisms based on factional, ethnical, or, narrow stereotyped prejudices by arm-chair critics and adjunct provocateurs, as experienced by President of the ANC, Cyril Ramaphosa, when addressing ANC delegates at a roll-call meeting of ANC Councillors in Gauteng.

Whether it has officially been pronounced or not, we are already in the 2026 local government elections mode. These are indeed tough times for the ANC, because the odds are stacked against it. Undue criticism of the ANC that is unwarranted and unfair by armchair critics, with “*jacks of all trades*” becoming instant expert political analysts during electioneering, is inherent and expected, and cannot be avoided. Anything that the ANC does or does not do would always attract negative publicity. Nevertheless, the ANC will wither the storm ONLY if it remains focused and resolute on unity and renewal initiatives of the organisation, and not allow itself to be distracted by any side-shows. It is one thing to criticise the ANC, or, anyone of its leaders for whatever reason, and it is also permissible to even formulate an



opinion thereof, but it is incorrect to perpetuate one’s flawed opinion about the ANC or any of its leaders as a fact. However, the battle to defend the ANC cannot be left to ANC leadership alone. It remains every ANC member’s duty to defend and explain ANC position whenever there is a need. Hence compulsory political education.

Whilst the ANC should accept constructive criticism and self-critique, it should disregard unfair and baseless criticism. The ANC is striving to regain lost ground since local government elections in 2016. Joel Netshitenzhe wrote on 22 March 2021 that, “*the battles must be deftly chosen, and the timing of each fight must be appropriate. Care must be taken*

not to allow the saboteurs to dictate the “what, when and how” of engagement”. Winston Churchill said, “*You will never reach your destination if you have to stop and throw stones to every dog that barks*”.

What is actually in the President’s statement that could lead to such diverse interpretations and/or misinterpretations? What is it that the President actually meant that ANC Councillors should learn from the DA-led municipalities, because one thing certain is that, in his address, the ANC President never said or meant to say, or, promoted any other party? The ANC President did not, and would never promote the DA on ANC platform. Please give him some credit! It is said, “*Prescription without*

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diagnosis is malpractice". The first step towards correcting anything is to acknowledge that there is indeed a problem, rather than denying the existence thereof. To get to whatever solution, one needs to first acknowledge that there is a challenge, or, identify the root cause thereof.

Was the President's statement misunderstood, misrepresented, or, deliberately distorted for cheap political mileage? Is it selective listening or perhaps failure to communicate appropriately to the audience by the President? Whatever the President said, the narrative that ANC Councillors should learn from the DA-led municipalities was blown way out of proportion by the media, because the President never said that ANC should learn from the DA, as a blanket statement across the spectrum, including on service delivery challenges, but was rather specific on what he meant.

Therefore, those criticizing the ANC President for having said what he said at the roll-call meeting with ANC Councillors, might not have contextually captured the gist of the President's message or they are just plainly disingenuous for their own selfish ends.

There are those who might genuinely be quoting the President out of context due to limited comprehension of the issues at stake, whilst others are purely engaged in dirty politicking by deliberately twisting or distorting facts to mislead and/or confuse others, especially the gullible ones. Whilst others would take whatever they read in the media with a pinch of salt, the gullible ones would believe everything reported by the media as gospel truth. This trend is influenced by sponsored negative reporting and publication in



the media to unseat the ANC, and not reporting in a balanced and fair manner, but rather continuing to engage in sensational false reporting against the ANC. Instead of objective reporting, most journalists are playing within the political arena, betrayed their noble profession and degenerated into useful instruments to pursue others' interests. It is human nature though that people will never agree on any particular issue.

Under the pretext of pursuing public's right to know, wilful misinformation and woven web of untruths are sometimes peddled by those with dishonest or evil intentions and hidden agenda against the ANC. There is always no objectivity and a *"sense of intolerance towards the ANC"*. Falsified reports riddled with inaccuracies give those with evil intentions justifiable reasons and motives to achieve their intended objectives.

There is indeed nothing to learn from the DA in as far as service delivery is concerned, and this is not even what the President said. The President was specific in what he said and meant, and that had everything to do with accounting system for the municipalities, but many, especially the media

houses, mischievously decided to quote the President out of context and misrepresented what he meant, and thus misleading the gullible ones who are themselves not analytical.

Of course, it is not true that wherever the DA governs, they do it right. This does not need to be debated. That would be a blatant lie, because everyone who is not ignorant would know what happened in Tshwane metro, and what is happening in the Western Cape, especially in the townships and informal settlements – Langa, Nyanga, N2 highway shacks, Khayelitsha, Gugulethu, Delft, Cape Flats, Mitchell's Plain, etc. regarding skewed service delivery backlog.

It cannot be right for people to listen to the same statement, but understands it so vastly different from one another due to ignorance. There is a saying that, "Everything has a cost, but not as compared to ignorance, which is more costly". Sri Chinmoy wrote, *"Ignorance is an enemy, even to its owner. Knowledge is a friend, even to its hater"*. It is normally said that, *"Ignorance is bliss"*, but there is honestly nothing blissful about ignorance.

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We need to try to make positive contributions to educate or develop each other. We can never solve any problem if we start by criticizing even before we understand the issues at stake. A lot of energy is going to waste due to negativity. We need to learn to see everything for what they are – the good and bad in others, and not always biased against them. Even in instances where we do not see things the same, we still need to explain to or persuade each other in a civil and respectful manner.

When we criticize and insult our leaders as ANC members, we should never forget who elected them. They are reflections of ourselves, and our entire being. What is good or bad in them, is the best or the worst in us respectively. Therefore, if you look into a mirror and see a snake, you have to find ways of living with that snake, because you can never run away from the snake in the mirror. You should treat that snake the same way you will deal with a mosquito that landed on your genitals, because you certainly cannot use maximum violence against it.

For the ANC to “continue to serve and lead the people”, it should have “organisational capacity and a corps of committed cadres who are selfless servants of the people. Every cadre of the ANC has a revolutionary duty to contribute to strengthening the hegemony of the ANC, and to defend and articulate its policies and programmes in public domain. To achieve this, all ANC cadres must be sufficiently grounded in politics of the ANC, to enable them to articulate and defend its positions and policies in public platforms.” (NGC 2015 Discussion Document).

There is a distinction between party cadres and ordinary members

of the organisation. ANC National Chairperson Gwede Mantashe said, “While every party cadre is a party member, not every party member is a party cadre. Cadres are those party members [who are] most responsible for the organizational fulfilment of the party line. They are the core of the [organisation], its cementing foundation.” (Notes on Cadre Policy and Development, 1988).

Che Guevara regarded cadre as “the backbone of the revolution”, and “an individual capable of self-analysis, which enables him to make the necessary decisions and to exercise creative initiative in such a manner that it won’t conflict with discipline...”. In his literary work titled Strategy and Tactics, John Rees defines cadres as, “members who have reached a certain level of political

understanding, and with practical organizing experience accumulated over years of involvement in the struggle”. The ANC’s 50th national conference that was held in Mafikeng in 1997 defined cadres as “those committed to self-improvement, criticism and self-criticism, national and gender consciousness and organizational processes”.

In conclusion, the President was specifically referring to the Auditor-General’s findings in which municipalities governed by the DA quite often get clean audits than most of the ANC-led municipalities, which is an undisputed fact. There are, of course, ANC-led municipalities that often obtain clean audits. The key word is “majority”. We therefore need to understand the context before we unduly criticize others. ■



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ANC

The Auditor-General, SALGA, and the Crisis of Local Governance

■ By **STAN ITSHEGETSENG**

The President's Pain Is Our Reality

When President Cyril Ramaphosa says that DA-led municipalities like Cape Town and Stellenbosch “lead the pack” in Auditor-General reports, he is not celebrating them. He is exposing us. Those who insulted him online are not defending the ANC – they are embarrassing it. The President’s statement was a mirror. Instead of fixing their reflection, some councillors broke the mirror.

ANC renewal begins with honesty. Pretending that ANC-led municipalities are all performing well is childish. Pretending that pointing to DA success is betrayal is cowardice. Renewal is about facts, and facts are stubborn.

As Oliver Reginald Tambo wisely guided: *“Be prepared to learn from other people’s revolutions. Learn from the enemy also. The enemy is not necessarily doing everything wrongly. You may take his right tactics and use them to your advantage. At the same time, avoid repeating the enemy’s mistakes.”* (Oliver & Adelaide Tambo Foundation, 2017).

This is the ANC’s medge: acknowledging what works, discarding what fails, and building a future rooted in people-centred governance.

Scenario One: Regression

The Auditor-General’s reports



over the past decade read like a tragic script:

- **2016/17:** Only 45 municipalities with clean audits. Warning signs everywhere.
- **2018/19:** Regression. Material irregularities growing. The AG says local government is “on the brink of collapse.”
- **2020/21:** Hope flickers. Some municipalities stabilise. But metros stumble.
- **2022/23:** Only 38 out of 257 municipalities achieved clean audits (14.8%). Worse, R5.19 billion in material irregularities was flagged across procurement, revenue and asset management.

Regression is the story of Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni, Buffalo City, Mangaung. These metros are

ANC’s flagship municipalities, yet their audits are red flags. When metros fail, they pull down the reputation of the whole movement.

Scenario Two: Excuses

Too many councillors hide behind excuses:

- **“The system is inherited.”**
- **“Coalitions paralyse us.”**
- **“Treasury regulations are too strict.”**
- **“Communities don’t pay rates.”**

Excuses do not fill potholes. Excuses do not deliver water. Excuses do not produce clean audits. Excuses are the political drug of the lazy.



Scenario Three: Ranting Instead of Working

Instead of leading municipal audit committees, councillors lead Twitter spaces. Instead of interrogating SCM contracts, they interrogate comrades on Facebook. Instead of tabling credible Integrated Development Plans, they table insults against the President.

This behaviour is infantile. Councillors who think governance is a spectator sport must be recalled. The ANC cannot carry spoiled children who mistake self-importance for leadership.

Scenario Four: The Shining Stars

Yet the story is not all doom. Certain ANC municipalities prove that clean governance is possible:

- **Senqu Municipality (Eastern Cape):** A consistent clean audit performer in one of the country's poorest provinces.
- **Ehlanzeni District (Mpumalanga):** Stable financial management in a volatile environment.
- **King Cetshwayo District (KZN):** Improving year after

year with stronger internal controls.

- **Umhlathuze (KZN):** Professionalised administration, showing balance between growth and governance.
- **uMzimvubu (Eastern Cape):** Commended for compliance with the MFMA and steady service delivery alignment.

These shining stars prove that the ANC does not lack capacity, it lacks consistency. Where discipline and technical competence are enforced, ANC municipalities outperform stereotypes. The challenge is to multiply these stars, not to excuse the darkness.

Scenario Five: SALGA the Sleeping Giant

The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) was meant to be the collective strength of municipalities. Yet for too long, SALGA has been a conference platform, not a crisis response unit.

If SALGA is to matter, it must:

- **Crack the whip, not crack**

jokes: Publicly name failing municipalities, instead of hiding them in glossy reports.

- **Replicate excellence:** Study Senqu, Ehlanzeni, Umhlathuze and transplant their practices elsewhere.
- **Deploy skills, not slogans:** Send engineers, accountants and planners into failing council, not just policy papers.
- **Tie membership to performance:** Why should failing municipalities keep SALGA status without consequences?
- **Back communities:** Where councillors repeatedly fail, SALGA must support recalls, not shield incompetence.

If SALGA remains timid, it is part of the collapse.

Scenario Six: Renewal in Practice

The ANC gathering at FNB Stadium was more than a rally, it was a declaration that councillors must be reminded that their seats are not thrones. Renewal means:

- Councillors measured by audit outcomes, not branch popularity.

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- Councillors trained in the MFMA, not just in struggle songs.
- Councillors who publish corrective plans, not excuses.
- Councillors who deliver water, refuse collection, and roads, not hashtags.

This is the ANC message of the moment: renewal is not theoretical, it is practical. It is measured in taps running, lights staying on, and waste being collected.

Conclusion: Every Excuse Exposed, Every Path Clear

Regression, excuses, ranting, failure of SALGA, every scenario explains why the ANC hurts today. But shining stars prove renewal is possible.

The President told the truth. Those who cry betrayal are afraid of mirrors. But the people of South Africa do not want mirrors, they want service. They want accountability. They want action.

It is time for the ANC to whip its councillors into governance, for SALGA to wake up, and for every municipality to choose renewal over regression.

As OR Tambo taught: **“Learn from the enemy also. The enemy is not necessarily doing everything wrongly. You may take his right tactics and use them to your advantage. At the same time, avoid repeating the enemy’s mistakes.”**

That is not betrayal. That is revolution in practice.

Anything else is betrayal, not of Ramaphosa, but of the people. ■



Reversing the decline of branches – Some reflections from voting patterns in Drakenstein municipality

This article focuses on Ward 27 in the Drakenstein Municipality in the Western Cape, which is the birthplace of struggle veteran Calvyn Gilfellan, who was actively involved in the anti-apartheid movement and the working-class struggles.

*This article, co-authored by **CALVYN GILFELLAN** and **DR JACOB CLOETE**, UWC academic and ANC member in Matzíkama Municipality, Western Cape provides an honest reflection on the current state of local politics in former ANC strongholds, which we can use as we prepare for the 2026 Local Elections.*

Introduction

The ANC has indeed seen a notable decline in support from the Coloured community. To investigate the reasons behind this, election results from two historically Coloured voter districts in Ward 27, Drakenstein Local Municipality, were analysed.

First, let’s examine the number of parties contesting the local elections in Drakenstein Local Municipality. In the 2021 local government elections, 31 political parties contested the elections, and one independent candidate.



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The combined results of the smaller localised political parties were less than five per cent. In 2016, 24 parties contested the elections, and the combined results of the smaller localised political parties were less than 3 per cent.

Secondly, breakaway parties such as UDM, COPE and EFF did not significantly affect the ANC's support in Ward 27. For example, in 2021, the combined electoral support for these parties was 1%, and in 2016, it was 3.8%. In 2024, the MKP received only one vote.

Thirdly, parties such as the Independent Democrats (ID) and GOOD have consistently enjoyed significantly more support compared to breakaway parties. For instance, in the years 2004, 2006, and 2009, the ID received 13.68%, 30.78%, and 30.81% of the vote, respectively. In 2019 and 2021, their electoral support decreased to 7.45% and 9.86%, respectively. This indicates a more positive response towards the ID when compared to the COPE, EFF, and MK's national agendas.

Fourthly, the election results clearly indicate that the ID, not the Patriotic Alliance (PA), has had the most significant impact on the DA's support. The DA's support only began to increase after the merger agreement with the ID in 2010. Additionally, the PA saw a substantial increase in support starting in 2024, ultimately winning a by-election in 2025 with 43% of the vote, compared to the DA's 39%, the first time since 2009 and clearly showing the fragility of the DA.

Fifth, the DA's average support over 25 years was 46%. It wasn't until 2011 that the DA first surpassed the 50% mark in an election. Between 2011 and 2025, the DA experienced an average electoral support of 59%. However, since 2024, their performance has dipped below this average, scoring 56% in 2024 and dropping to 39% in 2025.

Lastly, the ANC's average support over the same 25-year period is 29%. The ANC dominated the electoral results between 2000 and 2006, achieving an

average of 46%. Since 2006, however, the ANC's support has steadily declined, averaging 22% from 2009 to 2025. The ANC exceeded the average of 29% in both 2014 and 2024, achieving 31% on both occasions.

ANC branches are dead

Why do the ANC's pro-poor policies fail to gain electoral support among the Coloured working class and low-income individuals? This question is vital because the two voter districts in focus are in historically Coloured neighbourhoods in Paarl. The L.K. Zeeman Primary School voter district is the poorer of the two, with residents who can be considered impoverished. In contrast, the Amstelhof Primary School voter district is located in an area where the majority of residents are socioeconomically better off.

If the ANC's policies are specifically designed for this demographic, why do they fail to convince these individuals to vote for the ANC? Is there an apparent





miscommunication between the ANC and the communities living around L.K. Zeeman and Amstelhof Primary School? Alternatively, we could examine how the campaigns of the ID, GOOD, and PA differ from those of the ANC. Is this a matter of representation?

Let us focus on the latter question and argue for the importance of representation, considering that the leaders of PA and GOOD are Coloured.

We can propose and unpack Hypothesis 1: *The candidates chosen by the ANC do not represent the community's preferences.*

This perspective is overly simplistic and often used by political commentators to explain the ANC's declining support among Coloured voters. It serves as clickbait and generates engagement without providing real insight.

Analysing election results requires a more nuanced understanding of local politics and how these dynamics relate to regional, provincial, and national levels.

If we accept the simplistic narrative that the representation of Coloured leaders within the party and government would resolve the ANC's support issues among Coloured voters, we would be mistaken.

In reality, there has always been a significant representation of Coloured individuals at the local, regional, and provincial levels within the ANC structures in the Western Cape. In this respect, the ANC has provided more substantial support for Coloured people than the tokenism they might find in other parties in the Western Cape.

This lazy trope is further destroyed by the fact that the Western Cape and Northern Cape have almost the same proportion of Coloured people. How does the Coloured (under) representation hypothesis then explain the ANC's dominance in the Northern Cape?

This lazy trope overlooks a glaring fact: the ANC has been losing support across all demographics in South Africa. Our national elec-

toral support has now dropped to 40 per cent, and we have lost municipalities, provinces, and metros – not just in the Western Cape or among Coloured communities, but as a broader reflection of a failing ANC. We must ask ourselves: Why have we lost ground to other parties?

The answers are relatively straightforward. The ANC's branch structures are effectively defunct and as a result there is a lack of sustained ANC presence within communities. This vacuum has allowed parties like the ID, GOOD, and PA to make inroads, as they have been successful in recruiting former ANC activists to promote policies like those of the ANC's base. Unfortunately, many of these former members were sidelined by local ANC elites.

There is almost a deliberate lack of branch activity between elections, which protects the positions of these local elites. As elections or conferences approach, national, provincial, and regional leaders prioritise flattering these elites before introducing them selectively to their supporters.

Dead branches favour slate politics. These elites, with their significant resources, have the economic capacity to revive branches and ensure that their chosen slate benefits from the 'revived' organisations. Branches are usually reactivated just before conferences, filled with supporters loyal to a specific slate or cabal. After elections, the branches become inactive again, and the cycle repeats. Consequently, communities only see the ANC when elections are near, leading to the perception that the ANC is solely interested in securing votes.

Let us now examine Hypothesis 2: *Would a change in the conference delegate model increase support for the ANC at the local level?*

How can we enhance support for the ANC? At the heart of this is to improve service delivery in the poorest areas, through national government interventions tailored to specific local communities.

The South African Constitution assigns certain functions to the national government, which can either delegate these functions to provincial and local governments or execute them directly. This presents an opportunity for the ANC. The party maintains a presence in most communities across South Africa, with branches serving as gateways into these communities. By rolling out targeted national government interventions in local areas (and claiming them in the public space), the ANC can reconnect with its base.

However, for this strategy to be effective, senior party members must engage more closely with grassroots members. Currently, this connection is lacking, and an

incentive is needed to encourage them to return to the ground. This incentive should focus on reforming the ANC's electoral system.

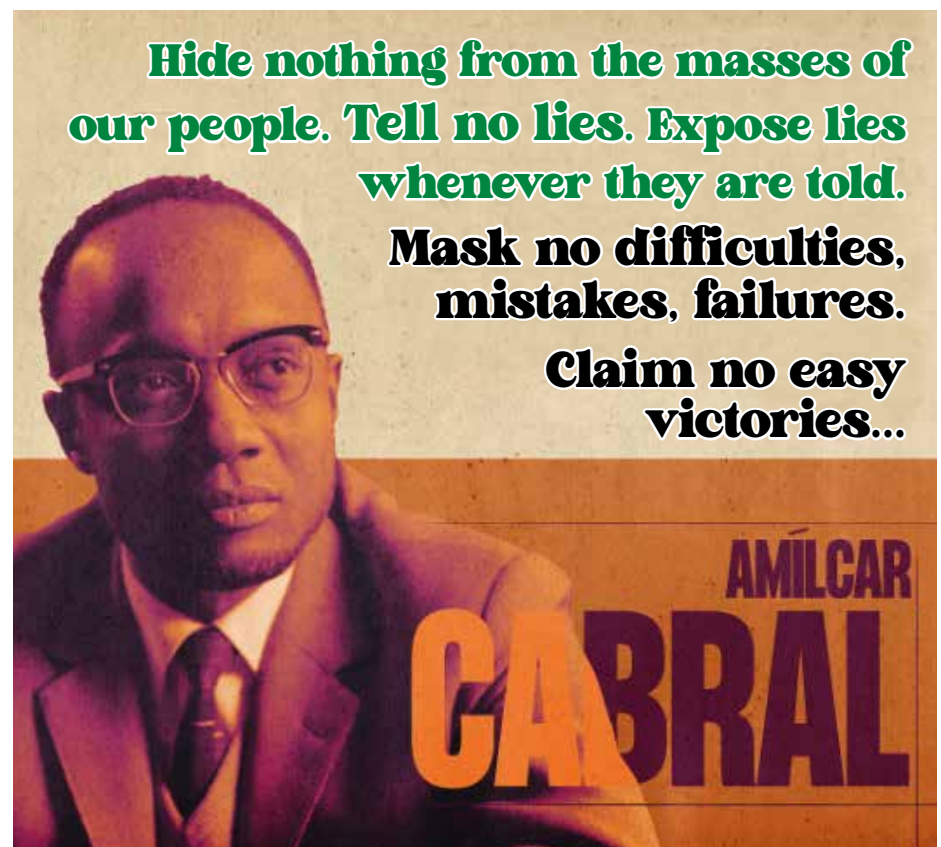
The current delegate system (or electoral college) favours cabal or slate politics, undermining grassroots support for the ANC in local communities. Therefore, we propose implementing a system of direct elections for the ANC's regional, provincial, and national leadership.

In this system, every member of the organisation would have the opportunity to vote for their leaders at all levels, similar to how Branch Executive Committees (BECs) are elected. This means that members will need to campaign in their communities for support, making them more visible and accountable between elections.

Additionally, members should have a direct say in the propor-

tional representation lists for all elections. This means allowing members to have a say in who represents them in government. We propose a broad-based nomination system followed by elections to determine the members of the proportional representation lists. Both nominations and elections should reflect a zonal, regional, and provincial character to ensure diverse representation of the party across the country. Members should be aware of who they are voting for and must be actively involved in this process.

In conclusion, if we do not reform the ANC's electoral system, the observed trends in the two voting districts will persist. The ANC will continue to lose support to opposition parties that share similar policies and positions on service delivery and transformation. If adopted, we envision another hundred years for Africa's oldest liberation movement. ■





Universal Basic Income Grant: Advancing Universal Social Security, Rejecting “Job-Seekers Grant” Conditionality

■ By **TSHILIDZI MUNYAI, TIMOTHY MASHELE and MLULEKI DLELANGA**

Introduction: ANC’s Consistent Commitment

The African National Congress (ANC) has always stood as the custodian of our people’s aspirations for freedom, equality, and social development. From the Freedom Charter’s historic demand that **“There shall be houses, security and comfort”** to the Reconstruction and Development Programme, and from the introduction of the Child Support Grant in 1998 to the expansion of social pensions and disability grants, our movement has consistently recognised that social protection is central to building dignity and advancing the National Democratic Revolution.

Today, more than half of South Africa’s households rely on at least one form of social grant. The Child Support Grant reaches over 13 million children, pensions

provide security for millions of elderly, and the Social Relief of Distress (SRD) Grant has become a vital safety net for unemployed working-age adults. In May 2024, the ANC issued a statement confirming its unequivocal policy direction: *“We recognise the significance of implementing a Basic Income Support Grant, also known as the Basic Income Grant (BIG), as a crucial step towards achieving social and economic change in our country.”*

The ANC’s 2024 Manifesto removed any ambiguity, reaffirmed this by declaring: *“We support a phased implementation of a universal and unconditional Basic Income Grant that benefits all individuals without exclusionary means testing or work-seeking conditions.”* President Cyril Ramaphosa reinforced this line during the election campaign,

stating at the Siyanqoba Rally: *“At the same time, we will progressively implement a basic income support grant for unemployed people based on the SRD grant.”*

These words are not election promises alone – they are policy mandates. The ANC has consistently framed the UBIG not as a privilege, but as an extension of constitutional rights, an affirmation of human dignity, and a concrete instrument to fight poverty and inequality.

The case for Universal Basic Income Support

The UBIG is a regular, unconditional cash transfer designed to reach working-age adults and vulnerable groups without restrictive conditions such as proof of job-seeking. This is necessary in

a country with one of the world's highest inequality levels, reflected in a Gini coefficient of 0.63, and an expanded unemployment level currently (QLFS Q2 2025) standing at 12.6 million people (over 80% of whom are long term unemployed). More than 20 million South Africans live below the poverty line. The ANC Youth League captured this urgency in its 2024 discussion document: "South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world, with a Gini coefficient of 0.63. Over 20 million of the country's 57 million people live below the poverty line... Social transfers remain a vital lifeline."

The current SRD Grant has already demonstrated the power of cash transfers. It has kept millions from destitution, helped households put bread on the table, and supported job-seeking and small enterprise activity. Yet the SRD remains inadequate in both coverage and value. Many eligible applicants are excluded, and its amount of R370 falls below the food poverty line. The UBIG will correct these gaps by ensuring universal access, adequate value, and long-term certainty.

Some argue that grants make people dependent. Evidence shows the opposite. The SRD has been used to buy electricity, transport to job interviews, and even to seed small businesses. International research similarly confirms that unconditional grants do not reduce willingness to work, but instead create pathways into employment and entrepreneurship. In a country with structural unemployment, where even graduates face joblessness, UBIG is about fairness: people should not be punished for an economic crisis they did not create.



The case for UBIG is also constitutional. Section 27 guarantees everyone the right to social assistance if they "are unable to support themselves and their dependents". Conditional "job-seekers grants" turn this right into a privilege, undermining constitutional principles. UBIG instead affirms the ANC's long-standing commitment to universality and dignity.

Lessons from history and evidence

The UBIG is the next step in a clear ANC trajectory. Our movement has always used social protection to advance equality. The Freedom Charter inspired a social wage that today includes free basic education, subsidised housing, no-fee schools, and social grants. The Reconstruction and Development Programme prioritised redistribution and equity as foundations of development. The Child Support Grant, which began modestly, now sustains millions of families. The old-age pension has been recognised even by international agencies as a model of inclusive social protection.

The COVID-19 pandemic marked a critical turning point with the introduction of the Social Relief of Distress (SRD) Grant, and became South Africa's first income support grant for unemployed working-age adults. Initially temporary, it revealed both the vast scale of need and the capacity of grants to reduce poverty. As the President has said in SONA: "We have seen the benefits of the SRD Grant and will extend it and improve it as the next step towards income support for the unemployed."

The evidence is overwhelming. Studies show that the SRD increased work-seeking activity, though many eventually gave up when jobs did not materialise. Research from across the continent confirms that unconditional grants are spent primarily on food, energy, and essentials, not on waste. Where conditionalities have been imposed, such as in parts of Europe, they have produced perverse outcomes: lower wages, precarious employment, and bureaucratic exclusion. South Africa must learn from this.

UBIG is not only morally right – it is empirically sound.

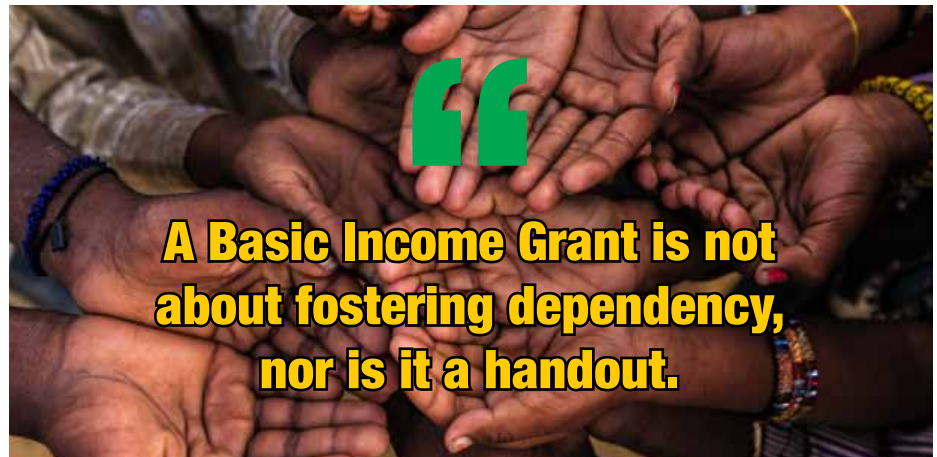
Responding to current proposals

Despite this evidence, several proposals seek to replace the SRD with restrictive models. The World Bank has suggested a job-seekers grant limited to fewer than four million recipients, requiring proof of work-seeking. National Treasury has floated a segmented system dividing people into categories such as “extreme poor,” “poor,” and “work-ready,” with only some qualifying for a work seekers grant, while the DA and Rise Mzansi have called for job-seekers grants with harsh time limits, in some cases only three months.

Proposing a replacement of the SRD grant with a grant that reaches fewer people, rather than expanding it, goes against ANC policy. The 2024 ANC elections statement is clear on this: *“To address the exclusion of a large number of people, we will improve the value of the grant and extend it to reach more beneficiaries.”*

These proposals are deeply flawed. They ignore the structural nature of unemployment, where over 40% of the workforce is jobless and youth unemployment exceeds 50%. They place the blame for unemployment on individuals rather than on systemic economic barriers. They impose compliance costs – transport, data, bureaucracy – that exceed the grant itself. And they risk violating constitutional rights by excluding millions who are clearly in need.

President Ramaphosa and the ANC have consistently rejected these regressive models. At the



2024 Manifesto Launch he made it clear: *“Strengthen income support through existing social grants and use the SRD grants as a mechanism towards phasing in a basic income support grant.”*

This is a rejection of exclusionary segmentation and an affirmation of the goal of universality. The ANC statement on Basic Income states: *“We recognise the need to progressively achieve an adequate basic income support grant based on the principle of universality.”*

Further any proposal to terminate the SRD grant without replacing it with a BIG would go against ANC policy.

The 55th ANC Conference Resolution states that *“Government should continue with the extension and improvement of the Social Relief of Distress Grant... until the Basic Income Grant, is both feasible/affordable and sustainable, this should be linked to the food poverty line and progressively improved to the upper bound food poverty line.”*

Treasury’s proposals, if adopted, would not reduce poverty – they would deepen it. DA and Rise Mzansi’s models, are far from tackling unemployment, would create revolving doors of temporary relief, stripping people of

their dignity. By contrast, UBIG is sustainable, constitutional, and rooted in ANC principles.

UBIG’s direct response to South Africa’s structural economic challenges

A Basic Income Grant is not about fostering dependency, nor is it a handout. It is a direct response to current South Africa’s structural economic challenges, particularly widespread unemployment, job insecurity, poverty, hunger and the rising cost of living. By providing a stable and guaranteed income, a permanent BIG can empower individuals, create economic opportunities, and stimulate local economies, contributing to a more just and sustainable society.

UBIG as an instrument of transformation

The UBIG is not simply about poverty alleviation. It is a pillar of economic transformation. When households have predictable income, they spend it in local economies. Spaza shops, street traders, stokvels, and co-operatives benefit directly. Research has shown how grants stimulate township and rural economies, creating a multiplier effect that generates jobs and strengthens local markets.

The UBIG is also part of the broader social wage. It must complement, not replace, public services such as education, healthcare, and housing. The ANC Statement emphasised this: *"We firmly oppose the notion of replacing public services with the basic income support grant. Instead, we view the grant as a complement to public services."* This ensures that UBIG strengthens, rather than undermines, the state's developmental role.

It also carries gendered and generational significance. Women, who shoulder the bulk of unpaid care work, will gain greater autonomy and security. Youth, many of whom are excluded from both education and employment, will have a base of dignity from which to pursue training, entrepreneurship, or work opportunities. Caregivers, whose unpaid labour sustains communities, will be recognised and supported. In this way, UBIG becomes a driver of equality, empowerment, and social cohesion.

Financing UBIG sustainably

The affordability of UBIG is often raised as an objection. Yet the ANC has been clear that UBIG must be financed progressively. The May 2024 Statement affirmed: *"We will explore options such as new progressive tax measures, including a social security tax, while maximising fiscal space by effectively utilising existing resources."*

The ANC Policy Conference Resolution stated: *"Government should come up with a financing strategy within 12 months that identifies new sources of financing which could include a wealth tax, closing tax loopholes and base profit shifting by corporates, a transactions tax and other means to prevent money being taken away from other state programmes."*

This means tapping into wealth taxes, financial transactions taxes, social security contributions, and the reallocation of subsidies that currently benefit the wealthy.

It also means using reserves such as the Gold and Foreign Exchange Contingency Reserve Account. Far from being unaffordable, UBIG is a question of political will and redistribution. South Africa remains a middle-income country with vast inequality. The challenge is not resources but priorities.

The ANC has committed to finalising a comprehensive UBIG policy within two years of the new 7th administration, i.e. by mid 2026. This timeline signals urgency, but also seriousness. Consultation, design, and financing must be carefully managed, but the direction is not negotiable. In the current phase, UBIG is central to advancing the National Democratic Revolution. ■

Tshilidzi Munyai is an ANC Gauteng PTT Member, **Timothy Mashele** is an ANC Mpumalanga PEC Member and **Mluleki Dlelana** is an SACP Central Committee Member.



"Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life"

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela

Majodina's Service Delivery Machine lands in the Northern Cape

■ By **CORNELIUS MONAMA**

MINISTER of Water and Sanitation, Penny Majodina, arrived in the Northern Cape on Thursday to hand over the refurbished Douglas Water Treatment Works and the World Heritage Irrigation Structure (WHIS) Award to the Orange-Vaal Water Users Association. This is part of her Service Delivery Friday programme which seeks to accelerate the delivery of water and sanitation projects and to unblock stalled projects.

Douglas is about 100km on the R357 main road South West of Kimberley, at the confluence of Vaal and Orange River. The Douglas Water Treatment is located central to Douglas town with the Vaal River channel to the North of the plant and the Orange River channel South next to the treatment works. It serves as raw water abstraction supply point for water purification and supply to the town and its surroundings. The existing purification plant was not operating efficiently as it had exceeded its 30-year design life cycle, and it therefore needed urgent refurbishment.

The R28 million revitalisation project scope entailed the refurbishment of the water purification plant, the general rehabilitation work of the plant and the installation of a 200KVA emergency generator. The plant will filter a total



capacity of 4 273 cubic metres per day of purified water. This project will benefit a total population of almost 22 180 and 4 704 households across Douglas.

Minister Majodina also used her time in the province to hand over the World Heritage Irrigation Structures Award to the Orange-Vaal Water Users Association. The prestigious award was received on behalf of the South Africans during 9th Asian Regional Conference of ICID in Sydney, Australia, in recognition of the Douglas Weir.

The Douglas Weir, a 134-year-old engineering marvel that pioneered irrigation-led rural development in the Northern Cape,

was recognised as a World Heritage Irrigation Structure by the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID). It was nominated by the South African National Committee on Irrigation and Drainage (SANCID) and the award was accepted on behalf of the committee by ICID Vice-President and SANCID Chair, Prof Sylvester Mpandeli.

The Douglas Weir will also be included in the ICID Register of World Heritage Structures. This is the first time that a South African irrigation structure has received the award since its inception in 2012.

The weir is an engineering masterpiece, forming the central in-

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infrastructure of the Lower Orange Vaal Water User Association, and supplying irrigation to an area of about 8,113 hectares. It has been providing water to the farming community, creating employment for the local community.

Beyond its contribution to sustainable agriculture, the weir is a key catalyst for poverty eradication, local economic development and rural development. It benefits a population of approximately 20,000 people by supplying crucial drinking water. It supports irrigation across over 7,690 hectares of agricultural land, directly contributing to water security, food security, and local economic development.

The Douglas Weir is South Africa's oldest Vaar River weir, with a rich history dating back to its construction in 1896 (upgraded in 1977). It is a testament to resilient design and long-term planning, having overcome over a century of challenges including floods, droughts, and budget constraints. Remarkably, it is still fully operational to this day, irrigating 8,113 hectares and sup-

porting agriculture in the critical Lower Vaal region.

The award is a testament to South Africa's rich engineering prowess and its ongoing role in sustainable development. This recognition presented an opportunity to showcase our national excellence while reinforcing commitments to

water and food security.

Handing over the award, Minister Majodina said: *"Through this achievement, South Africa walks tall among an elite group of only three African nations, that includes Egypt and Morocco, that have received this prestigious award"*. ■



BCMM Delivers Decent Housing in Mdantsane Zone 18



■ By **THABANG MASEKO**

THE Buffalo City Metro Municipality Mayoral Committee member for Housing, Malibongwe Mfazwe has delivered decent and proper houses in Mdantsane, Zone 18, and surrounding areas of East London.

The ANC's history with housing delivery is marked by the post-apartheid ambition of providing **"Housing for All"**. This is a remarkable achievement when viewed from a quantitative perspective. However, reviews also indicate that many new housing settlements in Buffalo City Metro Municipality are located far from economic opportunities, perpetuating urban sprawl and a mismatch between the location of accommodation and economic activity.

To address these challenges, the government needs to focus on providing safer public transport, adopting a walkable approach

to neighbourhood planning, enforcing by-laws governing house design and energy efficiency, providing waste separation and recycling services, and investing in food markets to improve community health and lower food costs. The government should also consider using locally available materials for building houses.

Zonwabisile Nayo, a victim of

the former Ciskei homeland government, is among the families evicted from their homes by the Ciskei National Independent Party (CNIP). He recalled that, as a schoolchild preparing for school, Ciskei police arrived one morning, forcibly removed his family, and took their furniture and clothing to the Zone 1 Police Station.

According to Nayo: "After more



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than 30 years of struggling to get a house, Buffalo City Municipality listed me and has already assigned me a house number as a beneficiary of the Amalinda housing project, which is in progress. I am very happy as this will restore my dignity. I live alone, as my parents and siblings have passed away.”

Another BCMM housing project beneficiary, Vuyiswa Williams, in Zone 18, Mdantsane, is delighted to have a warm house with a kitchen and a bathroom. She lived in Tambo Park, Zone 15, for over 20 years and moved into her new house just three weeks ago. Williams encourages residents not to lose hope, stating: “The ANC government doesn’t make empty promises.”

A neighbour, Nombongo Mnqanqeni (43), who arrived in Zone 18 in 2024, happily lives with her three children. However, she is disappointed with the steep landscape in front of her house, which prevents residents from parking their cars in the yard.

Nevertheless, she applauds human settlements for building a house for the future of her children. Khanisile Kata, a 31-year-old whose parents passed away, said: “The ANC government has changed my life by enabling me to own a house after many years of waiting.” She was allocated a house in the area through the list provided by her Ward Councillor. Kata highlighted that many houses remain unoccupied, with some people collecting keys and then leaving.

She noted minor issues with electricity, which had not yet been installed. “It wasn’t long ago that we reported this to our councillors, and I can confirm that the electricity poles have already been installed.” ■



Cape Town’s Two-Tiered Reality: Why the DA’s “Best-Run City” IS A LIE

■ By **FAIEZ JACOBS**

CAPE Town is my home. I was born here, raised and live here, and have spent three decades working in and with municipalities across South Africa from Chief Director at the Western Cape Department of Provincial and Local Government during Project Consolidate, to Director of HRD at SALGA, to programme manager at the Development Bank of Southern Africa. I have sat in council chambers, walked flooded alleys in Khayelitsha, convened ward committees in Mitchells Plain, and trained coun-
cillors.

So I speak as both a son of this city and a professional who knows what good local government looks like. And I say this without hesitation: the DA’s “best-run city” slogan is a lie.

The Architecture of Exclusion

The DA has perfected a myth that its governance in Cape Town is efficient, clean, and pro-poor. In reality, it has entrenched apartheid-era patterns of privilege and neglect. Budgetary choices, service delivery patterns, and spatial planning decisions consistently benefit affluent, predominantly



still white suburbs while relegating Black African and Coloured communities on the Cape Flats to death traps, indignity, despair and decay.

This is not opinion. It is fact, borne out by the City's own budget books, infrastructure allocations, and daily tragedies in our neighbourhoods. Cape Town is a city split in two: one polished for tourists and property investors, the other condemned to neglect.

Housing: Proximity Denied

There are more than 400,000 families on Cape Town's housing waiting list. Some, like Cheryl-Ann Smith, applied in 1993 and are still waiting. In Mitchells Plain alone, 15,000 people are on the list.

Yet the City's 2024/25 budget allocates R0 to well-located inner-city social housing in Woodstock, Salt River or the Foreshore despite court orders and the availability of public land. Instead, only R2.55 billion is channelled to peripheral townships like Blue Downs and Atlantis, far

from jobs and schools. Apartheid Spatial planning is not only alive, it is entrenched.

The refusal to release the Tafelberg site in Sea Point for social housing symbolises this betrayal. The DA preserves elite enclaves while forcing working families into two-hour commutes. That is not "best-run"; it is deliberate exclusion.

Water and Sanitation: Apartheid Patterns Persist

Cape Town boasts of "record investment" in water and sanitation, but the allocations reveal who matters most. The Camps Bay Pump Station alone received R427 million nearly three times the sanitation budget for Masi-phumelele, a poor informal settlement.

In Gugulethu, raw sewage flows through streets. In Philippi, groundwater contamination threatens health. In Khayelitsha's "Covid" informal settlement, no sanitation plan exists at all.

Meanwhile, new fixed water and

sanitation charges linked to property values add R300 per month to many township households punishing the poor for services they don't receive.

Energy: Children Dying in the Dark

Only 3% of Cape Town's energy budget is allocated to informal settlement electrification a meagre R254 million. Backyarders have no safe power solutions, and there are no township solar training programmes for unemployed youth.

The human cost is horrific. In September 2023, four children Lihle and Lusindo Dyamdeki, Storm Scholtz and Awam Simanga were electrocuted in Klipfontein Mission. In 2017, two brothers died in Philippi East after touching stray wires from an unrepaired streetlight.

Meanwhile, the DA pours R621 million into an Atlantis solar plant and R1.27 billion into Steenbras hydro upgrades that primarily benefit affluent areas and commercial zones. A "green city" for some, but death by neglect for others.

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Transport: Apartheid Mobility Lives On

Seventy percent of Capetonians use minibus taxis. But the DA spends billions on freeways and CBD projects:

- R940 million for the Fore-shore Freeway,
- R1.96 billion for N1/N2 interchanges,
- R663 million for CBD upgrades.

Meanwhile, after more than 10 years operational, MyCiTi avoids most working-class areas. In Bishop Lavis, children still walk to school along dangerous, unlit roads. In Philippi, winter floods cut residents off from work. Bon-teheuwel's walking and cycling project got R275 million less than a third of what the CBD freeway alone received.

Mobility apartheid is alive. The DA governs for car commuters from suburbs, not domestic workers from Khayelitsha. Taxi owners are being criminalized and poor commuters punished.



Safety: Preventable Deaths

Cape Town's safety budget tops R7 billion, but it does not protect the poor.

- In 2025, a child nearly drowned in Parkwood due to blocked drains.
- In 2021, two-year-old Imthande Swartboo died after falling into an uncovered manhole in Khayelitsha.
- The same year, four children died when a sinkhole collapsed in Nyanga.

- In 2016, Sinxolo Mafevuka was raped and killed in a communal toilet in Khayelitsha because the City failed to provide safe sanitation.

These are not accidents. They are the deadly consequences of neglect.

Budgets That Burden the Poor

Cape Town's 2024/25 budget entrenches inequality:

- Transport (R11.5 bn): benefits CBD commuters.
- Energy (R8.27 bn): favours commercial zones.
- Water/Sanitation (R9.25 bn): skewed to wealthy suburbs.
- Informal electrification: just R254 m, or 3% of the budget.

On top of this, the City introduced multiple fixed charges. Families in Coloured working-class suburbs where property values rose but incomes stagnated now face unsustainable bills.

Public participation? 87% of submissions opposed the budget. The DA ignored them.

DA Myths vs Reality

- **Myth 1:** Clean audits = good governance. Clean audits



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mean books balance. They don't mean toilets flush or drains clear.

- **Myth 2:** Record spend = pro-poor government. Billions flow to CBD freeways, not township streets.
- **Myth 3:** Migration makes inequality inevitable. Leadership is about choices. The DA chooses to protect privilege.

Hypocrisy Exposed

President Cyril Ramaphosa recently said the ANC must learn from DA municipalities. We should learn from anyone. But let us be clear: the DA's "success" is a façade. It governs for privilege, not people. Its clean audits hide dirty streets. Its big projects bypass the Flats. Its PR campaigns mask systemic failure.

Just ask families in Gugulethu who wade through sewage, or mothers in Philippi who bury children electrocuted by stray wires. Ask backyard dwellers in Mitchells Plain who still share buckets in 2025.

That is the DA's Cape Town.

Towards One City, Not Two

Capetonians deserve one city, one standard. That means:

- 72-hour repairs for leaks, 7-day streetlight fixes, 98% refuse collection, potholes



- filled in 7 days in every ward.
- Five inner-city social housing projects financed and delivered within 12 months.
- Safe electricity for backyarders, township solar training for youth.
- Taxi subsidy pilots, Safe School Zones in 50 schools, sidewalks and drainage fixes on the Flats.
- Tariff reform to protect low-income households.
- Ward meetings monthly, minutes online within 7 days, and grievance turnaround of 14–30 days.
- Consequence: councillors and officials who fail must face removal.

Conclusion: Service, Not Spin

Cape Town is not failing because of lack of money or skill. It is failing because of political choices that

prioritise privilege over people.

The DA can spin, crow and boast. But Capetonians live the truth every day: two cities in one metro. One of polished freeways and glossy audits. Another of sewage, stray wires, shack fires, and endless waiting lists.

True governance is not about clean audits or press statements. It is about fairness, dignity and equity. And by that test, the DA fails.

Capetonians like all South Africans deserve better. We deserve one city, not two. We deserve service, not spin. We deserve a government that governs for all of us not just the privileged few.

Faiez Jacobs, Proud but frustrated Capetonian.



Media, Power and the War on Transformation in South Africa

■ By **MOTHUSI SHUPINYANE**

THREE decades after 1994, South Africa still wrestles with the power of narrative. Political liberation may have been achieved, but the power to define reality remains contested. At the centre of this struggle is the media, a space that claims neutrality yet frequently reveals itself as partisan in the ongoing battle over transformation.

This distortion was crystallised in the cherry-picking of the President's remarks during the roll-call with ANC councillors. The President was explicit: he highlighted examples of good work being done in several ANC-led municipalities and spoke with deep concern about the issue of audit outcomes in relation to DA-led councils. His reference was to financial audits, not governance in its entirety, and certainly not to service delivery.

Yet the media, in its predictable haste, chose to focus narrowly on the audit outcomes and then went further, misrepresenting his sentiments as though he had conceded that the DA governs better. This is not a matter of error or misunderstanding; it is a deliberate attempt to exalt white superiority under the guise of neutral reporting.

The hostility displayed towards state-led redress policies, affir-



mative action, preferential procurement, TEFSA and NSFAS, black economic empowerment, exposes the persistence of a deep resistance to dismantling white privilege. The question we face is not whether the media is a “watchdog,” but rather: whose house is it guarding?

Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci explained that ruling classes maintain dominance not only through force, but through hegemony, the shaping of “common sense” by cultural institutions like schools, churches, and the media. In apartheid South Africa, the media was firmly a tool of white capital, reflecting and reinforcing the values of the ruling class. The democratic transition did not

fundamentally alter this structure. Ownership and cultural influence still lean heavily towards these elites of apartheid. Even as more black editors and journalists enter newsrooms, the institutional culture of mainstream media continues to echo the worldview of its historical owners.

Thus, the self-image of the South African media as a watchdog of democracy is misleading. Too often, its posture is that of a guard dog of privilege, quick to bark at state-led transformation while wagging its tail before entrenched monopolies.

One of the most effective weapons in this ideological arsenal is the liberal notion of meritocracy,

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the belief that individuals succeed purely through talent and hard work. In practice, this myth is used to delegitimise black advancement and erase the role of deliberate policy interventions.

The rise of a black middle class is routinely presented as a matter of individual excellence alone. Rarely is it acknowledged that this growth was enabled by affirmative action, preferential procurement, and student funding through TEFSA/NSFAS. The over one million students supported by NSFAS and the 54,000 black-owned companies that benefited from procurement are ignored, as if they never existed.

This selective blindness is not accidental. It sustains the illusion that white superiority is “earned” while black advancement is “undeserved.” By erasing the impact of collective policy, journalism re-packages privilege as merit and transformation as corruption.

French philosopher Michel Foucault observed that power operates through discourse, through what is made visible and what is silenced. South African media operates precisely in this manner.

Consider the silence surrounding the fact that even media houses themselves have benefitted from government advertising and procurement. Consider the reluctance to admit that transformation policies have opened professional doors once bolted shut. Instead, the emphasis falls heavily on state failures, corruption, and inefficiency, real issues, yes, but magnified in ways that overshadow genuine progress.

This is selective amnesia as ideology. It erases victories of transformation while amplifying weak-



nesses, thereby undermining public confidence in the ANC’s historic project. It shifts discourse from the structural injustices of apartheid to the individual failings of democracy.

The media prides itself as the “fourth estate,” a counterbalance to state power. Yet in practice, it frequently protects the status quo rather than challenging it. Investigations into state corruption are necessary and valuable, but where is the same scrutiny for corporate monopolies, for capital flight, for the structural inequalities that remain untouched? Instead of exposing all centres of power, journalism tends to focus narrowly on government, leaving the architecture of private privilege unchallenged.

This is not accidental. It is a survival strategy for an elite class that fears displacement. Transformation policies threaten not only economic structures but also the cultural dominance that legitimises them. Hostility to affirmative action, procurement, and NSFAS is therefore not just ideological, it is existential.

The Setswana proverb “*O tshabe motho*” teaches us that danger comes not only from nature but from people, often those who

appear harmless. In the case of transformation, the danger lies not only in open enemies of progress, but in those who cloak themselves in neutrality while subtly defending white superiority.

The media’s weapon is narrative. Its objective is to frame transformation as illegitimate, black success as unearned, and privilege as natural. To understand South African journalism today is to see it as part of an intellectual onslaught against transformation. It is not merely a matter of bad reporting; it is the reproduction of an ideology that seeks to naturalise privilege and delegitimise redress.

And yet, transformation cannot be erased. Millions of students have been educated, thousands of black-owned companies supported, and a new middle class has arisen, concrete evidence of the ANC’s policies at work.

The real test of our democracy is not whether we have watchdogs that bark at government, but whether we have a press courageous enough to bite into the structures of privilege. Until that happens, South African journalism will remain less a watchdog of the people than a guard dog of white superiority. ■

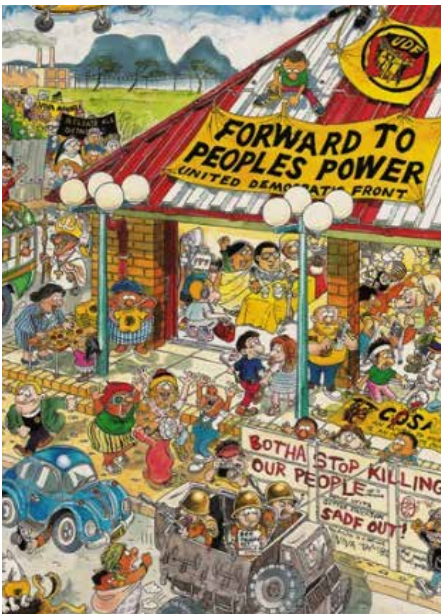
THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

20–26 September 2025

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

21 September 1989 Thousands join second Defiance campaign



On 6 September 1989, we witnessed the election of the last all-white election in South Africa. This election took place under a State of Emergency which had been in force for over 3 years; which prohibited freedom of speech, assembly and association and with arbitrary detention; and a covert culture of assassinations and disappearances. In a move to put forward the real issues concerning the majority, the Mass Democratic Movement embarked on a defiance campaign. The campaign gathered momentum and spread across the country embracing a wide range of issues. On **21 September 1989**, a protest of almost 2000 students was held by the End Conscription Campaign (ECC). On the same day, a consumer boycott

and overtime ban was launched, some 10 000 protesters marched in Durban and more than 5 000 in Oudtshoorn in the Cape.

21 September 1994 RDP White Paper released

Government releases its White Paper on the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP).

22 September 1828 King Shaka Zulu killed

Shaka kaSenzangakhona (1787–1828), Zulu monarch and founder of the Zulu empire, was murdered by his bodyguard, Mbopha, and his two half-brothers Dingane and Mhlangana after a relatively brief period as king of the Zulu people, from 1816. His death came a year after his mother's death.

22 September 2008 Parliament convenes on resignation of President Thabo Mbeki



President Thabo Mbeki resigned as president of the Republic South Africa on Sunday 21 September 2008. Parliament convened on Monday 22 September and accepted his resignation. The African National Congress also tabled a motion notifying the National Assembly on the resignation of Mbeki, and 25 September 2008 was put forward as the date on which the resignation of president would become effective.

23 September 1941 Judge Navi Pillay is born



Navanethem (Navi) Pillay, served as United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights, and was born on 23 September 1941 in Clairwood, Durban. She went to the University of Natal where she graduated with a BA in 1963 and with an LLB in 1965. It was at the University that she joined the Unity Movement. After completing her degree she commenced her legal career by doing her articles in Durban. In 1967,

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Pillay became the first woman to open her own law practice in Natal (now KwaZulu Natal). She provided legal defense for political activists, representing amongst others Phyllis Naidoo in her first case. In 1971, she represented 10 members of the Unity Movement who were charged under the Terrorism Act. Pillay also represented her husband Gaby Pillay who was detained by the Security Police under Terrorism Act. In 1973, she fought and won the right for political prisoners to have access to legal counsel. In the mid 1970's, Pillay defended detained BCM members such as Saths Cooper and Strini Moodley. In 1982, she obtained a Master of Law and in 1988 a Doctorate of Juridical Science from Harvard University. In 1995, Pillay joined the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, and in 1999 she was elected as its Judge President for which she served two four-year terms. Since 2003, she has served as judge on the International Criminal Court. Pillay is co-founder of the South African Advice Desk for Abused Women and was appointed the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on 28 July 2008.

23 September 2019 Jazz veteran Dorothy Masuka passed on

Dorothy Masuka (also known as Masuku) was born on 23 September 1935 in Zimbabwe, to a Zambian father and a mother from KZN. Masuka is known for her contribution to jazz in South Africa and the entire world. Masuka's talent was discovered when she was singing at a school concert at St. Thomas Catholic Boarding School in Johannesburg. At the age of sixteen she signed up at Troubadour Records. During her teenage years,



she released about 30 singles and most of them achieved hit status. This is when she started to be a top recording star. One of her famous song was *'Hamba Nontsokolo'* which created fame and introduced her to professional music. In 1961 Masuka wrote a song to pay tribute to Patrice Lumumba, the first democratically elected president of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). She continued to release more songs until one of her songs about apartheid laws was banned. She then went into exile where she spent time in Malawi and Tanzania. While in exile, she campaigned for the liberation of people through music. At the time of her death, Dorothy Masuka was based in Yeoville, Johannesburg. She died at her home, surrounded by her children and grandchildren, after suffering from hypertension.

23 September 2021 National Theatre of Somalia re-opens

The National Theatre in Mogadishu opened with film screening attended by thousands. The theatre was destroyed by Islamic militants during the civil war, was restored and again destroyed a second time in 2012 with a suicide bombing.

24 September 1938 Nigerian Central banker Sanusi born

The Governor of Nigeria's Central bank (1999-2004) appointed by President Obasanjo, Joseph Oladele Sanusi was born in Ondo state, known for stabilizing and steering the country's banking system.

24 September 1957 Sibongile Khumalo born on this day



On this day Sibongile Khumalo was born in Orlando, Soweto. She was one of the most recognized jazz, classical music, opera and traditional music artists in South Africa. She was launched into the limelight in 1993 when she won the Standard Bank Young Artist Award at the Grahamstown Festival. Born into a music family, she studied music and performed at several honoured occasions, including Nelson Mandela's 75th birthday and the 1994 Inauguration. Khumalo received the national Order of Ikhamanga in Silver. The "First Lady of Song" passed away at age 63 on 28 January 2021.

24 September 2008 Motlanthe elected as President

Following the resignation of President Thabo Mbeki, the National Assembly elected Kgalema

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Motlanthe as the third President of the Republic of South Africa, a position he served in until the elections in 2009.

24 September 2020 Ethiopia starts Bridges programme for Youth employment

Ethiopia started the programme to create 600,000 jobs for young people (80% female), as well as 15,000 small businesses over a period of five years. The programme seeks to train 300,000 young people at Ethiopia's seven industrial parks.

25 September 1974 Viva Frelimo Rallies in SA



The achievement of independence in Mozambique inspired the Black People's Convention (BPC) and the South African Students' Organisation (SASO), to organise a 'Viva Frelimo' rally.

If Portuguese colonialism could be defeated in Mozambique, so could settler-colonialism in South Africa. The idea was conceived by the SASO president at the time, Muntu Myeza. These rallies were the only national campaigns to be staged by SASO and it accelerated tension between SASO and the South African government. On the day of the rallies people turned up in large numbers in Durban and Turfloop. Police arrests followed and many BCM/BPC/SASO leaders were arrested, like Absolom Zitulele Cindi, Sathasivan Cooper, Rubin Hare, Sulayman Ahmed Ismail, Mosioua Gerard Patrick Lekota, Maitshie Nchaupe, Aubrey Mokoape, Sivalingam Moodley, Strinivasa Rajoo Moodley, Justice Edward Lindane, Muntu Myeza, Pandelani Jeremiah Nefolovhodwe, Nkwenkwe Vincent Nkomo, Gilbert Kaborane, Kaunda Sedibe, and Sadecque Variava. They were subsequently charged under the Terrorism Act, after months in detention.

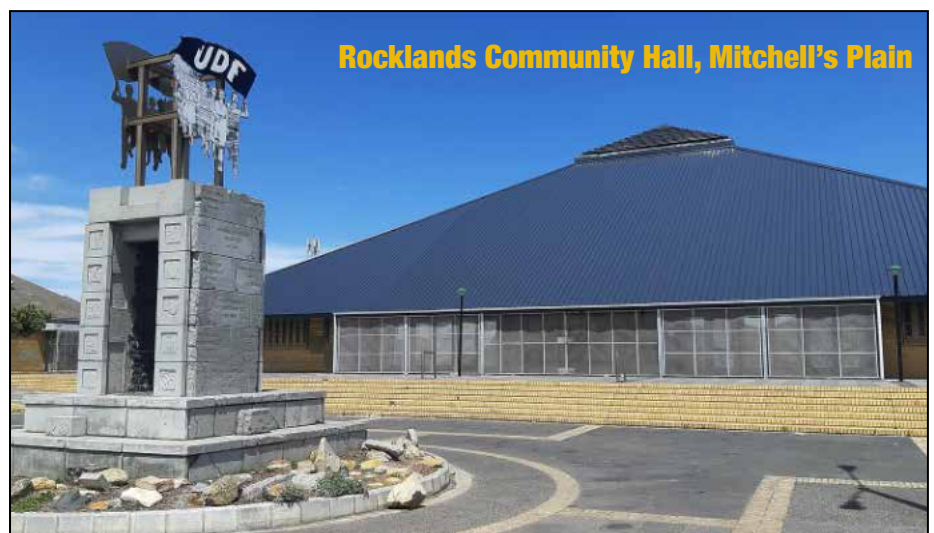
25 September 1977 Steve Bantu Biko Buried

After his killing by the apartheid regime in detention on 12 September 1977, and attempts to hide what happened, Biko's funeral

was the first big political funeral in South Africa since the 1960s. As bus-loads of mourners neared Biko's burial town (King William's Town), they passed Black youths standing solemnly along the road with their clenched fists raised. Prominent white liberals, such as MP Helen Suzman, attended. So did the black American diplomat, Donald McHenry and other international dignitaries. At the funeral, 20 000 people marched and sang freedom songs. For five hours, speakers eulogised Biko. The Reverend Xundu, the Transkei Anglican priest, who presided over the funeral, appealed to God to take sides with the oppressed to overthrow the system.

25 September 2020 Rocklands declared a National Heritage Site

On 25 September 2020, the Rocklands Community Hall in Mitchell's Plain, Cape Town, was declared a national heritage site by the South African Heritage Resource Agency. The heritage site, legally known as Erf 11553, also encompasses the Memorial Square, the library and the Community Healthcare Centre. The Rocklands Community Hall, built by the City of Cape Town Council in 1981, was the venue of an



Rocklands Community Hall, Mitchell's Plain

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historic gathering on 20th August 1983 which saw the establishment of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and signified a turning point in the struggle against Apartheid. The UDF was formed to unite people and organisations across South Africa despite racial, social and religious differences, and called for a united non-racial, non-sexist democratic South Africa.

26 September 1936

Winnie Madikizela-Mandela born



Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, an icon of the liberation struggle, was born in Bizana, Pondoland. Madikizela-Mandela was a staunch opponent of the apartheid government. She was jailed,

harassed and eventually banished to Brandfort whilst her husband was in prison. Her militancy and empathy with the oppressed earned her a title of **“Mother of the Nation.”** Madikizela-Mandela played a role in the founding of the Black Women’s Federation and the Black Parents’ Association; was a member of Umkhonto weSizwe and of the ANC NEC, and a Member of Parliament until her passing on 2 April 2018.

26 September 1916

Mary Smith, Ichthyologist born

On 26 September 1916 artist and ichthyologist, Margaret Mary Smith, was born in Indwe in the Eastern Cape. Ichthyology is the branch of zoology that deals with the study of fishes. Margaret Mary Smith illustrated the book ‘Sea fishes of Southern Africa’ by Prof. J.L.B. Smith, which is regarded as one of the most comprehensive books on fishes in the world.

26 September 1950

SASOL registered

The history of Sasol began in 1927 when a White Paper was tabled in Parliament to investigate the establishment of a South African oil-from-coal in-

dustry. It was realised then that, because South Africa did not have crude oil reserves, the country’s balance of payments had to be protected against increasing crude oil imports. After many years of research and international negotiations, Die Suid Afrikaanse Steenkool, Olie en Gaskorporasie (the South African Coal Oil and Gas Corporation) was formed and registered on 26 September 1950. The company has developed world-leading technology for the conversion of low grade coal into value-added synfuels and chemicals. Today, its operational footprint extends to more than 20 countries and they export to over 100. Sasol is one of the top five publicly listed companies in South Africa and is listed on the JSE and the NYSE.

26 September 2002

Senegalese ferry disaster

The world’s worst civilian ship disaster took place when the Senegalese ferry, Le Jolla, capsized in a storm off Gambia. Officially, 1836 lives were lost (compared to 1500 when the Titanic sunk in 1912). Only 65 people survived the disaster. Nearly half of the victims were from the town of Ziguinchor, Senegal, including 150 secondary school pupils from the town.



THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

20–26 September 2025

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

20 September World Cleanup Day

World Cleanup Day is an annual global social action program aimed at combating the global solid waste problem, including the problem of marine debris. It is coordinated by the global organization **Let's Do It! World**. The headquarters is located in Tallinn, Estonia.

21 September World Alzheimer Day



Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia, a general term for memory loss and other intellectual abilities serious enough to interfere with daily life. It accounts for 50 to 80 percent of dementia cases. It is not a normal part of ageing. Up to 5 per cent of people with the disease have early-onset Alzheimer's (also known as younger-onset), which often appears when someone is in their 40s or 50s. Alzheimer's is a progressive disease, where dementia worsens over time. Alzheimer's has no current cure, but treatments for symptoms are available and research continues.

21 September Bibliodiversity Day

Bibliodiversity refers to diversity and inclusion of all voices in writing and publishing, looking at who tells what stories, and who and what gets published. There is the famous reference to this issue, when

Toni Morrison left Random House publishers in 1983, "*their Black authorship decreased by 99.2%*".

22 September World Car Free Day

As populations grow, urbanization increases and with cities without proper public transport, pollution and our carbon footprint looms large. World Car Free day encourages us to, just for one day, use public transport, cycle, walk, run to get to work or go to the shops. Just for one day.

23 September International Sign Languages Day



The day promotes the linguistic identity and cultural diversity of all deaf people and other sign language users. According to the World Federation of the Deaf, there are more than 70 million deaf people worldwide. More than 80% of them live in developing countries. Collectively, they use more than 300 different sign languages. Sign languages are fully fledged natural languages, structurally distinct from the spoken languages. There is also an international sign language, which is used by deaf people in international meetings and informally when travelling and socializing. It is considered a pidgin form of sign language that is not as complex as natural sign languages and has a limited lexicon.

