



# ANC TODAY

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Conversations with the  
**President**

## 70 Years of the Freedom Charter: A lot has been achieved to implement its provisions

**LECTURE ON THE 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE FREEDOM CHARTER**

BY **ANC NATIONAL CHAIRPERSON GWEDE MANTASHE**

Mbuso Kubheka Region, KZN

**L**ET me start by explaining the rationale behind holding this important lecture on the 70th anniversary of the Freedom Charter.

The reality is that the significance of the Freedom Charter is **contested by various class forces and many parties**. It is contested by approximately **400 political parties** that are registered with the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), with 18 currently holding seats in parliament. Many of these **parties and independents** are breakaway parties from the ANC, and it is likely that more will emerge as we move towards the 2026 local government elections.

This in itself captures a changing

environment that necessitates ANC members to be vigilant. This is crucial because many of these parties, if not all, **contest in the same space as the ANC** and they **recycle ANC policies** to make it difficult for society to identify the actual difference between us and them. Addressing this phenomenon will require an ANC leadership that possesses clarity in articulating what the ANC represents.

It is, therefore, crucial for ANC members and leaders to assist society in differentiating the ANC from individuals who defect to other parties in pursuit of a seat in the municipality, legislature, or parliament. These are practical realities that we cannot afford to disregard as the ANC.

As we engage in the battle of ideas, it is imperative that we **discuss the Freedom Charter candidly**, convey the truth, and acknowledge both our accomplishments and shortcomings without downplaying them.

Through this lecture, we intend to provide a **scientific analysis of the Freedom Charter** by assessing its implementation and highlighting a few of its democratic changes.

At the pinnacle of the Freedom Charter's principles lies a resounding affirmation that **"the people shall govern"**.

This ideal was realised in 1994, when millions of South Africans, regardless of race and gender,



**attained the right to vote for a government of their choice.**

Since then, South Africa has maintained a proud tradition of **7 national** and **6 local democratic elections**, which reflect the collective will of the people. The 2026 local government elections will mark the seventh (7) municipal elections held in South Africa since the demise of apartheid in 1994. We must ensure that an ever-increasing number of South Africans exercise their **right to vote** and never take it granted, as it forms the cornerstone of our democracy.

The 1996 approval of the Constitution as the supreme law of the land meant that no other law or government action can supersede its provisions. This gave effect to the Freedom Charter's clarion call that **"all national groups shall have equal rights"** and that **"all shall be equal before the law and shall enjoy equal human rights"**.

We are actively translating the clarion call that promises, **"houses, security, and comfort"** into reality. The fact that **over four (4) million**

**houses have been constructed** in South Africa through the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and that these have been extended to rural areas highlights our government's dedication to fulfilling this provision.

In accordance with the Freedom Charter's declaration that **"the aged, the orphans, the disabled and the sick shall be cared for by the state"**, in excess of **18 million people** in our country, **including children**, receive **social grants** every month, thereby protecting them from hunger.

Our initiatives to **promote universal and equitable access to quality healthcare** are taking hold, reinforced by the legislative enactment of the National Health Insurance (NHI) which guarantees universal access to quality healthcare services for all citizens, regardless of their socioeconomic status.

The policy of providing no-fee schools up to matric, where learners receive free and compulsory education and food, reflects

the Freedom Charter's vision of **"opening the doors of learning and culture"**. Today, more than nine (9) million children benefit from this policy. Consequently, any individual who leaves school without completing matric does so voluntarily, not because of financial constraints.

The provision of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NS-FAS) enhances our contribution to higher education and technical training, thereby making it more inclusive. Today, NSFAS funds the education of five hundred and sixty-six thousand, five hundred and sixty-three (566 563) students across 26 universities and two hundred and forty thousand, three hundred and ninety-one (240 391) students across 50 technical vocational education and training (TVET) colleges, thereby facilitating their academic advancement.

The effects of this provision are more apparent in rural areas, where a homestead previously known for poverty now produces graduates. In essence, the economic status of a household does not determine the development of a child to full capacity.

The introduction of the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act in 2002 and the Mining Charter in 2004 signalled a significant shift in the country's approach to realising the Freedom Charter's ideal that **"the people shall share in the country's wealth"**. The fact remains that, since the discovery of diamonds in 1867 and gold in the late 1880s, the South African mining industry has been controlled by a few small elites, predominantly owned and managed by white males.

In line with the Freedom Charter's principle that **"the mineral wealth beneath the soil... shall be transferred to the ownership of the**

*people as a whole*", the MPRDA bestowed the mineral resources under the state custodianship for the benefit of all South Africans. Since then, notable progress has been achieved in terms of transformation in the South African mining industry.

For instance, **coal mining** is predominantly black-owned and managed, with significant black ownership evident in sectors such as manganese, gold, and platinum group metals (PGMs). While women were previously excluded from the industry, today over 70000 **women actively participate** in the industry, with some holding executive positions in multinational companies.

Historically, mining-affected communities, particularly black populations, endured dire industry conditions marked by dirtiness, difficulty, danger, and death. However, today, these communities and labour-sending areas are increasingly benefiting from the sizeable and impactful projects developed and implemented by mining companies as part of their Social and Labour Plans (SLPs). Some notable projects that we have handed over in recent years include schools, clinics, water supply infrastructure, police vehicles, roads, bridges, and electricity sub-stations.

This demonstrates our collective determination to abandon the century-old pit-to-port approach to mining in favour of a transformative model.

Notwithstanding the progress we have made, we are mindful of our shortcomings in the implementation of the Freedom Charter.

We acknowledge that our freedom is incomplete as long as poverty, unemployment and inequality persist. The alarming rate of

unemployment demands our unwavering attention at all levels as it erodes the dignity of individuals. It is against this background that in our January 8th statement, we prioritised accelerating inclusive economic growth as critical to resolving the deep-seated challenges of unemployment, poverty, and inequality.

We committed to streamlining the creation of a favourable environment for investment in industrialisation, targeting high-growth industries such as agriculture, manufacturing, mining, tourism and hospitality for accelerated interventions to stimulate job creation.

Resolving the **land question** is another hurdle to our implementation of the Freedom Charter. Despite challenges, we, however, remain committed to facilitating equitable access to land based on the needs of the people of South Africa.

In the lead-up to the 2026 local government elections, we must **engage with the public** on these realities so that they can be able

to make a clear distinction between the ANC and individuals motivated by self-interests.

To effectively serve the people, ANC members and branches are required to be well-versed in the everyday struggles of ordinary South Africans in every community and every ward by engaging in conversations, grasping their grievances, and being aware of their likes and dislikes regarding the ANC.

As a caring organisation that respects the fundamental human rights of all people, **let us partner with government to resolve the everyday challenges confronting our people**, including the water and electricity challenges, poor road conditions, and prevent vandalism of state infrastructure.

In light of today's discussions, it is evident that although substantial advancements have been achieved since the Freedom Charter's adoption 70 years ago, its objectives have yet to be fully attained; **let us persist in our collective efforts until our liberty is obtained.** ■





# The African National Congress commemorates HERITAGE MONTH 2025

■ By **ANC SECRETARY GENERAL FIKILE MBALULA**

**T**HE African National Congress (ANC) proudly joins millions of South Africans in celebrating Heritage Month 2025 under the inspiring theme: ***“Reimagine Our Heritage Institutions for a New Era.”*** This year, we honour the profound legacy of the 70th Anniversary of the Freedom Charter, a living testament that continues to guide our journey of transformation, justice, and unity.

The Freedom Charter, adopted in 1955 in Kliptown by the Congress of the People, boldly proclaimed that ***“The People Shall Share in the Country’s Wealth.”*** It established that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, ensuring that the doors of learning and culture shall be opened, and our heritage shall be restored to the people.

These timeless commitments lay

at the heart of Heritage Month 2025.

This month, we pay heartfelt tributes to the countless men and women, known and unknown, who sacrificed their lives in the fight for liberation. From the wars of colonial dispossession to the fierce anti-apartheid resistance, and the post-1994 struggle for dignity, they form the unbroken thread of our national heritage.

We especially remember those who died in exile, buried far from home yet forever intertwined with South African soil through their sacrifices. They are not forgotten; they are the spiritual architects of our democracy and living embodiments of the Freedom Charter’s enduring promise.

As we celebrate our past, the ANC calls upon all South Africans

to reimagine our heritage institutions as centres of public memory, community empowerment, and future-shaping education. Museums, archives, music halls, community centres, and cultural precincts should be reclaimed and revitalised, not merely as historical relics, but as active instruments of people’s development.

Let these institutions embody the Charter’s vision of equal access to culture, education, and historical redress. May they serve as platforms for truth-telling, healing, intergenerational dialogue, and innovation. The Freedom Charter demands nothing less than the complete restoration of our people’s heritage and the equitable development of our diverse identities.

South Africa is a land where music and struggle walk hand-in-

hand. Our heritage is defined as much by the liberation struggle as it is by song, poetry, dance, storytelling, and ritual. We celebrate the Scorpion Kings Live with Friends concert, held at the beginning of this month, which united thousands in a remarkable display of our musical excellence and progressive spirit.

This event, led by Amapiano pioneers Kabza De Small and DJ Maphorisa, highlighted women artists and youth creativity. It showcased the arts as powerful platforms for expression, economic development, and social cohesion. It echoed the Freedom Charter's vision that **"The doors of learning and culture shall be opened."**

Such public celebrations of our living culture reaffirm that the arts are not luxuries reserved for the elite, but vital instruments of liberation, nation-building, and pride. They create employment, inspire healing, and project South African identity to the world.

Heritage Month also embodies the spirit of **Ubuntu**, our shared identity, and our capacity to overcome division through solidarity. We are a nation of multilingual storytellers, freedom fighters, artisans, and spiritual custodians. Our collective traditions, rural and urban, and indigenous define who we are.

In this spirit, the ANC calls on all South Africans to embrace our unity in diversity by learning about and respecting each other's cultures, heritage, and traditions. By deepening our understanding of one another, we lay the foundation for a more cohesive, peaceful, and prosperous nation. Respecting our differences while celebrating our shared

destiny strengthens the social fabric and advances the vision of a truly non-racial, united South Africa.

On the global stage, South Africa stands as a leading cultural and diplomatic voice, sharing not just talent and tourism, but also values of resilience, community, and reconciliation. Let us nurture and elevate this global cultural citizenship.

As the ANC, we reaffirm our commitment to making the heritage sector a key driver of renewal, national pride, and empowerment. Our vision aligns with the Freedom Charter's core tenet: **"There shall be peace and friendship."**

We are transforming heritage institutions to foster youth employment, entrepreneurship, historical education, and social inclusion. Our strategy is one of reclaiming, restoring, and reimagining, placing people at the centre, honouring their memory, and empower-

ing them to shape the future with pride in their identity.

In this 70th year since the adoption of the Freedom Charter, let Heritage Month 2025 be a decisive moment of rededication to the values of freedom, equality, and unity. The quest for cultural restoration is ongoing, and the pursuit of economic and historical justice persists.

As President Oliver Tambo stated in 1980: *"The Freedom Charter is a statement of objectives to which the majority of our people adhere. That very fact imposes on us the obligation to educate in the spirit of the Charter, even the younger generations."*

Let us fulfill that obligation by preserving the legacies of our heroes, reimagining our cultural institutions, embracing each other's heritage, and building a South Africa that is free, proud, cohesive, and deeply rooted in its people's soul. ■



# OUTCOMES OF RECENT BY-ELECTIONS CONFIRM RENEWAL AND TRUST IN OUR MOVEMENT

■ By **ANC SECRETARY GENERAL FIKILE MBALULA**

**T**HE African National Congress (ANC) celebrates the decisive by-election victories in Ward 4 (Emalahleni Sub-Region, Chris Hani Region, Eastern Cape) and in Ward 34 (Fetakgomo Tubatse Sub-Region, Sekhukhune Region, Limpopo). These results unequivocally reaffirm that the ANC is the dependable choice of the people which is firmly rooted in their struggles, hopes, and determination for a better life.

We thank the community of Emalahleni and Fetakgomo Tubatse, as well as the voters, ANC volunteers, activists, and everyone whose unwavering support has made these victories possible. Your loyalty, commitment, and participation are a testament to

the fact that the ANC is not just trusted but passionately loved by the people as their movement for liberation and transformation. Congratulations to Councillor Thembinkosi Klaas and Councillor Mahlatse Mathipa on their election victories. You must lead with humility, dignity, respect, and honesty; always prioritizing the needs of the people above all else.

These victories come as a powerful prelude to the Special National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting on Local Government and the Roll Call of Councillors Meeting. At this critical gathering, we will redefine the ANC agenda for service delivery, sharpen our interventions, and accelerate the pace of development in line with

our renewal mandate.

The people of South Africa have made their choice crystal clear that they place their faith and trust in the ANC. These results starkly contradict the narratives of decline pushed by naysayers and hostile forces, including their opinion polls. The outcomes are indisputable and firm that the ANC stands stable, united, and effective in delivering results. Our renewal project is succeeding, and the ANC remains the stable force that the people can count on. With every ward retained and every mandate renewed, the ANC recommits to intensifying service delivery, strengthening local government, and ensuring that the people's needs are always placed first. ■



# The Left Axis In Disarray And Leaderless: A Call For Urgent Self-Discovery And Unity

■ By **DR. ZAMANI SAUL, ANC Northern Cape Provincial Chairperson**

**T**HE recent 2026 Local Government IPSOS SA poll results have unveiled a significant shift within South African politics, particularly for left-aligned political parties on the left axis of the ideological spectrum. It is important to note, however, that categorising parties as left-aligned is approached with extreme caution, acknowledging the complexities of the left-right ideological dichotomy and the evolving nature of ideological outlook of modern political parties. Often, parties may employ radical rhetoric associated with the left thought, but substantively their policies and conduct can be regressively oriented. Despite this fluidity, for the purpose of this analysis, the ANC, MKP and EFF are broadly categorised as part of the parties on the left axis in contemporary South African politics. These three parties collectively account for 62.3% of the votes for the 2024 general elections. This election outcome represents a very strong electoral support for the left axis, particularly by the poor and the working class.

The IPSOS election polls project a concerning future for all parties in the left axis, with the ANC anticipated to garner less than 30% of the votes, and both the EFF and MKP facing marginal losses. Conversely, support for the DA and some other right-wing political outfits projected to



increase moderately. These projected trends for 2026 Local Government Elections threaten the 62.3% electoral support for the left axis.

A particularly striking finding from the poll results is that 35% of respondents who intend to vote next year remain undecided. This high percentage marks a historical first since 1994, signaling profound disillusionment within the South African electorate, especially concerning parties on the left axis. This article argues that the current state of the left axis, as revealed by the recent poll results, requires an urgent self-discovery and a concerted push for unity.

The corrosion of the social base

of the left axis is due to fragmentation of the left, which is in turn due to lack of adept leaders. This throws the left-axis in profound disarray. This precarious situation is exacerbated by leadership failures to address the challenges facing the left axis broadly and beyond party politics. Furthermore, the emergence of new left formations, such as Mayibuye i Afrika, and the South African Communist Party's stated intention to independently contest elections, threaten to further fragment and weaken the left axis.

To effectively address the challenges confronting the left axis, it is imperative to establish platforms for meaningful engagements aimed at galvanising the

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**The urgency for unity of the left axis is paramount, not for its own sake, but for the poor and the working class.”**

left towards unity. The existing National Dialogue presents an opportunity for such critical discussions. Leaders must seize this moment to unite the left to advance a coherent progressive agenda. This can be achieved by collectively identifying and pursuing specific minimum goals, which could include advocating for constitutional amendments, specifically amending Section 25 of the Constitution to facilitate expropriation with nil compensation, introduction of radical measures to alleviate poverty, such as implementing a decent basic income grant and other redistributive economic policies. For such unity and collective action to materialise, leaders must transcend individual pride and misplaced arrogance, and prioritise the collective future of the left.

The left axis in South Africa stands at a critical crossroads. The current state of fragmentation and disarray can only be overcome through collective action and an unwavering commitment to unity. By engaging in honest dialogue, identifying shared objectives, and fostering collaboration, leaders have the potential to mobilise the left and advance a progressive agenda that genuinely benefits the poor and working class. The urgency for unity of the left axis is paramount, not for its own sake, but for the poor and the working class. ■



## ***What Would Actually Happen to the Alliance Should the SACP Proceed to Contest Elections Independently Outside the ANC?***

■ By **SEPHOKA DAVID SEKGOBELA**

**T**HE decision of the SACP to contest the forthcoming local government elections in 2026 independent of the ANC should not pin Alliance partners against each other. We need to soberly contextualize probable consequences for both parties of such a disastrous decision by the SACP. The SACP is indeed an independent organisation that is in an Alliance with the ANC, and is not one of the ANC's leagues like the ANCYL and the ANCWL. However, the ANC should not

relent in trying to persuade the SACP to reconsider its decision, because should it indeed proceed, that would dislodge or finish off the ANC's power to govern. It is unfortunate that the SACP has been too scathing in attacking the ANC regarding what it terms *“the sell-out GNU”*, and rhetoric such as, *“the ANC has sold out the masses”*, as if there was any other option under the circumstances.

Despite the differences, we nevertheless still need to approach

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this matter with the sensitivity it deserves, because the SACP might still decide not to go ahead contesting the local government elections outside the ANC. We should expect the possibility of continuing to work together in all fronts as Alliance partners, including campaigning for elections, and subsequent governance. Sanity might prevail even on the eleventh hour, because it is never late to do the right thing, and in that case, the Alliance partners might still campaign together for a decisive victory for the ANC-led Alliance. We therefore need to be careful of what we do or say against each other, because whatever we are concerned and agitated about might not even happen. We should refrain from doing or saying against each other anything that we will regret later. Some things cannot be undone or withdrawn once done or said. We need to be civil and respectful towards one another at all times, as we might still be stuck with one another like Siamese twins. We cannot afford to burn any bridges.

The sacrosanct relationship amongst the Alliance partners that many of us are wishing for to the extent of being delusional about is at its lowest ebb ever. Rehashing history of the SACP and/or the Alliance, or, quoting (sometimes out of context) Karl Marx, Lenin, Che Guevara, Fidel Castro, etc. is insignificant, and bears no relevance to the Alliance if the SACP decides to go solo in the next elections. We can say whatever we like, and/or invoke terms such as, “*counter-revolutionary*”, “*reconfiguration of the Alliance*”, etc., but the reality is that, contesting elections against the ANC by any of the Alliance partners would further diminish votes for the ANC. Even proponents of those terms



and phrases can hardly define them in clear and unambiguous terms to the understanding of everyone, including themselves.

The ANC is arguably like a huge elephant, but even the elephant would finally be finished off if everyone slices a pound of flesh from it. If the SACP would be contesting elections on its own in the forthcoming elections, it would, just like all breakaway parties – UDM, COPE, EFF, MKP, and a variety of other smaller parties, be fishing mainly from the same pond, i.e. the ANC electorate, and further contributing to reducing the ANC to a shadow of its former self. Needless to say, the SACP itself would also suffer humiliating defeat, because the two are stronger together, not the other way around. Moreover, in that case, the SACP would not only be fishing from the same pond with the ANC like the others, but would be fishing directly out of the “*ANC bucket*”, which is the ANC constituency, because

most, if not all SACP members, are also ANC members as well. On the other hand, some members of the ANC are also members of the SACP.

The ANC tolerated dual ANC-SACP membership, because the two organisations never contested elections against each other as adversaries in the past. Of importance is to note that the ANC Constitution cannot be applied selectively. Any member of the ANC who campaigns and/or votes for any party other than the ANC would not be treated differently from Jacob Zuma, who was subjected to disciplinary proceedings for breaching the ANC Constitution, and subsequently expelled from the ANC for campaigning for another political party in the previous elections. Jacob Zuma was found guilty of two charges of violating ANC Constitution – contravening **Clause 25.17.13** of the ANC Constitution by joining and supporting the so-called MK Party, which is not in

alliance with the ANC, and, contravening **Clause 25.17.17.4** by endorsing and campaigning for MKP in the previous elections.

How would those comrades who are currently enjoying dual membership of both the ANC and SACP vote in the forthcoming local government elections if the SACP would also be contesting the elections? If the SACP would be contesting elections, members of the ANC, who are also SACP members, might campaign for the SACP, as opposed to the ANC, and in that case, what would make the SACP different from MKP and/or any other political party such as the DA? In simple terms, the SACP would be poaching ANC voters.

When it comes to campaigning for the elections, how would members with dual membership campaign for both the ANC and the SACP? Shouldn't members of the SACP, who are also members of the ANC, first have to resign from the ANC before campaigning for the SACP? Wouldn't anyone who would be campaigning for the SACP in the forthcoming elections whilst still a member of the ANC be doing exactly what Jacob Zuma was expelled from the ANC for?

Having said that, we need to be sympathetic and compassionate, and not underestimate the dilemma of dual membership holders, because they like both the ANC and the SACP. Having to choose between the two might not be that easy for some of them, and might just decide to stay away from the polls, because some of them spent better part of their lives as members of both the ANC and the SACP. They could be likened to children whose parents are divorcing, who often do not know which parent to come with – the

mother or the father, because they love both parents equally.

Therefore the sooner the decision of the SACP to contest the elections independent of the ANC is clarified and finalized, the better. No tit-for-tat spats between Alliance partners would serve any purpose. There is equally no one in the SACP who is clarifying this conundrum or giving a sensible direction in that regard. Thus the signs of true leadership deficit are glaring. There is a saying that *“you cannot have your cake and eat it”*. It has to be clear whether the SACP is coming or going.

The timing of the SACP decision is misguided, because both the ANC and SACP need each other now more than ever before. The ANC lost the 2024 national elections with the Alliance still intact. What then gives people false impressions that the two parties would perform better whilst divided? It goes without saying that the ANC and the SACP would do better together than divided. The two organisations would be adversely affected by the ill-informed decision of the SACP to contest the elections. There is a saying that, *“unity is strength”*, and, *“united we stand, divided we fall”*. How would both organisations fare in the elections if they would be contesting against each other? This could hasten the end of both the ANC and SACP in government. There will be no winner at all in this instance.

The ANC and its Alliance partners, especially the SACP and COSATU, have been experiencing falling voter numbers since 2016 local government elections, losing Metros like Tshwane. What more would happen if the ANC has to face elections on its own, because the SACP is intending to contest the elections on its own,

and is also busy influencing the working class to turn against the ANC in the forthcoming elections? Whilst campaigning, there is no love lost amongst political adversaries. In the heat of the moment, unsavoury terms are sometimes exchanged against each other. Above all, to contest the elections, the organisation needs lot of resources. Partaking in elections has become an expensive exercise, not only in South Africa, but throughout the world. There are funders whose agenda is to destabilize the ANC, just like the Oppenheimers did in the previous national elections. They did not fund smaller parties' like BOSA and Rise Mzansi's campaigns because they had better policies, but simply because they would bring down the ANC to under 50%, which indeed happened.

In conclusion, fears of the total collapse of the ANC alliance with the SACP are real. Provocative, hostile tone, and unsavoury terms used by the SACP General Secretary at every conceivable platform to describe the ANC, e.g. *“arrogant”*, *“bullying”*, *“neo-liberal”*, etc. coupled with innuendos and insinuations, are not reconciliatory, or, showing intention of trying to salvage the Alliance. He needs to tone down. The SACP GS is continuing to talk about purported, but unproven abusive relationship the SACP is allegedly continuing to endure in Alliance with the ANC. As much as most people would like parties to reconcile for the sake of the Alliance, it looks like we are trying to close the stable long after the horses have bolted.

If the SACP decides to contest elections, what would still be the purpose of the Alliance? It looks like the Alliance would be of no significance if parties would be vying for the same electorate. ■



# Economic Statecraft in Action: Forging Prosperity from Principle

■ By **FAEIZ JACOBS**

**C**OMRADE President Cyril Ramaphosa's weekly letter, "*A foreign policy that always faces forward,*" is a timely clarion call for a nation at a crossroads. We navigate a geo-economic landscape of sharp opportunity and profound shock. The promising deals on clean energy and manufacturing advanced at TICAD9 in Japan stand in stark contrast to the punishing new U.S. tariffs on our exports which will test our market-diversification thesis and our agility in trade defence, standards diplomacy, and value-chain repositioning.

TICAD remains one of the most consequential platforms for Africa–Japan cooperation, with Japan and co-hosts (UN, World Bank, AUC, UNDP) positioning new capital, technology, and skills pipelines. In Yokohama, Tokyo signalled intent from financing to AI skills, while firms like Isuzu Motors South Africa publicly sketched plans to make our country a continental truck hub, scaling African volumes from 22% toward 45% over the next few years.

This moment demands more than a forward-facing posture; it demands a forward-moving execution engine. Our foreign policy, respected for its unwavering principles and progressive internationalism, must now convert that hard-won credibility into the concrete gains our people demand: trade, investment, industrialisation, and jobs.

Our history as a liberator and peacemaker from our own struggle to the mediation of conflicts in Lesotho, the Horn of Africa and peacekeeping has given us a voice of moral authority. Now, we must use that voice as a tool for economic liberation, to open markets and secure tangible prosperity for the masses. Our foreign policy is not a distraction from our problems at home; it is one of the most powerful tools we have to fix them. But we must use it smarter, harder, and with a single-minded focus on the economic well-being of all South Africans.

**The National Interest: Unity of Purpose in a Divided World**  
Our national interest is clear and

non-negotiable: it is the relentless pursuit of a better life for all South Africans, underpinned by economic growth, job creation, and social justice. This requires a stable, peaceful, and rules-based international order. Our stand at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for the Palestinians is not separate from this mission; it is its foundation. It affirms to the world that we are a sovereign, predictable nation that upholds international law a key pillar of investor confidence.

We must be vigilant against those, both internally and externally, who seek to exploit our domestic challenges and divisions for their own narrow interests. They weaken our national project. Our strength lies in our unity of purpose. Every arm of the state, every alliance, must be directed towards defending and advancing this unified national interest. Our National Interest Framework (2022) instructs us to forge alliances that defend and advance the national interest, not as performative non-alignment, but as hard-nosed, outcome-oriented statecraft.

### Bridging the Execution Gap: One Government, One Goal

The commitment of our leaders and missions is not in question. The breakdown occurs in the transition from a handshake to a hard investment. Structural bottlenecks energy instability, port congestion, and visa delays actively undermine the promises our diplomats make.

The solution is a radical alignment of the state. We see green shoots, but we must synchronise DIRCO, the Presidency, the dtic, investment agencies, and the private sector into a single, ruthless economic diplomacy machine. Crucially, **our diplomatic missions abroad must be economic, modernised and empowered to act not just as promoters, but as the eyes, ears, and voice of South Africa Inc., providing critical feedback to pressure domestic departments to fix the bottlenecks they identify.** This closed-loop system is essential.

### A Practical 10-Point Plan for Groundbreaking Execution

This is not a theoretical wish list. It is a directive for action, a toolkit for our cadres on the front lines.

1. **Focused Sector Offensives:** Each key mission will be mandated with two priority sectors (e.g., Japan: hydrogen & auto components; UAE: halal food & green steel). Sector leads will have binding quarterly targets for investor leads, MOUs, and export growth.
2. **National Deal War Room:** Establish a single, secure national Deal Pipeline (a CRM system) to track all international engagements. A cen-

tralised “Deal War Room,” chaired by the Presidency, will hold weekly meetings to unblock bottlenecks, leveraging mission reports to hold domestic departments accountable.

3. **AfCFTA Industrial Catalysis:** Move beyond rhetoric. Missions across Africa must be distributors and facilitators for South African products. We will use Rules of Origin to build Pan-African value chains that we anchor, particularly in vehicle manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, and processed minerals, turning the AfCFTA into a job creator for our factories.
4. **Standards & Market Access Diplomacy:** Launch a proactive campaign to mutually recognise standards with key partners (EU, GCC, UK). Empower the SABS to set up pre-compliance labs so

our exporters can pass EU or Japanese certification in Gqeberha or Ekurhuleni, not in Berlin or Tokyo. This removes a major non-tariff barrier.

5. **De-risking & Strategic Finance:** Scale up ECIC cover for new market entrants. Missions must aggressively secure co-financing lines with development finance institutions in Japan, the GCC, and the BRICS New Development Bank to fund strategic projects in infrastructure and energy.
6. **Logistics & Mobility Diplomacy:** Negotiate for fifth-freedom air rights and dedicated cargo slots on key trade routes. Implement a guaranteed 48-hour business visa service in all priority missions to facilitate the swift movement of investors and professionals.



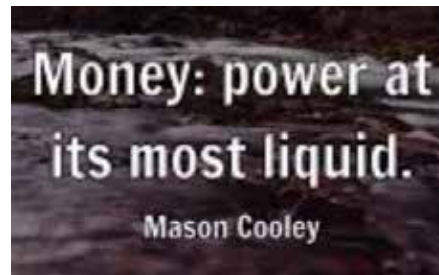
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7. **Integrated Intelligence Corps:** Each mission will produce a weekly digest of actionable intelligence tenders, regulatory shifts, and new opportunities fed directly into the national Deal Pipeline. We will deploy AI tools to scan global procurement portals, giving our companies a competitive edge.
8. **Diaspora & Sovereign Wealth Engagement:** Create structured diaspora investment bonds and clubs. Missions will be tasked with formally introducing our national project pipeline to sovereign wealth funds and large pension funds, translating our diaspora's patriotism into investment.
9. **Smart Supply Chain Diversification:** In response to external shocks, missions must actively help our industries "friend-shore" supply chains for critical inputs (like semiconductors or vaccine APIs) towards reliable partners in India, Korea, and ASEAN, enhancing our economic resilience.
10. **Results-Based Performance Contracts:** We will measure what matters: the value of closed deals, jobs created domestically, and the number of standards agreements signed. The performance agreements of heads of mission and trade attachés will be directly tied to these economic outcomes.

### From Words to Wins

The President's vision requires immediate action. As a matter of urgency, we must:

- Publicly launch the two prior-



ity sectors for our top 20 missions.

- Operationalise the MVP of the national Deal Pipeline.
- Secure three key standards MOUs with partners in the EU, GCC, and East Asia.
- Establish guaranteed 48-hour visa lanes in six strategic posts: Tokyo, Abu Dhabi, Doha, Mumbai, Singapore, and Lagos.
- Direct missions in Mexico, Canada, and ASEAN to find new buyers for products hit by U.S. tariffs.

### The Bottom Line: Our Legacy is Our Prosperity

Our principled foreign policy is

the bedrock upon which we will build our economic future. It is the source of our credibility and our competitive advantage. As Comrade President says: *'This is not about "balancing" between global powers; it is about advancing South Africa's interests with every tool and every relationship at our disposal'.*

This is a call to action for the entire movement and the state. Let us empower our missions, align our government, and harness the legacy of our international standing to deliver the prosperity our people deserve. Let us face forward, with our eyes wide open and our hands firmly on the levers of economic power.

The time for asymmetric, innovative deal driven economic statecraft is now. ■

**Faiez Jacobs** is a member of the ANC Gaby Shapiro Branch.



# THE VAAL UPRISING – IMPLICATIONS FOR POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

■ By **GEORGE MAGOMA**

**I**N the ANC TODAY Edition of 29 August 2025 comrade Khulu Mbongo took us an erudite expedition of the 1984 Vaal Uprising. With vividness he detailed how the events that followed would shape and influence the trajectory towards the future democratic dispensation. This was the beginning of the gradual fall of apartheid and the dawn of a new democratic order based on the will of the people.

This epic period – a turning point in South Africa’s liberation history which shook the foundations of apartheid – contributed immensely towards building a people-centred and people-driven local government as opposed to the odious Bantu administration apartheid appendages. The 41st anniversary of the Vaal Uprising is commemorated in the context of the 2026 local government elections, a fragmented body politic with diverse and parochial interests not aligned to the will of the people, and most importantly the enemy of poverty, high inflation, unaffordable water and electricity rates which were salient features of the time. And rejected by the people. The phantom of the past is haunting us.

These struggles were in addition to the broader struggles against the racist tri-cameral and Bantustan systems of divide and rule, the heavily militarised machinery of oppression and disenfran-



chisement against universal suffrage, democracy, freedom and justice.

The commemoration of this milestone, which changed the course of history happens at the time when the African National Congress (ANC), in the age of consultation meets with its representatives at local government to account and assess the work done since the last local government elections. Dubbed “a Roll Call”, this session is critical for the ANC and the people of South Africa, amidst a declining local government with

huge ramifications on its service delivery legislative mandate. This is an opportunity for every councillor to account. Also, it is a platform to assess the efficacy of local government as a vehicle to invest in people for the better life for all, to extricate the poor from the abyss of poverty and degrading unemployment.

Since the advent of local government which the 1998 White Paper on Local Government defined as a service delivery coalface, 2025 is a period of the review of the 1998 legislation upon which local

government pivots and the review of the country's constitution as a transformative instrument to give meaningful effect of the Freedom Charter on the occasion of its 70th anniversary.

It is a challenging moment for the ANC which experiences electoral decline on account of many factors and an assault on its body to emasculate it at the polls through a well-coordinated neo-liberal and right-wing agenda of anti-transformation, nostalgia to the apartheid minority rule and the reversal of the achievements of the 31 years of democracy. It is through this Roll Call that the ANC rebuilds itself through a process of introspection and building an ethical leadership capable of advancing the aspirations of the people.

The 1984 struggle was led by a hegemon of student, religious, civic, business, youth and academic organisations based on unity. Comrade Khulu's seminal exposition of the period elicits two important questions. This article attempts to respond to those polemics. If not responded to, there is a serious risk of defeating the programme of unity, renewal and building an ethical, capable and developmental local government.

The struggle was waged from all angles with the formation of the Congress of the South African Trade Unions (COSATU), South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO), Congress of the South African Students (COSAS), United Democratic Front (UDF) and the faith-based organisations united under the South African Council of Churches (SACC) under the context of the church and the class struggle, and unity.

The post-apartheid South Africa



**“The Roll Call is about bringing together all ANC councillors from across the country under the leadership of the National Executive Committee to review, guide and accelerate service delivery with accountability at the centre.”**

President Cyril Ramaphosa

had enormous implications for the ANC and the country. In 1991 the UDF was disbanded. SANCO remained, existing alongside an ANC branch.

New tendencies emerged, posing an existential threat on the life of the ANC. The victory of the ANC and the period post-1994 became a Pandora's Box for the ANC and the people. The liberation movement splintered. The ANC understood this significant milestone as a period of reconstruction and development, to reverse the vestiges of apartheid, socio-economic transformation and system which elevated the people to the apex of development. A system of corruption emerged, with voracious vultures hovering over meagre resources earmarked to develop communities.

SANCO's role dissipated, others opportunistically using it as a revolutionary watchdog over the ANC. The struggle against apartheid was based on the aspira-

tions of the people, progressive civil society and the complementarity of the tripartite alliance, a citadel for the liberation struggle and working class unity. Today, the alliance is at its weakest, with the SACP contesting local government elections, weakening a fortress which was a weapon for the demise of apartheid, a vehicle for change and a bulwark against forces opposed to transformation.

The country finds itself in a very difficult and precarious position. The Vaal Uprising was against the rent increment, culminating in the rent boycott and rejection of apartheid tentacles of Bantu administration. The culture of non-payment of services, malicious damage to state infrastructure, entitlement is institutionalised and pervasive. Is this on account of the events of the 3rd September 1984 and the period of ungovernability and unworkability as the ANC's war chant at the time?

## VIEWPOINT

Post 1994, did the ANC fail to educate the people on the essence of the weapon of the rent boycott which was designed to weaken apartheid? Or does the populace understand this as payback time? Or is the ANC trapped in between with so much adverse ramifications on building a capable local government that needs revenue to meet its objectives?

How do we define patriotism in the context of payment for services notwithstanding the ravages of unaffordable rates, poverty and an exponential municipal debt? And a putrid stench of sewer that flows through the streets of the Vaal?

These are some of the questions that the ANC and progressive forces need to urgently respond to in order to fortify the unity of the alliance, build a citizenry capable of defending the democratic state and its achievements, instil class consciousness, re-steer the liberation movement from the detour of destruction and the cancer of corruption, and a weak local government which accounts for voter apathy and the ANC' electoral decline.

Can the ANC survive on its own? As the vanguard of the liberation struggle, in the moment of this difficulty characterised by waning support, disintegration of the alliance, jobs bloodbath, collapsing infrastructure and many other challenges the ANC must redeem itself, win the confidence of society and lead with the alliance in the same way it was able to defeat the monster of apartheid. This can be done by strengthening the alliance, leading with society, deepening ethical leadership and de-weeding the rot within.

The apartheid period was difficult

with no state power. The victory over apartheid had bred a new enemy which inhibits the National Democratic Revolution (NDR). The ability to change everything resides in the lessons and the power of unity, the common purpose of development and the essence upon which the ANC exists, the potency of the alliance in leading socio-economic transformation.

The commemoration of this milestone should be purposeful with no act of chest beating and triumphalism. As the ANC approaches the 2026 local government elections the Review of the 1998 White Paper on Local Government should be understood as a process to empower local government. Otherwise the struggles of the generation of 1984 will be obsolete and a reversal of the gains and struggles which the changed the course of history.

The spark that was ignited in the Vaal snowballed like a fireball which engulfed the entire country. The people were united for

freedom, and this unity is needed today.

In commemoration of this day the ANC should pay homage to those who fell at the murderous hand of the apartheid regime, salutes those who prosecuted the liberation struggle with unity, purpose and discipline in the interest of the people against a corrupt minority apartheid government. As we commemorate this day, let us give answers to these difficult questions through a candid process of introspection through a Roll Call of accountability and the assessment of the movement's capacity to drive development. For the 2026 elections and beyond, the ANC needs to deploy capable, visionary and ethical leaders chosen by the people.

The culture of entitlement, non-payment of services guised as the "Asinamali kodwa siyabadala" of 1984 must die. Corruption must die. In this way we will build the capacity of the state and an effective organisation. ■



# The Renewal of the ANC as Leader of Society and Beacon of Hope for the People of the Eastern Cape is a matter of do or die for the Congress Movement

■ By **VUSUMZI VUSIE MBA**



**I**N the past few days on the way to the local spaza shop in my area I bumped into my childhood friends Soso and Thobelani conversing about the poor service delivery and corruption in the Buffalo City Municipality. I was shocked and equally taken aback by their conversation because they hardly talk about politics and socio-economic issues, a phenomenon that is for-  
eign in our decades of friendship.

For the first time in my life and as opinionated as I am, I kept quiet and decided to listen and

empathise with their sentiments, because I am also affected.

I was surprised by the emotive nature of the conversation as they were articulating their views on the subject matter. Their conversation was in the main about the state of decay and the dilapidating infrastructure in King Williams Town and the entire Border Region including Queenstown.

What I took from the conversation is that the people of the Eastern Cape, particularly in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality,

need service delivery and quality leadership that understands and appreciates the challenges they face – a leadership that appreciates the administrative and political complexities of the Eastern Cape.

This reminds me of the remarks made recently by the Eastern Cape Provincial Treasurer of the ANC, Zolile Williams in his capacity as the MEC of Cogta where he likened the state of municipalities to “graveyards of broken promises” and warned the leadership of the ANC in the Buffalo City of a possibility of a coalition government come 2026 local government elections if their conduct does not change. His remarks stem from a recently held chaotic virtual council meeting where ANC councillors hurled insults at each other, undermining the decorum and etiquette of the council.

Their conduct (councillors) was an antithesis of the values upon which the ANC was found and undermines the objectives of the ANC policy document titled “*Through an eye of the needle*” which explains the calibre of leaders that the ANC should deploy in strategic positions in society alas there seems to be lack of understanding of the contents of this

document by the said ANC councillors. It is my considered view that the latter should serve as an indictment to the ANC structures as this completely undermines the ANC's renewal program and its position as a **"leader of society"**.

The renewal of the ANC as leader of society and beacon of hope for the people of the Eastern Cape is a matter of do or die for the congress movement. This means that the ANC must be intentional about the calibre of leaders and technocrats it deploys in strategic positions.

The latter hinges on sound political leadership and empowered branch membership that understands societal challenges and proposes solutions to the structures of the ANC, which are not banal. An engaging and listening leadership precedes the understanding of societal challenges.

The recent visit by the Deputy Minister of COGTA and MEC of COGTA in the Eastern is indicative of a listening leadership and a municipality in crisis. The basis of this constitutional intervention is to support the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality in strengthening governance, financial management and service delivery mechanisms. The support comes in response to challenges faced by the municipality, including poor service delivery, poor financial performance and governance.

There is a correlation between a failing municipality and the lack of capacity of both the political and administrative leadership at its helm. Therefore, the crisis in the BCM reflects an organisation in crisis in the Walter Rubusana Region. This crisis warrants a



political intervention by the structures of the ANC in the region.

As the ANC prepares for the Walter Rubusana regional conference, the branches must acknowledge that society is in crisis, the future of their children is in their hands, things are falling apart, and this requires a certain calibre of leaders to rescue the ANC and by extension the Buffalo City Municipality.

At a governance level, these leaders must promote principles of good governance such as financial accountability, ethical leadership, transparency and implement processes and systems for effective performance management. A type of leadership that is honest enough to acknowledge the challenges but work towards addressing them not in air-conditioned offices but through the participation of the Buffalo City citizenry.

The latter has always been at the centre of the ANC's existence because it values the importance of public participation not as compliance exercise but as the

value-based political, social and constitutional process. We need ANC leaders who will not mollycoddle councillors but ensure that they report back to communities as doing so ensures effective governance and community accountability.

At a political level the expectation is that they should mobilize members of society under the banner of the ANC. Secondly, to conscientize society and membership and lastly to advance the interests of the people.

Those who will be elected should know that their task is to reposition the ANC as a leader of society and a beacon of hope. They should serve as servants of the people rather than positioning themselves for political patronage and advancing their personal interests. When there is a partnership built upon foundational values of trust, honesty and respect between the ANC and society, the citizenry will in turn ensure that the ANC **"leads and lives"**.

In the absence of leadership that

## VIEWPOINT

does not espouse the foundational values canvassed above, the citizenry will lose confidence and hope in the ANC and when it matters most, it will most likely look the other way.

It is my wish as a Buffalo City resident that as branches of the ANC in the Walter Rubusana Region

prepare for the upcoming conference that they emerge there with a leadership that will inspire confidence and restore the ANC as a beacon of hope and not a leadership that will perpetuate the status core.

The challenges of the Buffalo City Municipality and the Region-

al ANC are complex and dynamic and need leaders who are products of the theatre of struggle and auditoriums of institutions of higher learning who will be able to grasp the organisational concept of renewal and further address the issues that my friends who are members of society are concerned about.

## POLICY, MONITORING, EVALUATION & RESEARCH (PMER)

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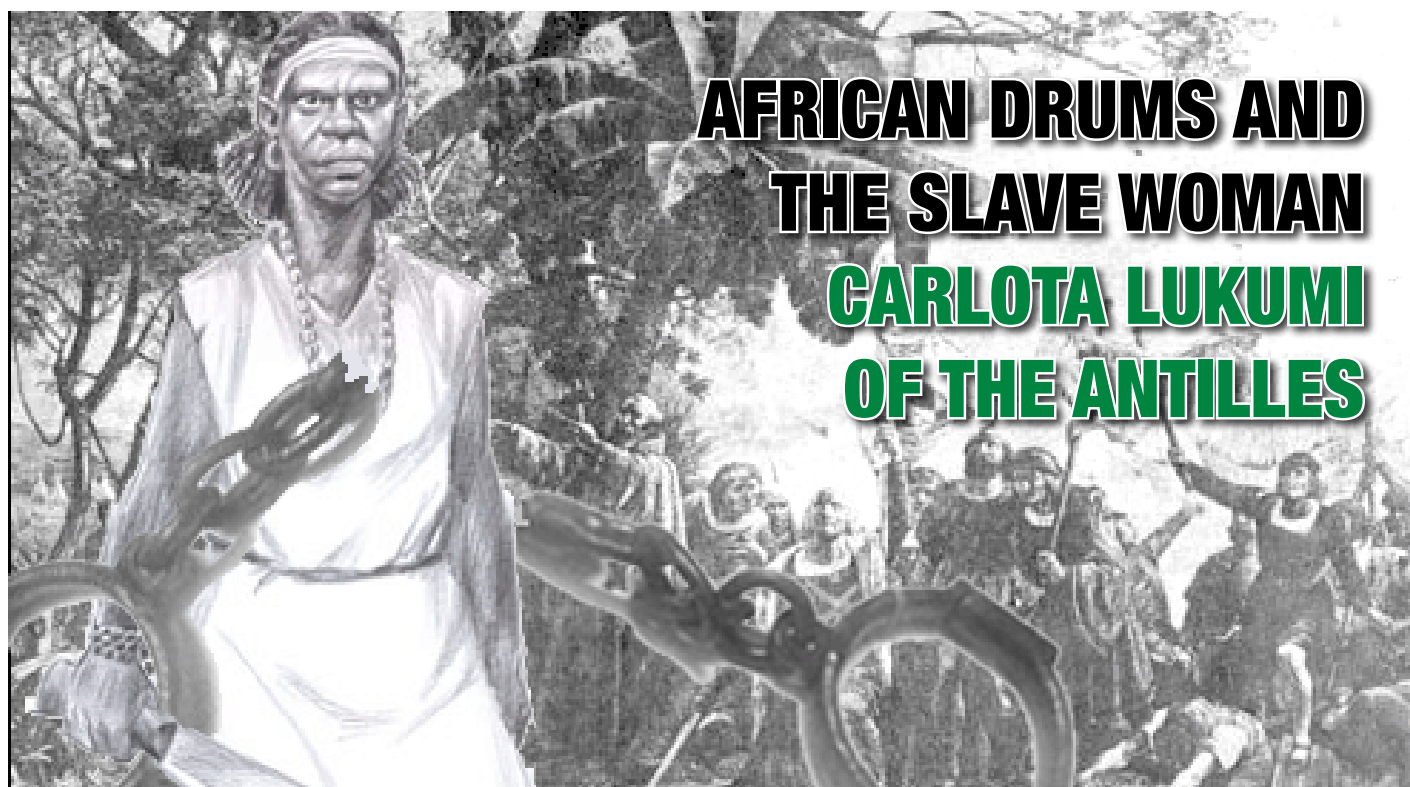
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**Issues will be escalated to the  
relevant department, municipality,  
or province.**



Issued by the ANC, Chief Albert Luthuli House, HQ





## AFRICAN DRUMS AND THE SLAVE WOMAN CARLOTA LUKUMI OF THE ANTILLES

■ By **AMBASSADOR PHATSE JUSTICE PIITSO**

**S**PECTRE of epochal revolution, pantheon of sacred treasures of humanity struggles, the symbolic beauty of a slave woman, Carlota Lukumi, colossus of historical significance, illuminating future society of freedom. Like ancient Egyptian flower, thunder of heavenly and earthly creation, born and cradled by an African woman, testimony of a legendary slave woman, we cannot tell in written words.

Mother of our homeland Africa, ascending the temple of Angels, sacrificial lamb for human freedom, in the realms of the dead and the living, no chapel to make offerings, shadows of invincible mortals, heartbeat no more, uncompromising pathways of the journey of necessity, steadfastness and resoluteness, immense example of endurance and selflessness, steeped in unparalleled ethos of bravery and heroism. In

the milepost of history, treasure store of resilience and courage, surmounting difficulties, triumph of humanity struggles.

Echoing through history, untold epic battles by battalions of warrior slave women, from Yoruba village of the Western African region of Nigeria and Benin, lured from the kindred heart of her mother, at the age of ten, through nightmarish dreadful waves of the Atlantic ocean, tormenting journey of the middle passage, born free to be a slave, atrocities of the slave labour in the hands of savage colonial masters, maroons in the mountain forest of the unknown, no tears to bathe, dreams of a future without hope.

Age of shifting paradigms of consciousness, drawing the line in the sand, harrowing squalor of slavery, beginning of new struggles for development of human society, sparks of revolutionary

flames by an emboldened African slave woman, hewing blows against the enemy, wielding machete in the mist of patriarchal chauvinism, ours struggles for freedom. Our mother, Carlota Lukumi, Triumvirato, in sugar cane plantations, Matanzas, shaking foundations of the world of feudal oligarchy, homeland is humanity.

The slave woman Carlota and the African drums, mastering the art of the creation of music, its melody, rhythm, relics, profoundest of the human soul, therapy of a heart at the right place, tranquility we cannot do without, expressing the inexpressible, in the wilderness away from home, a new home in the Antilles, blistering sun in the plantation, dancing songs not just for themselves, but future generations. African drums, source of strength and inspiration, organising fellow slave woman and men, art of war we cannot take, what was born free

remains free.

Magnanimity of tales of heroism, mothers of the nation, unparalleled history of acts of bravery, unmatched prowess, indispensable courage, uncompromising determination, hatching conspiracies for liberation, outshining the master, toppling the colonial mayor of Matanzas, Julián Luis Alfonso Sole, killing dozens of slaves owners and families, burning houses and infrastructure, new dawn of freedom struggles.

Life or death, besieged by merciless colonial army, mounting aggression by the Yankee, counterposing an impending world revolution, genocidal crimes against humanity, the slave people, heavy casualties, the hunter becoming the hunted, dozens colonial authorities and slaves dead, many captured and taken prisoner, some fleeing to the tropical forest mountains, seeking refuge amongst the local Taino communities, establishing independent maroon republics. Shockwaves through the American Peninsula, catastrophe of skirmishes between African slaves and European colonialism.

Renowned journalist and writer, Martha Rojas, in her majestic account, '**Carlota the rebel**', says: *"For the white slave owners, what they heard that night sounded like the drums playing in the quarters to call ancestors. But the truth is that, at eight that Sunday evening, the 5th of November, Carlota, Narciso and Felipe, as well as Ganga Manuel, had their machetes sharpened.*

*That moment, the target was the manager of the plantation, his overseers, and lackeys, they were the first to feel the edge of the steel, their pistol and shotguns snatched, their armaments too, Carlota and her Captains, following the plan they had secretly devised, went from Triumvirato to the Acana plantations, to set the slave woman Fermina free, a veteran leader, chained by her masters with shackles and Ankles."*

She acclaims that Carlota, visitation of her revolutionary meditation, imaginations of the soul, horizons of her living spirit, the drums of Eduardo, of the Fula people, were echoing, in the mountain plateau of the West African region, where Senegal, Gambia, Tinkisso, Konkoure and Niger rivers originate, valley of the mountain plateau of Fouta Djallon, there was no need to talk, she knew what it was for, planning for months. For years, it was a dream

for many slave people, born to live free, but like animals, with muzzles, shackles, under threat of being tied to the post, attacked by feral dogs, whipped by the master, that was not life.

Inexorable warning, slaughtering slaves like beasts, never to repeat again, gruesome forms of brutality, Carlota, tied to four horses moving into different directions, massacre of the most decorated slave woman, her body mauled into pieces, heroism redeemed by history, embodiment of our struggles, the world never the same, baton of hope to all ages, a banquet of honour, those to have volunteered their own lives, our freedom struggles, we shall achieve.

The famous writer and Poet, Sarah Louisa Forten, in her poem published in 1831, titled "**The Grave of the Slave**", says:

*"The cold storms of winter shall chill her no more,  
her woes and her sorrows,  
her pains are all o'er;*

*The sod of the valley now covers her form, she is  
safe in her last home,  
she feels not the storm.*

*The poor slave is laid all unheeded and lone,  
Where the rich and the poor find a permanent home;  
Not her master can rouse her with voice of command;  
she knows not and hears not his cruel demand;*

*Not a tear, nor a sigh to embalm her cold tomb, No  
friend to lament her, no child to bemoan;*

*Not a stone marks the place where she peacefully  
lies, The earth for the pillow, her curtain the skies.  
Poor slave, shall we sorrow that death was thy  
friend, The last and the kindest that heaven could  
send?*

*The grave of the weary is welcomed and blest; And  
death to the captive is freedom and rest."*

The collapse of the Estado Novo, fascist autocratic regime, led by dictator Marcelo Caetano, heralded a new epoch, ending the centenarian domination of Portuguese colonialism in Africa, with the independence of the newly born democratic republics of Angola and Mozambique, heightening a new epoch, of protracted Cold War ideological power relations. To the world revolutionary movement, the collapse of the Portuguese dictatorship, was not only the victory, of the struggles of the African people, but of the worldwide humanity aspirations, for a better home.

## REFLECTIONS

Precedently before the proclaimed day, independence of the new democratic republic of Angola, the United States of America, through CIA-sponsored secret operation, Lafaaturi, and South African racist regime, “*Operation Savanna*” – in collaboration with the former dictator of Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo), Mobutu se Seseko; rebel leader Jonas Savimbi of UNITA; and leader of FNLA, Holden Roberto – orchestrating the invasion of the capital city, Luanda, before the chosen leader of the people, President of MPLA, Agostinho Neto, could declare the new republic.

Heavily armed bandits from dictator Mobutu and FNLA of Holden Roberto advanced from the north and from the south was the largest contingent of bandits of the racist apartheid army and UNITA, besieging Luanda. At the behest of the leadership of MPLA, the Cuban government, under the leadership of the Commander-in-Chief, Fidel Castro,

sent thousands of men and women of the revolutionary army, with war machinery, to avert the political catastrophe, perpetuated by the US imperialism, destabilising the newly-born nation state of Angola.

The heroic revolutionary army of the republic of Cuba, with the assistance of MPLA and other liberation movements in the Southern African region, SWAPO, ANC, FRELIMO and others, inflicted heavy assault on the mercenaries from both the north and south of Angola. In the north, Mobutu suffered devastating blow at Cabinda, and in the south, the revolutionary army, destroyed the Quebec river bridge, making it difficult for the racist white South African army, to advance further into Luanda, which was just less than two hundred kilometres from Benguela, paving way for President Agostinho Neto to declare the birth of the new democratic republic of Angola.

The birth of the new republic of

Angola heralded a new epoch of destabilisation of the Southern African region, by the racist regime, supporting UNITA in Angola and RENAMO in Mozambique, killing millions of people and meting out the destruction of regional infrastructure. The involvement of the Cuban revolution in Angola from 1975 to 1989, with the defeat of Pretoria apartheid government at Quito Cuanavale, was Operation Carlota, named after the legendary slave woman from Africa, who waged the first slave rebellion in Cuba.

Paying tribute to the heroism of the Cuban revolution, its esteemed gesture of generosity, human solidarity and internationalism, the leader of the independent republic of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, Amilcar Cabral, said the following:

*“I don’t believe in life after death, but if there is, we can be sure that the souls of our forefathers, who were taken away to America to be slaves, are rejoicing today to see their children, reunited and working together, to help us be independent and free.”*

One of the Cuban volunteers, who participated in the liberation of the Southern African region, General Rafael Moracen, says: *“When we arrived in Angola, I heard an Angolan say that our grandparents, whose children were taken away from Africa as slaves, would be happy, to see their children return to Africa, to help free it. I will always remember those words.”*

Elaborating profound bonds of comradeship and friendship between the people of Cuba and Africa, during the ceremony to honour the life and times, of the founding father of the African continent, Kwame Nkrumah, one





**Punishing of slaves on colonial Cuba**

of the Commanders of the Cuban revolution, Jorge Risquet, said the following:

*“This was the understanding with which Cuban fighters, came to ancestral Africa, to fight side by side with the people against colonialism, and the oppressive apartheid regime. For 26 years, 381 000 Cuban soldiers and officers fought alongside African populations, between April 24, 1965, when Ernesto Che Guevara and his men crossed Lake Tanganyika, and May 25, 1991, when the remaining 500 Cuban fighters returned home triumphant, twenty-four hundred Cuban internationalist fighters lost their lives on African soil. Today we no longer send soldiers. Now, we send doctors, teachers, builders, specialists in various fields.”*

The Commander in Chief of the Cuban revolution, commemorating the 15th anniversary of the battle of Playa Giron, during which the people of Cuba, defended the invasion of their newly-born republic by US-backed mercenaries, called the battle

of Quito Cuanavale, the “*Playa Giron of Africa*”. Declaring that



during the battle of Giron, African blood was shed by the descendants of the slave people, defending the homeland, in Quito Cuanavale, Cuban blood was shed by descendants of the indigenous Taino people of the Antilles, paying historical debt owed by Cuba to the African people.

Declaring during the ceremony: *“Just as the imperialist and their pawns suffered the consequences of a Playa Giron, multiplied many times over Angola, the nation that comes to this land to wage war, will find itself facing thousands of Cuito Cuanavales, and defeats such as those, dealt to colonialism and apartheid, in heroic nations such as Angola, Namibia and South Africa, defeat they never imagined, would be linked to the history of this small Caribbean nation.”*

Addressing millions of the world people at a rally in Matanzas, Cuba in 1991, during his first visit after his release from prison, President Nelson Mandela said: *“The Cuban people hold a special place in the hearts of the people of Africa. The Cuban internationalists have made a contribution to African independence, freedom and justice unparalleled for its principled and selfless character. We in Africa are used to being victims of countries wanting to carve up our territory or subvert our sovereignty. It is unparalleled in African history to have another people rise to the defense of one of us.*

*“The defeat of the apartheid army was an inspiration to the struggling people in South Africa! Without the defeat of Cuito Cuanavale our organisations would not have been unbanned! The defeat of the racist army at Cuito Cuanavale has made it possible for me to*

## REFLECTIONS

*be here today! Cuito Cuanavale was a milestone in the history of the struggle for southern African liberation."*

He further during the year 1994, thanking the generosity of the Cuban revolution, its ethos of solidarity and internationalism by saying:

*"If today all South Africans enjoy the rights of democracy; if they are able at last to address the grinding poverty of a system that denied them even the most basic amenities of life, it is also because of Cuba's selfless support for the struggle to free all of South Africa's people and the countries of our region from the inhumane and destructive system of apartheid. For that, we thank the Cuban people from the bottom of our heart."*

With profundity, as we come to an end of the month of August, celebrating the heroism of wom-

en over centuries of struggles for liberation of mankind, I again dedicate this memoir to my wife, Delsey Madume Piitso, whose birthday we have celebrated during the month, to all the woman of our country, the continent and the world. Mankind shall forever be indebted, to the immense contribution of women, to the struggles for the development of society.

Our mother, Carlota Lukumi, was not just a blossoming flower of the Antilles, but the most decorated slave woman cherished by history, symbol of human solidarity and internationalism, epitaph of the triumph of human struggles against adversity, unbroken loyalty to serve humanity, making the world a better home for all, the coming world, shall define itself of what it is, her exemplary leadership, the generosity to give her own life for the sake of the freedom of others.

Freedom is our humanity, embodiment of necessity, they fought for it, we shall fight for it, they will fight for it, though it will amount to thousands of hills to climb, we shall endure, striving to reach the top of each hill, on top of the longest peak, shall humanity appreciate, the grandeur beauty of the universe, its mountain kingdoms, valleys, rivers, flora and fauna, its unending horizons of the blue seas and skies, on the valleys of our mountain kingdoms, shall be a written history, of the glorious revolutionary life of our mother, Carlota Lukumi, whose episodes of revolutionary philanthropism, has define the future we want to be, pilgrimage of thousands hills, the hope of humanity freedom.

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



**President Nelson Mandela with Fidel Castro during his visit to Cuba in 1991.**

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

# THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

6–12 September 2025

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

### 6 September 1910

#### Artist Gerard Bhengu born



Pioneer South African artist Gerard Bhengu was born at Mission Station at Centecow, Bulwer. Bhengu's remarkable skill attracted wide attention. His paintings were exclusively in watercolour and sepia ink on paper, with his earliest paintings and drawings date from 1926. His art works are seldom inscribed with a date, although they are almost always signed. Bhengu died in 1990 in Umlazi, Durban. His paintings are part of the collections of Museum Africa, the University of Fort Hare and the Albany museum in Graham's Town.

### 6 September 1939

#### South Africa joins Second World War

After the invasion of Poland by Germany in September 1939, SA Prime Minister Gen. J.B. Hertzog tried to pass a resolution in parliament, proclaiming South Africa's neutrality during the war. Hertzog's attempt was rejected by

80 votes to 67. After the refusal of Governor-General Sir Patrick Duncan to dissolve the parliament, Hertzog was left with no option but to resign from his position. The minister of justice, Gen. J.C. Smuts, took over and formed a new cabinet and South Africa joined the war against Germany. This step caused bitter dissent amongst the pro-war and anti-war sections in the white community.

### 6 September 1945

#### Artist Bheki Manyoni born

On 6 September 1945, Bhekisani Manyoni was born in Greytown, KZN. He attended the Rorke's Drift Art School and later took classes in fine arts, in particular ceramics and weaving. Here Manyoni also befriended John Muafengejo, who influenced his work. In 1970, Manyoni was appointed as curator of the Pandora Gallery in Mbabane, Swaziland, and in 1979 he began to teach at the Kotlehong Art Gallery. Manyoni specialised in ceramic sculpture and lino design, and has exhibited in many countries, including Holland and Germany. Manyoni also creates wood carvings and has received several awards, including the Hans Merensky Trust Award.

### 6 September 1991

#### Western Sahara-Morocco ceasefire

A ceasefire is reaching ending the Western Sahara War between

Polisario Front and Morocco over the right of self-determination of the Saharawi people. The war started in 1975 and claimed the lives of over 20,000 people.

### 6 September 2003

#### Queen Mother Mamohato Seeiso of Lesotho passed on



The Queen Mother Mamohato Bereng Seeiso of Lesotho was born in 1941. She was the youngest child of Chief Lerotholi Mojela. The princess was sent to study at Bath Training College of Home Economics in the United Kingdom. In 1962, she married King Moshoeshe II and they had three children. As the Queen Mother, she ran several charities and organisations in Lesotho. She was passionate about farming and was involved in poultry, livestock and crop farming and has been highly praised for her work in uplifting the lives of Basotho women. The Queen Mother Mamohato Bereng Seeiso died on 6 September 2003.

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

### 6 September 2019 President Robert Gabriel Mugabe passed on

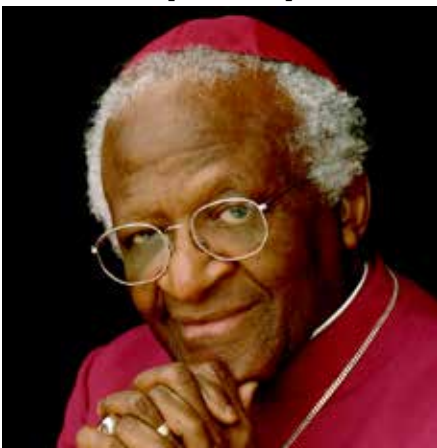


President Mugabe, a liberation icon and Pan Africanist, founder of the Frontline States, was Prime Minister and President of Zimbabwe since independence in 1980 until 1918. He passed away in Singapore where he was undergoing medical treatment.

### 7 September 1971 Artist James Cudjoe born

One of the best-known painters in Ghana, James Cudjoe was born in Tokoradi. His cityscapes of contemporary West African life, especially his series of paintings featuring market women, are legendary.

### 7 September 1986 Tutu ordained as Archbishop of Cape Town



The Anglican Church ordains the bishop and anti-apartheid icon as first black Archbishop of Cape Town, which makes him the head of the Anglican Church in South Africa, Lesotho, Namibia, Botswana and Eswatini.

### 7 September 1992 Bisho Massacre

80,000 protesters gathered outside Bisho, capital of Ciskei, demanding an end to the military government of Brigadier Joshua Gqozo and the re-absorption of the bantustan into South Africa. The protest was led by several senior African National Congress (ANC) leaders, including South African Communist Party Secretary General Chris Hani, Cyril Ramaphosa, Steve Tshwete and Ronnie Kasrils. Demonstrators tried to cross the Ciskei Defense Force lines and enter into Bisho. Soldiers opened fire and continued firing indiscriminately into the crowd for about five minutes using machine guns and rifle grenades, killing 28 people and over 200 injured.

### 7 September 1997 Mobutu Sese Seko dies

Mobutu Sese Seko (66), former president of Zaire (DRC) from 1965 to 1997, died in exile in Rabat, Morocco, three months after the end of his nearly 32-year reign. Sese Seko was exiled after he was ousted from power by Laurent Kabila's rebel movement, the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire.

### 7 September 2004 Beyers Naudé, struggle icon and Afrikaner cleric passes on

Oom Bey, as he was affectionately known, passed away on 7 September 2004 at a retirement



home in Johannesburg, with his wife, Ilse, by his side. Beyers Naudé was born in Roodepoort on 10 May 1915. One of eight children, he was born into a family fully committed to Afrikaner nationalism. His father was a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) and a founding member of the Afrikaner Broederbond. Beyers Naudé joined the Broederbond as one of its youngest members at the age of 25. He however defied his upbringing, aligning himself with the struggle of the oppressed after the Sharpeville Massacre, and in 1963 resigned from the Broederbond, after 22 years of membership. He condemned apartheid from the pulpit and was called a traitor by his community, harassed and eventually banned by the security forces and the apartheid government. Forced to resign as a dominee, he continued his ministry and the struggle through the Christian Institute, which was banned in 1977. In 1985 he succeeded Archbishop Desmond Tutu as Secretary General of the South African Council of Churches, and was a leading figure in the Dakar meeting between Afrikaner leaders and the ANC in 1987. He opened the inauguration of President Thabo Mbeki in 1999; in 2001 he was given the freedom of the City of Johannesburg and one of the major roads named after him.

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### 7 September 2015 Ibukun Awosika breaks finance glass ceiling

Nigerian financier Awosika is the first woman to be appointed chairperson of the First Bank of Nigeria, the first to hold a top job in the country's male dominated finance sector.

### 8 September 1998 Mpush Makambi wins World Boxing Title



Former APLA member and South African Middleweight Boxing Champion, Mpush Makambi defeated Adrian Dodson of Britain to take the Middleweight Title Fight. He was later voted Boxer of the Year because of his exploits in that title match.

### 8 September 2017 Large scale culling of chickens

The agricultural department of South Africa orders the culling of poultry following an outbreak of avian flu in the industry.

### 8 September 2023 Morocco earthquake

The 6.8-magnitude earthquake, the most deadly in 120 years shook Morocco's High Atlas mountain range shortly after 11 p.m. local time at the relatively

shallow depth of 18.5 kilometers. The epicenter was 72 kilometers from popular city of Marrakech, affected. Death toll from the quake numbered in the thousands.

### 8-9 September 2023 African Union becomes member of G20

At the 18th Summit hosted by Prime Minister Modi of India, the G20 officially admitted the African Union as a full member, bringing the number to 21 members, and the AU the second regional organisation member after the European Union. The G20 was formed in 1999 in response to the then Asian financial crisis, initially by the Finance Ministers and Central bankers, and later at leadership level, primarily focusing on economic and financial cooperation.

### 9 September 1913 Artist Gerald Sekoto born



Jan Gerard Sekoto was born on 9 September 1913 in Botshabelo, in the Middelburg district. Sekoto became one of South Africa's most renowned and celebrated artists, especially known for his evocative paintings. On 13 December 1989 he received an honorary doctorate from the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). In 2004 Sophiatown unveiled the Sekoto mural that depicts Archbishop Trevor Huddleston walking the dusty streets

of Sophiatown. Sekoto passed away on 20 March 1993 at the age of 79, six months before his 80th birthday.

### 9 September 1919 Artist Tahia Halim born



Egyptian Painter Tahia Mohamed Halim (1919-2003) is born in Sudan. A pioneer of the Modern Expressive Movement in Egyptian Art in the 1960s, her art features Nubian culture, the Nile and boats.

### 9 September 1973 Regent Maqomo dies on Robben Island

Xhosa war hero, Maqomo and regent of the AmaNgqika Xhosa clan died on Robben Island. He was captured in 1858 after the Cattle Killings of 1856-57, incited by Nongqawuse's vision on the banks of the Gxarha River. Maqoma was captured during the ensuing famine and convicted of having been a party to the murder of a chief who had refused to destroy his cattle. Maqoma and his wife Katyi were banished to Robben Island for twenty-one years. In 1869 they were released but he was sent back to Robben Island in 1871 after being found guilty of incitement, this time without his wife. According to historical sources, he was a brave warrior and "a formidable tactician, a masterly politician and a brilliant orator."

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### 9 September 2006

#### Hilda Bernstein passes on



Veteran political activist, artist and writer Hilda Bernstein passed away on 9 September 2006 in Cape Town, at 91. In 1932 Bernstein and her mother immigrated to South Africa from England. She worked in the advertising and later publishing and journalism sectors. Bernstein got involved in politics when she joined the South African Labour Party League of Youth, a member until 1940, when she left to join the Communist Party of South Africa. She made a historic entry into the Johannesburg City Council when she became the first communist to be elected as councilor to public office in South Africa on a "Whites only" vote. Bernstein participated actively in the major struggle campaigns such as the 1946 African Mine Workers' Strike, the 1952 Defiance Campaign, the 1954 FEDSAW launch, the 1955 Freedom Charter Campaign, the 1956 Women's March and 1960 Sharpeville Campaign. Bernstein was arrested and banned on several occasions. After the 1964 Rivonia Trial, Bernstein and her husband fled the country on foot to Botswana and exile. Her contribution to the liberation struggle was acknowledged and with the National Order of Luthuli.

### 10 September 1921

#### Editor JT Jabavu passes on

John Tengo Jabavu, the founder of the first Black-language newspaper, *Imvo Zabantsundu* (Native/Bantu Opinion) and political leader dies in Cape Town. He was the father to Davidson Don Jabavu, the first Black professor at the University of Fort Hare.

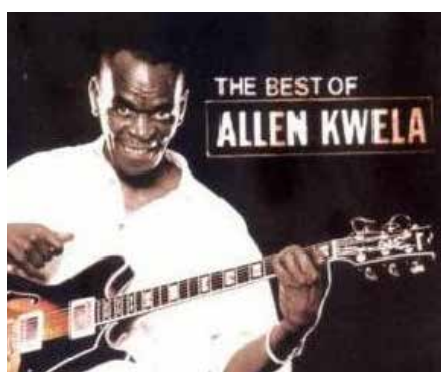
### 10 September 1944

#### Treaty of Tangier

In August 1844 French forces under General Thomas Bugeaud defeated the Moroccan army in the battle of Isly. The battle was a result of the French government's pursuit of Algerian resistance leader, Abd al-Qadir who had taken refuge in the country. Following the defeat Sultan Abd ar-Rahman of Morocco was forced to accept French presence in Morocco. He also had to agree to remain neutral and not assist any enemy of France in any way. A peace treaty was signed in Tangier on 10 September 1844 and came to be known as the Treaty of Tangier.

### 10 September 1936

#### Musician Allen Kwela born

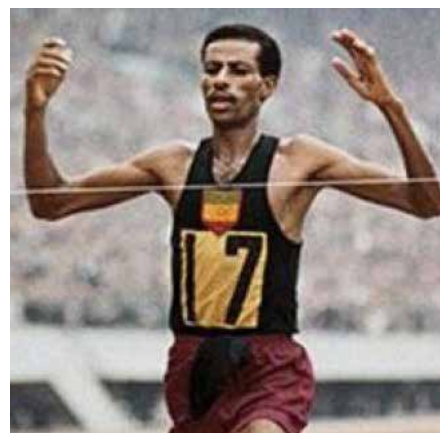


Allen Kwela was born in Kwazulu Natal, having been exposed to music, both African and Western from an early age. After moving to Johannesburg during the 1950's, he met musician Spokes

Mashiyane. They collaborated musically and Allen composed most of the kwela music, while Mashiyane performed. However, he remained in the shadow of his collaborator, who was later credited with the breakthrough of kwela during the 1950's. After his partnership with Mashiyane ended, he became interested in jazz, playing with well-known South African jazz artists such as Kippie Moeketsi and Barney Rachabane. He subsequently became one of South Africa's legendary jazz guitarists. His only album, *Broken Strings*, was released in 1998. Kwela passed on in 2003.

### 10 September 1960

#### Abebe Bikila wins Olympic Gold Medal



Ethiopian Abebe Bikila, running barefoot, became the first Black African to win gold in the history of the Olympic Games, setting a new world record at 2:16:2. Explaining later why he ran barefoot, Bikila said, "I wanted the world to know that my country, Ethiopia, has always won with determination and heroism." Four years later during the Tokyo Olympics, Abebe's fame has already reached all corners of the globe. Six weeks before the big race that awaited him, Abebe was taken ill with appendicitis. He underwent surgery amid a public outcry for proper medical counsel

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to decide on the procedure. The day he arrived in Tokyo, Abebe hadn't fully recovered from the surgery and limped his way down the stairs. However, the reception Abebe received from the Japanese people helped him to become the first athlete ever to win two Olympic marathons. Biki-la died in October 1973.

### 10 September 1990 Côte d'Ivoire Our Lady of Peace Basilica consecrated

The world's largest basilica build by 1200 workers in Ivorian administrative capital of Yamoussoukro, working day and night, is consecrated by Pope John Paul II, who also gives blessing to the adjacent hospital.

### 10 September 2009 4 de Abril Bridge inaugurated

The bridge which connects the Angolan cities of Benguela and Lobita, is opened by former President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos and named for the date of the 2002 peace agreement that ended the civil war in Angola. It is a 483m suspension bridge, construction started in 2007. The bridge provides for connection between the provinces of north, central and south of the country.

### 11 September 1896 Johannesburg name explained

In reaction to an inquiry, officials in Pretoria replied that Johannesburg was named after Johann Friedrich Bernhard Rissik and Christiaan Johannes Joubert. Some controversy exists concerning the origin of the name Johannesburg, as several men bearing the name Johann(es)

occupied positions of authority in the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR or Transvaal Republic) or were involved in events leading to the founding of the town. Rissik was a principal clerk attached to the office of the surveyor-general of the ZAR, while Joubert was a member of the Volksraad and head of the government's office of mines. It was on the recommendation of these two men that the land involved was declared a public goldfield, while they also suggested the town to be laid out either on the farm Randjeslaagte (Randjeslaagte) or a section of the farm Doornfontein. Government authorities decided on the former place. Other evidence, notably a letter from the deputy secretary of foreign affairs to the Swiss consul, dated 18 February 1896, substantiates the claim that the town was named after these two men.

### 11 September 1980 Court commutes James Mange's sentence



Following an international campaign led by international bodies such as the United Nations, Organisation of African Unity (now AU), Non-Aligned Movement, and non-governmental organisations in South Africa, the Bloemfontein Appeal Court commuted James Mange's death sentence on a

charge of high treason to 20 years' imprisonment. The African National Congress (ANC) applauded the achievements of this international campaign. In a statement issued by its Secretary General, Alfred Nzo, the ANC called for the same solidarity to demand the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners.

### 12 September 1977 Steve Bantu Biko dies in police detention



Steven Bantu Biko, leader of the South African Student Organisation (SASO) and pioneer of the Black Consciousness philosophy, died in police custody at the age of thirty (30). Biko was arrested in Grahamstown on 18 August 1977. During his detention in a Port Elizabeth police cell he was chained to a grill at night, left to lie naked in urine-soaked blankets, and kept in leg-irons for 48 hours in his cell. A blow in a scuffle with security police led to him suffering brain damage. The police transferred him, chained and untreated, at the back of a police van to a prison hospital in Pretoria, 1,133 km away. Biko died shortly after his arrival there. Peter Gabriel's song Biko commemorate this act of brutality. When asked for a comment, the then Minister of Justice and Police Jimmy Kruger lied about the cause death, saying about Biko's death: *"Dit laat my koud/I don't care."*

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### 12 September 1989 SWAPO Secretary General assassinated

Advocate Anton Lubowski (37), secretary-general of the South West African People's Organisation (Swapo), was shot dead at close range with an AK47 rifle outside his home in Windhoek, Namibia. The Civil Co-Operation Bureau (CCB) of South Africa was held responsible for the assassination of Lubowski. Judge Harold Levy of the Namibian Supreme Court, concluded that the CCB conspired to murder Lubowski, with responsible CCB members Joe Verster, Staal Burger, Abraham 'Slang' van Zyl, Calla Botha, Leon 'Chappie' Maree, Johan Niemoller junior, Captain Wouter Basson (aka Christo Britz), Ferdi Barnard and Charles Wildschudt (formerly Neelse) named. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) confirmed Judge Levy's report.

### 12 September 2004 Veteran Trade unionist Ray Alexander passes on



Rachel Alexander (Ray) Simons, legendary communist and trade unionist born in Latvia in 1914, died in Cape Town at the age of 91. Simons was instrumental in the formation of the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) and the drafting of the Women's Charter. A unionist throughout her life, she helped formed and lead the Food and Canning Workers Union and was named honorary life President of the Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU). Ray married Pro-

fessor Jack Simons in 1941, and together they were some of the first non-Africans to join the ANC. On 6 May 1965, Ray and Jack left South Africa for Zambia, and they were to remain in exile for 25 years until 2 March 1990. Jack and Ray Simons together wrote the classic labour history *Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950*, a pioneering analysis of the relationship between class and race, and how these have shaped the South African political and social landscape. In 1978, Ray joined MK as part of the Women's Battalion, and continued to write articles for the African Communist under various pseudonyms. Ray advised various trade unions, as well as the ANC and SACP, and worked on a book on her involvement in the FCWU. Ray Alexander, along with Lillian Ngoyi and Helen Joseph were the first three women to receive the ANC's highest order *Isithwalandwe/Seaparankwe* in 2004. On 12 September 2004, Ray Alexander died at the age of 91.



**THE MOST POTENT  
WEAPON  
IN THE HANDS  
OF THE OPPRESSOR  
IS THE MIND  
OF THE OPPRESSED.**

**STEVE BIKO**

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

# INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

6–12 September 2025

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



### 6 September

#### World Read a Book Day

The day is celebrated to encourage reading and the joys of books. On this day, we are all encouraged to share a quote from a book, talk about your favourite book or author, to give, read, donate, collect and share books, and to popularise your libraries and bookshops.

### 7 September

#### International Police Cooperation Day

The United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Policing highlights the importance of police integrity, accountability, and oversight in strengthening the rule of law, ensuring human rights-based and effective policing, and enhancing public trust towards law enforcement agencies. Law enforcement institutions are entrusted with a diverse set of tasks requiring a high degree of integrity within police agencies, supported by effective oversight mechanisms, while maintaining high standards of conduct and ensuring that they serve the communities in an effective and transparent way.

### 7 September

#### International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies

Air pollution is the biggest environmental health risk of our time. It also exacerbates climate change, causes economic losses, and reduces agricultural productivity. It knows no borders. The day recognizes the need to substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination by 2030, paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management.

### 8 September

#### International Literacy Day

Since 1967, International Literacy Day (ILD) celebrations have taken place annually around the world to remind the public of the importance of literacy as



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a matter of dignity and human rights, and to advance the literacy agenda towards a more literate and sustainable society. Despite progress made, literacy challenges persist with at least 773 million adults worldwide lacking basic literacy skills today.

### 9 September African Union Day



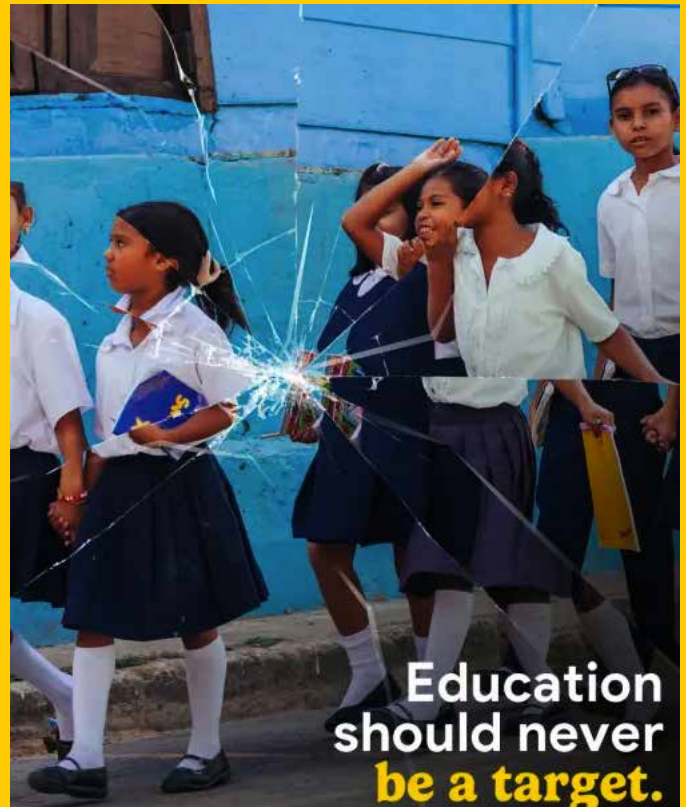
The day commemorates the decision by African Heads of State and Government, to transition from the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union, as issued in the Sirte Declaration on 9 September 1999, which called for the establishment of an African Union, with the aim of accelerating the process of continental integration to enable Africa to play its rightful role in the global economy while addressing multifaceted social, economic and political problems compounded as they were by certain negative aspects of globalisation. AU Day also reflects on the Union's transformation and achievements in the African continent.

### 9 September International Fetal Alcohol Syndrome day

Fetal alcohol syndrome (FASD) is a condition that develops in a fetus (developing baby) when a pregnant person drinks alcohol during pregnancy. FASD rates from studies conducted in SA are among the highest worldwide, it affects all communities and is therefore a major public health concern. Multidisciplinary and intersectoral interventions are urgently required to raise awareness about the dangers of prenatal alcohol exposure and the devastating effect of FASD on the lives of children, families and communities.

### 9 September International Day to Protect Education from Attack

Schools should be places of safety for children and teachers, but often they are targets of attacks



during war and conflict. For example, according to UNICEF, up to July 6, 564 schools in the Gaza Strip have been directly hit or damaged by Israeli attacks. One year after the start of the civil war in the Sudan, over 10,400 schools are closed, affecting more than 19 million children (UNESCO).

### 12 September South-South Cooperation Day

We refer to developing countries, many of whom have been colonized at some point, as countries of the global South (also formerly known as the so-called Third World). As a result of colonialism and the Cold War that spurred global inequality, economic development, power and trade are highly unequal; and tended to take the form of raw materials from the "periphery" (global South) to the "centre" (global North). South-South Cooperation was and is about solidarity and common action amongst development, to work with each other to develop their countries and peoples, and to fight for a more just global world order. Today, the global dominance of the North is not as absolute as before, with 'emerging' economies, especially China, but also India and Brazil accounting for a greater share of global economic activity. South-South Cooperation takes place through various international forums, such as the Non-Aligned Movement, BRICS, the G77 and a range of other forums.