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Conversations with the
President



Violence against women is a national disaster that demands national action

■ By **PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

AS South Africa and the world observes 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence from 25 November to 10 December, it is a shame that our country has the dubious distinction of having one of the world's highest levels of violence against women and girls.

According to the National GBV Study 2022 conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), more than 35% of South African women aged 18 and older have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime. In the majority of these cases the perpetrator was an intimate partner.

The HSRC study was the first of its kind to provide the baseline

data needed to support our efforts to combat gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF). It was mandated by the National Strategic Plan (NSP) that emanated from the first Presidential Summit on GBVF we convened in 2018.

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, I characterised violence against women as a second pandemic. But its impacts are arguably even more corrosive. Gender-based violence destroys families, has an economic cost, causes instability and fear for women and girls, and reproduces inter-generational trauma.

Last month, the government classified gender-based violence and femicide as a national disaster, recognising that dealing with this

scourge demands exceptional measures.

This classification strengthens the mandates of the respective government departments, such as Social Development, Justice, Health, Police and Basic Education, to tackle GBVF.

The classification will allow for expanded access to shelters, safe spaces, psycho-social counselling and community-based prevention programmes. It will enable faster emergency resource allocation for survivor services, enhanced monitoring and reporting mechanisms, and strengthen oversight.

All affected organs of state will be required to submit progress reports to the National Disaster

CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PRESIDENT

Management Centre on the actions they are taking.

Earlier this year, the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development briefed the Multiparty Women's Caucus in Parliament on the actions being taken to address the GBV crisis.

The noted that the SAPS have stepped up actions against perpetrators and case management is improving. More victim-friendly facilities and services, including specialised GBV desks, have been rolled out at SAPS stations across the country. A GBVF Information Centre has been set up at the SAPS Academy in Pretoria to track incidents.

The SAPS and the National Prosecuting Authority continue their joint work to improve the speed and quality of evidence analysis. A 24-hour service for obtaining protection orders has been introduced.

The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development provided a progress report on the operationalisation of the anti-GBV laws I signed into law in 2022. These included amendments to laws around domestic violence, strengthening the sexual offences register, establishing more sexual offences courts, and improving support services for vulnerable persons.

Even as we have made progress on the NSP, implementation remains uneven. By classifying GBVF a national disaster, we will be able to speed up resource allocation and funding flows to



support survivors and improve access to justice. We will be able to support law enforcement agencies and the judiciary to expedite the management and processing of GBVF-related cases.

Prevention is an integral part of the national anti-GBVF effort and far greater effort must be made to include men.

As I said at last week's Men's Indaba in the Free State, unless we directly engage men in prevention efforts, we will continue to have marches, hold protests and conduct social media campaigns, but the statistics will not change. Even as men are the main perpetrators of GBVF, they are also part of the solution. This is not a fight to be waged by women alone.

Under the national disaster classification we will be accelerating prevention programmes targeting men and boys. I have called for a concerted, sustained nationwide programme of dialogues with men and boys to engage openly on what is driving this pandemic, and

what must be done to arrest it.

We must engage honestly about the toxic masculinity, cultural norms, peer pressure, social dynamics and socialisation that is turning men and boys into abusers of women and children.

A national disaster demands national responsibility.

Whether as communities, civil society, government, faith leaders, business, unions or citizens, we must all play our part in bringing this scourge to an end.

We must be part of dismantling the attitudes that sustain violence against women and children by our own actions. We must report such crimes instead of looking away or regarding it as not our business.

The safety and security of women and children is everybody's business. Let us continue to work together as all of society to realise a society free from gender-based violence and femicide.

ADDRESS BY ANC PRESIDENT CDE CYRIL RAMAPHOSA AT THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FREEDOM CHARTER



COMRADES and Friends, we gather here, as members of the African National Congress, to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the Freedom Charter.

We gather here to recall the momentous events that took place at the Congress of the People in Kliptown on the 26th of June 1955.

Today, 70 years later, we celebrate the Freedom Charter not as an historical artefact, but as an enduring vision of a free and democratic society that continues to inspire and guide our struggle.

It was the late President Oliver Tambo who said: *“The Freedom Charter was not just another political document, the Congress of the People was not just another conference. The Freedom Char-*

ter is the sum total of our aspirations, but more: it is the road to the new life.”

In this NGC we have had to ask ourselves whether the National Democratic Revolution is still on course.

The Freedom Charter and the concept of the National Democratic Revolution are closely linked within the ideology and history of South Africa’s liberation movement, particularly the African National Congress.

The National Democratic Revolution is the strategic and theoretical process through which the Charter’s vision is realised in practice. The NDR is built upon the Charter’s foundation.

The Freedom Charter outlines a

set of ideals and aspirations and the NDR sets out the ongoing transformation strategy to achieve the National Democratic Society that is envisaged in the Freedom Charter.

In building a National Democratic Society, we firstly seek to build a united, capable and ethical developmental state based on the will of the people regardless of race, sex, belief, language, ethnicity or geography – incorporating representative participation and deliberative elements so that the people shall govern.

Secondly, improving the quality of life for all through access to affordable, basic quality services; equal rights and human dignity; and broad opportunities for every citizen.

Thirdly, to build an inclusive, transformed and thriving economy that offers decent livelihoods to all, including restoring the right of all South Africans to access land, the nation’s wealth, finance and other resources – within a growing, integrated African continental economy.

Fourthly, to build a nation with a common identity as an African country underpinned by non-racialism, non-sexism, unity, diversity and a spirit of global human solidarity.

The Freedom Charter is the foundation of the South African society

that we have solemnly undertaken to build.

The Congress of the People was the culmination of centuries of resistance and decades of struggle.

In order to resolve the problem of colonialism and later apartheid, the leaders of the Congress movement always sought to come up with strategic solutions, reflected in seminal documents, that would unite the Congress movement, express the people's needs and aspirations, present a principled alternative to colonialism and apartheid with a view to guide future action, and inspire the oppressed masses to continue fighting for freedom and justice.

As the Union of South Africa was established in 1910 to the exclusion of the majority of our people, African leaders came together from across the land to form the South African Native National Congress.

In 1923, this organisation, now known as the ANC, produced the first iconic document called the Bill of Rights in South Africa's history.

As the Second World War raged and the Atlantic Charter adopted by the Allies appeared to point the way to a new world order, the ANC produced the Africans' Claims in South Africa.

In April 1954, the Federation of South African Women drafted and adopted the Women's Charter, which outlined demands for the recognition of women's rights, including equality, full political participation, and social and economic justice for women across South Africa regardless of race.

It is a landmark document that laid the foundation for women's activism and played a significant role in the anti-apartheid and women's rights movements. It was regarded as the first women's rights document drafted in South Africa.

The Freedom Charter adopted in 1955 was to follow in the wake of all these other iconic documents as one of the most important political documents in South African history.

Besides the documents I have referred to, there is a host of

key documents that collectively shaped the vision, tactics and the ultimate achievement of freedom, equality and justice in the struggle that started in 1912 when our glorious movement, the ANC, was formed to wage the struggle against colonialism and apartheid.

These documents include:

- The 1923 Bill of Rights, which demanded land rights, equality, justice, representation and freedom for all South Africans.
- The Africans' Claims document of 1943 was about the early demand for civil and political rights.
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, which was affirmed by South Africa's liberation movements.
- The programme of action of 1949, calling for militant action for liberation.
- The Women's Charter of 1954, which was about equal rights for women.
- The Freedom Charter in 1955, which is the blueprint for non-racial democracy and justice.
- The Statement from the Dock by Nelson Mandela in the Rivonia Trial in 1964, which set



out ideas of resistance and equality.

- The Black Consciousness manifestoes of the 1970s, advocating psychological liberation and black pride.
- The Soweto Students' resolutions of 1976, which demanded education reform and youth rights.
- The founding charter of the UDF in 1983, which launched a mass democratic movement for equality.
- The Harare Declaration adopted by the OAU in 1989 outlined principles and preconditions for negotiations to end apartheid. It became a key policy roadmap for the international community and the liberation movement.
- The ANC Constitutional Principles adopted at the ANC's 1991 and 1992 National Conference and policy conferences. These principles strongly influenced the negotiating processes at CODESA and the Multi-Party Negotiating Forum and the content of South Africa's interim constitution in 1993, as well as the final Constitution adopted in 1996.
- The Interim Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1993.
- The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, which created the democratic state that we now have today with legal guarantees of equality and justice.

Tonight, we focus on the Freedom Charter, which stands above all these.

The Freedom Charter laid out a vision for a non-racial, democratic, and just South Africa. It became a moral and ideological foundation for the anti-apartheid

struggle and later influenced the country's Constitution.

The idea to have the Freedom Charter drafted was initiated by Professor ZK Matthews, who proposed that a Congress of the People be convened to draw up a Freedom Charter.

It was in the town of Cradock, at a provincial conference of the ANC in 1953, that he raised concern about the deepening crisis in race relations in South Africa.

He said:

"I wonder whether the time has not come for the ANC to consider the question of convening a National Convention, a Congress of the People, representing all the people of this country irrespective of race or colour to draw up a Freedom Charter for the democratic South Africa of the future."

The drafting of the Freedom Charter was principally led by the South African Congress Alliance, which included the African National Congress, South African Indian Congress, Congress of Democrats and the Coloured People's Congress.

The Congress Alliance called on all South Africans to speak of freedom. It called on them to draw up their demands for "the things that will make us free".

In the call to the Congress of the People, the Congress Alliance said:

*Let us speak together.
All of us together – African and European, Indian and coloured.
Voter and voteless. Privileged and rightless. The happy and the homeless.
All the people of South Africa; of the towns and of the countryside.
Let us speak together of freedom.*

And of the happiness that can come to men and women if they live in a land that is free."

The report of the ANC NEC to the 1954 Annual Conference said: *"Never in South African history have the ordinary people of this country been enabled to take part in deciding their own fate and future... There is a need to hear the voice of the ordinary citizen of this land, proclaiming to the world their demands for freedom."*

From across the country, people responded in their numbers, leading to the Congress of the People, which was the biggest single gathering of representatives of the people in South Africa.

To have the Freedom Charter drafted, the ANC sent 50,000 volunteers across the country to collect "freedom demands" from ordinary people, a massive grassroots democratic exercise.

The organisational ability of amassing 50,000 volunteers showed that the ANC had broad-based mass support and that it was able to mobilise grassroots structures. Even then the ANC showed that it was an organisation that relied heavily on strong participatory grassroots structures. These structures gave the organisation widespread reach, ensured democratic participation, facilitated community engagement, enhanced mobilisation and effective feedback.

We often talk about being able to mobilise thousands of volunteers for election work. Are there any lessons we can draw from the manner in which the ANC of the 1950s functioned?

The ANC success in mobilising thousands of people stemmed

from a combination of its historical legitimacy, the strong local branches, strategic partnerships with civic organisations, dynamic mass campaigns, ongoing political education – which often took place at night in what were called night schools – and attention to community needs.

These factors fostered active grassroots participation and deep community engagement, making the ANC of the 1950s a truly mass based political movement in South Africa.

We have to ask ourselves whether we are able to continue with this rich legacy.

At the time the Freedom Charter was drafted apartheid was tightening its grip.

The Freedom Charter boldly rejected racial hierarchy and demanded a society built on equality, democracy and human rights.

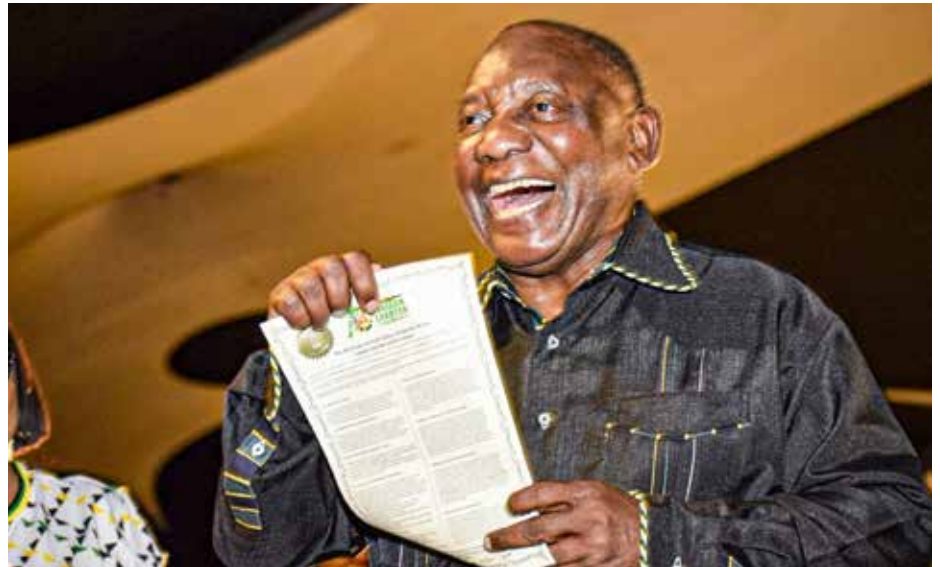
The apartheid government saw this as treasonous.

In dawn raids across the country on the 5th of December 1956, they arrested leaders of our movement and put them on trial for high treason.

These 156 people were from all races, both men and women, people whose only crime was to strive for a united, free and equal country.

By March 1961, all of those on trial had been acquitted and discharged.

Looking back, we see that the Freedom Charter campaign had a profound effect on the Congress movement and its organisational structures and capability.



It cemented the non-racial character of the movement, both in terms of its content and its composition.

It enabled the Congress movement to expand its organisational reach beyond the urban areas, transforming it in a fully-fledged national movement.

As Ismail Vadi notes in his 1995 history of the Freedom Charter campaign:

“The campaign for the Congress of the People and the Freedom Charter introduced within the liberation movement a degree of ideological uniformity and cohesion that did not exist previously.”

The Freedom Charter provided a clear and concise set of policies, aims and objectives and principles.

The Freedom Charter set out a 10-clause vision for a democratic, equal South Africa.

Having been drafted through mass public consultation and adopted at the Congress of the People it was used as a mobilising and organising weapon in the struggle for democracy.

It later influenced the values em-

bedded in the democratic Constitution of 1996.

It called for a fundamental restructuring of all aspects of South African society.

Among the most profound assertions to come out of the Congress of the People was that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white.

That statement was far more than an assertion of the right of residence in this country. It was more than an assertion of a common citizenship.

It was a declaration that all South Africans, regardless of race, have a right to an equal share of the country’s natural resources. They must share in ownership of, and access to, the means of production. They must all have a fair share of national income and public resources.

The Freedom Charter called for the dispossessed and the disenfranchised to have equal ownership of their country.

At the same time, it also made clear that white South Africans – the descendants of those who

had come as colonisers and settlers – also had an equal right to call this country their home.

This principle has guided the ANC over many decades and is foundational to the democratic society we are building.

The Freedom Charter declares that **The People Shall Govern!**

As South Africans, we must be proud that for the last three decades we have consistently held free and fair elections and that these elections continue to reflect the will of the people.

Democracy is deeply entrenched in our society and among our people. We understand that democracy is much more than holding regular elections.

We should actively encourage citizens to be involved in community building, in civic duties, in civil society, in local campaigns.

An active citizenry is vital for our democracy to flourish and for our country to succeed.

The Freedom Charter envisages a developmental state that plays a leading role in ensuring social and economic opportunities to those previously denied.

It envisages a state with sufficient legal authority and means to ensure decent working conditions and to take steps to improve the lives of the poor and marginalised.

It envisages local councils where citizens must be consulted about the development needs of their communities and be actively involved in the implementation of development programmes.



The Freedom Charter says that **All National Groups Shall have Equal Rights!**

The task of building a non-racial society remains fundamental to the work of our movement and to broader society.

Through our policies, programmes and practices, we need to advance non-racialism, ensuring that every South African appreciates their equal and irrevocable right to call this country home.

All South Africans must feel that they have a future here.

We need to build a non-sexist society in which all forms of gender discrimination, oppression, exploitation and violence are eradicated. This requires the achievement of full gender equality in all areas of life, from the home to the workplace, from the economy to the sports field.

As we mark the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Platform of Action, we need to ensure that we have effective policies and programmes to advance the empowerment of women.

Having recognised that gender-based violence and femicide is a national disaster, we need to

mobilise all the energy and all the resources of society to end it.

A united and cohesive society requires also that we end the exclusion, segregation and marginalisation experienced by persons with disabilities.

We need to confront discrimination, prejudice and violence directed against members of the LGBTQI community, giving real effect to the right to equality contained in our Constitution.

The Freedom Charter declares that **The People Shall Share in the Country's Wealth!** and **There Shall be Work and Security!**

As we cement the political gains of the last three decades, our focus is firmly on the task of fundamental economic transformation.

As a movement, we have resolved that rapid, inclusive economic growth is necessary to generate employment and business opportunities – and is essential to advance empowerment and redress.

Since 1994 we have enacted laws to advance the transformation of our economy, anchored in the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act and the Employment Equity Act.

The progress we have made is undeniable. We have seen real changes in ownership patterns, including more businesses owned by women. We have seen changes in management control, enterprise development and skills development.

Despite this progress, the average income of white households is still nearly five times higher than that of black African households.

That is why we need to intensify our drive for inclusive growth through infrastructure development, industrial policy, land redistribution and black economic empowerment.

We do not agree with the suggestion that we must make a choice between growth and transformation. Economic growth without transformation entrenches exclusion, and transformation without growth is unsustainable.

To build a country in which there is work and security, where all may share in its wealth, we must pursue growth and transformation together.

The Freedom Charter says **The Land Shall Be Shared Among Those Who Work It!**

The struggle to return the land of this country to all the people of South Africa remains a historical and economic imperative. More than a century after its enactment, the Natives' Land Act continues to define much of the landscape of our country.

It is to address this persistent injustice, that we are proceeding with the implementation of an accelerated land reform programme to provide land to those who work it and who need it, including young people and women.

We are working to ensure that the return of the land is accompanied by robust programmes of support to beneficiaries, promoting economic growth and sustaining food security.

The Freedom Charter says **All Shall be Equal Before the Law!** and **All Shall Enjoy Equal Human Rights!**



It is a measure of the weight of our history and the dreams of our future that the first right contained in the Bill of Rights in our Constitution is the right to equality.

For centuries, our country has been defined by inequality. It is our deepest desire that our nation shall be defined by equality.

Since it was adopted nearly 30 years ago, our Constitution has enshrined and safeguarded the equal rights of all South Africans.

Our courts, democratic institutions and public bodies have on many occasions upheld these rights.

As the ANC and as a society we need to continue to work to advance these rights and ensure that all people have access to the courts to protect their rights.

The Freedom Charter says **The Doors of Learning and Culture Shall be Opened!**

Over the course of 30 years of democracy, we have massively expanded access to education.

We have achieved almost universal attendance at schools and enabled access to higher education to students from poor and working class homes. We have

seen a steady improvement in our education outcomes, as witnessed in the matric results.

As we focus on early childhood development and the foundational years of learning, we have recognised that more needs to be done to achieve the skills revolution we seek.

We need an overhaul of our skills development system if we are to ensure that the doors of learning are fully opened and remain open.

The advent of democracy unleashed the richness and diversity of culture in our country.

We need to embrace our culture, our heritage and the infinite creativity of our people.

We also need to make space for all forms of cultural expression to flourish including our languages.

As ANC leaders, we should make an effort to learn some of the languages spoken by our people other than our own language.

Nelson Mandela famously highlighted the importance of learning other people's languages as a means of building connection, respect and understanding.

One of his most well-known quotes on this subject is: *"If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart."*

This statement by President Mandela emphasises that communicating with someone in their own language is far more meaningful and impactful than simply using a language they may know academically.

It shows empathy, respect and a willingness to bridge cultural divides – core principles that Mandela demonstrated throughout his life and leadership.

Mandela believed that language can be a tool for reconciliation, unity and deeper relationships among people of different backgrounds.

The Freedom Charter says **There Shall be Houses, Security and Comfort!**

Since the advent of democracy, we have substantially expanded basic services such as electricity, water, sanitation and houses.

More than 88 percent of households today live in formal houses.

Through social grants, free basic services, health care, fee-free education, school feeding schemes and other interventions, millions of South Africans have been lifted out of absolute poverty.

Yet, as we have noted, many communities experience service delivery failures on a regular basis. Households struggle with the cost of living.

These problems are compounded by the distances that people have to travel to work or social services, and insufficient infrastructure in townships and rural areas.

Reducing poverty and inequality is therefore one of our most important and urgent tasks as we pursue the vision of our forebears at the Congress of the People.

The Freedom Charter says **There Shall be Peace and Friendship!**

South Africa is a force for peace, partnership and cooperation on the global stage.

Our foreign policy emphasises human rights, peace and mutually-beneficial relationships.

We respect the rights and sovereignty of all nations.

Through international platforms, we contribute toward a more inclusive, just international order, using leadership positions to advance African and Global South interests while strengthening multilateral institutions.

The Freedom Charter was to later to become the inspiration and the guide for the most extensive exercise of popular engagement in the history of our democracy: the involvement of millions of citizens in the drafting of our new democratic Constitution.

The members of the Constitu-

tional Assembly elected in 1994 were determined that ordinary South Africans must feel that the Constitution belongs to them.

Across the length and breadth of the country public, participatory workshops, seminars and hearings were held. There were talk shows on radio and TV and newsletters were distributed at taxi ranks and other public places.

Around 250,000 submissions from the public were received on the Refined Working Draft of the Constitution alone.

In both its content and its spirit – and in the way that it was produced – our Constitution is firmly grounded in the Freedom Charter.

Now, as we embark on a National Dialogue, we must seek to harness that spirit. The National Dialogue seeks to bring all South Africans together to discuss the



challenges our country faces and to define a common vision of a shared future.

In public dialogues that will take place in every ward in the country, and which will be organised in every sector, citizens will be able to put forward their concerns, wishes and suggestions on how to build a better country.

Like the Freedom Charter campaign, we expect the National Dialogue process itself to have a positive impact on our society.

In the year that we celebrate 70 years of the Freedom Charter, we celebrate the centenary of the birth of two giants of our revolution – *Isithwalandwe Seaparankoe* Mama Gertrude Shope and *Isithwalandwe Seaparankoe* Ntate Tlou Cholo.

Earlier this year, we bid a sad farewell to Ma Shope. As a member of the Federation of South African Women, as an organiser of the Women's March on the Union Buildings, and later as the President of the ANC Women's League, Ma Shope had a profound grasp of the realities facing women in South Africa.

She was a pioneer who was instrumental in shifting attitudes within and outside our movement on the place of women in the struggle and in society. As an activist, an organiser and an internationalist, Ma Shope embodied the cadre that our movement needs today – the dedication, the humility, the tireless effort and the deep love for the South African people.

Ntate Tlou Cholo is a soldier of peace, a champion of the working class, who has been an active participant in seminal moments of our revolution. A member of



the Luthuli Detachment, he was at the forefront of the armed struggle.

As a member of the South African Congress of Trade Unions, the ANC and uMkhonto we Sizwe, Ntate Cholo is an embodiment of our revolutionary alliance.

As we honour his contribution, we have a responsibility to preserve and strengthen that alliance and to make it a united and cohesive instrument of revolutionary change.

At his 100th birthday, on the 20th of October this year, Ntate Cholo said that the ANC remains the hope of our people. He called on the leadership of our movement to serve the people with commitment so that we may change the lives of the people.

We are grateful for his wise counsel and his enduring revolutionary spirit.

The 70th anniversary of the adoption of the Freedom Charter is about celebration.

But it is also about reflection and mobilisation.

We must use this occasion to reflect on our gains and shortcomings.

We must mobilise all South Africans not only to speak of freedom, but to work together to

achieve that freedom.

Like the *amavolontiya* of the 1950s, we need to reach out to our people to discuss the Freedom Charter.

Like them, we need to be disciplined, we need to be earnest, we need listen to the people and work together to address their concerns.

In an article written on the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the Freedom Charter, the revolutionary intellectual Mzala said:

"We defend, fight and die for, the ideals enshrined in the Freedom Charter, not because it is an all-time document, but because it is a revolutionary guide to a life free of misery and oppression.

"It is the demands of the people that have yet to be won. These are the kind of ideals which most nations achieve, ideals for which men and women stubbornly and heroically resist torture in detention and gruelling lives in exile, ideals for which our martyred dead stood firm and unflinching to the last minute of their lives.

"Such ideals cannot be taken lightly."

So let all of us in this room this evening, all of us who love our people and our country, now say together:

"These freedoms we will fight for, side by side, throughout our lives, until we have won our liberty."

STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ANC CDE FIKILE MBALULA ON THE

MIDTERM REPORT

PRESENTED TO THE 5TH NATIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL

THE Midterm Report presented to the 5th National General Council stands as an emphatic declaration that the African National Congress is not only renewing itself, it is repositioning South Africa on a path of methodical progress, measurable development, and accelerated transformation. Delegates welcomed the Mid-term Review with warmth, confidence and visible enthusiasm, recognising it as a turning point in the movement's trajectory. At a time when the world is marked by volatility and nations confront unprecedented pressures, this report demonstrates that South Africa, under ANC leadership, continues to advance human development, expand opportunity and strengthen the building blocks of a just society.

As the nation marks 70 years of the Freedom Charter and approaches 114 years of ANC leadership, the Midterm Report confirms what millions of South Africans understand; the ANC remains the only movement capable of uniting the nation, transforming the state, and advancing a thorough socio-economic progress that improves daily life.

The report is anchored in verifiable facts. Life expectancy in South Africa continues to rise, reaching 64 years for men and 69.6 years for women in 2025, a scientific accomplishment rooted in massive public-health investments and the most extensive



HIV/AIDS turnaround on the continent. Educational progress has placed South Africa at the forefront of global human-development indicators; the Global Gender Gap Report 2025 ranks South Africa first in the world for women's enrolment in primary, secondary and tertiary education, a direct outcome of ANC policies that widened access and dismantled apartheid-era exclusions. Youth investment has intensified, with 75% of young people now enrolled in education, while participation in higher education has risen, offering a proven protective effect against unemployment. These are not abstract achievements; they are scientific measurements of a society that is moving forward.

The expansion of the social wage is equally demonstrable. Today, 90.2% of households have access to electricity, up from 76.7% in 2002; 87.7% have access to piped water; and 83.1% now enjoy improved sanitation, compared to barely 61% two decades ago. These numbers reflect a profound transformation in the material conditions of millions of people and reaffirm that the ANC-led state remains the primary engine of human upliftment. Even in the face of global shocks that have driven increases in food insecurity worldwide, South Africa continues to deepen interventions to protect vulnerable households, strengthen nutrition programmes and expand social protection, again showing



that we are grounded in empirical understanding and responsive policymaking.

Economically, the report shows a society undergoing structural transformation backed by measurable outcomes. Since democracy, formal employment has more than doubled from 8 million to 16.8 million people, demonstrating broad labour absorption despite global recessionary trends. The growth of the Black middle strata, now accounting for roughly half of the country's middle-income population, is another scientific indicator of transformation. This expansion did not happen by accident; it is the direct result of empowerment policies, skills development, preferential procurement and inclusive growth strategies implemented over three decades. The NSDF2050 further provides an evidence-based spatial plan to modernise cities, strengthen rural regions and position the entire national territory as an integrated, competitive economic system.

The report also demonstrates that when we were confronted with a strategic electoral setback, the ANC responded not

with emotion, but with scientific political calculation and responsible statecraft. The decision to champion a Government of National Unity was a rational, evidence-based intervention designed to stabilise the country, protect transformation gains, ensure policy continuity and prevent reactionary forces from reversing democratic progress. This is the ANC acting as a mature liberation movement, guided by data, history and the national interest.

What emerges unmistakably from the Midterm Report is a

movement that is renewing with purpose, rebuilding with discipline and driving human development with measurable results.

The ANC is sharpening its ideological tools, strengthening its institutions, investing in cadreship and reconnecting with the motive forces of change. It is demonstrating through evidence; not slogans; that South Africa is moving forward. People live longer; more children and youth are in education; more households have services; more Black South Africans occupy professional and entrepreneurial spaces; and the foundations of an integrated, future-oriented economy are being constructed with scientific precision.

The message to the nation is clear and emphatic, the ANC is rising; the ANC is renewing; and the ANC is leading South Africa into a new era of measurable progress, scientific advancement and inclusive development. The future is not only imagined, it is being built, in data, in policy and in the lived experiences of millions, through the renewal project now firmly underway.



CLOSING ADDRESS

BY ANC PRESIDENT CDE CYRIL RAMAPHOSA

TO THE ANC 5TH NATIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL

WE have come to the end of the 5th National General Council of the ANC.

In the finest traditions of our movement, this NGC has been an opportunity for umrabulo, an opportunity for thorough political debate.

Most importantly, it has been an opportunity to outline a clear path ahead to give effect to the decisions of the 55th National Conference and to advance the historic mission of our movement.

In the commissions that I attended, I was impressed to hear how delegates had come to this NGC so well prepared. I was impressed to hear them put forward views informed by deep knowledge and grounded in real research.

The delegates reminded us that the ANC must always be led by evidence, principle and the real needs of our people – not by slogans, popularity or convenience.

When we engage from a researched point of view as many delegates did in this NGC, our policy becomes realistic, implementable and focused on impact.

The high level of debate is underpinned by the culture which I recognised of reading, analysing, listening and thinking.

This thoroughgoing preparation



by delegates is indicative of a resurgent ANC. The movement must continue to build on these green shoots of renewal.

When we read, research, analyse and think, we decide better. And when we decide better, our people live better.

Throughout the NGC, the commissions were packed to capacity and delegates debated in a calm and comradely atmosphere.

The delegation breakdown between men and women, young and old has improved. Women and young people have participated in greater numbers than before.

Delegates have remained focused on the tasks at hand. They have refused to be distracted by

issues outside of the purpose of the NGC.

As a result, we leave this NGC with agreement on the actions we need to take to make the ANC a more effective instrument of the people to achieve the vision of the Freedom Charter.

This mid-term evaluation has been characterised by honest and critical reflections.

We evaluated the work being done by the ANC in communities, in government and our historic role in fundamental social and economic transformation of South African society.

Reflecting on the mood of the delegates present here over the past four days, we can say without a shadow of doubt that you,

our delegates, came here to genuinely renew and rebuild our movement.

Throughout the discussions and debates there was an emphasis on the urgency of implementing our policies and decisions.

We can summarise the central message of this NGC as: Disciplined implementation is the number one priority.

We agreed that we must rid our movement and government of not implementing decisions that have been taken.

We agreed that since the 1994 democratic breakthrough, a lot has been done in changing South Africa's political and legal landscape. We have a transformative Constitution, a progressive Bill of Rights and democratic institutions that safeguard the rights and freedoms of our people and ensure that government is based on the democratic will of the people of South Africa.

Successive ANC-led administrations have quantitatively improved the lives of millions of South Africans though expanded access to basic services and infrastructure.

They have expanded access to housing, healthcare, education, electricity, water, sanitation and a social security net to those who need state support.

We have witnessed a significant growth of the black middle class, black professionals, black-owned and women-owned businesses in many sectors of the economy.

The NGC supported the decision to form an inclusive ANC-led Government of National Uni-

ty as a tactical intervention that doesn't change the ANC's long-term strategy for fundamental transformation.

While supporting the NEC intervention and decision fully, the NGC correctly noted that some parties have been using the GNU to try and undermine the transformation of our country as mandated by the Constitution, the supreme law of the land.

Accordingly, the NEC has been mandated to strengthen the ANC's capacity to drive progressive policies in the GNU and ensure delivery of immediate results on jobs, inclusive growth, tackling poverty and inequality, and fighting crime and corruption.

The NEC, as mandated by this NGC, should continue to monitor and assess the performance of the GNU and make necessary interventions to ensure that the GNU serves the interests of the people of South Africa.

The subjective organisational weaknesses of the ANC and the Alliance and the increasingly difficult objective economic conditions of the motive forces require a combination of both organisational renewal and the national renewal of our country.

We must therefore renew and rebuild both the ANC and the Alliance with a specific focus on inclusive economic growth and the safety and security of citizens.

We salute the more than 125,000 members of the ANC from 1,600 branches who have already completed the Foundation Course.

Our aim is to ensure every ANC member and every ANC leader understands the core principles,

values and policies of our movement. This will lay the basis for vibrant and renewed branches and upgrade the quality of our cadres.

We also take heart from the substantial progress we have made in developing our new membership system and the many branches and members who now have access to this important mechanism that confirms their identify as members of the ANC to ensure an effective membership system.

Vibrant active branches with consistent community outreach programmes are the foundation of a renewed ANC. Our process of branch functionality audits will ensure that we are monitoring the rebuilding of our structures and sharing good practice throughout the organisation.

Every branch must conduct an audit of ward-based challenges and issues which will in turn inform the branch's programme of action to focus on the resolution of local issues. No ANC branch can claim to lead a community that is not rooted in the daily struggles of that community for a better life.

Rebuilding a culture of integrity and ethics is central to our renewal process. In this regard we want to salute the important work of the ANC Integrity Commission on guiding our approach to these difficult matters.

We note that the step aside decision is now being implemented with greater consistency across our structures.

Those members who are stepping aside voluntarily while the matters that could bring the ANC into disrepute are being pro-

cessed are to be applauded. The issues that impact on the integrity of the ANC are being taken to heart by the membership. This is to be welcomed, because this is where we are seeing progress.

This NGC has raised deep concerns about the negative impact of the current state of the Alliance on the ability of the progressive forces to execute a revolutionary agenda, to defend and advance the NDR.

Accordingly, this NGC has supported the NEC's assessment that the SACP's resolution to field candidates in the 2026 local government elections, has not only tactical implications, but also strategic implications for the Alliance as a whole and the prosecution of the NDR.

It has been agreed that the Alliance leadership must meet urgently and develop a common approach to the reconfiguration and renewal of the Alliance in a manner that safeguards unity and cohesion and avoids further confusion, division and conflict among the rank-and-file on the ground.

The ANC, as the leader of the Alliance and the NDR, should not give up on its historic responsibility and effort to unite the Alliance, including continuing to engage the SACP to ensure that we approach the elections the way we have always done, on a common platform.

As we continue to persuade each other we need to ask the SACP to recuse itself from strategic election structures and not send official representatives to sit in those meetings.

The NGC observed that the coun-



try has made significant progress in addressing the network industry infrastructure shortcomings, with an emphasis on stabilising energy supply, which has enabled us to bring an end to load shedding and to now focus on grid expansion.

We are also seeing an improvement in the tonnage of goods that are transported on our rail network and exported and imported through our ports. We are seeing greater efficiencies and rising productivity in our network industries.

The NGC noted that economic growth and employment performance are beginning to show positive trends but remain significantly lower than the levels required to bring down unemployment. The ANC must focus its actions towards achieving a 3% growth rate in the medium term.

The NGC has re-affirmed the focus and priority areas of the '**Ten Point Plan**' as the guiding framework for economic implementation and action to improve growth and employment rates.

The Ten Point Plan is already demonstrating effectiveness in streamlining implementation of our Conference resolutions and Manifesto priorities in a measurable and time-bound manner.

In this regard, the NGC welcomed the progress made on energy security, as well as interventions on electricity tariffs in the ferrochrome sector, as well as port and rail network transformation. There are other industries that need attention, such as the steel and auto sectors. Our comrades in government will be giving attention to those sectors.

The NGC stressed the importance of enabling private sector investment in our national infrastructure revitalisation programme through a variety of finance mechanisms, while maintaining effective and strategic asset ownership and regulatory control as the state.

The NGC re-affirmed the importance of a social compact that enjoins government, labour, civil society and business around a coherent national investment strategy to increase the momentum of growth and development in our country.

The NGC emphasised the importance of Cabinet developing a coherent and transformative investment philosophy to guide public investment activities across all levels of government.

The NGC places emphasis on strengthening the project and contract management capability of government to execute projects in line with public interest priorities.

Acknowledging the challenges confronting small enterprises in our townships, rural and village areas, the NGC mandates government to ensure access to finance and appropriate skills training.

Recognising that there remains

a challenge in the skills ecosystem, the NGC has mandated government to institute a review of the SETA system in relation to industry requirements. The NGC agreed that we must proceed to implement the dual skills acquisition system to foster a skills revolution.

The NGC reaffirms its commitment to a broad-based structural transformation and all socio-economic redress policies. The NGC affirms the ANC's position on broad based black economic empowerment. It mandates government to ensure local content targets are implemented to support re-industrialisation in the steel and other sectors.

Local government remains the level of government closest to the daily lives of citizens. Accordingly the role of local government in both social and economic transformation is central to the developmental agenda of our country.

Accordingly, the NGC has affirmed today that municipal administration must be ethical and capable, and that professional administration is insulated from undue political interference.

The NGC has agreed that as the process of the review of the White Paper on Local Government unfolds, our structures must ensure that the new document meets all the objectives of developmental local government.

We reaffirm the important role traditional and Khoi-San leadership must play in local government to ensure joint planning between municipalities and Traditional Councils.

The NGC mandated government to ensure that the Department of

Land Reform and Rural Development and the institution of Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership must resolve outstanding land reform matters.

Once again we affirm that the District Development Model is the primary mechanism for integrated planning, budgeting and accountable service delivery across all spheres of government so our slogan must be: One Plan, One Budget, One Approach.

In less than a year we will contest the 2026 Local Government Elections. This will be an important test of the extent to which we have managed to renew the support and confidence of the electorate.

To win decisively the ANC must field our most dedicated, honest and competent candidates. We must work tirelessly in voting districts going door to door to explain why the ANC remains the only party that can meet the needs of all our country's people.

Crime and corruption remain a central concern of all communities.

The Madlanga Commission will assist us to establish facts and help us to reset the South African Police Service and the criminal justice system over the next decade.

The classification of gender-based violence and femicide as a National Disaster signals a firm commitment to tackling this societal scourge through an all of government and all of society approach.

The recent adoption of an integrated strategy to deal with gang violence in the Western Cape

and Gauteng, together with the allocation of substantial financial resources must ensure we stamp out the endless cycle of killings and violence that terrorise communities and devastate families every day.

The resolutions of this NGC explicitly recognise the porous borders of our country as a threat to territorial integrity and link them to illegal mining, terrorism, narcotics trafficking and transnational organised crime.

While the Border Management Authority has been established and initial deployments have begun, financial constraints remain a critical enforcement limitation. Accordingly the NGC mandates government to look at ways to strengthen the Border Management Authority.

It is a matter of urgency that we move with speed to update our legislative environment to deal with new realities in our migration environment.

Health and Education

Universal health coverage is a key aspiration of the Freedom Charter.

The NGC has agreed that we must proceed to implement NHI and strengthen all aspects of our health system towards the achievement of affordable, equal and quality health care for all our people.

Delegates welcomed the classification of gender-based violence and femicide as a national disaster, but highlighted poor police response, secondary victimisation and long case backlogs as amongst factors exacerbating gender-based violence and femi-

cide in our society.

The NGC agreed that the harmful practice of ukuthwala – the forced marriage of young girls – must be condemned without any form of ambiguity.

There was agreement the movement must urge its deployees in the state to strengthen and fast-track legislative and other measures aimed at enhancing the implementation of the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide.

Delegates emphasised mandatory training for SAPS on the National Strategic Plan, in particular. Those in the criminal justice system must take care and be trained to prevent further harm to survivors and victims.

The NGC stressed that the ANC should continue to strive for a better Africa and a better world

The ANC should continue to revive and strengthen its ties with sister liberation movements and progressive parties across the world, including the anti-apartheid movement, and share lessons and experiences on successful party renewal.

We must continue to mobilise international solidarity campaigns with the people of Palestine, Western Sahara and Cuba.

South Africa must continue to diversify economic ties and strengthen trade relations with countries in our own continent, the Middle East, Asia and Central and South America, in addition to the relations we have with Europe and North America.

The NGC has agreed that we must continue to anchor all our

economic recovery and inclusive growth efforts in Africa.

We must strengthen the Global South to strengthen Africa's role in global economic institutions like the IMF and World Bank.

We must continue to promote multilateralism and insist that the United Nations remains at the centre of the resolution of international disputes.

Commissions called on the NEC to hold all Ministers, MPs, Premiers, MECs, Mayors and councillors accountable and ensure they to address poor service delivery, the collapse of infrastructure and ensure our economy grows and creates work for especially for women and young people.

This NGC has resolved that we must prioritise nation-building, social cohesion and empowerment of the motive forces to unite society behind the cause of transformation and a better life for all.

This informs our endorsement of an inclusive and citizen-led National Dialogue.

We have agreed that our participation in the National Dialogue should be guided by four core principles: transparency, inclusivity, objectivity and action orientation.

We need to ensure that all sectors have a voice in shaping the dialogue, and that the National Dialogue produces measurable outcomes.

From this NGC, we have a clear line of march.

The delegates to this NGC have acknowledged the great chal-

lenges that confront our movement and our country.

But we are not daunted by these challenges. We are not cynical.

We can see how far we have come. This gives us hope. It inspires us to carry on, to work harder and to do better.

While we have much further to travel, the renewal of our movement is gaining momentum. It is moving forward and will soon be unstoppable.

We are resolved to see the fundamental renewal of our movement through to its conclusion.

We are resolved to hold our 56th National Conference as a transformed organisation, an organisation that is united, that is cohesive, that has the confidence and the trust of the masses of our people.

We are resolved to become an ever more effective agent for fundamental social and economic transformation.

Next year, we will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the adoption of our democratic Constitution.

The Constitution is a revolutionary framework that mandates and guides the fundamental transformation of our society into a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous nation.

It affirms that the people shall govern, that all shall be equal before the law, and that dignity, work, shelter and security are not privileges, but rights.

For three decades, this Constitution has empowered decisive action to dismantle the legacies

of racial, gender and class oppression.

Yet this anniversary takes place at a time of ever more strident attacks on constitutional values, the rule of law and a rules based international order.

The task of the ANC and all progressive and patriotic South Africans is therefore twofold: to defend and deepen constitutional democracy, and to ensure it delivers more decisively for the poor and the marginalised.

This NGC has confirmed that central among the tasks of the moment – to give effect to those aims and objectives – is to drive inclusive economic growth, create jobs and tackle poverty.

We have embarked on a path of economic recovery and transformation. Like the renewal of our movement, this recovery is gaining momentum.

The difficult years are beginning to yield to a new era of progress, confidence and hope. We can see the effects of our efforts in important economic indicators. Our task now is to ensure that South Africans see the effects of these changes in their lives.

They must feel the benefit of jobs being created, new businesses starting up, young people getting the skills they need, services being reliably delivered, social infrastructure being built.

People must feel safe in their homes and on the streets of their towns and on the paths of their villages. Public services must work. Officials must be honest and helpful. Public representatives must be accountable.

As we depart this NGC, as we go home to our communities, let us be more determined than ever to bring about the changes that our country needs.

I wish to extend thanks to the staff of the African National Congress, who despite the known challenges, showed up and performed their duties for our organisation. Your hard work and dedication remain unparalleled.

I also want to thank the SGO, TGO and the Presidency and the entire NGC Preparatory Team for organising an inspiring forum for debate and assessment.

Finally, I wish to thank all delegates and other participants for their constructive contributions and debates.

As our forebears did 70 years ago, let us pledge ourselves to strive together, sparing neither strength nor courage, until the democratic changes been achieved.

I wish everyone a peaceful and blessed festive season. And safe travels as you head home.

ANC LIVES! ANC LEADS!



DECLARATION

OF THE 5TH NATIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

HELD 8–11 DECEMBER 2025

Introduction

1. We, the over 1500 delegates from structures of the ANC, together with our Alliance partners the South African Communist Party (SACP), Congress of South African Trade Union (Cosatu), and the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO), the Mass Democratic Movement, as well as sister organisations from across the region, gathered for the 5th National General Council in Ekurhuleni, as an embodiment of our intensified Renewal Mission!
2. The NGC convened under the theme: *Renewal to make the ANC a more effective instrument of the people to achieve the vision of the Freedom Charter: The People shall Govern! The People shall share in the country's wealth!*
3. The 5th NGC took place at a critical moment in the history of our young democracy, with notable progress to build a better life over the three decades of freedom, which includes: a Constitutional order committed to equality, redress, human and socio-economic rights and a comprehensive social wage which includes the millions now having access to basic services.
4. At the same time, the legacies of the past still find expression in the triple challenges of poverty, inequality, and unemployment. These challenges have been exacerbated by spatial under-development that remains stubbornly high, impacting negatively on millions of men and women, young and old, across the country.
5. The 5th NGC also convened as we celebrated 70 years of the Freedom Charter, 40 years since the launch of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and as we prepare for 30 years of the South African Constitution and the seventh local government elections in 2026.
6. We, the delegates to the 5th NGC, remain mindful that our movement and indeed the cause of social transformation continue to face an existential crisis, which has placed the very cause of national liberation at a crossroads. Consequently, we understand our struggle to be at a fork road, and thus:
 - We can either Renew or Perish.
 - We can Unite or Face Defeat.
 - We can Return to Serving the People or Betray the NDR.
7. Mindful of this pregnant moment in our history, the Plenary and Commission sessions lived up to the expectation of our NGC as “*the largest political school*” of our movement. Venues were consistently full, and delegates discussed topics from the Base Document, Political Overview, Mid-Term Report and various thematic areas.
8. The 5th NGC delegates displayed utmost discipline and determination to learn, participate, and sharply raise matters of outmost concern to society, communities on the ground and the ANC membership. The work done on the ground through the ANC Foundation Course and the preparations by the Provinces and the Leagues towards the NGC, made a positive impact on the quality and depth of debates.
9. The 5th National General Council affirmed the ongoing relevance of the NDR as the shared theory, strategy and programme of the ANC-led Alliance and democratic movement. The NGC reaffirmed the thorough-going socio-economic transformation as a fundamental foundation for the South Africa We Want and the means of achieving it. NGC agreed that the strategic objectives of the NDR as articulated in the Strategy and Tactics document remain relevant. Attaining these objectives will lead to the

fundamental transformation of South Africa into a National Democratic Society – a truly united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous nation – based on the vision of the Freedom Charter.

10. The NGC acknowledged progress of the NDR in the empowerment of the motive forces. These gains can be seen in the significant growth of Black professionals and middle strata, and to an extent Black-owned and Women-owned businesses in many sectors of the economy reserved for white males under apartheid. Workers have also made enormous gains in terms of labour rights and the social wage, including the minimum wage. The youth are the primary beneficiaries of massive public investment in the expansion of basic education and higher education. South African women have also made gains regarding the social wage, political representation and economic empowerment – South Africa occupies the second place in the G20 countries on women empowerment.
11. At the same time, despite progress, the NGC concluded that the **NDR stands at a crossroads**, because of the following:
 - Incidents of corruption on the capacity, legitimacy and authority of the state.
 - Tendencies of Ideological and organisational degeneration in the ANC and Alliance structures, especially the sins of incumbency, factionalism, crass materialism, social distance and outright service delivery failures.
 - The Apartheid-colonial political economy remains largely intact: the unequal distribution of economic opportunities between Black and White, men and women, urban and rural and high levels of unemployment and economic exclusion remain a dominant pattern of South Africa's political economy and spatial landscape.
 - The impact of neo-liberalism, an ideology and policies that seeks to limit the role of the state in driving a developmental agenda. Thus, outsourcing and “tenderisation” of state functions have weakened the democratic state's capacity and orientation to drive development.
12. The NGC admitted that the cumulative impact and toxic combination of these factors, and the deterioration in, inequality and unemployment rates as well as slow progress in reducing poverty, have led to the 2024 electoral setback and the crossroads of the National Democratic Revolution. These factors also contributed to the emboldening of counter-revolutionary forces at both domestic and global levels.
13. The 5th NGC therefore declared that for fundamental socio-economic transformation to be advanced and accelerated, organisational renewal must be sustained and must go hand in glove with national rejuvenation and renewal, in the following four areas:
 14. Firstly, **Renewal of the ANC as the leading Agent of Change** – to rebuild the leadership, organisational and ideological capacity to drive transformation. This renewal must be all-encompassing, and will require strict organisational management of the ANC, the adoption of a **Renewal Charter Towards 2032**, with performance targets and indicators across a range of issues identified by NGC, which should include the reconfiguration and renewal of the Revolutionary Alliance.
 15. **Secondly**, national renewal and rejuvenation must be **anchored by an elective Developmental Path for Growth and Social Equity** – that re-industrialize the economy for mass employment creation, transform the racialized and gendered patterns of ownership and control, build productive rural areas advancing land and agrarian reforms, urban centres as drivers of economic growth and innovation; safe communities, quality basic services, climate-smart infrastructure and a state that is elective, trusted and ethical.
 16. This must include strengthening the local sphere of governance through the Local Government Action Plan, to accelerate service delivery, infrastructure development and maintenance, and reconnecting with the people. This will require ward-based monitoring & evaluation systems and deploying the best amongst us in the 2026 Local Government Elections.
 17. Local government is the sphere of government closest to the people, where the injunction of the Freedom Charter that “*the people shall govern*” must find most direct expression. This must also be reflected in the demarcation of local government structures. The National General Council directed the NEC to work with

communities negatively affected by recent decisions by the Local Government Demarcation Board to address their concerns.

18. Thirdly **Nation-Building, Social Cohesion and Empowerment of the People** – to unify society behind the cause of transformation manifested in a better life for all.

19. Finally, **navigating a complex global situation** – to protect and advance our national interests and the African agenda amid global shifts.

20. The 5th NGC, in a range of Commissions reviewed implementation of 55th National Conference resolutions, challenges and new issues, with recommendations on accelerating implementation towards 2027 when the 56th National Conference convenes and 2032, when the ANC will turn 120 years.

21. The 5th NGC instructs the NEC to strengthen the recommendations and immediately translate these recommendations into a Renewal and Rejuvenation Action Plan, with marching orders to ANC deployees in executive authorities, public representatives, NEC, PEC and RECs members, and above all in the basic unit of the movement, the ANC branches across the length and breadth of the country.

22. The 5th National General Council calls on all ANC leaders, members and supporters to put shoulder to the wheel to implement this Renewal and Rejuvenation Action Plan, as we take part in the National Dialogue, engage with communities, sectors and the Alliance, and advance service delivery, economic transformation in the ANC-led GNU, Provincial and Local governments, and from opposition benches.

23. We approach the 30th anniversary of our Constitution in 2026, following closely on the 70th anniversary of the Freedom Charter. The Constitution is the supreme law of our republic. It is a democratic revolutionary framework that mandates and guides the fundamental transformation of our society into a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous nation. It affirms that the people shall govern, that all shall be equal before the law, and that dignity,

work, asset ownership, shelter and security are not privileges, but rights.

24. For three decades, it has anchored democratic governance, built independent institutions, expanded access to justice, and enabled major social advances in housing, education, health-care, water, electricity and social protection. It has empowered decisive action to dismantle the legacies of racial, gender and class oppression.

25. Yet this anniversary takes place at a time of ever more strident attacks on constitutional values, the rule of law, and a rules-based international order, globally and domestically, including a targeted campaign against the continuing process of liberating the majority of South African from the legacy of white patriarchal supremacy.

26. The task of the ANC and all progressive and patriotic South Africans is therefore twofold: to defend and deepen constitutional democracy, and to ensure it delivers more decisively for the poor and the marginalised. The movement must lead a year-long 30th Anniversary programme that ignites mass constitutional education, active citizenship, youth mobilisation, and cultural programmes, while confronting corruption, disinformation and democratic disengagement.

27. The ANC affirms, for all our country and the world to know, that the Constitution is the people's covenant, a powerful instrument of renewal, justice and shared prosperity.

28. The 5th National General Council rises with the ANC and the broader progressive movement re-energised, inspired and determined to translate the commitments and resolutions into practical action not only to inform the actions of our members and supporters; but to impact on the lives of South Africans in practical ways.

29. In this regard, we solemnly reaffirm the profound commitment enshrined in the Freedom Charter: ***These freedoms we will fight for, side by side, throughout our lives until we have won our liberty.***

AMANDLA!





ANC's death exaggerated and now resurrection contemplated

■ By **YACOUB ABBA OMAR**

THE ANC's national general council (NGC) meeting could come to represent an inflection point; the moment it put a brake on the steady erosion of electoral support and clawed its way back into the hearts and minds of the South African electorate.

Regaining organisational discipline is a core concern. From the opening session its leadership insisted they were not there to discuss the removal of ANC president Cyril Ramaphosa, with secretary-general Fikile Mbalula saying branches can discuss that in the lead-up to the 2027 elective conference.

Mbalula's 294-page midterm report acknowledges that the ANC's decline dates back to 2016, be-

ginning with the loss of major metros and culminating in losing its parliamentary majority in the 2024 elections. The report describes the organisation as "*weakened structurally, politically and morally, but not defeated*".

In his opening address, Ramaphosa revived the Vision 2032 and renewal programme presented at the ANC's 2022 national conference. That conference's declaration pointed out that "*the ANC will only succeed in realising its strategic objective of transforming South Africa when it has successfully transformed itself into a renewed, responsive, modernised, well-governed, well-resourced, caring and effective political formation – the central focus of the ANC Roadmap to 2032*".

There has been much speculation around ideological tensions over the ANC's choice of political parties when constituting the government of national unity (GNU). Ramaphosa defended it, arguing that the national executive committee agreed that the core progressive policy agenda has been retained, despite the difficult conditions.

Ramaphosa's speech on the second night shepherded the troops around a common ideological framework by adroitly drawing on its many historical documents, with the 1955 Freedom Charter providing the fulcrum around which past thinking flowed and future thinking would revolve.

In emphasising that the charter still represents a basis for radical transformation of the economy

and building a nonracial South Africa that belongs to all who live in it, he:

- Extended a hand to the South African Communist Party (SACP), whose leaders have decided to contest the local government elections without the ANC, and seized the mantle of radical rhetoric from the EFF and MK parties.
- Strengthened this with remarks about the steadfastness of Cosatu as an ally and emphasised the role of the working class in achieving economic transformation.
- Underscored the centrality of land restitution, describing the dispossession of the original inhabitants of this land as *“the original sin”*.
- Reasserted the openness of the ANC to all race groups, citing the various moments it had committed to nonracialism. He also emphasised this needs to find concrete expression

through all structures of the organisation.

- Signalled that the ANC leadership will not be associated with xenophobic attacks against those who have taken up residence in South Africa.

The circumstances leading to the local government elections and 2029 general election could not be more propitious for the ANC. We are witnessing the rolling back of crime and corruption through arrests, commissions and hearings, but the ANC needs to take the lead in this fight and not be on the back foot when its comrades are accused of, or implicated in, malfeasance.

We are also beginning to see an improvement in the country’s economic prospects, especially due to the raft of reforms made possible by the business-government working groups.

Other factors that could create the

conditions for the ANC’s revival are the fissures confronting the DA, EFF and MK. The May 2024 elections indicated that support for the DA and EFF is plateauing. Fuelling this trend, according to election analyst Wayne Sussman the Patriotic Alliance (PA) is *“setting themselves up as the one party stronger today compared to 2024”*.

An issue that should concern all parties is the decline in voter participation, with increasing levels of cynicism in the democratic process. Participation of the voter-eligible population, which includes registered and non-registered voters, came in at about 42% in last year’s elections.

The ANC must lead the charge in renewing faith in the electoral system and saving our democracy.

Abba Omar is director of operations at the Mapungubwe Institute.



Renewal Is Not Déjà Vu: A Response to Tony Leon and the Politics of Liberal Forgetfulness

■ By **BUTI MANAMELA**

TONY Leon's recent commentary dismissing President Cyril Ramaphosa's political report as "*renewal déjà vu*" is not simply a critique of the ANC's internal processes; it is an ideological statement rooted in the liberal conviction that the movement has exhausted its historical purpose. To Leon, renewal is a pitch we have heard before, a performance repeated without conviction, a recycling of promises that have outlived their shelf life. It is a comfortable argument for someone who has long believed that South Africa is best served when its largest liberation movement is confined to a museum.

But what Leon misreads – and what many commentators echo uncritically – is that renewal, as engaged at this 5th National General Council, is not a branding exercise or an attempt to revive past slogans. It is a moment of reckoning. A confrontation with decline. A recognition that a liberation movement can drift, can falter, can deviate, and yet still carry within it the intellectual and organisational resources to correct course. Renewal is not *déjà vu*. It is dialectic. It is the ANC recognising that history does not wait for wounded giants to heal; it demands they act or perish.

Leon treats Ramaphosa's report



as a repetition of old scripts because his political tradition reads ANC self-correction as theatre rather than theory. He judges the movement by the metrics of managerial efficiency rather than the deeper architecture of ideological struggle. Where he sees sameness, those of us steeped in ANC tradition recognise a return to foundational clarity – not because the past must be romanticised, but because the present requires the discipline of political honesty.

The political report does not present renewal as ornamentation. It describes it as existential imperative. It acknowledges the electoral setback without euphemism.

It concedes that the movement has, in places, been hollowed by patronage, distracted by factionalism, and burdened by its own internal contradictions. It diagnoses the collapse of local government with unflinching accuracy. It admits that corruption did not merely weaken the state – it wounded the moral fibre of the organisation itself. No serious analyst could describe this as repetition. It is politically dangerous truth-telling. It is not the language of a movement content with old slogans; it is the language of one aware that it stands at a historical precipice.

Leon's argument rests on the belief that the ANC's promise

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of renewal has been made too many times to carry weight. But movements do not renew on media timelines. They renew when organisational survival, ideological coherence and national responsibility converge. That convergence is now. The ANC's challenge is not to find new metaphors; it is to recover the discipline, ethics and theoretical coherence that once made it a transformative force. Renewal is repetition only to those who cannot distinguish between an echo and a warning.

The NGC is not a nostalgia festival. It is a governance correction. It is an organisational inquest. It is a moment to align the movement's internal health with the national interest. And far from recycling platitudes, the political report outlines one of the most far-reaching diagnoses of state failure presented inside the governing party since 1994. It demands a professionalised public service insulated from factional interference. It calls for procurement reform to dismantle a parasitic middleman economy that Leon's own party once celebrated as entrepreneurial freedom. It argues for a rebuilt develop-

mental state that places capacity above cadre entitlement. It insists that renewal must be both ethical and structural – a fact that the libertarian imagination cannot entertain because it reduces governance to technocratic tinkering.

Leon calls the report *déjà vu* because it refuses to mimic the neoliberal assumption that the market alone will resolve structural inequality. Renewal in ANC terms is fundamentally about power – who wields it, for whom, and toward what end. It is about whether the democratic state can reclaim authority from private interests and internal saboteurs. It is about whether the working class, the unemployed youth, and the vulnerable majority can still see themselves in the nation-building project. It is about whether the ANC can earn trust not through nostalgia but through competent, ethical and disciplined leadership.

And this is precisely where Leon's argument collapses under the weight of its own amnesia. He positions the ANC's call for renewal as a 13-year loop, but without acknowledging the devastating impact of state capture, the global

economic shocks, the ideological fragmentation of post-apartheid society, or the dangerous emergence of anti-constitutional populisms that threaten the very fabric of democracy. To ignore these forces is to critique from abstraction. To renew in the face of these forces is to govern in reality.

This NGC is not business as usual. No previous NGC convened at a time when the ANC must confront its own mortality. No previous NGC operated under the constraints of coalition governance where every misstep becomes ammunition for forces hostile to the constitutional order. No previous NGC had to address the widening gap between the promise of the NDR and the lived experience of youth swallowed by unemployment, or communities who experience local government as a daily betrayal. This is not *déjà vu*. This is crisis. And crisis, in political movements, is often the birthplace of clarity.

Leon is correct about one thing, though unintentionally. If renewal is not implemented with the discipline and urgency outlined in the political report, then indeed nothing will change. But this is



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not the gotcha he imagines. It is the very reason the NGC exists. The ANC has never renewed itself because its critics demanded it. It has renewed itself because history required it. At Morogoro. In Kabwe. In the 2000s when it rethought the meaning of governance. In moments when the movement chose correction over comfort.

What Leon calls *déjà vu*, we call responsibility.

Renewal begins in thought but is proven in action. And this political report — for all its demands, all its candour, all its ideological re-anchoring — is not the end of that work. It is the beginning. It is the intellectual mandate from which organisational discipline must follow. It is the diagnostic document from which both state and movement must rebuild.

So yes, Tony Leon is watching.

So are the millions of South Africans who have every right to demand more from the ANC than promises. Renewal will not be judged by its announcement but by its execution. But dismissing the seriousness of its political grounding is not analysis. It is a projection of liberal fatigue onto a movement engaged in introspection far deeper than its critics are willing to admit.

The real test is not whether Leon believes in renewal. The test is whether we can make it real — through discipline, through courage, through ethical leadership, through re-anchoring the ANC in the people's lived struggles. Renewal is not *déjà vu*. It is the only path ahead. And those who call it repetition mistake the sound of an echo for the approach of a turning point.



Beyond 'Dishing Out': Lazy Headlines betray our global role

■ By **CHRISPIN PHIRI**

THE recent headline, “SA dishing out millions in foreign aid to neighbours, allies,” did more than just report on the African Renaissance and Cooperation Fund (ARF). It perfectly illustrated a chronic deficiency in how South Africa's international relations are covered: a preference for sensational, domestically charged framing over specialist and correct understanding.

In today's contested new media world analytical shallowness is often tolerated, this headline is a masterclass in the latter. It is conceptually bereft and ideologically loaded, reducing a key instrument of statecraft to the level of a reckless handout. This does

a disservice to the public's understanding of where South Africa sits in a complex world.

A specialist lens, one we urgently need in our foreign policy journalism, would immediately reframe the discussion. “Dishing out.” This is the vocabulary of a cafeteria line, not of diplomacy. It implies a casual, unthinking generosity. It erases the calculated strategy behind every rand allocated from the ARF. This fund is not a charity. It is a core tool of soft power and direct investment in our own national interest.

The ARF is, in essence, an investment in regional stability and prosperity. When we support post-disaster/ conflict reconstruc-



tion in Mozambique or the Democratic Republic of Congo, we are investing in fewer refugees, less cross-border crime, and more secure trade routes. When we fund infrastructure or skills development in SADC nations, we are cultivating the neighbours who become the future markets for our goods and services. This is not altruism; it is strategic pragmatism.

The second failing is the unexamined use of the term “*foreign aid*.” This imports a paternalistic, donor-recipient model that is alien to South Africa’s foundational foreign policy philosophy. We speak of “*African-led solutions*” and “*mutual cooperation*.” The ARF is a vehicle for this, a tangible commitment to the “African Renaissance” that its very name honours. By labelling it “aid,” the narrative instinctively - and wrongly- pitches it against domestic service delivery. Of course we have dire needs at home. But all nations, even struggling middle powers, must resource their foreign policy. The real question isn’t “*Why are we spending this abroad?*” but “*Is this fund being managed transparently and effectively to deliver on its stated goals of enhancing our security*

and influence?”

The media’s critical role is not to stoke zero-sum resentment, but to demand accountability for outcomes. Are ARF projects achieving their aims? Are they fostering democracy, stability, and integration? That is rigorous oversight. The temptation to critique the fund solely by tallying rand amounts against potholes misses the broader strategic picture. An independent review of the ARF published in November 2024 underscores this point, finding that more than half of the fund’s initiatives made a significant contribution to South Africa’s foreign-policy priorities and to the continent’s stability and development. Put simply, the ARF is delivering the kinds of outcomes that strengthen both our regional role and our national interests.

Most tellingly, the headline and the framing it imposes completely airbrush out the “*African Renaissance*.” This is the intellectual and strategic heart of the fund. It is the legacy of a vision for a continent that is peaceful, self-reliant, and capable of shaping its own destiny. To ignore this is to report on a tree while missing the forest. It reduces a nuanced

foreign policy to a mere line item, easily weaponised for cheap political points.

We live in a contested world where South Africa is steering active non-alignment, a re-asserting multilateralism and the reform of post-world two institutions in a world a where Cold War super powers are retreating to narrow and crude nationalism and although the colonialism is decapitated, our continent is still the a domain of extraction of critical minerals. The public cannot make sense of these dynamics if our reporting defaults to simplistic “handout” headlines. We need journalism that can translate statecraft, analyse strategic interests, and hold power to account on the complex terrain where it actually operates.

The term “African Renaissance” is not mere decoration; it is the center piece of our foreign policy. The story of the ARF is not a simple tale of generosity. It is a chapter in the arduous, essential, and ongoing project of building a better Africa a project from which South Africa stands to gain immensely. It’s time our headlines started showing they understand that.



When we contribute to stability in Mozambique or support democratic consolidation in Lesotho, we are not merely being neighbourly. We are investing in the stability of our own economic corridor, the security of our borders, and the collective strength of the regional markets upon which our own prosperity depends. It is, in the cold calculus of statecraft, a form of preventative spending. The cost of regional instability, in the form of uncontrolled migration, transnational crime, and collapsed trade, would be infinitely higher.

This is not to say the fund should be immune from scrutiny. Quite the opposite. The public's rightful scepticism should be channelled into far more penetrating questions than whether we should

spend the money at all. We must ask: Is the fund administered with rigorous transparency? Are its projects subject to independent evaluation? Do they deliver tangible results that align with our stated goals of peace, integration, and mutual development? This is the terrain of meaningful accountability. It shifts the debate from a simplistic "here versus there" to a more soft power diplomacy tools and the prevention of conflict "*effectiveness versus waste.*"

What troubles me about the "dishing out" narrative is not its questioning of expenditure, but its poverty of imagination. It reduces a nuanced, long-term vision of African partnership, a vision that animated our moral re-en-

try into the world, to the level of a household grudge. South Africa's voice on the continent and in forums like BRICS and the G20 derives not only from the size of our economy, but from a perceived commitment to a certain set of principles. That credibility is a strategic asset, one carefully cultivated through instruments like the ARF.

It is true we all feel the pinch of our domestic challenges, such concerns are valid. It is the engine of accountability. But I would gently suggest that our patriotism must also look outward. Our destiny is inextricably linked to that of our continent and the international community interconnected world. Discussing that bond requires us to move beyond the chasing sensationalism and, more towards illustrating that a shared renaissance is still painfully incomplete.

We deserve a public discourse on foreign policy that is as sophisticated as the challenges we face. It begins by asking better questions, and by resisting the easy allure of a headline that, while resonant, may ultimately lead our conversation down a path of parochialism, away from the complex world in which our future must be secured.



The South African Constitution: A Transformational Framework and Nexus With Internationalism And Human Rights

■ By **GEORGE MAGOMA**

THIS year marks the 29th anniversary of the signing of the Constitution on the 10th December 1996 in Sharpeville.

As the curtain closes on the 70th anniversary of the Freedom Charter, looking with hope to a new year of vast opportunities, we look back with pride the momentous period in our lifetime on the signing of the democratic constitution on the 10th December 1996. This is a long period which draws us closer to the mirror, to reflect on the progress made since this watershed moment. As we so do, we interrogate the nexus between the Constitution, internationalism and a culture of human rights in a changing world gravitating towards solidarity and equality.

In a period of cynicism where all embrace the Constitution as a transformative tool, others peddle falsehoods of a country committing acts of genocide against the people which the constitution is designed to protect, to promote the culture of human rights, dignity and the right to life.

A few weeks ago when our international guests, business, progressive civil society and global leaders left our shores after the G20 Summit, none amongst



them witnessed any human culling, persecution of minorities and land seizures, but a people immersed in peace and friendship, which is their proud heritage and value system.

This is their culture as a cardinal principle of the Freedom Charter, emphasised in the landmark judgment of the State Makwanyane in which the apex court declared the death penalty barbaric and a crime against humanity. Then how can, the African National Congress (ANC) and government, carry these deplor-

able acts akin to the slaughter of Gaza, Serbia, Bosnia, Rwanda and many atrocities across the world?

As the country celebrates the 29th anniversary of its founding Constitution, we reiterate that South Africa belongs to those who live in it, black and white, and united in diversity. As an inclusive non-racial state guaranteeing common citizenship, the constitution promotes equity and diversity driven through various pieces of legislation. Against this fundamental grain, resistance to

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equality, non-racialism, unity, diversity, addressing the injustices of the past, protection of every citizen as envisioned by the constitution is heightened, questioning the commitment of those opposed to an inclusive state, redress and equity, and their patriotic duty to the democratic, to contribute to its prosperity and development, advance its objectives and to defend its gains of the 31 years of democracy.

The G20 Summit was steeped in the spirit of camaraderie, solidarity, pivoting on the central theme of Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability towards a new global order of inclusive multilateralism and progressive internationalism. The G20 Summit catapulted South Africa to the global state, its flag nestled high amongst many that adorned our beautiful sky, reflecting our diversity, our national coat of arms, the seal of the republic inscribed with inerasable words which animate our collective resolve', reflecting on who we are, expressed in, "Ike e: /xarra //ke" which means that diverse people unite, symbolising the nation's call for unity among its diverse cultures and peoples, promoting a shared sense of belonging and national pride.

The Constitution enjoins us to build a democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations. Through the G20, its diplomatic policy, a quest for a better Africa and a better world, South Africa is riding the crest of a wave, fighting for justice on behalf of the voiceless, imperialism for a new global order, promoting cooperation, an end to hunger, exploitation, disease, peace and friendship and striving for progressive internationalism and inclusive multilateralism.



These efforts are undermined, owing to South Africa's role and its emergence as a powerful force in a geopolitical paradigm that has drastically shifted from dominance and global bullying to inclusivity and cooperation of nations of the world. This is South Africa's constitutional imperative of a new global order that frowns upon neo-colonialism, but solidarity and equality, the central theme of G20, and the injunction of peace and friendship as advocated by the Freedom Charter.

The signing of the Constitution in Sharpeville in the Vaal, the present day Sedibeng was not a coincidence of history, but the recognition of the injustices of the Group Areas Act, the abhorrent pass laws, separate development, the betrayal of the 1902 Peace of Vereeniging, the land dispossession regime of 1913, the Sharpeville, Boipatong and Nangalembe Massacres and the graves of Maccauvlei where lay the Afrikaaners who fought the British occupation in the

Anglo-Boer War, but betrayed blacks who were on both sides of the war, denying them of universal suffrage, human rights and land ownership.

In 2025 the government passed the Expropriation Act to reverse brutal betrayal of this exclusionary peace pact of Vereeniging, concluded between two enemies, who as an oxymoron were tied together in furtherance of racial oppression and colonialism.

The Constitution is a catalytic vehicle that mobilises all South Africans behind the goal of patriotism, the duty to defend the democratic state, to foster national pride and unity. It is a bastion of human rights, and an instrument to advance development, build a non-racial, improve the quality of life, and to free the potential of each individual.

Equality is non-negotiable as a right enshrined in the Constitution to drive transformation and human dignity, to further the

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NDR in reversal of the legacy of apartheid. Today, on the occasion of his watershed moment, the ANC prides itself with many achievements attained through the constitution as a transformative framework promoting human rights and progressive internationalism.

In giving effect to the constitution, the ANC had passed empowering laws. The laws, designed to ensure equality, equity and inclusivity include the National Health Insurance Act (NHI), Expropriation Act and the Employment Equity Act to transform the workplace on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Congress of the South African Trade Unions (COSATU), to strengthen the tripartite alliance in advancing the imperatives of the constitution and the NDR and a dream of a better life.

Our Constitution is unitary and not alienating, it is a transformational instrument that unites society behind the common goal of development, nation building and prosperity.

Moving forward with determination and a sense of purpose, our vigilance must be raised against rising nationalism, the emergence of the laagers of racism and division. All citizens, in the face of this assault on the vision of the constitution must renew their resolve to defend the democratic state, to defeat the right-wing agenda and advance the poor and working class struggles.

In reaffirming the Constitution, we reassert that our country's sovereignty is not for sale.

The People Shall Govern! There Shall be Peace and Friendship! All Shall Enjoy Equal Rights!

How Majodina is Revitalising the Water Sector

■ By **CORNELIUS MONAMA**

SOUTH Africa's water sector has for years been trapped in crisis: ageing infrastructure, rampant non-revenue water, municipal debts exceeding R21 billion, violent service-delivery protests, and the predatory activities of the "water mafia". As one of the world's 30 most water-scarce countries, with per capita consumption already exceeding the global average at 218 litres per day compared to 173 litres internationally, South Africa has been teetering on the brink of a water crisis.

The point needs to be made that while there are challenges, raw water supply in South Africa is currently approximately in balance with existing demands on a na-

tional scale, but there have been localised deficits in areas such as Nelson Mandela Bay, Cape Town, Gauteng and eThekweni.

Amid overwhelming challenges, Majodina brought resolute leadership that would ignite a renaissance in the water sector. Since taking office as Minister of Water and Sanitation, she has provided exactly that kind of leadership. Over the last few months, she sought to ensure that each partner in the value chain understood their mandates and executed them. She instilled an appreciation that the water sector is a system, and that each part of the system carries a responsibility to contribute to the effective functioning of the whole system.





In less than 18 months, she had already moved the department from crisis mode to strategic intervention, unblocking long-stalled projects, restoring governance and placing water security on top of the national agenda. Through bold reforms, infrastructure investments and strategic partnerships, she has transformed an entire sector into an engine room for hope, dignity and sustainable water supply for all.

Majodina inherited a fragmented system that has been unable to respond adequately and in a co-ordinated manner to all challenges that undermine sustainable and reliable water supply. Bulk infrastructure projects routinely missed deadlines and blew budgets. One of her first decisive moves was to fast-track the establishment of the South African National Water Resources Infrastructure Agency (NWRIA), a game-changing entity responsible for all major bulk water projects. In the past, fragmented oversight led to delays and cost overruns in mega-projects. In her first eighteen months, she unblocked and fast-tracked key bulk water projects:

- Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (R42 billion) is back on schedule which will deliver an addition-

al 400 million cubic meters of water annually to Gauteng and the Free State by 2026.

- Maintenance on the LHWP's delivery tunnel, completed in May 2025 despite setbacks, ensured uninterrupted flow to the Vaal Dam and averted shortages in South Africa's economic powerhouse.
- The long stalled Lower uMkhomazi Bulk Water Supply Scheme in KwaZulu-Natal is back on track and will increase annual supply from 394 million to 608 million cubic metres to over five million people.
- In the Eastern Cape, the James Kleynhans Water Treatment Plant was handed over after upgrades that doubled capacity from 10 to 20 megalitres per day for Makana

Municipality.

- George's R81.3-million Garden Route Dam and remedial works (handed over on World Water Day 2025) added balancing dams, expanded treatment capacity, and installed generators that will ensure an uninterrupted supply even during power outages.
- In Emfuleni, she established the Vaal Corporation Water Utility, a special-purpose vehicle meant to rebuild and restore water and sanitation infrastructure.
- In August, the President launched Station 5A at Rand Water's Zuikerbosch Plant in Vereeniging, Gauteng, Africa's largest and state-of-the-art water purification facility to ensure reliable, sustainable water security for millions of residents.
- Parts of Hammanskraal have been receiving water since October 2024, following intervention by Minister Majodina to fast-track the Klipdrift Package Plant. The rest of the area will soon have access to clean, reliable and safe water.
- The R9.5-billion Mandlakazi Bulk Scheme (Zululand) and R4.7-billion Olifants-Ebenezer Phase 1 (Limpopo) are among dozens of regional projects



now fully funded and under construction.

Majodina now oversees 14 major projects valued at more than R100 billion that were previously stalled.

Majodina understands that governance is critical to sustainable water supply. Good infrastructure means nothing in the absence of good governance. Under her leadership, amendments to the Water Services Act have been energised to give the department stronger regulatory powers and to reverse the deterioration of water services at local government. Non-revenue water is now being tackled in a systematic and co-ordinated manner.

More investments are prioritised for rural and peri-urban areas, townships, and historically neglected municipalities. Groundwater development, water reuse and non-sewered sanitation solutions are being rolled out where pipelines are deemed to be economically unviable. Ongoing upgrades to wastewater treatment works and reticulation systems are part of her commitment to address decades of deliberate neglect.

The water mafia are also firmly on her radar. The sector has long been held to ransom by criminals the water mafia. She has declared war on these criminal syndicates who deliberately damage water infrastructure in order to secure lucrative emergency tanker contracts. Closer co-operation with law-enforcement agencies is now protecting critical infrastructure and ensuring that tax-payers' money serves the public, not the corrupt. At a very conceivable turn, she reminds stakeholders that water infrastructure is a key public asset, not a feeding trough for the corrupt.

In August 2025, Majodina used the AU-AIP Water Investment Summit to secure US\$10–12 billion in commitments for 80 priority projects across 38 African countries. Her frank message to developed nations – “put your money where your mouths are” – helped to highlight the continent’s US\$30 billion annual water-investment gap.

At home, she stabilised struggling water boards (uMngeni-uThukela recently earned an AA+ Fitch rating) and brokered debt-recovery agreements with defaulting municipalities. Rural and peri-urban areas, for decades neglected, are finally seeing targeted investment in groundwater, water reuse and off-grid sanitation solutions. She has issued a clear call to every citizen, municipality, business, and community to treat water as the scarce and precious resource that it is.

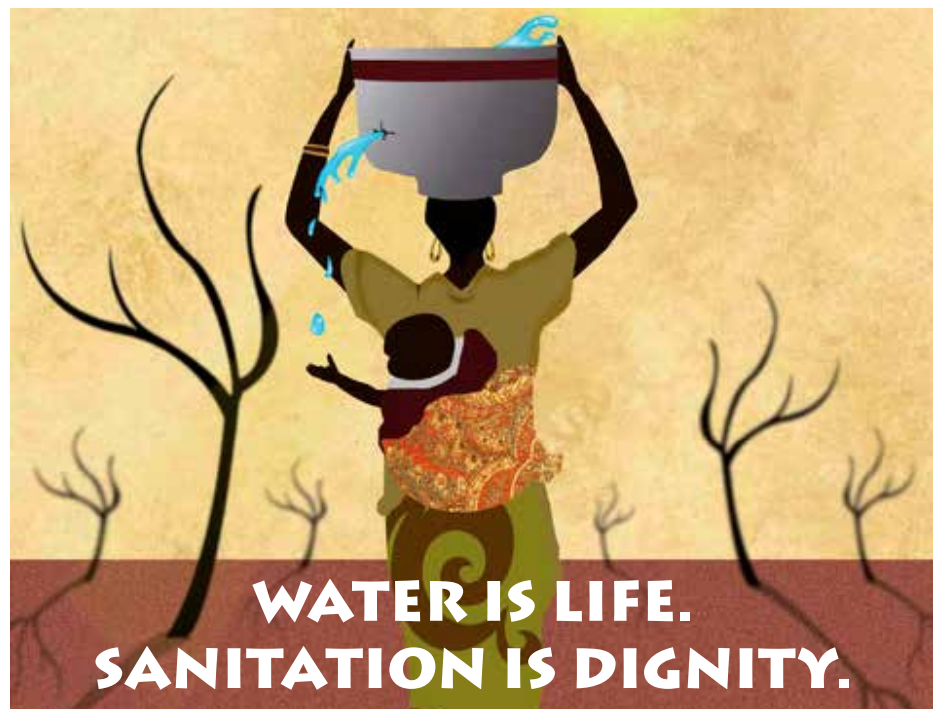
She has urged municipalities to update their indigent registers. At the same time, she continues to urge citizens to be the first line of defence against vandalism of infrastructure. Her message to

those who can afford to pay is clear: pay for the services you consume to enable authorities to keep delivering consistently.

Majodina often reminds the nation of the department’s mantra: **“Water is life. Sanitation is dignity.”** Her interventions have touched human life. National access to RDP-level water has increased from 60% in 1994 to 90% today. The task is to sustain this progress and to expand it to every underserved village, school and clinic. She knows too well that unless this mantra is translated into the lived experiences of ordinary citizens, it will not be worth the material it is written on.

Majodina’s re-engineering is a testament to what visionary leadership can achieve in any sector.

Her tenure has shown that political will, technical focus and courageous leadership can deliver results. If this momentum is sustained, then South Africa stands on the threshold of a new era where clean, reliable water is not a privilege for some but a guaranteed right for all citizens.



The Boikie Tlhapi Story Matters

■ By **SELLO TATAI**

IN an interesting turn of events, three former Apartheid Police Officers namely, George Mbathu, Itumeleng Matiti and Johannes Venter have been identified as persons of interest by the National Prosecuting Authority into the alleged death and disappearance of Potchefstroom anti-Apartheid activist Boikie Tlhapi, in police custody. The trio recently appeared before North West High Court sitting in Mahikeng where their case was remanded to March 2026 to allow them sufficient time to finalise their application for legal representation.

Tlhapi's story forms part of over hundred and fifty Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) cases that have been registered and reopened for investigations. And in May this year President Cyril Ramaphosa established a judicial commission of inquiry to investigate the reasons for the long delays in the investigation and prosecution of TRC cases over the past decades.

Thirty-nine years ago a group of young political activists were intercepted by the Stilfontein Riot Police while en route from Ika-geng township near Potchefstroom to a funeral in Klerksdorp. Amongst them was 26-year-old Boikie Tlhapi. They had defied the 1986 State of Emergency to bid farewell to their fallen comrades who were killed by police during political riots. They were subsequently detained at the Stilfontein Police Station where they were



tortured for several days and after fourteen days in custody, they were released. But Tlhapi never made it home and that was the last time he was seen alive.

The 1980's marked a turbulent period in the country and in its defense the then Apartheid government used extensive powers to incarcerate thousands of activists, gag media freedom and curtail political gatherings as well as imposing curfews by declar-

ing the State of Emergency. This was part of a broader strategy by the government of the day to crackdown on anti-apartheid movement and keep the racist Apartheid government in power no matter the ramifications.

During this period, efforts to raise awareness on atrocities meted by the Apartheid Government on African people had grown by monumental proportions gaining international recognition in the process.

Through international mobilization and solidarity, the African National Congress had sought to use its international footprint to mobilise the global community to isolate the regime through sanctions and disinvestment.

At the centre of the organization's strategy was Mass Mobilisation and Action. This encapsulated sustained popular mass action and civil disobedience through large scale protests, boycotts, marches and stay-aways.

The rolling mass action came at a heavy price particularly through the actions of the Security Branch affectionately known as the Special Branch. Established in 1947 and sustained throughout the Apartheid Era this unit was used as an instrument for state repression, surveillance, detention, torture and extra-judicial killing of thousands of anti-apartheid activists. A tragedy that would later befall Tlhapi during his detention at the notorious Stilfontein Police Station which many likened to Vakplaas- an infamous counter-insurgency unit which was involved in human rights abuses, bombings and assassinations of anti-Apartheid Activists.

I came to know about Tlhapi's story through a former Apartheid Police Officer George Mbathu, one of the three men that have been identified as persons of interest in the Tlhapi matter. At the time I was a journalist for the Public Broadcaster based in Mahikeng. In a three (3) piece insert I produced for SABC News, I interviewed Mbathu who made some very interesting and yet startling remarks about the disappearance of Tlhapi. He pointed out a mine ventilation shaft where he alleged, Tlhapi was thrown by police.



"In that shaft, there are bones and skeletons of our people there. I am saying today I am prepared. If they can open the shaft, if they don't get the skeletons they must charge me. In fact, it is not Boikie Tlhapi alone that was being thrown there. All comrades that were being arrested within Carletonville, Randfontein and Welverdiend they were also thrown in that shaft," alleged Mbathu.

He further maintained, the shaft was sealed after a visit by the Independent Inquiry Body (IIB) to have it excavated and test his allegations. The IIB was tasked with investigating human rights abuses that took place in the 80's in the then Western Transvaal.

During this period the late Advocate Abbey Dlavane was a human rights lawyer and contributed immensely in the compilation of the IIB report and partly corroborated Mbathu's claims. The IIB recommended a follow up on the excavation of the shaft. But this was not done and efforts to finally close this horrific chapter were dealt a huge blow.

At the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Tlhapi's story and that of other activists who dis-

appeared under similar circumstances occupied centre stage. This includes Sam Khiba of Kanana Township and Tello Nikelo who was only seventeen years old at the time.

The TRC recommended the arrest and questioning of police officers who were last seen with Tlhapi. But again, this was not done until recently following Minister Mamoloko Kubayi's decision to have the case re-opened.

Tlhapi's disappearance continues to linger in the minds of his family, fellow comrades and activists as well as the general public.

He might not have been a popular political figure as it is the case with other high profile cases of a similar nature currently sitting before various South African courts. But his story matters. It bears testimony to the resilience and fortitude demonstrated by ordinary South Africans from all corners of our country and in this regard the little known townships of Ikageng and Kanana in the struggle for national liberation.

It continues to serve as a constant reminder on both the emotional and physical scars carried by the victims of Apartheid, thirty-one years after the country's democratic breakthrough. True democracy must therefore heal the wounds of the past through restorative justice, centred on honesty transparency and accountability particularly for the families who lost their loved ones in the course of National Liberation.

Sello Tatai is a former journalist and co-founder of the Maftown Book Club. He writes in his personal capacity.

Princess Faku: Her Role in Uniting the Dr W.B. Rubusana Region (formerly the Border Region)

■ By **THABANG MASEKO**

ALLOW me to express my political view on the recent ANC Dr W.B. Rubusana regional conference, where Princess Faku was elected unopposed as the new regional chairperson following the withdrawal of her counterpart, Antonio Carels, who had been contesting the position of regional secretary.

Both Faku and Carels are children of the ANC, groomed within the ranks of the Congress Movement. Although Carels is no longer in a leadership position, he remains committed to work with the current leadership.

The strength of any leadership is measured by its presence on the ground and its willingness to serve the structures of the organisation.

Understanding where we come from and acknowledging that we have built a solid foundation for the movement, we remain mindful of the challenges that persist. We will continue to refine and improve our models of engagement.

Our preparations for the 2026 local government elections are on course and will provide a firm basis for unity, enabling us to advance our revolution unhindered.



Princess Faku

Faku has emphasised in the media that a vibrant ANC branch is one that provides space for all its members to contribute their ideas, skills, and competencies for the betterment of the organisation. This space should not be reserved exclusively for those elected to office (the Branch Executive Committee).

Such vibrancy is further characterised by continuous engagement with broader society on issues affecting the communities in which the branch operates. Through consistent interaction, the branch listens to society in order to refine its policies and ensure they remain aligned with ANC principles.

The eleventh-hour withdrawal of

Carels at the conference was not a betrayal of the struggle. On the contrary, I admire his brave decision to step aside in order to unite his forces with those of Faku and foster unity in the region.

The people of the Dr W.B. Rubusana region yearn for the kind of unity we experienced in the 1980s during the Border region era.

The politics of the Buffalo City Border region which includes East London, Mdantsane, and Qonce (formerly King William's Town) were shaped in the 1980s by the severe implementation and rigid enforcement of apartheid policies, particularly the Bantustan system.

The area became a flashpoint of political conflict and anti-apartheid resistance, largely due to the forced proximity of the "white" city of East London and the impoverished Ciskei homeland.

Key political dynamics in the 1980s included: Forced removals and relocation

The Ciskei became a receptacle for countless African families forcibly removed from other areas. The influx, combined with state-created tribal authorities that controlled land and services,

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created immense social pressure and led to the rapid growth of informal settlements as public housing provision declined in the early 1980s.

Vibrant civic resistance

The oppressive Bantustan system ignited robust civic movements that contested the legitimacy of the Ciskei's tribal authorities and the broader apartheid regime.

The Egerton Bus Boycott Massacre (1983)

When the Ciskei government increased bus fares for commuters travelling from Mdantsane to East London, a massive bus boycott ensued. On 4 August 1983, Ciskei police and soldiers opened fire on commuters at Egerton train station, killing 11 people and injuring 36. This incident, along with subsequent mass arrests, laid bare the brutality of political repression in the region and galvanised anti-apartheid sentiment.

International pressure

These events occurred against

the backdrop of intensifying global pressure, with the United States and the European Economic Community imposing economic sanctions on the apartheid regime sanctions that increasingly took effect by the decade's end.

The politics of the region in the 1980s were therefore defined by a direct, often violent clash between the state's rigid racial segregation policies and the growing resistance of local Black communities.

Today, the young leader Faku, now serving her second term at the helm of a region with such rich political history, faces the daunting task of uniting all forces. To achieve this, we have had to confront tendencies among some senior comrades to express ill-informed views about the ANC at funerals and social gatherings. Such individuals should be engaged constructively and encouraged to be part of the solution.

In some instances, leadership has also had to reassess its own views about former leaders, rec-

ognising that some of us have held uninformed opinions in the past. We must acknowledge that we, too, may be part of the problem and resolve to ensure broader participation of cadres in organisational matters so that the Buffalo City Metro Municipality (BCMM) remains an ANC-led metro.

There is general acceptance that the movement holds a wealth of experience and more must be done to share this with new generations of ANC members led by Faku and her secretary, Anele "Gee" Lizo.

This further underlines the need for proper organisational and administrative machinery to advance the movement. Finally, thank you, Comrade Faku, for your generosity in proposing that Comrade Carels assume the parliamentary position of "Gee" Lizo, thereby ensuring continued comradeship.

This challenges all of us in political office to play a meaningful role and support our principals wherever they serve.

Newly elected Top 5 ANC Dr W.B. Rubusana Regional Leadership





A LEAF OUT OF SOUTH AFRICA'S HISTORY

SECHABA: "Taking the Struggle to the White Areas"

■ By **CASTRO KHWELA**

IN the December 1985 issue of the African National Congress (ANC) journal, "**Sechaba**", it reproduced a leaflet that had been distributed inside South Africa titled "**Take the Struggle to the White Areas!**" The leaflet began with a belligerent slogan, which declared, "**Make the whole of South Africa ungovernable! Paralyse apartheid!**"

It then had a topic, "**The Battle Lines Are Drawn**", in which it maintained that through resolute action, many parts of South Africa were rendered ungovernable and the apartheid system of government in the African ghettos were smashed, while at the same time rudimentary organs of people's power were evolving. Furthermore, the leaflet asserted that despite enemy brutality, the people were engaged in mass action around all issues affecting them.

Moreover, according to the leaflet, the ANC had managed to create combat groups and mobile units to defend the people and their leaders by confronting the racist army, police, death squads, agents and stooges within their midst. By using all forms of struggle, the people had thrown Botha and his clique into confusion. The leaflet then said the goal was clear, which was "*to destroy the system of apartheid colonialism and establish in its stead a democratic, non-racial system in The People Shall Govern!*"

In the following heading of the leaflet, "**The Enemy is Desperate**", the ANC averred that Botha and his generals were resorting to martial law and full-scale repression against all anti-apartheid forces, which included mass murder, arrests, bannings and so on, in an attempt to cow the people into submission. At the same

time, the document argued, the regime was doing all it could to confine the struggle to the Black areas and protect the comfort of Whites, which was viewed to be a consequence of oppression and super-exploitation. As a solution, therefore, the leaflet asserted that the time had come to take the war to the White areas, as White South Africa could not be at peace while the townships were in flames.

In the leaflet's definition of taking the war to the White areas, it meant the strengthening of workers' organisations and engaging in united action in the factories, mines, farms and suburbs; spreading the consumer boycott to all areas of the country; engaging in well-planned and organised demonstrations in the White suburbs and central business districts; forming underground units and combat groups in places of

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work and taking such actions as sabotage in the factories, mines, farms and suburbs, and disrupting the “enemy’s oil, energy, transport, communications and other vital systems”; systematic attacks against the army and police and the so-called area defence units in the White areas; and organising well-planned raids on the armouries and arms dumps of the army, police, farmers and security services to secure armaments for the combat and mobile units.

The leaflet then called on White democrats and all anti-apartheid Whites to play a special role by ensuring that they participated in even larger numbers in mass action in the White areas hand-in-hand with the mass democratic movement; spreading the voice of democracy far and wide through the anti-apartheid organisations and win as many Whites as possible to the side of freedom and non-racialism; and intensifying the campaign against conscription, repression, the tri-cameral system, racist education and the mass carnage by the army and



police in the townships.

Furthermore, the leaflet challenged the progressive White community to change those who were serving in the apartheid parliament, who were claiming to stand for democracy by abandoning the illusion that the apartheid system could be changed from within and finding their place within the democratic movement; changing those who were serving within the army and the police to refuse to shoot their fellow countrymen, and turn their weapons against the sadists that were giving orders for killing and maiming; as well as throwing

their lot with the fighters for liberation by swelling the ranks of the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe underground.

The leaflet then concluded by saying, “*The issue today is not whether or not freedom for the people will come. The question is on which side you should be – whether to perish with apartheid or to live with the forces of democracy and peace. Let us all Act in Unity against a system that has brought so much suffering to so many, and that continues to drown thousands in blood.*”

**WEAKEN THE ENEMY’S REAR!
PARALYSE APARTHEID’S
NERVE CENTRE!**

**MAKE THE WHOLE OF SOUTH
AFRICA UNGOVERNABLE!**

Source:

Sechaba Leaflet, “*Take the Struggle to the White Areas! Make the of South Africa Ungovernable! Paralyse Apartheid!*”, Sechaba, December 1985.

REVOLUTION

December 1985

“Taking the Struggle to the White Areas”



“The issue today is not whether or not freedom for the people will come. The question is on which side you should be – whether to perish with apartheid or to live with the forces of democracy and peace. Let us all Act in Unity against a system that has brought so much suffering to so many, and that continues to drown thousands in blood.”

**WEAKEN THE ENEMY’S REAR! PARALYSE APARTHEID’S NERVE CENTRE!
MAKE THE WHOLE OF SOUTH AFRICA UNGOVERNABLE!**

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

13–31 December 2025

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

13 December 1941 Petros Matseke, social campaigner and activist dies

Matseke was born in 1878 in Pretoria, and drafted as a driver into the Boer Commandos during the Anglo-Boer War. He worked as a court interpreter, fluent in African languages and Dutch. Appointed to the Pretoria Location Advisory Board (PLAB) in 1928, he used this position to campaign for improved policing, the appointment of black nurses and against rent increases in black areas. Matseke served on the National Executive of the African National Congress (ANC), and as ANC Deputy Speaker and Organizer in the 1930s. He was a member of the Transvaal African Congress (TAC) and succeeded S.M. Makgatho as president. As TAC President, he presided over a conference that led to the founding of the African Mineworkers' Union (AMWU) in 1941. Matseke was active in the Lutheran Church and later joined the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME). On 13 December 1941, Simon Petros Matseke passed away in Pretoria, survived by his wife and five children.

13 December 1946 Zomba floods

The heavy rain in the former capital of Malawi started on Friday the 13th, and by the second day over 50 cm of rain had fallen, leading to roads being cov-

ered, flashfloods and trees and mudslides from the mountains damaging buildings. The city is at the foot of the Zomba Plateau, which has forest trails, waterfalls and sweeping views over the surrounding plains. The plateau is home to baboons, giant butterflies and raptors. In 1948, the Pseli Brothers Band recorded a hit titled Napolo (meaning flash-flood), in which they described the Zomba flood.

13 December 1975 Visual artist, Alexis Preller dies

Alexis Preller was born on 6 September 1911 in Pretoria. Before pursuing a career in art, he worked as a clerk. He left for England in 1934 to study at the Westminster School of Art, returning to South Africa in 1935 before leaving for Paris. Preller's work defied classification, and was one of the most innovative artists of his time. He died in Jo-

hannesburg, on 13 December 1975, from a heart attack.

13 December 1989 Brazzaville Protocol signed

The peace agreement, brokered in the Republic of Congo, was signed by Angola, Cuba and South Africa, bringing an end to the South African war on Angola, which started in 1966, also called one of the 'last great conflicts of the Cold War.'

13 December 1990 Oliver Tambo returns from Exile

President of the African National Congress (ANC), Oliver Tambo, returned to South Africa after going into exile nearly thirty years ago. Tambo was one of the founder members of the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) in 1944, and was elected as ANCYL Secretary. He served as ANC Sec-



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retary General from 1954. With the banning of the ANC and other liberation movements in 1961 Tambo was given the mandate to establish ANC mission offices in exile. He started both the UK/Ireland and Lusaka Missions and was at the fore of mobilisation of the armed struggle and sanctions campaigns against apartheid. When ANC President Chief Albert Luthuli died in 1967, Tambo was appointed as Acting President. He was elected as President of the organisation during the Morogoro Conference in 1969. Oliver Tambo passed away on 24 April 1993. South Africa's main airport in Johannesburg is named after President OR.

13 December 1996 Kofi Annan appointed as UN Secretary General



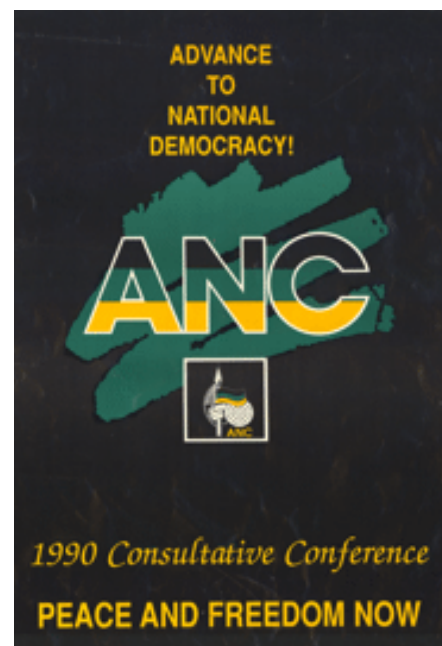
The Ghanaian diplomat is appointed UN Secretary General by the UN Security Council on this day, later approved by the General Assembly. Annan served two terms as UN Secretary General from 1997 to 2006.

13 December 2015 First Nyege Nyege festival begins

The annual festival of electronic music, arts and culture was held for the first time in Kampala, Uganda. The festival, now in its 8th year attracts thousands of visitors from across East Africa and

the continent, now takes place in Jinja, on the banks of Lake Victoria. It is organised and curated by the Boutique Foundation, a community-based organisation aimed at developing culture in Uganda. In 2023, the Nyege Nyege festival brought together over 300 acclaimed instrumentalists, producers, bands, emcees and deejays from across the continent for three days of non-stop music celebration on over nine acres of forest at the source of Nile River.

14-16 December 1990 First ANC Consultative Conference after three decades held



The African National Congress (ANC) held its first Consultative Conference in South Africa since its banning in 1960 from 14–16 December 1990. Nelson Mandela gave his Opening address on behalf of Comrade OR Tambo, who by then had suffered a stroke. Conference addressed the conditions for negotiations, the Third Force violence, the rebuilding of the ANC as a mass legal organisation, the building of a Patriotic Front against apartheid, and the double agenda of

the apartheid regime. After the banning of the ANC, three consultative conferences were held outside the country – in Lobatse, Botswana (1962), Morogoro, Tanzania (1969) and Kabwe, Zambia in 1985.

14 December 2011 Pan-African University launched

The African Union launched this continental initiative, one of the Agenda 2063 flagship projects, on this day in Addis Ababa. The university has branches in five African regions, specializing in different areas of strategic importance to Africa: Algeria hosts the PAU Institute for Water, Energy and Climate Sciences, KENYA the PAU Institute for Basic Science, Technology and Innovation, Nigeria the Institute for Life and Earth Sciences, Cameroon the Institute for Governance, Humanities and Social Sciences and South Africa the PAU Institute of Space Sciences.

14 December 2014 ANC fires Chief Whip for sexual harassment

The ANC's National Disciplinary Committee (NDC) responded to allegations of sexual harassment by a staff member against its Chief Whip Mbulelo Goniwe by bringing three charges: abusing his office to obtain sexual favours, bringing the ANC into disrepute and provoking divisions in the unity of the party. Goniwe was found guilty on the first two charges and was fired as the chief whip of the ANC on 14 December 2006. He also lost his parliamentary seat and his membership of the ANC was suspended for three years. Goniwe's sacking was considered as a landmark victory for women's rights in South Africa.

15 December 1986 Ebrahim, Maseko and Dladla abducted from Swaziland

South African security forces abducted ANC activists Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim, Mandla Maseko and Simon Dladla in Swaziland and transferred them to stand trial in SA. The treatment of Ebrahim was particularly harsh, as he was taken at gunpoint and in chains from his home. They were convicted in January 1989 despite testimony by the ANC's office in London that the structure of the Organisation was such that the accused could not have committed the crimes they were charged with. Ebrahim received a 20-year sentence, while Maseko and Dladla were sentenced to 23 and 12 years respectively. Cde Ebrahim Ebrahim passed away on 6 December 2021.

15 December 1993 SA Citizenship restored to South Africans in bantustans

The Transitional Executive Council, a product of CODESA negotiations engaged on lengthy deliberations around restoration of citizenship to the residents of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei, numbering about 10 million inhabitants. It was agreed in the deliberations that the restoration should be done simultaneously with the reintegration of these territories into South Africa. The formal announcement on the restoration was made by parliament on 15 December 1993, scheduled to come into effect on 1 January 1994. President of Bophuthatswana, Mr Lucas Mangope announced that his homeland would never participate in South Africa's first democratic elections scheduled, prompting the Anti Bop campaign

led by the ANC Youth League and other structures.

15 December 2013 President Nelson Mandela laid to rest in Qunu



President Nelson Mandela passed away on 5 December 2013 at the age of 95, in his home in Johannesburg. His passing was greeted with outpourings of grief across the country, continent and world. His body lay in state at the Union Buildings, and a Memorial service was held at FNB Stadium. On 15 December 2013, Tata Madiba was buried in Qunu in the Eastern Cape.



15 December 2017 Rwanda bans Shisha pipes

After a WHO study, that found that smoking the addictive tobacco shisha for one hour equals 100 cigarettes, Rwanda banned the import, sale and smoking of the pipe.

15 December 2021 African Intangible Heritage

UNESCO listed Congolese rumba music and Senegal's fish and rice dish, Thiébo Dieune on its Intangible Heritage of Humanity register.

16 December 1913 Women's Monument opened in Bloemfontein

The Women's Memorial was unveiled in Bloemfontein, at a ceremony attended by 20,000 people from all over the country. The monument commemorated the 26 251 women and children who died during the Anglo-Boer War 2, mainly in British concentration camps.

16 December 1943 African Claims adopted at ANC Conference



At the annual conference of the African National Congress (ANC) held in Bloemfontein, the document the African's Claim in South Africa, presented by a committee appointed by ANC president Dr A.B. Xuma, was unanimously adopted. The committee was mandated to study the Atlantic Charter and draft a Bill of Rights.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY



CELEBRATING 64 YEARS OF THE PEOPLE'S ARMY UMKHONTO WE SIZWE

16 December 1961

On this day we remember and pay tribute to the heroic sons and daughters of our revolution. We honor these brave soldiers of our movement for their selfless contribution to the struggle for the freedom of all South Africans.

16 December 1961 **Umkhonto we Sizwe** **launches its first acts** **of Sabotage**

On this date, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the military wing of the African National Congress (ANC) announced its existence by launching its first acts of sabotage. During the evening of 16 December 1961, five bombs were detonated in Port Elizabeth, with other actions in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town and Durban. The MK High Command selected targets for the start of the military confrontation and insurgency, with primary targets being power stations and government buildings. Umkhonto we Sizwe engaged in the armed struggle, under the political leadership of the ANC, until the suspension of armed action in 1990 and its integration into the SANDF after 1994.

16 December 1995
Orlando Pirates won the
African Champions Cup
Orlando Pirates won the Second

Leg of the 1995 African Champions Cup (ACC) Final against ASEC Mimosas with a score of 1 – 0. With this victory, Pirates became the first football club south of the equator to win the ACC at first attempt. The match was later awarded the Kick Off Magazine's Game of the Decade Award.

16 December 1998 **Gugu Dlamini, AIDS** **activist killed by men** **in her community**



On 16 December 1998, Gugu Dlamini, a young woman from KwaMashu, KZN dedicated to

raising awareness around HIV/AIDS and fighting against discrimination, was killed. Being HIV positive herself, Dlamini believed that in order to overcome the stigma of the virus and educate people across all social spheres, we had to talk openly about the disease. On World AIDS Day, December 1, 1998, Dlamini disclosed her HIV status on television and on a Zulu-language radio station. Her public disclosure was met with anger from members of her hometown, who believed she had brought shame to their community. Subsequent to her announcement Dlamini is reported to have been threatened by her neighbours. These threats manifested into violence when, on 16 December 1998, she was stoned and stabbed to death by a group of men from her community. Since her gruesome death, Dlamini's name continues to be used in the fight against the stigmatization of HIV infected persons and HIV denialism.

17 December 1949 **ANC Conference adopts** **Defiance Programme of** **Action**

The adoption of a Programme of Action by the African National Congress (ANC) at the December conference marked one of the most important turning points in the history of the struggle. The ANC Youth League initiated and lobbied for the Programme of Action, to transform the ANC into a militant liberation movement, which embarked on mass action, involving civil disobedience, strikes, boycotts and other forms of non-violent resistance. In 1952, the young guard in the ANC, led by Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela, in alliance with the South African Indian Congresses, the Con-

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gress of Trade Unions and the Coloured Peoples' Congress, led the first Defiance Campaign.

17 December 2010 Tunisian youth sets himself on fire, sparks Arab Spring

Mohamed Bouazizi, a 26-year old street vendor, left school early to help earn a living for his family, selling fruits on the street. He was continually harassed by the police, and shortly before the incident had his scales confiscated and his cart turned over by a government official. Mohamed went to the governor's office to try and get his tools of trade back, but the officials refused to let him in. He returned the next day, doused with petrol and set himself alight. Bystanders tried to help, but he sustained 90% burns and passed away from his injuries. This spurred the Tunisian revolution, and the broader Arab Spring from 2010 through to 2012, against uncaring and authoritarian regimes. This affected Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria and Bahrain; with protests in Algeria, Morocco, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, and the Sudan.

18 December 1949 Steve Bantu Biko is born



Biko was born on this day in King William's Town in the Eastern

Cape, and went on to inspire the hope for freedom among millions in South Africa and across Africa. Founder of the South African Student's Organisation (SASO), and a leading ideologue and leader of the Black Consciousness Movement, he was banned and detained several times by the apartheid authorities, until he was killed by the police whilst in detention on 12 September 1977.

18 December 1965 John "Shoes" Moshoeu born



South African and international soccer player John Moshoeu was born in Diepkloof, Soweto. One of the most successful footballers, his nickname came from his dribbling skills as an attacking midfielder. He started his football career at Giant Blackpool, and went on to play for Kaizer Chiefs, AmaZulu and Fenerbahçe, Turkey. He made his debut for Bafana Bafana 1993 against Botswana, was influential in the team that won the 1996 Africa Cup of Nations and went onto represent the country in six other international tournaments, including the 1998 FIFA World Cup in France. Shoes Moshoeu passed on in 2015, after a long battle with stomach cancer.

19 December 1997 Sugarboy Malinga wins World Boxing Title, again



Tulane Sugarboy Malinga, South African super middleweight, won the World Boxing Council (WBC) title for the second time in his career. Malinga became the first South African to win a WBC belt by beating Nigel Benn in 1996.

19 December 1989 Zimbabwe political parties merge

Two rival political organisations in Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), led by Joshua Nkomo, and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), led initially by the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole and later by Robert Gabriel Mugabe, merged following consensus reached in 1987 to form a new political party called the Zimbabwean African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF).

19 December 1943 Father of Ethiopian Jazz

Mulatu Astatke is an Ethiopian musician and arranger considered as the father of Ethio-Jazz, which combines Ethiopian music with jazz and Latin music. Mulatu led his band while playing the vibraphone and conga drums, instruments that he introduced into Ethiopian popular music, as well

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as other percussion instruments, keyboards, and organs. The unique sound of Ethio-jazz finds its roots in a culture with over 3,000 years of independence.

19 December 1969 Uganda Prime Minister Milton Obote shot

Apollo Milton Obote was a Ugandan socialist political leader who led the country to independence in 1962. He became prime minister of Uganda and later president. In 1969, an attempt on his life was made when he was shot at while attending a UPC conference in Kampala. Angered and paranoid after the attempted assassination, he banned all opposition parties. His government was overthrown in 1971 and was succeeded by Idi Amin. Obote died of kidney failure in 2005.

20 December 1948 Abdulrazak Gurnah born

The Tanzanian author Abdulrazak Gurnah was born on this day in Zanzibar. Gurnah won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2021, for his books, which speaks to the themes of exile, colonialism and post-colonial experiences.

20 December 1965 Arthur Elias Letele, medical doctor and ANC activist passed on

Arthur Elias Letele was born in Lesotho in 1916, but grew up in Ladybrand in the Free State. He finished high school in Eastern Cape, studied medicine and started a practice in Lovedale in 1947. While at medical school, Letele joined the ANC Youth League, and the ANC when he moved to Kimberley in 1948. He participated in the 1950s Defiance Campaign, leading to



his first arrest. Another arrest in 1952 led to a 9-month sentence, after which he was banned from leaving Kimberley until August 1953. Letele was elected to the ANC Executive Committee, was part of the Congress of the People Campaign and was accused in the 1956 Treason Trial. After the Sharpeville Massacre, Letele was arrested for a third time, and upon his release, given 30 days to leave South Africa. He returned to Lesotho in 1961 and continued his involvement with the ANC in exile. After suffering from an incurable disease for years, Letele committed suicide on 20 December 1965. The South African Institute of Health Care Matters was named in his honor in 2003.

20 December 1991 Discovery of 5000 year-old fleet of Nile ships

On 20 December 1991 (some sources say 21 December) archaeologists discovered a 5000 years old fleet of ships near the Nile in Abydos, Egypt. The 12 large wooden boats were believed to be the first royal ships, possibly belonging to the second dynasty Pharaoh, Khasekhemwy. However, other archeologists believed that the boats might have been built by an earlier Pharaoh, Djer, of the first dynasty. It was concluded that the boats were used for burial of royals. The

boats boasted very advanced design for their era and were built to withstand rough seas.

20 December 1991 CODESA starts



The Convention for a Democratic South Africa starts the process of negotiations in Kempton Park with a range of political parties represented, to dismantle apartheid and usher in a democratic South Africa.

20 December 1997 Yanok Yai born

South Sudanese fashion model Anok Yai was born on this day in Cairo. She is the second black model after Naomi Campbell to open a Prada show. When discovered, she was a 19-year old student studying biochemistry, got her picture taken and shared on Instagram, and the rest was history.

20 December 2012 Rwanda Minister of Planning Convicted of Genocide

Augustin Ndirabatware was sentenced to 35 years in prison by a UN war crimes court after convicted of genocide. At the time of the 1994 Rwanda genocide, Ndirabatware was Minister of Plan-

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

ning, a Doctor of Economics and Professor at the National University of Rwanda, and former General Director of the Minister of Mines and Artisanat. Gisenyi Ngirabatware was charged with conspiracy to commit genocide, through a plan to exterminate the Tutsi civilian population, instigation of ethnic violence, training.

21 December 1949 Sankara born



Thomas Sankara, Pan African, freedom fighter, revolutionary and President of Burkina Faso, was born on this day in Yako. Amongst his famous quotes were: *"You cannot carry out fundamental change without a certain amount of madness."* The charismatic leader was assassinated in a coup led by Blaise Compaoré, Sankara's close friend and fellow army colleague on 15 October 1987.

21 December 1967 Louis Washkansky dies

54-year old dentist Louis Washkansky, recipient of the first successful human heart transplant in the world, died in Cape Town, 18 days after receiving the heart of Denise Darvall. The heart transplant operation was performed by Dr. Christiaan Barnard at Groote Schuur Hospital in Cape Town on 3 December 1963. Washkansky

died of pneumonia brought on by a weakened immune system. Heart transplants have become routine procedures since then.

22 December 1959 Dusi Canoe Marathon starts

The Dusi Canoe Marathon started on 22 December 1951, when 8 individuals canoed from Alexandra Park in Pietermaritzburg, through the Umsindusi, the Valley of a Thousand Hills and the Umgeni to Durban. Ian Player was the only one who reached the final destination in 6 days, 8 hours and 15 minutes. He published the book *Men, Rivers and Canoes* in 1964. The Dusi Canoe Marathon is one of the most iconic canoe races in the world, attracting between 1 600 and 2 000 paddlers each year.

22 December 1963 ZANU-PF founded

The Zimbabwe National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) is founded, as a political and military liberation alliance between ZAPU led by Joshua Nkomo and ZANU led by Robert Mugabe. Though with ideological differences, it presented a formidable assault against white and British rule in Zimbabwe, and became the governing party in 1980.

22 December 1989 Somalian peace activist Ilwad Elman born

Ilwad Elman was born on this day in Mogadishu. Her father, a peace activist was assassinated and she was sent to Canada to stay with family. She returned to Somalia in the midst of the country's civil war to work with her mother in a social welfare foundation, and has since involved in

co-founding a rape crisis centre and other social initiatives.

23 December 1938 Ancient Coelethant found in East London

Marjorie Courtenay-Latimer, a museum curator in East London, had an arrangement with fishermen Captain Hendrick Goosen that she could examine all catches from his trawler for her museum. On 23 December 1938, she saw an unknown specimen amongst the fish. Back at the museum, going through her reference books, she notice that it looked like the prehistoric coelacanth, a fish that had been swimming in the seas 400 million years ago, and believed to have been extinct for some 70 million years. This was confirmed by other scientists.

23 December 1980 Four black newspapers banned



Four black newspapers, Post Transvaal, Saturday Post, Sunday Post and the Sowetan, were banned, on the same day that an 8-week strike of black journalists ends. Six days later, in the Rand Supreme Court, Justice Coetzee, refused to lift the banning order on the newspapers. The security police also served the president and vice-president of trade union

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

Media Workers of South Africa with 3 year banning orders.

23 December 1897

Helen Martins, the Owl Lady born

Helen Elizabeth Martins has put the quaint Karoo village of Nieu Bethesda on the map with her eccentric Owl House, with its extraordinary creatures of wire, cement, and cut glass. It included owls, camels, wise men, women, and children walking on the road to Mecca. She was born on this day in Nieu Bethesda, the youngest of six children and lived there when she died on 8 August 1976. Nieu Bethesda remains a key tourist attraction.

23 December 2002

Tatamkhulu Afrika, poet and activist died

Tatamkhulu Afrika was born in Egypt as Mohamed Faud Nasif on 7 December 1920. His parents relocated to South Africa in 1923 where they died from the Asia flu leaving him orphaned at the age of two. He was given to a Methodist couple who renamed him John Charlton. In 1938, his adoptive parents informed him that he was adopted and not white. John Charlton published his novel *Broken Earth* (1940) at the age of 17. After the end of World War II, he went to live in Namibia where he was taken in by an Afrikaans family, renamed Jouza Joubert. In 1964, Jouza Joubert embraced Islam and changed his name to Ismail Joubert before settling in District Six. When District Six was destroyed in 1967, Joubert launched a militant Muslim organisation, Al Jihaad. Ismail Joubert and other Al Jihaad members joined uMkhonto weSizwe early 1980s. Joubert was arrested and charged with Terrorism in 1987, spent some

time in prison and then banned for 5 years and forbidden to write. During his time in MK he was given the name Tatamkhulu Afrika (Grandfather Africa), a name that he adopted as his official name. He wrote and published eight poetry volumes and four prose works, winning a number of awards. He donated a large portion of his income to establish an Islamic centre and a creche. Tatamkhulu Afrika passed on 23 December 2002 in a road accident.

24 Decembers Birthdays:

Actress and author **Anna Neethling Pohl** was born in 1906 on this day and so was Rivonia trialist and Isithwalandwe Seaparankoe, **Wilton Mkwayi** in 1923, famous Sowetan business icon, **Richard Maponya** in 1926 and **Stephen Appiah**, Ghanian footballer born in 1980.

25 December 1992

Helen Joseph passed on



Helen Joseph was an anti-apartheid leader, a FEDSAW founding member, one of the four women that led the 1956 women's march to the Union Buildings, Treason Trialist and a patron of the United Democratic Front formed in 1983. She was arrested several times for her involvement in political activities. She died at the age of 87 years.

25 December birthdays:

Anwar Al-Sadat, former Egyptian President born (1919); **Christmas Tinto**, trade unionist, civic and ANC leader and Western Cape UDF President (1925); and **Aziz Pahad**, former ANC NEC member and Foreign Affairs Deputy Minister born in 1940.

29 December 1981

Winnie Mandela served with yet another banning order

The continues harassment of Winnie Mandela saw her being banned for another five years and banished and restricted to the small Orange Free State town of Brandfort.

30 December 1875

Adam Kok III killed in accident

Adam Kok III, founder and chief of Griqualand East, was killed in an accident. The Cape Colonial government unilaterally annexed Griqualand East in 1874 deposing Kok of his duties as chief. He is revered by the Griqua people of the present day as the greatest of the Kok chiefs.

31 December 1930

Dorothy Nyembe born

Dorothy Nomzansi Nyembe was born on the 31st of December 1931 near Dundee in northern KwaZulu-Natal. Her mother, Leeya Basolise Nyembe was the daughter of Chief Ngedee Shezi. Dorothy attended mission schools until Standard Nine, and at the age of fifteen gave birth to her only child and few years later. She joined the African National Congress (ANC) in 1952, participating as a volunteer in the Defiance Campaign in Durban and was imprisoned briefly on two occasions. In 1954 she participated

in the establishment of the ANC Women's League in Cato Manor and becoming Chairperson of the "Two Sticks" Branch Committee. She was one of the leaders against the removals from Cato Manor in 1956, and also one of the leaders of boycotts of the government controlled beer hall. The beer halls were perceived to destroy traditional beer brewing, the only viable source of income for women in the townships. In the same year, Dorothy was elected as Vice-President of the Durban ANC Women's League and a leading member of the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW). On the 9th of August 1956, she led the Natal contingent of women to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to protest against the introduction of passes for women. In December of that same year she was one of the 156 people arrested and charged with high treason, but the charges against her and sixty others were dropped on 18 December 1957, she resumed her political work, was elected to the ANC's National Executive Committee with Lilian Ngoyi in December 1958. In the same year, she was elected President of the ANC Women's League in Natal, and was active in the potato boycott in 1959. During the 1960 post-Sharpville state of emergency she spent five months in detention. In 1961, Dorothy was recruited into Umkhonto we Sizwe and worked closely with the likes of Chief Albert Luthuli, Moses Mabhida, Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and Oliver Tambo. In 1962 with the ANC banned, Dorothy became President of the Natal Rural Areas Committee where she participated in the organisation of anti-government demonstrations by rural women, including their refusal to fill cattle dips. The campaign became known as the Natal Women's



Revolt. In 1963, Dorothy was arrested and charged with furthering the aims of the banned ANC and she was sentenced to three years' imprisonment. Following her release in 1966 Dorothy was served with a five-year banning order restricting her to the magisterial district of Durban, however she carried on with her underground activities. In 1968 she was detained with ten others and charged on five counts under the Suppression of Communism Act. In January 1969 she was found guilty of harbouring members of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the military wing of the ANC, and was sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment which she served in Barberton, Kroonstad, Potchefstroom, and Pretoria Central prisons. South Africa's longest-serving woman political prisoner, she endured conditions often worse than those for incarcerated African men. She was released on 23 March 1984, and became active in the Natal Organisation of Women (NOW), a community organisation fighting against rent increases, transport costs, poor education and lack of child care facilities. Dorothy was awarded the Soviet Union's greatest awards, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) **People's Friendship Award**. In 1992 she was awarded

the **Chief Albert Luthuli prize** for her commitment and dedication to the liberation struggle. In 1994 after the first democratic elections, she was one of the pioneer Members of the National Assembly and one of the founding mothers and fathers of the South African democratic constitution. Mam Dorothy passed away on 17 December 1998.

31 December 1932 Mapungubwe re-discovered

The ancient city of Mapungubwe ('Hill of the Jackal') is an Iron Age archaeological site in the Limpopo, on the border between South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana. Mapungubwe was the centre of the largest known kingdom in Africa, a sophisticated trading center from around 1200 to 1300 AD, trading gold and ivory with China, India and Egypt. The site was 'discovered' on 31 December 1932, when a local informant, Mowena, led farmer van Graan to the Mapungubwe Hill. The University of Pretoria archeologists excavated the site, but for decades until 1994 suppressed all knowledge of the city, because it defied the apartheid colonial version of history. Mapungubwe was declared a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in July 2003.

31 December 1959 Last of Sophiatown residents removed

Forced removals from Sophiatown had started in 1955. On this day, in 1959 the last residents are moved. In 1963 the demolition of the houses started, as the area was reassigned to White residents and renamed Triomf by the apartheid government.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

13–31 December 2025

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

14 December

Day of African Sport

Sport plays an important role in the continent, contributing to health, entertainment, national cohesion and the economy. Africans play an important role in global sport, with over 100 African footballers playing in premier leagues in Europe, Asia and South America; Kenyans and Ethiopian athletes dominate long distance track events, but also other athletic codes. Reggie Walker, a South African sprinter, was the first African to win an Olympic gold for the 100 meters in 1908. According to the African Reporter, Football, Rugby, Running (Athletics), Cricket and Basketball are amongst the top five sports in the continent. More and more women's teams and athletes are making their mark, although the gender pay gap between male and female athletes across sports remains huge.

17 December

International Day to end Violence against Sex workers



First celebrated in 2003, the day calls attention to hate crimes committed against sex workers and to highlight the social stigma and discrimination that contribute to violence against sex workers. The day was inaugurated by Dr Annie Sprinkle and started by the Sex Workers Outreach Project USA.

18 December

International Migrants Day



Migration has been part of the experience of humanity since time immemorial, as Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary General said: “throughout human history, migration has been a courageous expression of the individual’s will to overcome adversity and to live a better life.” The commemoration coincides with the adoption on 18 December 1990, of the UN International Convention for the Protection of all Migrant Workers and their Families”. South Africa has a long history of migration (forced and voluntary), from colonialism and the arrival of the Dutch, British and others of European descent, slaves from Angola, Madagascar and Malaysia, the Mfecane, Chinese and Indians indentured labour, migrant labour for the mines from Southern Africa, to the current post 1994 waves of migration.

18 December

Arabic Language day

There are about 274 million Arabic speakers in the world, and is an official language in over 26 countries. In recognition of the importance of the language, in 1973, the UN General Assembly adopted Arabic as one of its six official languages. Arabic is also widely spoken in the African continent, especially north and east Africa, and is also one of the African Union official languages.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

19 December

UN Day for South-South Cooperation

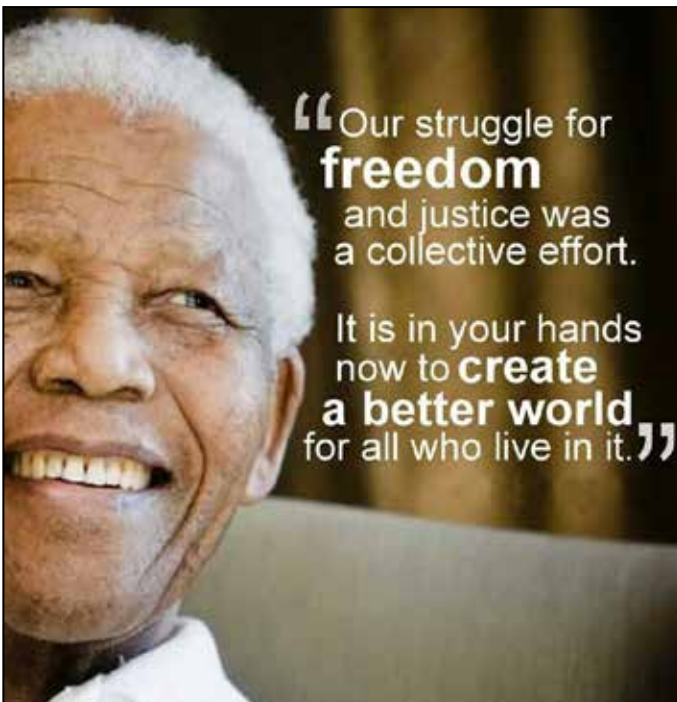


South-South cooperation is a manifestation of cooperation and solidarity among peoples and countries, to work towards ending the unequal and unjust global economic and political system, that continues to advantage countries of the North, allowing them to continue to exploit developing countries to their advantage. The cooperation is expressed in various multilateral forums and South Africa continues to play an important role in promoting and fighting for South-South cooperation and solidarity.

20 December

International Human Solidarity Day

Solidarity is identified in the Millennium Declaration as one of the fundamental values of international relations in the 21st Century, wherein those, who either suffer or benefit least deserve help from those who benefit most, in the context of a highly unjust and exploitative world order. Consequently,



in the context of globalization and the challenge of growing inequality, strengthening of international solidarity (and social justice) is indispensable.

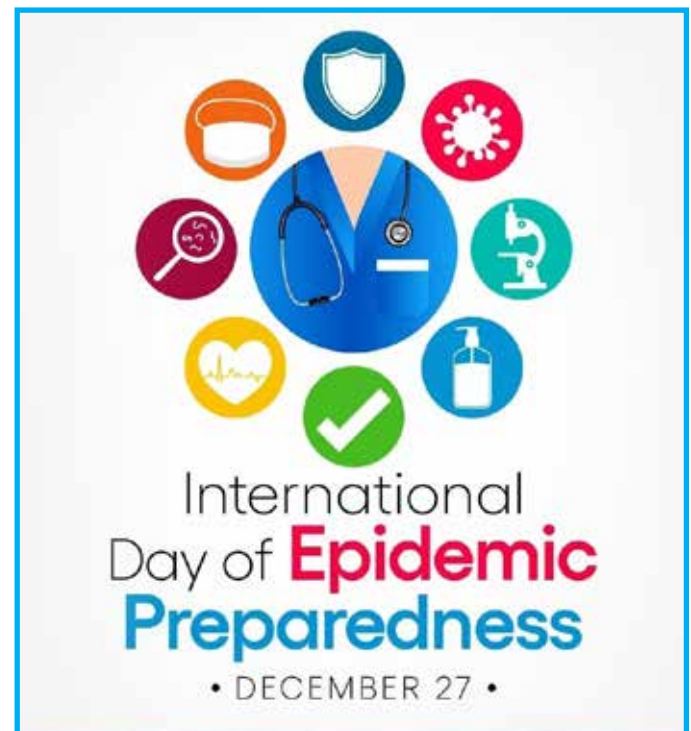
24 December

Christmas Book Flood Day

This day has its origin in Iceland, where friends and family members exchange books and read together.

27 December

International Day of Epidemic Preparedness



Truly global pandemics are once in a century occurrence, like the COVID-19 pandemic and the Spanish Flu of 1918, which affect countries across the world. But, there are also more localized epidemics and pandemics, like SARS, Ebola or the Bubonic Plague. An epidemic is defined as the rapid spread of an infectious disease to a large number of people within a short space of a time. If it spread to a number of countries, it is called a pandemic. Epidemics have been recorded in human history for as far back as 1200 BC in Babylon. The UN uses this day to focus attention on the importance of public health preparedness and coordination and for the One Health approach –the “*integration of human health, animal health and plant health, as well as environmental and other relevant sectors.*”