



# ANC TODAY

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## Conversations *with the* President



# The Class of 2025 provide inspiration and encouragement

■ By **PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

**L**AST week, the Minister of Basic Education announced that the Matric Class of 2025 had made history by achieving the highest pass rate in our country's history. More than 650,000 learners passed the National Senior Certificate, achieving a pass rate of 88%.

We congratulate all the learners and their teachers, families and communities for this great achievement. We applaud every learner who sat these exams.

The matric results have shown a steady improvement over many years, both in the quantity and the quality of the achievements. They have contributed to a dramatic increase in the

number of South Africans older than 20 who have a matric qualification, increasing from 30% in 2002 to 52% in 2024.

This outstanding achievement shows the value of the investment we are making in education and the efforts we have made to ensure that all children, regardless of their background and gender, have access to quality education.

Global experience has shown that one of the most effective ways to reduce poverty is to ensure that girl children receive a good education. It is therefore significant that in 2025 more girls sat for the matric exams than boys, and that the pass rates of boys and girls

were much the same. A higher proportion of girls attained admission to Bachelor studies than boys, and nearly twice as many obtained distinctions. This bodes well for the continuation of their studies at universities and colleges.

It is also significant that more than two-thirds of all bachelor passes came from schools in the most disadvantaged communities, classified as quintiles 1-3. This is both a testament to the determination of these learners and their teachers, and to the effectiveness of policies like no-fee schools and the child support grant. Taken together with the expansion in recent years of funding for tertiary students from poor back-



grounds, these results give us encouragement that many of these young people will be able to lift themselves and their families out of poverty.

We are encouraged by the fact that 90% of learners with special education needs passed matric and 52% achieved bachelor passes, both higher than the national average. Our task is now to ensure that more learners with special needs are able to write matric exams.

As we applaud these great results, we must acknowledge that challenges remain.

Of the 1.2 million children who started grade one in 2014, only 778,000 made it through to grade 12 in 2025. That's nearly half a million young people who left school before finishing. As we strive to improve the quality of our matric results, we must

work harder to ensure that more children complete their schooling.

Another challenge is the drop in performance in subjects like mathematics. While more learners are taking these subjects, we have seen a drop in the pass rates for mathematics and accounting. These are subjects that our learners need to excel at if they are to succeed in a rapidly changing economy.

In working to address these challenges, we are starting with the foundations of learning. In the same week that the results came out for the class of 2025, the class of 2037 started their first day of grade one.

From this moment, they are starting their preparations for matric and beyond. That is why we are placing greater emphasis

and making more investment into the early years of schooling. We have made Grade R compulsory and embarked on an ambitious drive to register and provide subsidies to more early childhood development centres. We are strengthening early grade reading, improving teaching materials and focusing on teacher development in the early grades.

By investing in children at the start of their school career, by giving them a solid educational foundation, we are preparing them for success. We are working to ensure that they all finish their schooling, that they excel in matric and that they go on to thrive in everything they do.

The achievements of the Class of 2025 must inspire and encourage all the years of learners that are to follow. ■

Keynote Address by the Deputy President of the African National Congress,  
**PAUL MASHATILE** during the occasion of the  
**UMKHONTO WE SIZWE LIBERATION WAR VETERANS (MKLWV)  
 INAUGURAL CONFERENCE**

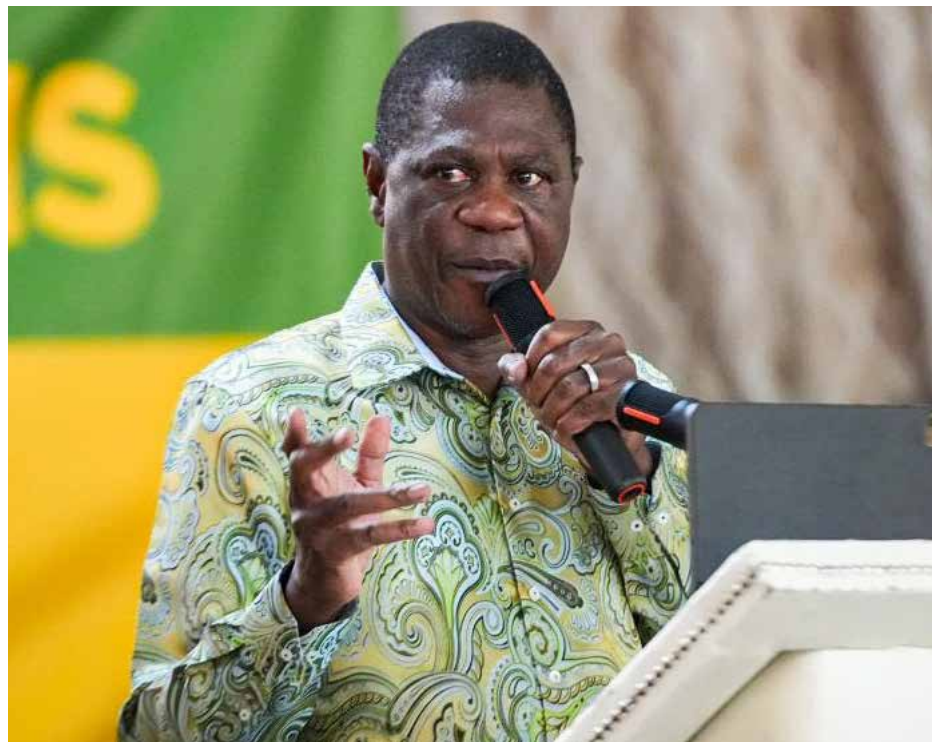
16 January 2026

It is an honour to address this inaugural conference of the Umkhonto we Sizwe Liberation War Veterans (MKLWV). Established in 2022, the MKLWV was created to unify fragmented veterans' structures – particularly the MKMVA and MK National Council – into a single, credible organisation for all liberation war veterans. This was an ANC driven initiative to restore integrity and eliminate parallel structures.

We meet under the theme: “**MKLWV, for the Renewal, Rebuilding and Revolutionary Discipline: Defending the Gains of the Revolution.**” This theme is not symbolic; it is a call to action. It clarifies our responsibilities and charts a transformative path for the future.

Our struggle has always been about transformation, dismantling systems of oppression and building a society rooted in freedom, solidarity, and shared prosperity. The gains of our revolution; our Constitution, democratic institutions, and governance systems remain the foundation upon which South Africa's progress rests. These must be defended and advanced with vigilance.

I must emphasise: without the courage and sacrifice of our military veterans, the story of South Africa's freedom and democracy is incomplete. You confronted the



brutality of apartheid. You stood at the frontlines when freedom seemed an impossible dream. The song ***Sabashiya abazali ekhaya...*** captures the profound emotional and human cost of your sacrifice – leaving home, facing exile, imprisonment, and even death so that democracy could be born.

Your bravery is the backbone of our national identity. If we fail to honour and elevate your legacy, we diminish the very soul of our democracy.

It is important to recognise that our liberation struggle continues to evolve beyond 1994. As

a maturing democracy, we face multiple tensions, including the Government of National Unity, economic challenges, unemployment, and inequality.

I am also not oblivious of the challenges that our military veterans are confronting. Many veterans still live in dire conditions and have limited access to health-care, housing, and face barriers to employment and economic opportunities. This is not just as a social issue but as a moral crisis.

Although no amount of compensation can match your contribution, it is deeply regrettable that many veterans bear the brunt of



service delivery failures despite being the architects of our freedom.

It is our duty, morally and politically, to ensure that veterans receive the support they deserve. We must accelerate efforts to improve access to healthcare, housing, and essential services. Beyond social support, we must open pathways to economic opportunity through entrepreneurship, training, and access to finance.

As a Chair of the Presidential Task Team (PTT) on Military Veterans, we acknowledge government shortcomings in addressing the plight of veterans. However, we are accelerating solutions through focused workstreams on legislation, pensions, socio-economic support, and heritage.

Priority has been placed on reviewing regulations to enhance the Defence and Military Veterans (DMV's) delivery mandate, with progress in amending pension and burial regulations for military veterans. Additionally, the DMV is updating health care regulations to address challenges veterans face in accessing health care services.

The DMV Minister has established a transversal team to aid in creating policy proposals that address the comprehensive support for military veterans. In relation to the amendment of the Military Veterans Act, the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development is being consulted to assist the DMV with the drafting of the Amendment Bill.

Furthermore, the Database Verification, Cleansing and Enhancement Panel, led by retired Major-General EM Mashoala, is

in the final stages of verifying applicants from various provinces for the National Military Veterans Database. This Verification Panel's responsibilities include evaluating the inclusion of Ex-Political Prisoners into the Database.

Our primary mission is to identify and develop short, medium, and long-term programs that enhance the well-being of military veterans and their dependents. This initiative aims to improve the socio-economic conditions of military veterans and to create economic opportunities.

Moreover, the DMV has instituted plans to advance the empowerment agenda for military veterans, including through preferential procurement processes that will favour businesses owned by military veterans. In a nutshell, for the period 2020–2025, we have been able to support military veterans with the following services and benefits:

- **Education Support:** During a five-year period, 18,743 bursaries were awarded. For the 2025 academic year, 2,717 students received a total funding of R33.2 million for basic education, R27.7 million for private tertiary education, and R15 million for public tertiary education through NSFAS.
- **Skills Development Programme:** 5,188 military veterans and/or their dependents approved for programmes to improve their employability and economic participation. This includes military veterans and their dependents being provided with access to skills programmes like the University Management Programme, designed for those without Matric to enrol for middle and senior management qualifications.
- **Access to Healthcare:**

17,943 military veterans receiving healthcare services.

- **Access to housing:** The DMV, working in collaboration with the Department of Human Settlements, has handed over 115 houses in 2024/25, a total of 133 houses in the 2023/24 financial year. In the previous years of 2022/23 the total was 90 houses being delivered, and in 2021/22, a total of 71 houses were made available.
- Moreover, since the inception of the **pension benefit rollout** in November 2023, a total of 4,457 military veterans and/or their dependents are now receiving this benefit.

Let me be clear, regardless of the progress made in advancing the needs of military veterans, it is not enough. Until every veteran enjoys the dignity, care, and opportunity they deserve, our work remains unfinished. As the ANC in government, we remain committed to achieving this objective.

I must emphasise that your role as veterans remain important in our society. Your experience in discipline, strategy, and leadership is needed now more than ever, in government, in civil society, and in the economy.

As veterans, you must seek ways to influence the current political discourse, ensuring that your voices and concerns are heard and represented in decision-making processes. Both in the ANC and in government. You deserve to have a seat at the table and a say in shaping policies that impact our people's lives.

We particularly need your leadership and wisdom in our movement, the ANC. As a veteran, you can no longer remain a passive observer in the affairs of the or-



ganisation to which you have dedicated your entire youth in helping to shape its development.

As the ANC leadership, we also see you as a partner in the renewal process. The ANC has just emerged from the 5th National General Council (NGC) not just with resolutions, but with a mandate for renewal. Renewal is not a slogan; it is an existential necessity. We must ask ourselves: Are we bringing about qualitative change in the lives of our people? If the answer is not a resounding “yes”, then our task is clear. We cannot lead the people if we do not listen to them. To build trust, we must adopt a posture of radical honesty:

- We must stop “burying our heads in the sand.” While we have achieved much, our people face a crisis of unemployment and a lack of basic services. Admitting this is the first step toward a solution.
- We must build trust, and trust is built when the councillor is visible and the water flows – service to the people.
- Our branches must be the primary centres of problem-solv-

ing in every ward, ensuring the state remains responsive to the people. In rebuilding trust in our communities, we must strengthen our branches and ensure that the ANC remains a movement of the people, not a vehicle for self-enrichment. Renewal begins with each of us. It is a call to action.

- We must implement the Renewal Charter 2032 with strict vetting for the 2026 Local Government Elections, aiming to field the best and most ethical candidates, while excluding those who seek personal enrichment at the expense of the poor.

The ANC is committed to revitalizing local government, promoting inclusive economic growth, creating jobs, and restoring public trust in state institutions to regain confidence in its leadership of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR).

Last weekend we celebrated the 114 years of the ANC in the North-West Province. In his address the President made a call

that we must among other things prioritise improving local government, something that has been neglected in some of our municipalities over the years.

As we head towards the 2026 Local Government Elections, let us be clear: the people will not judge us by our history but by our current actions. We must go to the masses with clean hands, a humble heart, and a decisive plan.

Let us fix our municipalities, defend the revolution, and transform our economy. Comrades, at the heart of our economic transformation is the reindustrialisation of South Africa. We must move from a colonial-style economy of raw material exports to a modern manufacturing powerhouse. Our minerals must be processed here. We are as such prioritising mineral beneficiation to create high-value manufacturing jobs for our youth. We are revitalising the automotive, textile, and agriculture sectors through sector-specific Masterplans. Every government cent spent must prioritise local procurement to support South African businesses.



Reindustrialisation must happen in the townships and rural nodes, not just in the cities. We are revitalising industrial parks to bring work to where the people live.

The ANC is cognisant that we operate in a world of shifting political power. South Africa's foreign policy is an extension of our domestic struggle for dignity.

The expansion of BRICS provides us with new markets and alternative sources of finance through the New Development Bank. We are leveraging these partnerships to bypass the restrictive conditions of traditional global finance.

We remain unshakeable in our support for the people of Palestine, Western Sahara, and Cuba. Our *"Non-Aligned"* stance is not a sign of weakness but a sign of our sovereignty as we navigate a multipolar world. At a continental level, we are positioning South Africa as the manufacturing engine for the African Continental Free Trade Area, ensuring that African wealth stays within the African continent.

Comrade, allow me to speak on the Decisive Action Plan adopted by the Inter-Ministerial Task Team on Military Veterans – a plan that speaks to urgency, accountability, and transformation.

This is a plan that must inform our approach as we engage with communities towards the Local Government Elections, specifically despondent comrades and activists who are military veterans and their children.

Firstly, regarding **Administrative and Structural Reform**, we will empower Ambassador Mseleku, former Director General of High-

er Education, to enhance the Department of Military Veterans' efficiency, responsiveness, and empathy. An audit of DMV personnel will ensure that those serving our veterans possess the necessary skills and political awareness of their sacrifices.

We will also complete verification drives nationally, guaranteeing that no legitimate veteran is overlooked due to administrative issues.

Secondly, concerning **Direct Socio-Economic Benefits**, we will expedite the distribution of the Military Veterans Pension to over 9,600 eligible veterans and dependents in the upcoming cycle.

We aim to unblock the delivery of 900 houses promised during the MTEF period and ensure that 18,900 veterans receive fully subsidized healthcare cards, facilitating access to military and public health services. Additionally, we will secure bursaries for more than 4,200 dependents in the 2026 academic year to cultivate the next generation of leaders to contribute to our industrialization efforts.

Thirdly, in **Economic and Local Government Integration**, we will instruct municipalities to allocate a committed share of contracts to veteran-owned small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) in fields such as security, maintenance, and logistics. We will initiate the 2026 National Homebuilders Representative Council (NHBR) and technical training programs to assist younger veterans in entering the construction and manufacturing sectors.

Furthermore, Parliamentary Constituency Offices will be transformed into Veteran Support

Hubs to guarantee that every veteran can access assistance with DMV processes.

Comrades, these are not just commitments, they are decisive actions. Together, we will restore dignity, deliver justice, and secure a future where the sacrifices of our military veterans are honoured not in words, but in deeds.

A personal pledge from the IMTT is that *"My door, and the doors of the DMV, must remain open until every veteran who fought for this democracy lives in the dignity they earned"*.

Let me conclude by speaking briefly about unity. Unity is not about erasing our differences; it is about harmonising them in pursuit of a common purpose. As veterans, we carry a sacred responsibility: to safeguard the legacy of our struggle and ensure that future generations inherit a nation grounded in peace, dignity, and mutual respect.

Fragmentation weakens our collective voice, while unity strengthens our ability to advocate, to pursue social justice, and to advance the wellbeing of all who served.

With this renewed MKLWV mandate and dynamic leadership, we have an opportunity to unite our movement and fortify the bonds within the MKLWV. Together, let us advance a vision of unity, dignity, and progress for the benefit of our nation.

***The People Shall Govern!***

***Mayibuyele!***

***Power to the People!***

***Amandla! ■***

## STATEMENT BY MKLWV ON THE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF ITS INAUGURAL CONFERENCE

**F**ROM 15 to 17 January 2026, Umkhonto we Sizwe Liberation War Veterans (MKLWV), representing all MK detachments, convened their National Conference in Bloemfontein, the birthplace of the African National Congress.

This Conference was the first national gathering of MKLWV detachments since the 2022 Unity Conference in East London, which dissolved the MK Military Veterans Association and the MK Council. Four years later, MKLWV stands as a unified and recognised formation, endorsed by the African National Congress and mandated by former Umkhonto we Sizwe combatants organised within the Movement.

The Conference was addressed by senior leadership of the African National Congress, including the Deputy President, Paul Mashatile, the Secretary General, Fikile Mbalula, the National Chairperson, Gwede Mantashe, and the former Umkhonto we Sizwe Member and the 11th President of the ANC, President Thabo Mbeki.

The leadership addressed the Conference on matters concerning organisational renewal, discipline, political responsibility, and the defence of the National Democratic Revolution. Delegates were called upon to assume their responsibilities as veterans of the armed struggle in advancing uni-



ty, accountability, and the reconstruction of the Movement and the state.

Reflections by President Mbeki have drawn responses from a political formation whose leadership includes individuals expelled or facing disciplinary processes within the ANC for conduct that undermined the organisation. Some among them have been criminally charged and convicted for Cash-In-Transit related offences during the democratic period, yet continue to occupy seats in Parliament.

The MKLWV states clearly that it concurs with President Mbeki's analysis. Those who dispute these views have recourse to the courts. The MKLWV will not expend further organisational time responding to individuals or formations that rely on provocation rather than political substance. This statement closes our engagement on that matter.

The MKLWV records its appre-

ciation to the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress for deploying a senior delegation to the Conference, recognising the role of liberation war veterans in the present phase of struggle.

The Conference also acknowledged the participation and solidarity of fraternal liberation movements, including FRELIMO and Chama Cha Mapinduzi, whose shared history with Umkhonto we Sizwe forms part of the collective liberation heritage of the region.

The Conference deliberations were focused on political tasks and organisational responsibilities. It was noted that the identification of counter-revolutionary conduct continues to be resisted by some quarters.

The Conference therefore posed the following questions as matters of political record:

- How should the deliberate weakening of the South African Revenue Service be understood?
- How should the looting of public health institutions, including Thembisa Hospital, be characterised?
- How should attempts to undermine the Security Cluster Departments be assessed?
- How should the use of State-Owned Enterprises for private accumulation be described?

These actions were not isolated incidents. They constituted a pattern that weakened the state, eroded public trust, and obstructed the objectives of the National Democratic Revolution.

On the outcomes of the Conference, emphasis was placed on strengthening structured links between the leadership of MKLWV and liberation war veterans, commanders, commissars, and cadres of MK.

The Conference reaffirmed the role of veterans in political education, community safety, organisational discipline, and institu-

tional accountability.

The MKLWV resolved to act in coordination with its mother body to restore public confidence, reinforce political discipline, and mobilise veterans as part of the broader Alliance effort to advance the Revolution. This includes participation in crime prevention, anti-corruption measures, heritage preservation, and socio-economic reconstruction.

**The Conference reaffirmed a principle that admits no ambiguity: There is only one Umkhonto we Sizwe.**

**MKLWV is the only custodian of its legacy, history, and heritage.** This custodianship is not symbolic. It carries responsibility to defend the values of sacrifice, discipline, and service that defined the armed struggle and to transmit these values to future generations within a constitutional democratic order.

The Conference has positioned the MKLWV to discharge its responsibilities with clarity of purpose and organisational unity, in pursuit of the objectives of the National Democratic Revolution and in service of the people of South Africa. ■

## Umkhonto we Sizwe Liberation War Veterans (MKLWV) Top Seven



**Congratulations to the newly elected MKLWV leadership.**

Chairperson: **Cde Dan Hatto**; Deputy Chairperson: **Cde Xolani Dom**;  
Secretary-General: **Cde Mmcedisi Mthethwa**; Deputy Secretary-General: **Cde Mandilakhe Dilima**;  
National Commissar: **Cde Thami Ntenti**; Treasurer General: **Cde Thandi Mashoala**;  
Gender Representative Officer: **Cde Tosca Tyibilika**.

Strength to the collective as they advance renewal, discipline, and the defence of the gains of the national democratic revolution.



# Why is Scholar Transport always in the News for Wrong Reasons?

■ By **SEPHOKA DAVID SEKGOBELA**

**T**HE country's future is its children. South Africa has an obligation to all children to ensure that they are able to benefit from education. Access to education is the Constitutional right of every learner. The Constitution states that “*everyone has the right to basic education*”. However, in order to take up this basic human right, children of school-going age must be able to get to and from school safely, comfortably, and without much difficulty.

With the recent spate of harrowing incidents or road accidents and fatalities involving schoolchildren, there is indeed the need to focus on intense regulation of scholar transport. (NB: “Learner” or “Scholar” would be used interchangeably throughout this article to mean exactly the same thing.) Learner transport has always been

one of the challenges confronting the government since the new dispensation. Various studies, such as the National Household Travel Survey (NHTS), highlighted some of those challenges. In some instances, learners are left stranded without transport at all, and some operators are using Light Delivery Vehicles (LDV's) or bakkies and/or smaller capacity vehicles to transport learners to schools.

Majority of scholar transport service providers do not meet policy and legislative requirements to render scholar transport service, and thus compromising safety of the learners and academic performance. Constant vehicle breakdowns and unpunctuality are some of the problems having direct impact on academic performance of the learners. Valuable academic time is lost due to scholar transport vehicles

arriving late at school. Some of the learners even miss their examinations due to late coming. A more effective and efficient way of dealing with scholar transport issues is thus required to safeguard interests of the learners relying on scholar transport.

Learner transport plays a crucial role in fulfilling one of the important policy directives of the government, i.e. enabling the majority of children of school-going age to get to school. It cannot be expected of the learners to perform well academically, but yet do not give them the necessary support to do so. Learner transport is important part of the education system. It provides access to education facilities for many of the learners. In terms of the National Learner Transport Policy, scholar transport subsidy should be available to any learner staying more than 5km from school.

One of the major assumptions is that, transport needs of the learner are affordability, accessibility, getting to school on time, short trip, safety and security, and comfort. Scholar transport is thus very much an important part of the total transport system. However, challenges relating to scholar transport in general are manifold, and include:

- Illegal operations in terms of unavailability of road carrier permits or operating licences, and the use of unroadworthy vehicles.
- Use of unsuitable vehicles to transport the learners – LDVs, sub-standard buses which have been disqualified for bus contracts, minibuses and the 4+1 taxi type sedans (especially in those areas like informal settlements where there are no alternative formal public transport services by buses and trains).

The need to regulate scholar transport operations stems from the fact that most of the operators are not recapitalising their old fleet, resulting in seriously unsafe vehicles being used to transport the learners. It has further been established that, in most instances, the condition of many of the type of vehicles used is totally unacceptable. Safety standards are lacking and/or the operators are not adhering to them, seriously compromising safety and quality of the service that these operators are rendering.

It is imperative that all services and vehicles for scholar transport must comply with the current legislation, i.e. have valid operating licences (permits) to convey the learners. In some areas, especially in the rural areas, schools totally depend on transport, and without reliable transport, those

schools cannot exist. Unless scholar transport is provided, many potential scholars will be unable to attend school. It is estimated that, without scholar transport, up to 25% of school children in the age bracket 7-9 years of age cannot attend school on regular basis due to excessive walking distance (more than 5km one way). This is mainly a common problem in many of the rural and farming communities.

Information relating to operations of scholar public transport services is required as an input into a number of transport-related plans such as Integrated Transport Plans (ITPs) and strategies that have to be developed by transport authorities at all levels of governance.

The function of learner transport is a shared responsibility between the provincial departments of education and those responsible for transport. In some provinces, scholar transport is misplaced within the provincial departments of education, whose core competency is the provision of education, not transport. Scholar transport under the auspices of the provincial departments of education has been marred with a lot of challenges – ranging from unreliable and unsafe scholar transport operations, to fraudulent claims by unscrupulous

scholar transport operators (in collaboration with some corrupt government officials), where the number of learners and kilometres are often inflated, leading to ever-increasing scholar transport subsidies.

Throughout the country, the government contracts independent scholar transport operators to ferry the learners to and from school. However, challenges that are experienced by these transport operators are manifold. Some of those problems are deliberately caused by the ineptitude of or general mismanagement of the system by corrupt and unscrupulous government officials not doing their job properly.

It is important to note that there are sometimes valid reasons for non-delivery of the service by the contractors.

Firstly, there is rampant systematic corruption within the scholar transport system throughout the country. Corrupt syndicates include educators (and principals), government officials, law enforcement officers, and scholar transport operators themselves. In terms of prevailing policies and legislation, all subsidized transport operations have to be monitored by independent supervising and monitoring firms to guard against maladministration – inflated kilometres or the



number of learners, use of unroad-worthy or unsuitable vehicles, operating without permits, etc. However, in many provinces, scholar transport is not being monitored by independent monitoring and supervision firm, and people could, for instance, make use of minibuses, but claim for buses, or, in some instances, claim for ghost schools that do not even exist at all.

Secondly, some of the government officials and politicians are, through proxies, also scholar transport operators themselves. They abrogate to themselves lucrative routes, and leave unattractive, unviable and unprofitable scholar transport routes to other operators. The rates for those routes are not sustainable for profitable operation. In most provinces, the routes are not packaged properly, and unsuspecting scholar transport operators only find out later that they have been given economically unviable routes. They then abandon them, leaving learners in the lurch without transport.

Thirdly, most of the appointed or preferred scholar transport service providers do not even have vehicles of their own. However, they compete with those having buses and get appointed, because they have corrupt relationship with concerned government officials. They nevertheless get appointed, and then subcontract those having buses. They are the ones who get paid, but do not pay the owners of the buses on time.

Fourthly, in terms of prevailing policies, service providers have to be paid within 30 days, but government officials would deliberately delay to make payments, and in some instances, expecting kickbacks to expedite payments. The delay in payment by the gov-



ernment, leads to a further delay by the appointed contractor to pay the subcontractor, i.e. the actual owner of the bus that does the actual scholar transport operations. The system is therefore very unfair to the actual owners of the buses, because they do not get directly appointed, but people who do not own vehicles are the ones who are appointed and paid. When subcontractors literally cannot afford to provide the services, the least they could do, to the frustrations of the learners, parents and the authorities, is to withdraw their services. To provide effective, efficient, safe, and reliable public transport service, there are cost factors such as labour, maintenance, fuel, tyres, insurance, etc. The service provider would not be able to render quality service if the services are not compensated for by the government. Costs impacting on scholar transport services include both capital costs and operating costs. For instance, drivers need to be paid, fuel is expensive, vehicles need to be maintained, etc.

There are also constant complaints of poor quality service by majority of school principals, and learners' parents. Other negative social ill that could be attributed to that poor quality trend is poor academic results, because some

of the learners miss first periods almost every morning due to late coming.

Scholar transport services are continuing to be operated on informal basis with very minimal or no proper regulatory measures at all. In most instances, safety standards are lacking, or are not being adhered to by the scholar transport operators, and thus compromising quality of the service that they are rendering, whilst at the same time, compromising safety of the learners thereof. Quite often, the condition of many of the vehicles used for scholar transport operations is unacceptable, with some falling apart.

In conclusion, there is rampant corruption involving scholar transport in many provinces across the spectrum. Hence, there is a need to conduct independent verification of scholar transport data and services in all provinces with a view to determine the actual problems, improve service quality levels, assist the government to manage scholar transport in terms of safety, reliability, and where subsidised, administer scholar transport subsidy effectively and efficiently, reducing scholar transport costs, and thus avoiding undue losses through fraud and corruption. ■

# The Illusion of Borrowed Power and the Work of Holding South Africa Together

■ By **GODFREY NKOSI**

**T**HERE is a growing unease in the public discourse of our country, a shift in tone that is felt more than it is always clearly articulated. It reveals itself in online spaces, in casual conversations, and in the renewed confidence with which some voices speak about a return to a past that placed some above others by design. This moment, shaped in part by the return of Donald Trump to political power in the United States and the global prominence of Elon Musk, has been interpreted by a small but vocal segment of South African society as a signal of international validation. The result is not the birth of racism, for racism never truly left, but its re-emergence into the open, emboldened and less guarded.

This global moment does not exist only in relation to South Africa. The rhetoric and visibility of Trump and Musk have also coincided with a rise in right-wing opinion in parts of the United States and Western Europe. These shifts, amplified by digital platforms and polarised media environments, have created the impression of a broader and more permanent realignment. Yet even there, the political landscape remains fluid, contested, and subject to change. What appears ascendant in one season can just as quickly lose momentum in the next. To treat these global currents as fixed or enduring is to misunderstand



the nature of democratic politics itself.

For many years, exclusionary views in South Africa existed largely in coded language, behind false names and within closed digital communities. Social media platforms and algorithmic echo chambers now give them greater reach, often rewarding provocation and outrage with visibility. What once appeared marginal can suddenly seem widespread, not because it has grown in substance, but because it has grown in amplification. This is the terrain on which our current moment is being shaped.

It is important to say clearly that South Africa's democratic order is not a matter of opinion or external approval. It is anchored

in a Constitution that stands as a social contract between citizens, binding on all who live in this country. The rights to dignity, equality, and freedom are not gifts from political leaders or foreign figures. They are principles embedded in law, protected by independent courts, reinforced by Chapter 9 institutions, and sustained by a free and often critical media. These are not decorative features of democracy. They exist precisely to ensure that no group, however emboldened, can drag the country back into a system of racial hierarchy.

The notion that external voices might somehow reverse the course of South African history rests on a misunderstanding of how change occurred in the first place. The old order did not fall

because the world decided it should. It fell because South Africans, in their millions, across townships and suburbs, farms and factories, classrooms and places of worship, decided that a society built on exclusion could not endure. That collective decision, forged through sacrifice and courage, remains the foundation of our present, however imperfect that present may be.

There is also a deeper illusion at work in the belief that borrowed authority can provide lasting political or moral power. The global standing of any figure, no matter how influential, is neither permanent nor immune to scrutiny. Confidence in leaders rises and falls, both domestically and internationally, as their actions are tested against reality. To build a political or social project on the perceived permanence of external influence is to anchor it to shifting ground.

South Africa's future will not be decided in Washington, Silicon Valley, Brussels, or any other distant centre of power. It will be decided here, in the daily choices made by those who live, work, and raise their children in this country. It will be shaped by the tone set in public leadership, the standards demanded by civil society, and the values passed on in families, schools, and communities.

This does not mean that South Africa is without deep and painful failures. Inequality remains stark and visible. Many feel excluded from opportunity and unheard by those in authority. Institutions have, at times, fallen short of the ideals they were meant to uphold. These realities demand serious, sustained, and honest engagement. Criticism of govern-



ment, of policy, and of leadership is not only legitimate, it is essential to the health of any democracy. But there is a clear distinction between demanding better governance for all and longing for a return to a past defined by racial exclusion. One seeks to widen the circle of belonging. The other seeks to narrow it.

There is also a practical reality that often goes unspoken. South Africa's economy and social fabric are deeply interdependent. Businesses, workers, and communities do not exist in racial compartments. Stability, growth, and opportunity are built through cooperation, shared skills, and social trust. Racial polarisation does not protect prosperity. It undermines it, driving away investment, weakening employment, and leaving the most vulnerable to bear the greatest cost.

Our place in the world is also more complex than a simple alignment with Western political currents. South Africa stands in Africa, shaped by its responsibilities and relationships on the continent and in the Global South. Its

future is being written as much in its regional partnerships, its role in continental development, and its participation in emerging global forums as in its engagement with traditional centres of power. The idea that its destiny can be reset by the approval of any single foreign figure misunderstands both its history and its position in the world.

What is often overlooked in moments of heightened rhetoric is the quiet power of everyday influence. Words spoken in public spaces travel far beyond their immediate audience. They move through households, classrooms, workplaces, and communities. They shape how young people learn to see themselves and how they learn to see others. In this way, public discourse becomes a form of social instruction, teaching either a language of belonging or a language of division.

There is also responsibility in silence. When extreme views go unchallenged, they can acquire the appearance of normality. Unity is not only weakened by those who speak loudly in favour

of exclusion, but also by those who withdraw from the conversation entirely.

The South Africa of racial supremacy is gone. What replaced it is not a perfect society, but a commitment, a commitment to a country in which citizenship is not defined by race, but by shared humanity and equal standing before the law. That commitment remains unfinished and vulnerable, but it stands as the central achievement of the democratic era.

The work of the past three decades has been careful, contested, and often frustrating. It has involved compromise, institutional building, and the slow cultivation of norms that value difference without turning it into a threat. This work will not be undone by nostalgia for a world that no longer exists, nor by the fleeting confidence drawn from global political shifts.

In the end, the question before us is not what powerful figures elsewhere say about South Africa. It is what South Africans choose to say to one another. The country's future will be shaped in its streets, its schools, its workplaces, and its public institutions, in the daily decisions to either deepen division or to insist, however imperfectly, on a shared and inclusive path forward.

What remains is the responsibility of protecting what has been built, not as a monument to the past, but as a foundation for those who will inherit this country long after the current global moment has passed. The measure of our generation will be found not in the strength of our responses to distant voices, but in the steadiness of our commitment to one another. ■



## Councillors and the Broad Church: Rebuilding Trust, Ward by Ward

■ By **FAIEZ JACOBS**

**T**HE ANC was never built to be a narrow tribal, ethnic party of one community. It was built as a **broad church**: a mass democratic liberation movement that held together workers, students, unemployed and professionals, rural and urban, African, Coloured, Indian and White South Africans, even foreigners, believers and sceptics, militants, moderates and negotiators united by one moral idea: South Africa belongs to all who live in it.

If that diversity and inclusivity is diluted if it becomes performative, episodic, or opportunistic the ANC does not merely lose votes. It loses its character. And when a movement loses its character,

corruption, criminals and careerism do not arrive as strangers; they arrive as entitled heirs.

Today, the country is not judging us primarily by national rhetoric. South Africans are judging us by local government: by the street-light that stays broken, potholes, jobs, the sewage that runs for weeks, the clinic that fails, the housing queue that never moves, the unsafe public spaces where children learn fear earlier than hope. In 2026/27, this judgement will harden into electoral reality.

And the lived face of the ANC in each community is the same: the councillor and the comrades in local ANC Branch (if functional, credible and vibrant).

### The political fact we must face: the ward map has shifted

Ahead of the 2026/27 local government elections, ward boundaries have been finalised and handed over by the Municipal Demarcation Board to the IEC, as part of the latest delimitation cycle. The number of wards has also been increased by 20 to a total of **4,488** wards.

Within this national ward architecture, there exists a smaller set often described in ANC discussions as fewer than 350 wards where Black African voters are not the majority, and where the electorate is predominantly White, Coloured, or Indian/Asian. (The precise count can move as boundaries and demographics shift; the strategic point does not.)

These wards must never be treated as “special wards”, “hostile wards”, or “not our people.” They are South African wards. Treating them as peripheral is not only electorally foolish it is nation-building failure. Social cohesion is not built in our comfort zones. It is built where mistrust still lives. Also most of our ANC NEC, PEC, REC leaders live in these NON-ANC wards so it becomes important for our leaders to show ANC support where they live.

### The frontline of renewal: the councillor as a public trust

If we deploy councillors who are arrogant, absent, corrupt, factional, or captured by commercial interests, then every national message becomes a lie told too loudly. But if we deploy councillors who are ethical, capable, organised and present, then the ANC becomes credible again not by slogan, but by service.



So we need a clear standard simple enough for branches to use, strong enough to block manipulation:

#### 1. Clean hands and interests

No conflicts hidden behind relatives, no business dependence on municipal contracts, no “tender whispers”. If you cannot be audited without fear, you cannot lead without harm.

#### 2. Administrative discipline

A ward is an operating system: case logs, turnaround times, escalation routes, evidence trails, minutes, attendance registers, complaint resolution. A councillor who cannot run a ward office cannot run public trust.

#### 3. Local problem-solving

They must read the ward as a system: housing pressures, informal trading dynamics, public safety patterns, youth unemployment pathways, water/sanitation risk points, spatial injustice. Councillors must know how the municipality actually functions who signs, who implements, who delays, who can unblock.

#### 4. Integrity under pressure

Can they resist bribery, intimidation, factional instructions, and community anger without collapsing into populism or bitterness?

#### 5. Bridge-building across difference

Especially in urban wards and wards where the ANC is weak: can the councillor speak with credibility to professionals, small businesses, faith groups, civics, ratepayer associations, NGOs, and youth without insulting them, stereotyping them, or pandering?

#### 6. Visible results and honest reporting

Not propaganda. Evidence. Monthly report-backs. Public dashboards if possible. “Here is what we escalated, what moved, what failed, and why.”

#### 7. Human presence

A councillor must be seen in pain: at funerals, on unsafe corners, in overcrowded clinics, in flooded informal settlements, in gang-infected streets. Not only at rallies.

### The hidden war: candidate selection and its vulnerabilities

We must speak the truth inside the movement: even good rules collapse under weak capability and bad faith. Our candidate selection process is vulnerable to:

- Gatekeeping through membership manipulation and meeting control;
- Slate logic that prizes factional

## VIEWPOINT

- arithmetic over community fit;
- Money politics and transactional mobilisation;
- councillorship treated as a procurement doorway;
- “Impressive CVs” masking weak ethics and weak ground presence;
- Urban neglect ceding difficult wards by default.

If we do not confront these risks, we will keep recycling the same tragedy: good people step back, cynical people step forward.

### A practical innovation: a “Triple-Lock” selection model

To reduce manipulation, we must design a process where capture becomes expensive and visible.

#### Lock 1: Community proof through an Open Ward Forum

Shortlisted candidates must face an open forum not a rally. An evidence forum. Residents and stakeholders ask questions. Candidates present a simple 90-day and 12-month ward plan.

#### Lock 2: Integrity + capability verification

A small verification layer respected veterans, governance professionals, and community credibility figures checks conflicts

of interest, lifestyle red flags, disciplinary history, and basic operational competence. Not to replace democracy to protect it from sabotage.

#### Lock 3: A public performance contract

Every candidate signs a public contract: ward office hours, monthly report-backs, procurement fire-wall rules, case turnaround standards, meeting schedule, and consequences for breach. If you won't sign it, you don't want service you want power.

This is how we move from “*process compliance*” to governance discipline.

#### A direct call to comrades in middle-class and non-supportive wards

*To ANC leaders and members living in wards where the ANC is mocked or marginal:* you cannot outsource struggle to townships and rural villages while you live comfortably in silence. Your presence in those wards is strategic because it requires conviction, not convenience.

**STAND UP. ACCOUNT.** Step forward. Help recruit credible candidates. Host dialogues. Build bridges. Open doors to profes-

sionals and community builders who have stayed outside the ANC because they associate us with incompetence or corruption. Bring them back not with begging, but with a serious offer: help us rebuild local government with clean hands and real delivery.

#### The moral bottom line

This is not a numbers game, even though the numbers matter. Inclusivity is not a campaign tactic it is the ANC's historic identity.

Councillorship is not a reward, a hustle, or a factional prize. It is a public trust. If we choose councillors the way we choose comrades for internal battles, we will lose the country outside our meetings.

But if we choose councillors the way we would choose a pilot to fly our children skill, ethics, discipline, calm leadership, and care then renewal becomes tangible.

Let us find the right people. Let us protect them from manipulation. Let us deploy them with discipline. And let us prove ward by ward that the ANC can again be a **broad church that serves all South Africans, and earns trust by what it fixes**, not what it promises. ■



# Knysna water crisis: National Government steps in to safeguard water security in Knysna

■ By **CORNELIUS MONAMA**

**M**INISTER of Water and Sanitation, Comrade Pemmy Majodina, has conducted a two-day working visit to Knysna Municipality in the Garden Route District, Western Cape, as part of the democratic state's responsibility to intervene decisively where service delivery failures threaten the wellbeing of communities, economic activity and social stability.

The visit forms part of government's ongoing programme of expanding access to a better life for all. The ANC places the provision of basic services — including access to sufficient and safe water — at the centre of transforming the material conditions of the people and dismantling the legacy of inequality, underdevelopment and spatial exclusion.

Knysna is currently experiencing severe water supply challenges as a result of a localised drought affecting the Garden Route belt. The Akkerkloof Dam, the municipality's primary water storage facility, is approximately 16% full, representing an estimated 13 days of usable water at current consumption levels. These climatic pressures have been compounded by long-standing infrastructure neglect, high levels of non-revenue water and vandalism of public assets.



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This situation constitutes a serious water security crisis that threatens livelihoods, economic activity and social cohesion. It therefore requires a capable, ethical and developmental state to act decisively, in partnership with communities, business and all spheres of government, to stabilise the situation and lay the basis for sustainable solutions.

In keeping with the ANC's tradition of hands-on leadership and people-centred governance, Minister Majodina, together with the Executive Mayor of Knysna Municipality, Councillor Thando Matika, and technical teams from the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) and the municipality, conducted on-site inspections of critical water infrastructure and



resource points. These included the Karatara River, the Akkerloof Dam and strategic boreholes to assess their potential for rehabilitation and sustainable yield.

The Minister also engaged directly with communities in Khayalethu township, faith-based organisations and the Knysna Local Business Chamber. These engagements reaffirmed the ANC's long-standing principle that sustainable solutions emerge from social dialogue, active citizenry and shared responsibility, rather than technocratic approaches alone.

Technical assessments confirmed that Knysna's water challenges did not arise overnight. While drought conditions have intensified the crisis, weaknesses in infrastructure asset management, maintenance and

water loss control have accumulated over many years. These challenges speak to the broader task identified by the ANC in its conference resolutions and January 8 Statements: the need to strengthen local government as the frontline of service delivery and to build professional, capable institutions.

Importantly, the assessments indicate that sufficient water resources exist to meet Knysna's needs, provided that leaks are reduced and consumption is managed more effectively. This underscores the importance of governance reform alongside emergency relief.

Minister Majodina supported the municipality's decision to classify Knysna as a disaster area and noted that a corresponding declaration by the Western Cape

Provincial Government would enable the state to mobilise resources, expertise and personnel in a coordinated manner. Such an approach reflects the ANC's commitment to cooperative governance, ensuring that all spheres of government act in a unified and integrated way to serve the people.

In line with ANC policy positions that call for a strong and interventionist developmental state, Minister Majodina announced a package of immediate, medium- and long-term support measures by the Department of Water and Sanitation.

The department will avail an emergency relief allocation of R20million, reprioritised from water services infrastructure grants, to support Knysna Municipality. This funding will be accompanied

by technical support to accelerate the development of groundwater resources and reduce reliance on increasingly stressed surface water sources.

The department is also deploying engineering expertise to assess the Knysna Desalination Plant and determine refurbishment requirements to increase supply. In addition, DWS has funded feasibility studies for a new small local dam, laying the groundwork for long-term water security and climate resilience.

In announcing these measures, Minister Majodina emphasised that state support must be matched by accountability and reform at local level. She urged the municipality to implement a credible plan to reduce water losses, repair leaks and install functional water meters, which are critical to addressing high levels of non-revenue water.

Consistent with ANC resolutions that call for the protection of public assets, Minister Majodina condemned the vandalism of water infrastructure, describing it as an attack on communities and the developmental objectives of the state. She called for decisive action by the municipality, working with law enforcement and communities, to combat sabotage and criminality.

The Minister commended the Knysna Business Chamber for its willingness to participate in coordinated response structures and for its pledge to mobilise retired technical experts to support the municipali-

ty. This partnership reflects the ANC's vision of social compacts between the state, business and civil society to confront national challenges and advance development.

The department has consistently supported Knysna Municipality through the Water Services Infrastructure Grant (WSIG), allocating R12.4million in the 2023/24–2024/25 financial years and R7million in the 2025/26 financial year for infrastructure rehabilitation and water conservation and demand management initiatives.

Knysna Executive Mayor, Councillor Thando Matika, welcomed the intervention, noting that it reflects a coordinated response across all spheres of government

in line with the constitutional mandate to progressively realise access to water for all.

The Department of Water and Sanitation, working with provincial and local government, water sector institutions and stakeholders, will continue to closely monitor the situation and provide regular updates to residents.

This intervention affirms the ANC-led government's commitment, as reiterated in successive January 8 Statements, to place the needs of the people at the centre of governance, to build a capable developmental state, and to ensure that access to water, a strategic national resource, is protected in the interests of present and future generations. ■

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## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

# THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

24–30 January 2026

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

### 24 January 1960 Cato Manor Protests



Protests in Cato Manor, Durban resulted in the death of nine police men. The New York Times reported that the Commissioner of Police testified that the police were met with increasing hostility from communities, as they implemented the ever-expanding Apartheid laws and repression of political activities.

### 24 January 1964 Apartheid government stops Nkosi Albert Luthuli's tenure as Rector

Nkosi Albert John Luthuli (1898-1967) was Glasgow University



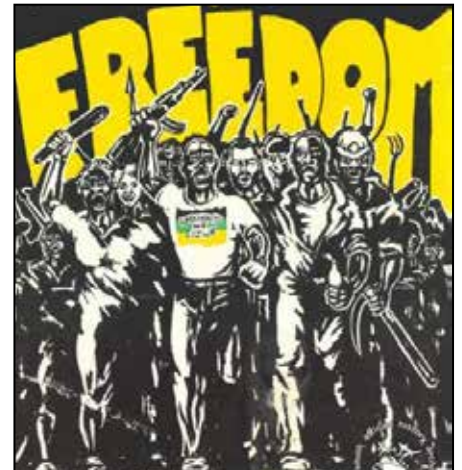
Rector from 1962 until 1965. The University's Luthuli scholarship is named in his honour. It was announced on this day in 1964 that the apartheid government aims to stop former ANC President's tenure in this position, refusing to issue him with a passport and permission to travel.

### 25 January 1977 Priests report against 1976 police brutality

A group of clergymen of seven Christian churches – including the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Methodist churches – calling themselves '*Ministers Fraternal*' published a report blaming the riot police for their role in the violence in the Cape Town townships at Christmas 1976. Their report was banned. The Minister of Justice and Police, J. Kruger claimed the internal unrest and riots were not the result of the government's apartheid policies but were instigated by Communists and the ANC.

### 25 January 1980 Silverton siege in Pretoria

On 25 January 1980 three MK Cadres – Stephen Mafoko, Humphrey Makhubo and Wilfred Madela – were allegedly on their way to carry out a planned MK sabotage mission on petrol depots at Watloo near Mamelodi. En route, 'the Trio' realised they were being tailed by the police. In an attempt to escape, they took ref-



uge in a branch of Volkskas Bank in Silverton, Pretoria. They held 25 civilians in the bank hostage, making a number of demands, including a meeting with State President Vorster, the release of Nelson Mandela and James Mange, as well as R100 000 in cash and an aircraft to fly them to Maputo. After negotiations, which included the police handing food over to the cadres and hostages, a police unit stormed the bank and all three cadres were killed by the police. Two civilians, Valerie Anderson and Anna de Klerk, were killed and many others were wounded in the shootout.

### 25 January 1981 Laingsburg Floods

On 25 January 1981, Laingsburg, Western Cape was devastated by a severe flood. The hard rains immersed the whole town in water, with only roofs left visible. 425mm of rain fell on 24 and 25 January 1981 causing the Buffalo River that flows North-

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

south through the town to burst its banks. The average rainfall was 175mm. The force of the water was so immense that victims' bodies were found as far away as Mossel Bay, 250 kilometres away.

### 26 January 1887 Ethiopians defeat Italians at the Battle of Dogali

The battle of Dogali was a skirmish that was part of a larger conflict between the Italians and the Ethiopians. At this time Ethiopians had the most well equipped standing army on the African continent. This battle ended in a stunning victory for the Ethiopian forces, as they totally routed the invading Italians on 26 January 1887.

### 26 January 1896 Oldest teachers training college opens in Wellington

The oldest teacher training college in South Africa opened on 26 January 1896, in Wellington, Western Cape. Andrew Murray, a Dutch Reform Church Minister, was instrumental in developing early tertiary education in South Africa especially for white women, making Wellington famous as an education centre in the country. The foundation stone for the building, Murray Hall, was laid on 19 November 1874. This building also served as a hostel for girls and women, the Huguenot University College and the Teachers Training College and is now part of the Boland College of Education.

### 26 January 1983 Dieter and Ruth Gerhard detained as spies

The South African government announced at a press conference that senior South African

naval officer, Commodore Dieter Gerhardt and his wife, Ruth, had been detained for questioning in connection with alleged espionage. Gerhardt was commanding officer at the strategically important Simonstown naval base. They were jailed in December 1983 after being convicted of spying for the Soviet Union.

### 26 January 2001 First edition of ANC Today published



The first edition of the ANC's online weekly newspaper was published on this day in 2001. This edition, featured the *Letter from the President*, that became a regular weekly column written by President Thabo Mbeki, as well as three other articles on the Arms deal.

### 27 January 1914 Women drafted petition against Pass Laws



Black women in the Free State protested when they were included in Pass legislation previously reserved for African men only. A petition against Black women carrying passes was drawn up, presented to the authorities, with protests organised by women. This law was subsequently relaxed until the 1950s.

### 28 January 1974 Cinematographer Sofian El Fani born

Tunisian cinematographer, responsible for brilliant camerawork in movies such as *Black Venus* (2010), *Blue is the Warmest Colour* (2013), *Timbuktu* (2014) and *It must be Heaven* (2019) was born on this day in Tunisia.

### 28 January 1981 Journalists issued with banning orders

Phil Mtimkulu, acting president of MWASA and Joe Tiholoe, Transvaal vice president, are served three-year banning orders.

### 28 January 1997 Apartheid police confessed to killing Steve Biko

Apartheid-era police officers who appeared before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) admitted their role in the 1977 killing of Steve Biko, the leader of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). In an inquest into his death by the apartheid government following local and international pressure, no-one was held responsible. The five former policemen, Harold Snyman, Gideon Nieuwoudt, Ruben Marx, Daantjie Siebert and Johan Beneke applied for amnesty to the TRC for their role in the death of Steve Biko.

## 28 January 1998

### AKA born



South African rapper, songwriter and record producer, Kienan Jarryd Forbes (popularly known as AKA) was born in Cape Town on this day. Forbes gained recognition after releasing his single “Victory Lap” from his debut studio album, *Altar Ego*. Often regarded as one of the greatest South African musicians of all time, he was one of the most popular South African musicians of his era and the best-selling South African hip hop artist of all-time. The late rapper won multiple awards, including awards at the South African Music Awards, the MTV Africa Music Awards, and the Metro FM Music Awards. He also won international awards, including an AFRIMA and a BET award. The hitmaker met his untimely death on 10 February 2023.

## 28 January 2005

### Gift of the Givers to help Tsunami victims from Somalia

Gift Of The Givers Foundation founder and national coordinator Dr Imtiaz Sooliman, announced in Johannesburg that the foundation would fly forty tons of food, medical supplies and water into Somalia immediately after getting a go-ahead from the United Nations to aid tsunami victims in Somalia on 30 January. This was the first humanitarian relief from the African continent to fly into Somalia direct-

ly, carrying aid supplies valued at R3-million. About 54,000 people were affected by the disaster on 26 December 2004.

## 28 January 2012

### New African Union Headquarters inaugurated

The African Union Summit of Heads of States and Government opens the newly build headquarters in Addis Ababa on this day.

## 28 January 1988

### Sarafina! opens in New York



The musical written and directed by Mbongeni Ngema and with music by Hugh Masekela, about the Soweto uprising opens in New York to much acclaim. It will later be made into a film, starring Leleti Khumalo and Whoopi Goldberg.

## 28 January 2013

### Legend Victor Ntoni passed on

Victor Mhleli Ntoni was born in Langa, Cape Town in 1947. As a teenager, Ntoni gradually established himself in the townships playing with saxophonist McCoy



Mrubata. He was part of the sextet, “*The Uptown*”, which included the Ngcuka brothers. A self-taught musician, he studied at the Berkley School of Music in Boston in 1976. On return, he co-founded the Afro Cool Concept band, and became a legend of South African music and culture.

## 28 January 2021

### Award-winning songstress Sibongile Khumalo passed on



South African opera singer and Jazz legend Sibongile Khumalo passed away on this day in 2021. Sibongile was born in Orlando West, Soweto, on September 24 1957. Her grandfather was a maskandi artist, her father, Khabi Mngoma, a professor of music and her mother, Grace, a nurse with a powerful alto voice. After launching her full-time singing career in 1992 at Kippies Jazz International, she won the Standard Bank

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

Young Artist Award at 1993's Grahamstown Arts Festival for her sellout show, ***The Three Faces of Sibongile Khumalo***. Her mix of opera, oratorio and classical music with African traditional elements won her audiences around the world. Sibongile Khumalo was awarded the National Order of Ikhamanga in Silver in 2008 for her excellent contribution to the development of South African art and culture in the musical fields of jazz and opera.

### 29 January 1961 Strive Masiyiwa born

The Zimbabwean businessman and billionaire was born in Harare, Zimbabwe. Masiyiwa founded technology companies Econet Global and Cassava Technologies. Active in a number of causes, he contributed to African business support for the African Against Ebola Fund IN 2014-15 and through his foundation, has given scholarships to over 250,000 young Africans since 2000.

### 29 January 1986 Museveni becomes President of Uganda



Uganda experienced a number of changes of government since independence from British rule in 1962. In December 1980 Apollo Milton Obote, from the Uganda

People's Congress (UPC), returned to power for the second time after multi-party elections. The election outcomes were contested by the opposition, the Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM). Yoweri Museveni (UPM) refused to recognise his government and with Yusuf Lule, the former President of the Ugandan Provisional Government, challenged the legitimacy of the new government through guerrilla warfare under the auspices of Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM), later the National Resistance Movement (NRM). The NRM finally entered the capital and deposed Military Council leader, Okello. On 29 January 1986 Museveni, after five years in the bush, was sworn in as the new Ugandan Head of State.

### 29 January 1950 Formula One Champion Jody Scheckter born

Jody David Scheckter was born in East London, Eastern Cape on this day. Scheckter became South Africa's first and thus far only Formula One World Driver's Championship winner in 1979. He drove a Ferrari, and won several Formula One races in Europe. Jody Scheckter is also infamously known for being the cause of one of the biggest accidents in the history of Formula One.

### 29 January 1986 Police ban on struggle media, including t-shirts

Brigadier Christoffel Anthonie Swart, divisional commissioner of police of the Western Province, issues an order that would in effect ban even t-shirt slogans. It says: *"No person shall in any place affix, display or distribute any placard, banner, sticker, pamphlet, clothing or similar object on*

*or in which any viewpoint of a political nature or in relation to any system of Government or Constitutional policy is expressed, advocated or propagated."*

### 29 January 1996 Film producer Jamie Uys passed away



Johannes Jacobus Uys, popularly known as Jamie Uys, was an internationally acclaimed South African film director who made 24 films. Prizes for his work included the 1981 Grand Prix at the Festival International du Film de Comedy Vevey for ***'The Gods Must be Crazy'*** and the Hollywood Foreign Press Association award for best documentary in 1974 for ***'Beautiful People'***. ***'The Gods Must be Crazy'*** enjoyed three years of uninterrupted screening in the United States of America. Jamie Uys passed away on 29 January 1996, Johannesburg, South Africa from a heart attack.

### 29 January 2021 Rwanda Chili Pepper deal

Rwanda's Gashora farm signs a deal with buyers for 100 million USD each year, to export chili peppers to China. Chili peppers soon became one of the country's top export products. The farm was founded and is run by a young Rwandese entrepreneur Diego Twahirwa, who is in

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

his 30's. Gashora farm not only exports raw chillies, but also produces chili sauces and other products for the local market.

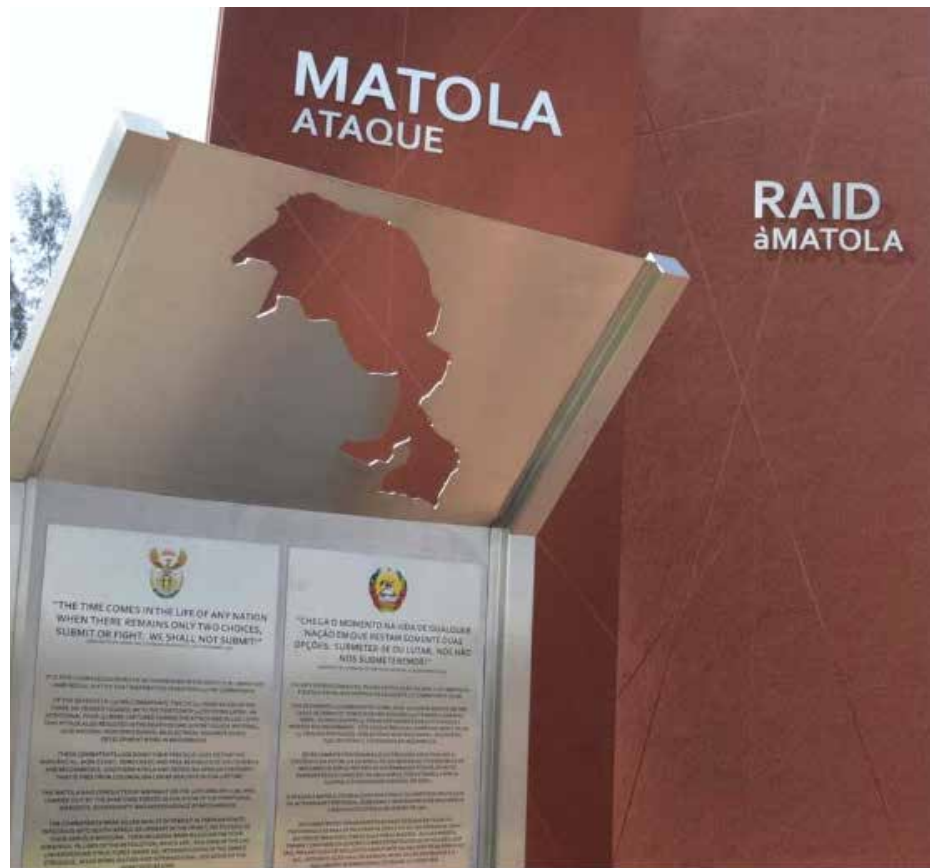
### 30 January 1899 Dr Max Theiler, first Nobel Laurette born



Dr Max Theiler was born on 30 January 1899 in Pretoria. He studied medicine at the University of Cape Town Medical School from 1916 to 1918, graduated at the London School of Medicine in 1922 with a diploma in tropical medicine and hygiene and went on to work at Harvard University School of Tropical Medicine and the Rockefeller Foundation in the USA. There he did extensive research on yellow fever and other viral disease, heading the research team that produced the vaccination for yellow fever, for which he awarded the Nobel Prize for Physiology/Medicine in 1951. He was the first ever South African to receive the prize and the only Nobel Laurette to date for creating a virus vaccine.

### 30-31 January 1981 Matola raid

In the early hours of 30 January 1981, the apartheid regime launched an attack on homes of ANC members in the Maputo suburb of Matola, in Mozambique. The attack claimed the



lives of 15 Umkhonto we Sizwe cadres: Mduduzi Guma, Lancelet Hadebe, Mandla Daka, Daniel Molokisi, Steven Ngcobo, Vusumzi Ngwema, Thabang Bookolane, Krishna Rabilal, Themba Dimba, William Khanyile, Motso "Obadi" Mokgabudi, Collin Khumalo, Levinson Mankankaza and Albert Mahutso. The fifteenth victim, Vuyani Mavuso was kidnapped during the raid, and was later executed when he refused to cooperate with apartheid security agencies to betray his comrades. On the occasion of the first anniversary of the Matola Raid, addressing a Frelimo Rally in Maputo on 14 February 1982, ANC President, Cde Oliver Tambo described the Matola invasion "as a raid, which insulted the sovereignty of the Mozambican people, defiled their national dignity, violated their territorial integrity and challenged the very concept of African independent statehood". A monument was built by

the governments of Mozambique and South Africa to commemorate the event. The Matola raid was one of many cross-border aggressions which include invasions, bombings, abductions by South Africa of its neighbouring states since the 1970s right up to the end of apartheid in the 1990's.

### 30 January 1987 Carte Blanche denied permission to quote OR Tambo

On 30 January 1987, the Minister of Law and Order issued a message to the newspapers denying Carte Blanche, an investigative television programme permission to quote exiled president of the African National Congress (ANC) Oliver Tambo. The communication from the office of the minister stated that: "Please note that the Minister of law and order has not given Carte Blanche permission to quote Oliver Tambo." ■

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

# INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

24–30 January 2026

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

### 24 January

#### International day for African and Afro-Descendant Culture



This UNESCO global day celebrates the many vibrant cultures of the African continent and African Diasporas around the world, as a rich source of global heritage and culture. On 24 January 2006, the African Union adopted the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance in Khartoum, replacing the earlier Cultural Charter for Africa, which was adopted in Port Louis by the OAU in 1976.

### 24 January

#### International Day of Education

Education offers children a ladder out of poverty and a path to a promising future. But about 265 million children and adolescents around the world do not have the opportunity to enter or complete school; 617 million children and adolescents cannot read and do basic math; less than 40% of girls in sub-Saharan Africa complete lower secondary school and some four million children and youth refugees are out of school. Their right to education is being violated and it is unacceptable. Without inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong

opportunities for all, countries will not succeed in achieving gender equality and breaking the cycle of poverty that is leaving millions of children, youth and adults behind. Under the theme “*AI and education: Preserving human agency in a world of automation*”, the 2025 International Day of Education inspires reflections on the power of education to equip individuals and communities navigate, understand and influence technological advancement. As computer and AI-driven systems become more sophisticated, the boundaries between human intention and machine-driven action often blur, raising critical questions about how to preserve, redefine, and, ideally, elevate human agency in an age of technological acceleration.



### 25 January

#### National Police Day

This is a South African awareness day, adopted by Cabinet in 2005. On National Police Day the South African Police Service (SAPS) remembers the sacrifices that our men and women in blue have made and continue to make as they provide safety for all who live in South Africa. South Africa has about 193,000 sworn police officers, with 1 154 police stations. According to the Constitution (205 (3)), the purpose of the police is to “*prevent, combat and investigate crime, to maintain public order, to protect and secure the inhabitants of the Republic and their property, and to uphold and enforce the law.*”

**26 January****International Day of Clean Energy**

Energy lies at the core of a double challenge: leaving no one behind and protecting the Planet. In a world grappling with climate change, clean energy plays a vital role in reducing emissions, and can also benefit communities lacking access to reliable power sources. Still today, 685 million people live in the dark - more than 80 per cent of them in Sub-Saharan Africa. 26 January is also the founding day of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).

**27 January****International Day of Victims of the Holocaust**

This year marks the 81st anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau by the Soviet forces. It was the major Nazi concentration camp in occupied Poland, and its liberation signaled the end of the Second World War, and of the Holocaust. Holocaust victims were targeted by the Nazi German regime for their religion or ethnicity, political beliefs or sexual orientation. The figure of people killed is estimated at 17 million: 6 million Jews and 11 million other groups deemed 'racially inferior' by the Nazis such as the Roma (gypsies), Poles, Russians,



as well as Germans with disabilities, homosexuals, Communists, Jehovah Witnesses, and Socialists. Today, the state of Israel itself stands accused before the International Court of Justice of genocide against the Palestinian people.

**28 January****Global Community Engagement Day**

Community engagement is the process of engaging with community groups to address and solve issues that impact the well-being of the community. It encourages public participation in communities, and for people to work together and get involved. People on social media are also encouraged to celebrate this day by broadcasting what they do for their communities and connecting with others who do the same.



There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about.

**Global Community Engagement Day!**

**28 January****International Reduce CO2 emissions day**

As climate change continues to impact our world, humans are experiencing (and contributing to) the effects of degradation on the planet. The awareness of the need to reduce greenhouse gas or CO2 emissions has been on the radar of scientists for more than 100 years. As scientists continue to study the impact of the greenhouse effect and loss of the ozone layer on the planet, more evidence has been revealed of global warming, including rising sea levels, increased drought, severe wildfires, declining water supplies and much more. When the Kyoto Protocol was signed in 1997, it was a sign of movement in the right direction toward the reduction of greenhouse gasses from industrialized countries.

Still, it hasn't been adequate to slow down the rate fast enough. Later, as the Paris Agreement was adopted in 2015, it legally bound 196 different countries in a commitment to limit global warming by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The goal is to achieve a climate neutral planet by the middle of the 21st century. (<https://www.daysoftheyear.com/days/international-reducing-co2-emissions-day/>)

### 29 January Freethinkers Day

Exploring ideas with open minds, embracing the art of independent thought and challenging dogma and norms, paving the way for unique perspectives. So, get ready to open your mind to new possibilities and ideas on this day when people are not only allowed to think outside the box, but are even encouraged to do so.

### 30 January World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day

Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) are a group of conditions that affect more than a billion people who mostly live in marginalized, rural and poor urban areas zones. Although they are preventable and treatable, these diseases – and their interrelationships with poverty and ecological systems – continue to cause devastating health, and social and economic consequences. These diseases often leave visible scars, the impacts of which

are amplified for women because of gender-based cultural norms and expectations; children infected with soil-transmitted helminthiases are nutritionally and physically impaired.

### 30 January School Day of Non-violence and Peace



We dream of the world being a much safer place to live, and that future generations will inherit a healthy planet of peace and friendship. Although this change is unlikely to happen overnight, people can still start now to instill this value in the future citizens of the world. School Day of Non-violence and Peace offers opportunities for children to be taught about peaceful resolution to conflicts, pacifism and non-violence. It takes place in schools all over the world on the anniversary of the death of Mahatma Gandhi, an important figure of non-violent resistance in India and South Africa. ■

**“Education** is the most powerful weapon which you can use to **change the world.**”

**Nelson Mandela**

