



ANC TODAY

VOICE OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

30 January–5 February 2026

Conversations *with the* **President**



We must build on the momentum of our economic recovery

■ By **PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

AS we enter a new year, the momentum of our economic recovery is gathering pace. In the last months of 2025, we saw a number of indicators that our collective efforts to rebuild our economy are bearing fruit.

The economy has posted four consecutive quarters of growth.

There has been a steady reduction in unemployment, while recent data released by Statistics South Africa shows that levels of poverty and inequality have declined considerably. Confidence in our economy is rising, the stock exchange has been performing well and the average inflation rate is the lowest in two decades.

Late last year, South Africa exited the Financial Action Task Force grey list, which is an important signal of institutional improvement and a boost to investor confidence. We have also seen a sovereign credit ratings upgrade, reflecting strengthened fiscal credibility.

While these signs of progress are encouraging, there is no time to rest. The difference between a temporary lift in growth and sustained shift in our economic trajectory lies in expanding investment. With a strengthening currency and rising commodity prices, we have wind in our sails. Now we must steer our ship towards greater prosperity for all South Africans.

Last week, at its first meeting of the year, the Presidential Economic Advisory Council (PEAC) made clear proposals on how to achieve this goal. A body of respected local and international economists, academics and practitioners, the council provides strategic and evidence-based advice on policy decisions that promote economic stability, growth and inclusivity.

The council said that Government should translate recent positive developments into enduring growth by simultaneously boosting public infrastructure spending and lowering the cost of doing business.

Increasing infrastructure investment is not simply about



spending more. It is about delivering projects that reduce the cost of doing business, unlock growth and create jobs.

Council members expressed strong support for the ongoing programme of structural transformation in key sectors such as electricity, logistics and water. These interventions, which have brought an end to load-shedding and improved rail and port performance, aim to enable competition, improve the efficiency of network industries and reduce costs across the economy.

Our electricity reforms are critical to this effort. A competitive electricity market is essential to bringing down the cost of electricity. And lower electricity prices are critical for both inclusive growth and social development. Similarly, improving logistics performance in rail, ports and freight corridors remains essential to exports, industrialisation and job creation.

In addition to boosting private investment, we need to

achieve higher levels of public investment in infrastructure. Over the last few years, we have laid a solid foundation for investment by streamlining the regulations that have held back infrastructure projects, making it easier to pursue public-private partnerships, and establishing strong institutions such as Infrastructure South Africa and the Infrastructure Fund. We have committed more than R1 trillion of public funds for infrastructure projects over the next three years.

We need to build on this foundation by strengthening our state-owned enterprises and enabling them to invest at much higher levels.

We must do all of this at a time when the international environment is increasingly volatile and uncertain. Global growth is expected to remain subdued over the medium term and many countries are facing heightened trade and geopolitical tensions.

This underscores the need

for South Africa to sharpen its competitiveness and expand markets, particularly on the African continent. We must capitalise on the positive momentum of recent months by building strong partnerships, strengthening delivery, and closing the gap between policy intent and implementation. Only if our own institutions are strong can we compete and remain responsive in a rapidly changing world.

During the course of this year, we need to double down on our efforts to grow investment and create jobs. We must seize the momentum we built and translate this into long-term gains for our economy.

In the coming days, Cabinet will hold its annual Lekgotla to outline the actions that will be taken across Government and with social partners to achieve these goals. Through these actions, by working together, we will ensure that the progress we've seen in the last year will have an impact on the lives of South Africans this year.

ANC NEC Lekgotla Affirms 2026 as a Year of Decisive Action to Fix Local Government, Accelerate Economic Transformation, Create Jobs, Deepen Social Justice and Renew the Movement

■ By **ANC SECRETARY GENERAL FIKILE MBALULA**

THE African National Congress (ANC) National Executive Committee (NEC) Lekgotla has successfully concluded its deliberations, held from 24th to 26th January 2026. The NEC Lekgotla was convened to reflect on the political, economic, and social conditions confronting the country, assess progress in implementing policies and resolutions aimed at improving the lives of South Africans, and adopt a focused, action-oriented Programme of Action for the year ahead.

The NEC Lekgotla took place in the context of the January 8 Statement marking the 114th anniversary of the ANC, which declared 2026 as **The Year of Decisive Action to Fix Local Government and Transform the Economy**. This declaration reflects the movement's sober assessment that the credibility of democratic governance, social cohesion and economic recovery will ultimately be judged by improvements in the daily lived realities and experiences of the people of South Africa.

The NEC Lekgotla formally adopted its outcomes as a binding strategic framework guiding the work of the ANC, its structures, Alliance partners and deployed cadres across all spheres of gov-



ernment. The Lekgotla resolved that 2026 will mark a decisive shift from planning to execution, from fragmented interventions to coordinated delivery, and from incremental change to visible, sustained impact in communities.

The Lekgotla reaffirmed that this moment requires leadership that is decisive, disciplined and people centred. The ANC recommits itself to governing with humility, accountability and urgency, fully conscious of the expectations and hopes of South Africans.

Political and Strategic Orientation

The NEC Lekgotla reaffirmed the ANC's historic responsibility as

the leading force for social and economic transformation and the strategic centre of governance. The Lekgotla noted that South Africa remains anchored by a progressive Constitution, resilient democratic institutions and a comprehensive policy framework to advance inclusive development and a better life for all.

The Lekgotla reaffirmed that the central challenge of the current phase is not policy absence, but uneven execution, coordination gaps and variable institutional capacity. Addressing the Lekgotla, the ANC President emphasised that development outcomes depend on disciplined implementation, effective leadership and accountability at all levels of the state.



The NEC Lekgotla therefore resolved to strengthen intergovernmental coordination, align planning and budgeting across spheres, and speed up the professionalisation of the public service to ensure policy intent is translated into concrete results. The ANC will intensify oversight over governance performance while supporting capacity-building interventions where required.

The Lekgotla further reaffirmed the importance of strengthening the Alliance and partnerships with labour, business, civil society, traditional leaders and progressive formations, recognising that sustainable development requires collective effort and shared responsibility.

Fixing Local Government and Improving Basic Services

The NEC Lekgotla reaffirmed that local government is the frontline of democratic governance and the primary site where the state is experienced by communities. Water provision, electricity supply, road maintenance, sanitation, refuse removal, human settlements and local economic development are central to restoring public confidence and dignity.

In declaring 2026 the *Year of Decisive Action to Fix Local Government*, the NEC Lekgotla the NEC affirmed the implementation of the Local Government Action Plan (LGAP), adopted at the Councillor Roll-call in September last year. Key to the plan is a comprehensive Service Delivery Acceleration Framework anchored in the District Development Model (DDM). This framework aligns national, provincial and local planning and budgeting through a “**One District, One**

Plan” approach, ensuring coordinated implementation and accountability.

Since the Councillor Roll-call, service delivery war rooms are being restructured, consolidated and strengthened on the back lessons learned previously, from local, district/metro, provincial and national levels, to follow-up on all service delivery issues. The ANC at national level will also soon launch a toll-free service delivery hotline. The Lekgotla further resolved to deploy rapid-response technical teams to priority municipalities, and institute weekly monitoring of delivery performance. Priority workstreams include water reticulation, road rehabilitation, energy network stability, clean towns and cities, human settlements delivery, climate-resilient infrastructure and local job creation.

The NEC Lekgotla further resolved to professionalise the interface between municipal political leadership and administrative leadership, strengthen financial management and billing systems, eliminate unfunded budgets, fill funded vacancies with skilled personnel, and enforce consequence management for maladministration and corruption. Through these measures, the ANC is committed to restoring functionality, credibility and a developmental orientation in local government.

Economic Transformation, Industrialisation and Job Creation

The NEC Lekgotla reaffirmed that economic transformation, industrialisation and job creation are central to restoring dignity, opportunity and shared prosperity. While macro-economic sta-

bilisation has laid an important foundation, the decisive task of the current phase is to translate stability into inclusive growth that expands productive capacity and creates jobs.

The Lekgotla welcomed tangible progress in energy reform, particularly the implementation of the Energy Action Plan, which has resulted in sustained periods without load-shedding, increased generation capacity and accelerated grid investment. These developments have removed a major constraint on economic activity and investment.

The NEC Lekgotla noted that government has committed over R1trillion in public infrastructure investment over the current Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, focusing on water infrastructure, roads, freight rail, ports and energy transmission. Through the Infrastructure Fund, blended-finance projects exceeding R100billion have been approved, crowding in private investment and accelerating delivery.

Industrialisation and localisation remain the backbone of inclusive growth. Sectoral masterplans across automotive, steel, agro-processing, clothing and textiles, energy-intensive industries and critical minerals are being consolidated to improve coordination and accountability. Government procurement is being leveraged to support local manufacturing, supplier development, beneficiation and township-based production.

Jobs, Skills Development and the Social Wage

The NEC Lekgotla reaffirmed that unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, remains

the most urgent socio-economic challenge confronting South Africa. The Lekgotla expressed deep concern that youth unemployment remains structurally high, reflecting historical underdevelopment and limited economic diversification.

The Lekgotla resolved that job creation interventions must be immediate, targeted and spatially responsive. Public employment programmes, including the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), the Community Works Programme (CWP), and the Presidential Employment Scheme (PES) will be better coordinated to provide income support, skills development and pathways into sustainable employment.

Skills development was reaffirmed as a strategic lever for long-term employment creation. The NEC Lekgotla resolved to intensify investment in technical and vocational education, artisan development, digital skills and sector-specific training aligned to industrialisation priorities, with strengthened partnerships between TVET colleges, universities, SETAs and industry.

The Lekgotla further reaffirmed the importance of the social wage in supporting households while focus structural reforms and industrial strategies take effect. Continued investment in education, healthcare, housing, transport subsidies, food security and social protection remains central to reducing inequality and strengthening household resilience.

Safety, Justice and the Fight Against Crime and Corruption

The NEC Lekgotla reaffirmed that safety, justice and the fight



against crime and corruption are essential foundations for social stability, economic growth and democratic legitimacy. Communities cannot thrive where criminality undermines trust, investment and social cohesion.

The Lekgotla welcomed the unwavering commitment of President Cyril Ramaphosa to the fight against corruption. The work of the Special Investigating Unit (SIU), Asset Forfeiture Unit and law-enforcement agencies has resulted in billions of rands recovered or preserved from the proceeds of crime, including investigations and convictions on stage capture cases demonstrating that focused political leadership and institutional coordination yield results.

The NEC Lekgotla resolved to accelerate consequence management, ensuring that investigations lead to prosecutions, asset recovery and institutional reform. Coordination across investigative, prosecutorial and adjudicative institutions will be strengthened to improve turnaround times and outcomes.

The Lekgotla further resolved to intensify the crackdown on illegal mining operations, including zama-zamas, whose activities terrorise communities, destroy

infrastructure, undermine the rule of law and endanger lives. A coordinated, intelligence-led response involving law enforcement, border management and mining regulators will be intensified.

Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF): A National Emergency

The NEC Lekgotla reaffirmed that gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) constitute a national emergency that violates the dignity, safety and fundamental rights of women, children and vulnerable persons, and undermines the moral fabric of society.

The Lekgotla welcomed progress in implementing the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, including the expansion of specialised sexual offences courts, strengthened survivor-centred services, victim-friendly policing and improved inter-sectoral coordination.

The NEC Lekgotla resolved that 2026 must mark a decisive escalation in the national response to GBVF. This includes intensifying prevention programmes, strengthening investigation and prosecution, reducing case withdrawals, expanding shelters and psychosocial support, and ensuring swift consequences for perpetrators.

EDITORIAL

The Lekgotla reaffirmed that ending GBVF requires a whole-of-society approach and response, engaging men and boys, traditional leaders, faith-based organisations, schools, workplaces and communities. The ANC commits to sustained political leadership until women and children are safe in all spaces.

Border Management, Immigration and Identity Integrity

The NEC Lekgotla reaffirmed that effective, humane and orderly border management is a core responsibility of the democratic state and a critical pillar of national security, social cohesion and economic stability. South Africa's constitutional values, geographic position and economic profile require a migration system that is principled, well-regulated and firmly rooted in the rule of law, capable of managing migration flows while protecting the integrity of the state and the dignity of all people.

The NEC Lekgotla welcomed the ANC's leadership in initiating the White Paper on International Migration for South Africa, which provides a comprehensive framework to modernise South Africa's immigration system and address long-standing weaknesses that have undermined public confidence.

The Lekgotla resolved that the White Paper must be urgently finalised and processed into legislation to become an Act of Parliament, providing clear legal authority for implementation, enforcement and accountability across the state.

The Lekgotla resolved that strengthening border management capacity is non-negotiable. This includes the full capacita-

tion and operationalisation of the Border Management Authority, enhanced coordination among security and law-enforcement agencies, modernisation of ports of entry, and the deployment of appropriate technology to secure land, sea and air borders. These measures are essential to combat transnational crime, human trafficking, smuggling and the abuse of immigration systems.

The NEC Lekgotla reaffirmed that South Africa's commitment to Pan-Africanism and African unity must be balanced with the sovereign duty to regulate migration in a manner that is lawful, orderly and fair. African unity does not imply the erosion of borders or tolerance of illegality. Migration must be managed in a way that upholds human dignity while safeguarding national institutions, public services, labour standards and social cohesion.

National Dialogue, Social Cohesion and 30th Anniversary of the Adoption of the Constitution

The NEC Lekgotla reaffirmed the National Dialogue as a citizen-led platform to rebuild trust, foster unity and confront shared national challenges. The Dialogue will be inclusive, transparent and action-oriented.

ANC structures at all levels will mobilise communities through branch dialogues, ward-based engagements and sectoral forums to ensure broad participation. The Lekgotla resolved that the 30th Anniversary of the Constitution must be used to deepen civic education and reaffirm constitutional values. National unity is understood as a shared responsibility, respect for diversity and commitment to social justice.

As part of the commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of the Constitution, the African National Congress will intensify mass organising and mobilisation to defend South Africa as a sovereign constitutional democracy. Our Constitution is a product of struggle and popular will, and no foreign state or external interest has the right to undermine or infringe upon the sovereignty of the South African people.

In this regard, the ANC, together with its Alliance partners and progressive forces from civil society, labour, business and community formations, will lead a **mass national march on Saturday, 21 March 2026**, with thousands converging from Beyers Naudé Park, adjacent to Luthuli House, to Constitutional Hill in Braamfontein.

This mobilisation will be coordinated nationally, with ANC structures in Gauteng and neighbouring provinces forming the nucleus of the march in Gauteng. The ANC will further organise simultaneous marches across the country to ensure a unified and unmistakable national message. The movement will reaffirm through this mass action that popular participation is the foundation of constitutional democracy and assert that South Africa's sovereignty belongs to its people and will be defended through their organised and conscious action.

Organisational Renewal and Movement Building

The NEC Lekgotla reaffirmed that organisational renewal is an existential task central to the African National Congress' continued relevance as a liberation movement and governing party. Renewal is not a periodic exercise, but a

continuous process that must be visible in leadership conduct, deployment practices, internal culture and the quality of service rendered to communities. The Lekgotla reaffirmed that the credibility of the movement depends on its ability to live its values in practice, lead by example and earn public trust through visionary, servant, capable ethical and effective leadership.

The Lekgotla resolved to intensify the implementation of the Renewal Charter as the central framework guiding organisational rebuilding. This includes strengthening ethical leadership, enforcing discipline without fear or favour, and applying consistent consequence management for misconduct, underperformance and behaviour that undermines the integrity of the movement. The NEC Lekgotla reaffirmed that renewal requires firm, principled leadership that places the interests of the people and the organisation above personal or factional considerations.

The NEC Lekgotla further reaffirmed the importance of political education as a cornerstone of renewal. Political education through the Foundation Course and the OR Tambo School of Leadership will be compulsory and continuous for all members and leaders, ensuring that cadres are grounded in the history, values and ideology of the ANC, as well as the practical competencies required for governance in a modern, developmental state. Political education is essential to building disciplined, capable and ethical leadership at all levels.

The Lekgotla emphasised the need to strengthen systems of monitoring, evaluation and accountability across all structures

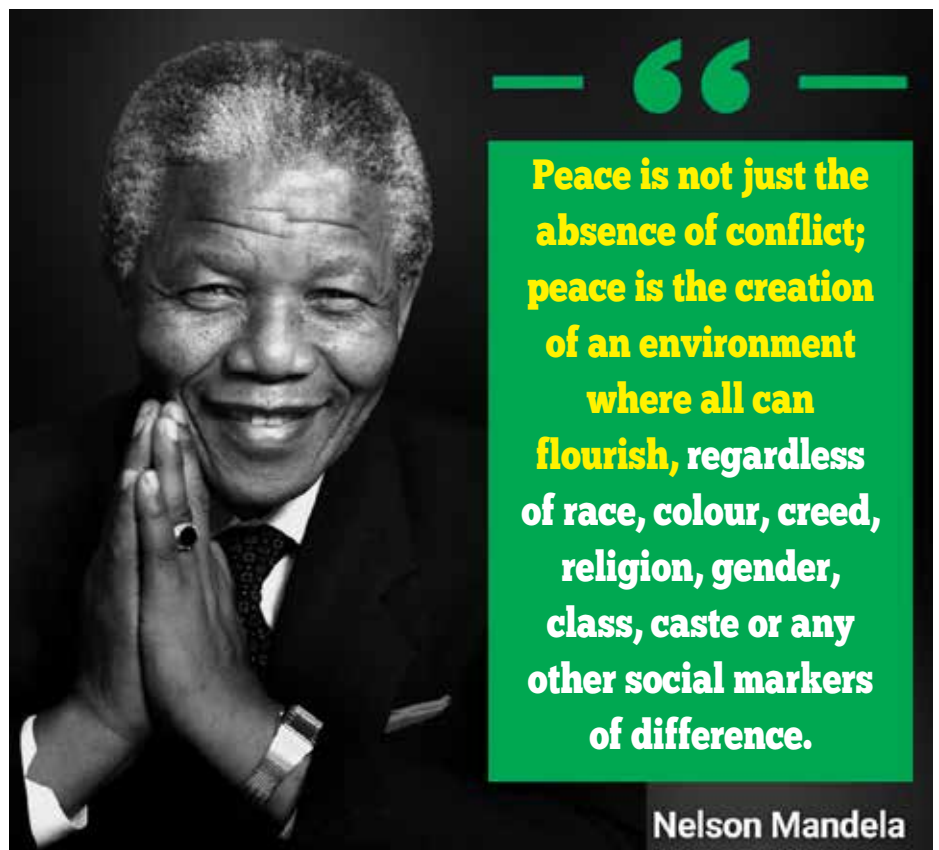
of the movement. Performance must be measured, excellence recognised and rewarded, and non-performance addressed decisively. Deployment practices must prioritise competence, integrity and commitment to service, ensuring that those entrusted with responsibility can deliver on the mandate of the organisation and the expectations of the people.

The NEC Lekgotla reaffirmed the ANC's mass character and its historic role as a movement rooted in the daily struggles and aspirations of the people. Renewal must therefore be reflected in consistent presence in communities, meaningful engagement, listening to the concerns of the people and acting decisively to address them. A renewed ANC must be humble, accessible and responsive — a movement that reconnects with communities not only during elections, but as a permanent and trusted partner in social transformation.

International Solidarity and South Africa in the World

The NEC Lekgotla reaffirmed South Africa's commitment to progressive internationalism, Pan-Africanism and principled multilateralism in a rapidly changing and increasingly contested global environment. The Lekgotla noted that the erosion of multilateral institutions, the rise of unilateralism and the persistence of global inequality pose serious challenges to peace, development and sovereignty, particularly for developing countries. In this context, South Africa's foreign policy remains firmly anchored in the values of justice, equality, solidarity, peaceful resolution of conflict and respect for international law.

The NEC Lekgotla reaffirmed that Africa remains the primary pillar of South Africa's international engagement. South Africa will continue to strengthen African unity



and regional integration through active participation in continental and regional structures, prioritising political stability, peace-building, economic integration, infrastructure connectivity and industrial development, as envisaged in the African Union's Agenda 2063. African-led solutions to African challenges remain central, and South Africa will continue to support initiatives that advance shared growth, collective security and sustainable development across the continent.

At the global level, the NEC Lekgotla reaffirmed South Africa's commitment to constructive engagement in multilateral platforms to advance development cooperation, reform global governance institutions and defend the centrality of international law.

South Africa will continue to work with like-minded countries of the Global South to promote a more equitable international economic order, fair trade, development financing, solidarity, peace and inclusive global decision-making. Multilateralism remains essential to addressing global challenges such as climate change, conflict, poverty and inequality.

The NEC Lekgotla reaffirmed that South Africa will conduct its international relations with clarity, independence and confidence. Our country will neither be bullied nor be reckless, but will act in a principled, sovereign and responsible manner, guided by national interests and constitutional values. International relations are not an abstract exercise, but a practical instrument to support domestic development, economic transformation, peaceful coexistence and improved living conditions for the people of South Africa, while contributing to a



more just and peaceful world.

On Allegations of Irregular Handling of ANC Internal Electoral Material

Further to the statement previously issued regarding allegations of irregular handling of ANC internal electoral material, the ANC confirms that the matter remains under active investigation. Following a tip-off, an internal process initiated by the Office of the Secretary General established prima facie evidence of misconduct, which led to ANC security reporting the matter to the South African Police Service.

Members of the ANC Electoral Committee, the National Executive Committee, and the Gauteng Provincial Task Team were informed of and present during the related visit.

The ANC continues to regard this matter as extremely serious, as any confirmed wrongdoing would undermine the credibility and integrity of the organisation's internal electoral processes.

Investigations and related processes are still underway, and the outcomes will be formally communicated upon their conclusion.

In the interim, ANC members are urged to maintain discipline, refrain from public commentary, and allow the duly elected leadership of the ANC Greater Johannesburg Region to continue discharging its responsibilities in accordance with the ANC Constitution.

Conclusion

The NEC Lekgotla reaffirmed that the true measure of its outcomes will be reflected in tangible improvements in the quality of life of our people.

All ANC structures and deployed cadres are called upon to implement the adopted Programme of Action with discipline, unity and urgency.

The NEC Lekgotla extended its deepest condolences to the families and communities affected by the tragic scholar transport accident in Vanderbijlpark, which claimed the lives of 14 (fourteen) learners. The Lekgotla calls on all road users and transport operators to always exercise caution, patience and responsibility. Recklessness costs lives' and must not be tolerated nor condoned.

We further call on law enforcement to intensify operations to ensure that safety measures and compliance to rules and regulations on our roads are always adhered to.

The ANC enters 2026 with renewed determination to lead, to serve and to deliver, together we will take decisive action to fix local government, accelerate economic transformation, create jobs, deepen social justice and renew the movement with the people of South Africa.

NATO Countries Blindly Fed and Appeased the US Imperialist Beast at Their Own Peril: Now?

■ By **DR. ZAMANI SAUL**

IN one of the many group chats in my WhatsApp inbox, I came across a widely distributed speech delivered by the Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney at the recent 2026 World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos. In the opening paragraphs, I got truly impressed by the remarkable presentation by Carney. He opens his speech by referencing what he terms a “rupture” in geopolitics, where great powers operate without constraints. He lamented that the world is constantly reminded that we live in an era dominated by these great powers, which can act as they please while the weaker nations must submit to their will.

Carney emphasized that this power dynamic and global control are often framed as inevitable, as the natural logic of international relations. He cautions what he refers to as the “middle countries,” stating that, “*if we are not at the table, we are on the menu.*” In a pragmatic appeal, he urged his European allies to “*diversify in order to hedge against uncertainty*”, which he attributed, among other factors, to “*transactionalism*”.

He concludes his speech in a very distorted way, albeit with a powerful assertion: “*The old order is*



not coming back. We should not mourn it. Nostalgia is not a strategy”. While reading the speech, at some point I honestly felt it echoed the speeches of leaders like Thabo Mbeki, Robert Mugabe, Fidel Castro, Ernesto Che Guevara, Cyril Ramaphosa and many other revolutionary leaders at international platforms such as the UN. The irony here is that the old order that Carney criticises, established after World War II, was crafted and enforced by the West, mainly through its war machine called NATO, with Canada as a prominent member. Canada

is part of the imperialist global command chain, which does not distinguish it from the US — the belly of global imperialism.

In recent years, Canada has been an active participant in NATO operations that have had devastating consequences, including the invasion of Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks, the invasion of Iraq under the guise of seeking weapons of mass destruction, and the NATO-enforced no-fly zone through Resolution 1973, that led to the killing of brother leader, Muammar Gaddafi. All these

imperialist military operations have resulted in the suffering and deaths of thousands of people.

Carney, from his self-proclaimed moral high ground, addressed the WEF about the “old order” that must not be mourned. However, he notably avoids discussing contemporary injustices perpetrated by the “old order” such as the genocide in Palestine by the Zionist regime of Israel and a great friend of NATO, the recent US military incursions into Venezuela, an independent and sovereign state and the criminal multiple economic sanctions imposed on Cuba by the US for more than six decades now. His silence on these topics raises questions about his commitment to a just global order.

Moreover, Carney does not mention the urgent need for the transformation of the UN Security Council and other multilateral bodies which are still structured to benefit the Global North. This lack of acknowledgment suggests a failure to confront the entrenched power dynamics that continue to marginalise many nations and people worldwide. By overlooking these pressing issues, his speech seems disconnected from the realities faced by those enduring injustice and oppression. Such omissions highlight a selective moral stance that undermines the broader narrative of seeking a just and equitable global order.

Carney reminds me of what happened exactly 80 years back in 1946 when Martin Niemöller addressed the Confession Church in Frankfurt, Germany. The address was part of his reflections on guilt concerning the Holocaust and Nazi atrocities. He asserted: “First they came for the commu-



nists, and I did not speak out because I was not a communist.

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak out.”

This quote serves as a stark reminder of the importance of advocating for others, even when the injustices do not immediately affect us. NATO, including Canada, is complacent in the US aggressive bullying and ridiculing of countries in the Global South. They were dead quiet, continued to feed and appease the US imperialist beast in its attack of the Global South as long as Trump’s erratic temperament was not directed at them. NATO family member states reinforced the US hegemony, now the imperialist

beast, with its deadly teeth and elongated sharp claws, smells blood in the family. Now, the vile arrogance and threats of aggression are directed to NATO member states by their well-fed beast.

By remaining silent in the face of global injustice generated by the US, these NATO member states have not only facilitated and supported the continuation of imperialist bullying but have also allowed those same tactics to potentially backfire against them. Now the imperialist beast, which they once unconditionally fed, supported and appeased turns on them with unprecedented intensity. It is only now that they thinly deploy moral agency to speak out and such behaviour is called double standards, hollow rhetoric, mediocrity and an act of self-preservation. The lessons from history remind us that silence in the face of injustice ultimately leaves us all vulnerable.

Good luck to NATO, the European Union and Canada in dealing with this uncommon behaviour from the US, their trusted ally. The Global South must continue to strive for greater autonomy within a complex international landscape. Countries in Africa and the Global South must assert their independence and tackle their unique challenges to achieve self-reliance. This evolution is critical, as meaningful progress comes from within, rather than relying on external forces that prioritise their own interest. These shifting dynamics present both challenges and opportunities, presenting a real potential for transformation in global power relations.

Dr. Zamani Saul is the ANC Northern Cape Provincial Chairperson.



■ By **SEISO MOHAI**

BUILDING on the back of the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the African National Congress (ANC) Declaration of 2025 The Year Of 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! The ANC is hitting the road running, the machine is grinding, the moral is high amidst a buoyant mood in 2026.

President Cyril Ramaphosa delivered the African National Congress (ANC) National Executive Committee (NEC) January 8 Statement on January 10, 2026, at Moruleng Stadium in the Moses Kotane region of North West Province. The statement declares 2026 as the **Year of Decisive Action to Fix Local Government and Transform the Econ-**

omy, serving as a clarion call for ANC members and branches to prioritize six key tasks amid preparations for the 2026 local government elections. The ANC Branches are duty-bound to translate the statement into a structured, rolling mass mobilisation plan for cadres and branches to rebuild the organisation, reclaim its hegemony, and restore lost ground through granular, phased actions aimed at re-asserting the ANC hegemony.

The statement underscores the existential crisis faced by our movement at this juncture and calls for organisational renewal – change or face obsolescence. Branches are implored to embark on visible action to transform every branch into an “*activist branch*” through rigorous compulsory political education, integrity enforcement, and zero tolerance for ill-discipline, and factionalism. Implementa-

tion of compulsory political education and ideological training, step-aside rules, and branch functionality metrics for all members are some of the measures required to renew the ANC. That is the kind of necessary change for cadres to exhibit conduct embodying ANC values of integrity, humility, and competence and excellence, while branches lead grassroots campaigns solving local problems like service delivery failures that eroded trust since 2016. Reclaiming the hegemony of the ANC in society will be achieved through defending the gains of the National Democratic Revolution and by defending our constitutional democracy against anti-transformation forces, imperialists and by fostering non-racialism, and uniting the people of South Africa.

Between 15 and 19 January 2026, the Free State Province became the stage for two events of

national importance: the uMkonto Wesizwe Military Veterans Conference and the January 8 celebrations. These gatherings were hosted in the province wherein the ANC was founded in 1912.

The questions that beacon, is what are the practical steps beyond theory structures and cadres of the movement nationally and in the Free State Province, in our case, need to take to give effect to the priority tasks outlined by the ANC President on behalf of the NEC of the ANC? What is the pre-occupation of branches and cadres of the movement in translating the tasks into implementable activities in 2026? Do we possess the will and capacity to integrate the priority tasks in the weekly ward-level activations, integrating the priority tasks into branch functionality barometers for tracking input-out-ratio?

There are concrete and practical activities we can embark on from the perspective and lens of the Free State Province that can be applicable in the national geopolitical space. The postulation below is illustrative of the granularity and extent to which we can be programmatic in carrying out the priority tasks optimally for better outcomes and results.

There are lessons to be gleaned for ANC in the Free State Province guided by the Midterm Report of the National Executive Committee to the 5th National General Council, delivered by the Secretary-General of the ANC. The Report underscores the urgent imperative for organisational renewal to reverse our electoral setbacks and reclaim our revolutionary hegemony. It calls for branches to intensify mass mobilisation, combat factionalism, and ensure cadres are account-

able to communities the delivery of services at all material times, especially in this period when the country is approaching the 2026 Local Government Elections.

The report identifies decline since 2016, driven by governance failures, voter shifts to counter-revolutionary forces like uMkonto We Sizwe (MK) and Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), and internal weaknesses such as unresponsive branches (52% cited). For Free State ANC structures, this report demands of us to build active branches rooted in community struggles, selecting cadres of moral calibre for local leadership, and implementing the District Development Model (DDM) to integrate planning, budgets, and action seamlessly. Renewal should be anchored in politically and ideologically training our cadres based in rural areas and township branches, and fostering unity of purpose to restore the ANC as the strategic centre people's power.

We must enter the pre-election

period guided by ideological clarity and collective discipline, uniting behind the GNU's transformative potential while exposing right-wing and neoliberal tendencies. It is our collective interest to forge unity by convening lekgotla-style dialogues to heal social divisions, prioritising the Freedom Charter's vision of shared prosperity over resource capture. This is the kind of unity of purpose combined with disciplined cadres mobilising motive forces – will counter fragmentation and propel us to decisive victory, proving the ANC remains the vanguard of national liberation.

The January 8, 2026 Statement read by the President on behalf of the ANC National Executive Committee calls upon us as members and activists to campaign relentlessly for Local Government Election Victory in the Free State and nationally.

We are called upon to conduct branch audits to identify and deploy ethical, capable cadres for





wards, enforcing lifestyle audits and encouraging community endorsements of ANC candidates.

The NEC issued a clarion call for the launch mass mobilisation campaigns against service failures, electricity theft, billing weaknesses, Gender-Based-Violence and Femicide (GBVF) via door-to-door organising and community programmes aligned with the Spatial Development Planning Framework.

As activists we carry both the moral responsibility and strategic task in joining the War on Crime and Corruption with no hold barred. It is the ANC as the leader of society that has the moral obligation to end Gender-Based-Violence and Femicide (GBVF). The urgent tasks of reinforcing Community Policing Forums (CPFs) with bi-weekly patrols, running GBVF awareness marches led by African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL), unremittingly demanding prosecutions of offenders is our collective responsibility.

Similarly the African National Congress Youth League (ANC YL) should lead campaigns aimed at mobilising young people out of school, in school and students in institutions of higher-learning to combat Gender-Based-Violence and Femicide.

Our duty is to rally all spheres of government and social partners around the implementation of the District Development Model through joint ANC-government task teams, prioritising infrastructure for an example in rural Mortho and Lejweleputswa to deliver tangible wins on jobs, housing, and livelihoods.

The conditions exist to bolster Economic Transformation through directed public-private partnerships with a biased to Micro-Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) with a sharp focus in manufacturing, agriculture, information and communication technologies, Eco-tourism and services drive. The environment is conducive for us to unapologetically entrench implementation of preferential

procurement as an important lever for redress. Revitalisation of industrial parks and Special Economic Zones (SEZs) are key triggers to economic stimulation and growth and must be consolidated on a sustainable basis. Support to township entrepreneurs through skills initiatives and financial linkages bodes well for accelerating job creation and unlocking opportunities for youth, women, citizens residing in townships and villages.

The Free State Province is strategically located to pro-actively participate in the evolution of South Africa's oil and gas sector and holds a notable potential for energy security and economic growth.

An ANC-led government of the people in our province, working together with other spheres of government should direct investments to the people including improving health and education outcomes. This requires engagement with communities in proactive health drives, establishing mobile clinics and school nutrition

programs co-managed by local volunteers to boost outcomes. Similarly in education, our ANC Free State branches have the capability to host parent-teacher forums to tailor skills programs, lifting pass rates through targeted interventions.

We can proactively, roll out cadre and activist workshops with community input to build an ethical and transformative leadership at all levels in Free State municipalities. Our Programme of Action for 2026 should bind us to building a digital dashboard for public tracking of government performance, fostering a capable, ethical and developmental, state rooted in community trust.

As the Free State Province we must develop our own toolkit and mechanisms for tracking poverty and the high cost of living. Working together with community organisations and civil society, we can initiate community cooperatives for affordable food production and bulk buying schemes to directly cut high cost of living.

We must pledge to proactively scale up programs and skills hubs, engaging approximately 100,000 households to lift fami-

lies out of poverty through localized economic relief.

It is the interest of all African Patriots in the Free State ANC structures to host pan-African solidarity forums with local communities to champion fair trade and climate justice initiatives. In the same vein, it is of paramount importance to proactively mobilize youth brigades for global campaigns, positioning the province as a beacon of ubuntu-driven international cooperation.

Global Solidarity is our new normal and it is imperative for our province to link local initiatives through multifaceted approaches to the African Union (AU) the African Continental Free Trade Areas (AfCFTA).

In keeping with the revolutionary tradition and spirit of the African National Congress, guided by the enduring vision of the Freedom Charter and the National Democratic Revolution, the January 8 Statement of 2025 laid the unshakeable foundation for acceleration of economic transformation, service delivery, organisational renewal, and organisational rebuilding, which the January 8 Statement of 2026 amplifies as

the Year of Decisive Action to fix local government, accelerate inclusive growth, and wage war on crime and gender-based violence. This ideological continuum finds its powerful expression in the Free State's January 8, Provincial Celebrations and the uMkonto weSizwe Military Veterans Conference held in our Province 2 weeks ago, where delegates and participants united to reaffirm the people's will to govern, directly informing the past extended NEC Lekgotla scheduled for January 2026 that sharpened inputs towards the State of the Nation Address (SONA) and Local Government Elections Manifesto into a cohesive weapon for radical socio-economic transformation.

Through revolutionary vigilance and unity of purpose in action, the Free State ANC collective it should lead the offensive, restoring the ANC's moral and organisational supremacy for a National Democratic Society. Amandla!

Seiso Mohai is an ANC activist and Member of the Free State Provincial Executive Committee. He also serves as a Member of Parliament and Deputy Minister of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation.



Smartphone Justice: Social Media and the New Era of Policing Accountability

■ By **BANDILE MASUKU**

THE rise of social media has revolutionized how we engage with civic issues, and nowhere is this more evident than in the realm of law enforcement and crime prevention. A recent Johannesburg High Court judgment has granted citizens the right to record police activities, a ruling that fundamentally transforms the relationship between the public and those sworn to protect them. This decision is more than a legal technicality; it is a powerful affirmation of transparency and accountability in South Africa's law enforcement.

By allowing ordinary citizens to document police interactions, the court has positioned the public as active participants in safeguarding justice. In an age where smartphones are ubiquitous and social media platforms dominate communication; this ruling opens the door to a new era of civic engagement.

Why This Judgement Matters

The court's decision recognizes that in today's South Africa, every smartphone is a potential tool for justice. Recording police conduct is not just about capturing isolated incidents; it is about creating a culture of accountability. When citizens share these recordings

on social media, they amplify public scrutiny and spark essential conversations about policing practices.

This democratization of information challenges systemic injustices and ensures that misconduct cannot hide in the shadows. It's exactly what the Freedom Charter envisioned when it declared that "*the people shall govern*", except now with digital tools that make governance more accessible than ever.

The Role of Social Media

Social media platforms like X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, and TikTok have evolved from spaces

for casual sharing into powerful instruments for social justice. In a country still grappling with the legacy of corruption and abuse of power, this visibility is transformative. Real-time sharing of evidence mobilizes communities, holds institutions accountable, and creates a digital paper trail where none existed before.

Citizen-generated content now provides crucial evidence and strengthens community vigilance, making crime prevention a collective effort rather than solely a state monopoly. The recent Brooklyn Crème incident demonstrates how citizen documentation isn't just evidence, but a catalyst for real-time policing and



community safety.

When a Brooklyn Crème customer's smartphone captured a phone-snatching incident in Pretoria, no one imagined it would lead to a swift arrest within hours. Yet that's exactly what happened. The video went viral on X, Facebook, and TikTok, with social media users identifying the suspect from Instagram posts and forwarding leads to authorities. Johannesburg Metro Police acted on this digital intelligence, arresting the individual in Hillbrow and charging him with multiple thefts and attempted hijacking.

Navigating New Digital Frontiers

However, this new power comes with profound responsibilities. The same tools that promote transparency can be misused. Globally, we have seen similar trends where technology empowers citizens but also sparks debates about surveillance and state control. As studies on digital authoritarianism warn, the same tools that promote transparency can be weaponized by governments to monitor and suppress dissent.

Concerns about selective editing, context removal, and the potential to incite public opinion before all facts are known must be addressed. Additionally, xenophobia, algorithmic bias, and the misuse of technology remain pressing concerns.

South Africa must tread carefully to ensure that this newfound freedom strengthens democracy rather than undermines it. As we implement this legal victory, we must develop guidelines and best practices that balance the right to record with the need for



fair, accurate reporting. The ANC believes in responsible citizenship; exercising rights while fulfilling corresponding duties to the broader community.

This Judgement and the ANC's Vision for Accountable Governance

This judgment aligns perfectly with the ANC's commitment to transparency and accountable governance. From the Freedom Charter to the Constitution, our movement has consistently fought for the rights of citizens to hold power to account. This court ruling extends that tradition into the digital age, ensuring that our democracy evolves with technology while staying true to its core principles.

The ANC has consistently championed policies that empower citizens and strengthen oversight mechanisms. This legal victory is another step in that journey, providing ordinary South Africans with practical tools to participate actively in governance and ac-

countability.

A Call to Action

This landmark judgment is just the beginning. For it to have real impact, we must all rise to the occasion: Citizens must exercise their rights responsibly, and public institutions must commit to transparency.

Together, we can build a society where justice is not just promised but practiced; where technology serves as a tool for empowerment rather than oppression.

In the end, the question is not whether social media will shape the future of policing; it already has.

The real question is: will we use this power to strengthen democracy or allow it to erode the very freedoms we seek to protect?

Bandile Masuku is a Member of the ANC Gauteng Province Provincial Task Team.



When the law becomes negotiable, THE STATE BECOMES FRAGILE

■ By **GODFREY NKOSI**

I have travelled the SADC region many times, and in most of those journeys, I have been the one behind the wheel. There is a particular stillness that comes over you as you cross our borders into Mozambique, Lesotho, Eswatini, or Botswana. You grip the steering wheel a little tighter. You watch every road sign a little more closely. You ease your foot off the accelerator even when the road opens up in front of you.

It is not fear that guides you. It is something quieter and more deliberate. It is respect.

You know, before you even arrive, that the law in those places is not a suggestion. It is not a negotiation. It is not something you can test and see how far it bends. You obey, not because you are perfect, but because you understand that there is a line, and that crossing it has consequences.

I have often thought about that feeling on the long drive back home. The moment when the border post fades into the rear-

view mirror, and the road stretches out ahead of you inside South Africa. The country I love. The country I argue with. The country I have defended in conversations across continents.

And yet, increasingly, it is also the country where the law feels like it is being asked to plead for its own relevance.

The story of the Sporong informal settlement in Randfontein has been sitting heavily with me. More than six hundred residents forced to flee their homes. Families carrying what they can in their arms. Children sleeping on the floor of a community hall. Elderly people waiting for answers that no one seems able to give.

They were not driven out by nature. Not by a storm or a fire or an earthquake. They were driven out by human beings who decided that intimidation and threats would give them more power than the law.

When I picture that hall, I do not

see statistics. I see a mother trying to keep her child warm through the night. I see a man staring at the ceiling, wondering how a home he built from scraps of corrugated iron and timber could still be something he was forced to abandon. I see dignity being eroded, not by poverty alone, but by the knowledge that somewhere, not far away, people who caused this are moving freely.

We often speak about crime in this country in the language of numbers. Crime rates. Arrest figures. Conviction percentages. But displacement is not a number. Fear is not a statistic. The sound of a community packing itself into a hall because it no longer feels safe on its own streets is not something you can capture in a quarterly report.

Illegal mining, the phenomenon we so casually call zama zama, has long stopped being a story about desperation alone. It has become a system. It has financiers. It has logistics. It has enforcers. It has routes, buyers,

and protectors. And in communities like Sporong, it has something even more dangerous. It has confidence.

Confidence that it can threaten and not be challenged. Confidence that it can occupy space that should belong to the state. Confidence that the people who suffer most will be the least heard.

This is not an isolated ache.

In Kimberley, in the Northern Cape, a police station was attacked after the arrest of a foreign national. Windows were smashed. Police vehicles were damaged. Officers found themselves defending the very buildings meant to symbolise safety and authority. Eight people were arrested, and the headlines moved on, as they always do.

In Gqeberha, a single road-rage incident spiralled into something much darker. Somali nationals and taxi operators clashed. Vehicles burned. Gunshots echoed through a neighbourhood. Business owners spoke of a town that felt, for a moment, like a battlefield rather than a place of trade and daily life.

These are different stories, in different places, with different triggers. But they all leave behind the same aftertaste. The sense that the line between order and disorder is being tested more often, and in more places, than we are comfortable admitting.

South Africans live with many frustrations. We complain about police response times. We grumble about under-resourced stations. We argue about corruption, about politics, about leadership. But still, when something goes wrong, most of us turn, almost in-



Community of Sporong collecting their belongings after being chased out by zama-zamas.

stinctively, to the law.

We go to the police station. We open a case. We wait. Sometimes we wait in hope. Sometimes we wait in resignation. But we wait because, at some level, we still believe that the law is the only language that can hold a society together.

That belief is a fragile thing.

It survives on a simple sense of fairness. On the idea that the rules apply, not just to the quiet and the compliant, but also to the loud, the angry, and the powerful.

When people begin to feel that some can intimidate their way around the law while others must live beneath it, something inside the social fabric starts to tear. Resentment grows in the silence where justice should have been. Fear begins to fill the spaces where trust used to live.

This is not a conversation about nationality. It is a conversation about criminality. It is about the dangerous idea that anyone, regardless of where they come from, can operate above the law

if they are bold enough, organised enough, or violent enough.

The passport someone holds should not matter. The law should see only the act.

What worries me most about Sporong is not only the pain of those who have been displaced. It is the lesson being taught to every other vulnerable community watching from a distance.

It teaches that if you are strong enough, or ruthless enough, you can claim territory. It teaches that the state will arrive late, or briefly, or not at all. It teaches that ordinary people must learn to live around power rather than under the protection of it.

This is how people begin to look for safety outside the law. This is how vigilante groups are born. This is how neighbourhoods start to draw their own lines, enforce their own rules, and decide, in their own way, who belongs and who does not.

That path never leads to peace. It leads to cycles of revenge that grow wider and harder to contain.

If government is serious about restoring confidence, it cannot do so with gestures. It cannot be satisfied with occasional raids, press statements, or short-term deployments that fade as soon as the cameras do.

Illegal mining must be confronted as organised crime, not as a series of isolated trespasses. The money must be followed. The equipment chains must be broken. The buyers must be exposed. The leaders must be identified and prosecuted. Without that, every arrest on the ground is like cutting a single branch from a tree whose roots remain untouched.

Communities under threat need more than sympathy. They need presence. A sustained, visible presence that tells both residents and criminals that the state has not retreated, that it still claims the space it is meant to govern.

The courts, too, carry a heavy responsibility. When cases of intimidation, illegal firearms, extortion, and attacks on police infrastructure move slowly or collapse quietly, the message that travels far beyond the courtroom is a dangerous one. It tells those who watch that the risk of consequence is low, and the reward of defiance is high.

There is also a regional dimension that cannot be avoided. Criminal networks do not respect borders, and neither can lawful cooperation. Countries of origin, like countries of destination, have an interest in ensuring that their citizens are not associated with lawlessness abroad. Standing with South Africa in isolating and condemning criminal behaviour is not an act of submission. It is an act of shared responsibility in

a region that claims to value stability and the rule of law.

At the end of all this, my mind returns to that quiet discipline of driving in a foreign country. To the simple understanding that rules exist not to humiliate, but to protect. That their power lies not in how harsh they are, but in how certain they are.

A state does not collapse in a single, dramatic moment. It weakens in small, repeated surrenders. In the community that flees instead of being protected. In the police station that must be defended instead of being trusted. In the street where fear speaks louder than the law.

Sporong is not just a settlement in Randfontein. It is a mirror held up to the rest of us.

It asks a question that is painful in its simplicity. What kind of

country do we want to live in?

One where the law is a shared promise, binding all of us equally. Or one where it becomes a fragile request, easily ignored by those willing to push hard enough.

I write this not in anger, but in a kind of quiet sorrow. Because I know how much has been invested, over decades, in building a society where the law was meant to be the shield of the weak, not the inconvenience of the strong.

If we allow that promise to fade, we will not lose it all at once. We will lose it slowly, settlement by settlement, street by street, until one day we realise that the certainty I feel when I drive in other countries is something I can no longer find in my own.

And that, more than any headline, is the loss that should trouble us all.



Armed zama-zamas.

Swift Support for Family of Mr Phila Mntambo Restores HOPE AND DIGNITY

■ By **THOBEKA MAGCAI**



WHEN 59-year old employee at Steelbank Merchants in Pinetown Durban left home on the evening of 29 June 2024, little did his family know that that would be the last time they would see their father and loved one. Mr. Mntambo worked as a general cleaner, responsible for the upkeep of the environment at the steel giant for over 15 years.

According to his family, Mr. Mntambo had been apprehensive about the kind of work he had

been allocated recently, as this involved machinery, which was not part of his delegation. The preliminary report prepared by KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Chief Inspector, Mr. Mlungisi Zondi indicated that Mr. Mntambo had sustained severe injuries while performing duties on a machine. He had reportedly slipped, causing his left arm to be caught inside the rollers of the machine, severing the arm. His family reports that Mr. Mntambo seemed to have had head, face and chest injuries. Due to the severity of his injuries, it is believed that the

occupational incident led to the death of Mr. Mntambo in hospital a few days later.

At the time the incident was reported, the Department conducted an inspection at the company to determine the cause and assess the employer's compliance with occupational health and safety requirements. The investigation revealed several areas of non-compliance in terms of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 (Act No. 85 of 1993).

Upon seeing the news report,

wherein the family and widow of Mr. Mntambo, Ms. Mncwabe detailed the pain of losing her husband and being left without full disclosure by the employer, as to what had transpired on that fateful night, ANC NEC Member and Minister of Employment and Labour, Cde. Nomakhosazana Meth immediately instructed the Director General, Ms. Jacky Molisane to furnish her with the report of the tragic incident.

Since Minister Meth's intervention, Deputy Minister, Cde. Jomo Sibiya visited the Mntambo family to offer support and comfort the family. Claims that had been lying idle, such as the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act (COIDA) were processed and paid. Following the investigation, the department took the matter for prosecution and a case has been opened.

Although nothing could bring back Mr. Mntambo to his traumatised family, who are still hurting nearly two years later, the intervention by the Minister and DM was well received and brought much-needed relief and hope to the family.

"Siyabonga kakhulu (thank you so much) for taking our concerns seriously. Ngiswela amagama okubonga (I'm speechless and have no words). To see the Deputy Minister and DEL officials, brought hope to us as we seeking justice kulodaba lababa (on my father's matter). Siyabonga ngempela to you. No mama use-nalo ithemba (my mother now has hope)," said Ndumiso Mntambo.

"Companies must stop the tendency of making employees operate machinery for which they are not trained. This case clearly

demonstrates the risk of tasking employees with work outside their delegation. We will continue to monitor the situation and ensure that the family receives the necessary support," said Minister Meth.

The Minister stressed upon the Department to improve on service delivery turnaround times to ensure that Compensation Fund and Unemployment Insurance Fund claims are processed faster and timeously in accordance with the PFMA, as there may be several cases such as the Mntambo family, that have not been processed for years after the incident.

In his opening address at the ANC NEC Lekgotla, President Cyril Ramaphosa highlighted the

importance of ANC branches and leaders being at the forefront of assisting communities with accessing services from Government. This includes orphans who require assistance with applying for NFSAS, the elderly requiring assistance with applying for indigency, or potholes and broken traffic lights that need to be reported to the municipality for intervention. **"We must be the first to assist communities and families,"** said President Ramaphosa.

The intervention of the Ministry of Employment demonstrates the urgency at which challenges of ordinary South Africans can be addressed and the care and sensitivity at which ANC Deployees handle concerns of communities on the ground.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE DELIVERY ACTION PLAN

For all your service delivery and corruption issues, send an email or WhatsApp to:

✉ basic.services@anc1912.org.za

📞 +27 81 698 8522 / +27 81 698 8523

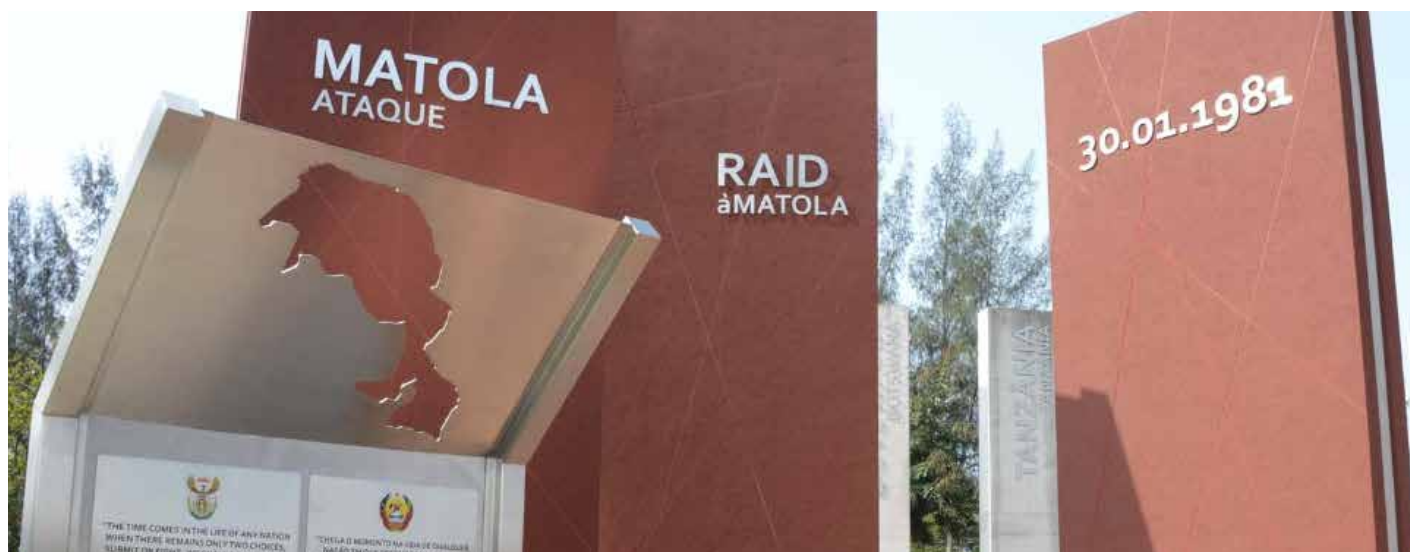
Issues will be escalated to the relevant department, municipality, or province.

114
ANNIVERSARY

2024: The Year of Decisive Action
to Fix Local Government and
Transform the Economy

Headed by the African National Congress **ANC** Roadmap, 14 Pillars to build a new South Africa, Johannesburg, 2021. www.anc1912.org.za

ANC



45 Years On: Remembering the **Matola Massacre** – Strengthening International Solidarity

■ By **ALVIN BOTES**

FORTY-FIVE years ago, in the early hours of 30 January 1981, the Apartheid regime carried out one of its most brazen acts of cross-border terror. In Matola, on the outskirts of Maputo, Apartheid death squads attacked homes used by the African National Congress in exile, assassinating twelve of our ANC cadres and one Mozambican national. This crime, now known as the **Matola Massacre**, was not an isolated act. It was part of a systematic strategy to terrorise the liberation movement, destabilise frontline states who supported our liberation, and extinguish the flames of freedom across Southern Africa.

As we mark this commemoration, we do more than remember our fallen comrades. We reaffirm a fundamental truth: Apartheid sur-

vived through extreme violence, illegality and regional destabilisation. Our liberation, by contrast, was won through selflessness, sacrifice, revolutionary discipline, clarity, commitment and unity of purpose – grounded in the four pillars of struggle: mass mobilisation, underground organisation, armed resistance and international solidarity.

The Matola assassinations were an admission of defeat by the Apartheid regime. Unable to defeat the ANC politically or morally, it resorted to cowardly terror beyond South Africa's borders, violating international law and trampling the sovereignty of neighbouring states.

In honouring the martyrs of Matola, we must speak plainly about Mozambique's historic role. For

decades, Mozambique provided sanctuary, logistical support and political solidarity to the banned ANC. It did so knowing the cost. The Apartheid regime responded viciously with cross-border military attacks, economic sabotage, and relentless destabilisation – culminating in the assassination of President Samora Machel. Mozambique paid a heavy price for standing on the right side of history.

This was not the solidarity of words, but the solidarity of action. As a frontline state, Mozambique absorbed political, economic and human costs so that South Africa could be free. Despite its own post-independence challenges, the Mozambican people and the FRELIMO government chose principle over fear. The Matola Raid and the assassination of

President Machel remain permanent scars – and permanent reminders – of the price of freedom.

That revolutionary solidarity did not end in 1994. It was transformed. Our democratic breakthrough did not erase history; it affirmed it. Since liberation, the ANC and FRELIMO have deliberately sustained party-to-party relations as a strategic pillar of bilateral cooperation, recognising that liberation movements carry a historic responsibility to defend the gains of freedom and resist counter-revolutionary forces.

Through regular engagements, structured cooperation, and most recently the Liberation Movement Summit, our movements have re-committed themselves to renewal, ideological clarity and organisational sustainability. In an era marked by amongst others, a rise in globally in- narrow nationalism, right wing racism, demagogues, populism, imperial resurgence, economic coercion and ideological assault on liberation movements as well as counter revolutionary regime change agendas, this unity is not ceremonial – it is a political necessity.

Importantly, this party-to-party solidarity has been matched and reinforced by strong government-to-government relations since 1994. Democratic South Africa and Mozambique have consciously transformed the bonds of struggle into structured political, economic and security cooperation. Mozambique is today South Africa's largest trading partner on the African continent and our fourth-largest export market globally – a reflection of a deep and growing economic partnership rooted in energy, infrastructure, trade and investment. South African investment has



**President OR Tambo
with President Samora
Machel**

supported industrial development and job creation in Mozambique, while regional infrastructure such as the Maputo Development Corridor has strengthened economic integration and people-centred growth. At the same time, our solidarity has extended to the defence of peace and stability, with South Africa standing alongside Mozambique through SADC in confronting terrorism and insecurity in Cabo Delgado. This cooperation – political, economic and security-related – is not separate from our liberation politics; it is its continuation, translating revolutionary solidarity into concrete developmental and security outcomes for our peoples.

Remembering Matola is therefore a political act. It reminds us that the ANC is, at its core, an internationalist movement. That our struggle was never confined to borders. That freedom in South Africa was inseparable from free-

dom in Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe and beyond.

As ANC members, we honour the fallen not through ritual alone, but through recommitment – to Pan-Africanism, anti-imperialism, the rule of law, human rights, sovereignty, and international solidarity. We honour Mozambique not only with gratitude, but by deepening party-to-party unity and defending the liberation legacy against historical amnesia and political opportunism.

Forty-five years on, the blood spilled in Matola still speaks. It speaks of unity forged in fire, of comradeship sealed in sacrifice, and of a struggle that did not end with liberation – but continues in defence of it.

Alvin Botes is an NEC Member & Deputy Minister of International Relations & Co-operation.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

31 January–6 February 2026

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

31 January 1980 Swiss Government protest against Apartheid spying

The Swiss government sent an official protest to the South African government over the illegal activities of South African agents operating in Switzerland, including apartheid spy, Craig Williamson. Allegations were made that Williamson siphoned off IUEF funds to establish "Operation Long Reach" in Pretoria, and that he was involved in the assassinations overseas of a number of ANC cadres.

31 January 1986 Pregnant journalist Zubeida Jaffer detained



Zubeida Jaffer, former journalist from the Cape Times and her husband Johnny Issel, were detained by the security police on 31 January 1986 under the state of emergency. Jaffer, who was three months pregnant at the time was put into isolation, with no access to a doctor, and her

lawyer was also detained. Zubeida Jaffer at the time was active in the anti-apartheid and the trade union movements, editing community and trade union publications. Jaffer is the author of the biography of Charlotte Maxeke, *Beauty of the Heart* (www.beautyoftheheart.co.za).

31 January 1996 Master KG born



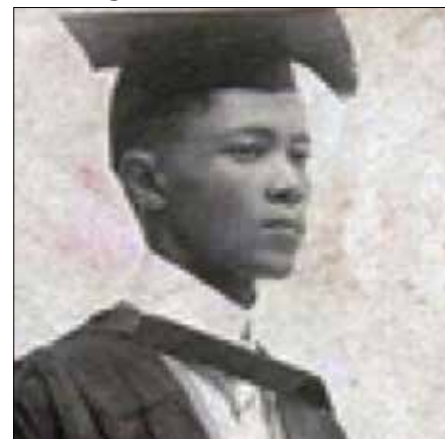
Kgaogelo Moagi (Master KG, South African musician and record producer is born in Tzaneen. A trend-setter musician, he popularized the Bolobedu dance, and in collaboration with Burna Bo and Nomcebo Zikode in 2020, created the international hit *Jerusalem*.

1 February 1920 South African Air Force established

On 1 February 1920, the South African Air Force was established. This made it the first air force of the Commonwealth, with

Lt-Col. Pierre van Ryneveld appointed Director of Air Services.

1 February 1889 Educationist Harold Cressy born

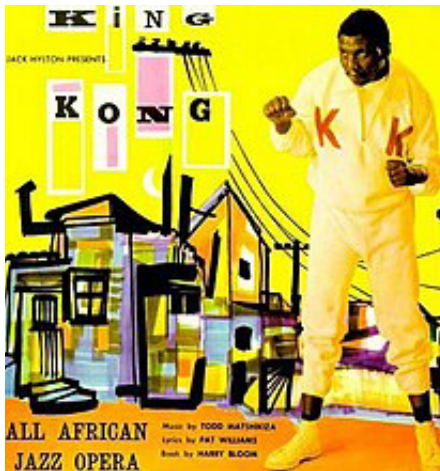


Harold Cressy, co-founder of the Teachers League of South Africa (TLSA), educationist and teacher, was born in Rorke's Drift, KZN. He qualified as a teacher at the Zonnebloem College Cape Town. In 1906, at the age of seventeen, Cressy was employed as principal of the Dutch Reformed Church mission school at Clanwilliam, where he was exposed to the injustices of the Cape's segregated education system. He studied matric part-time and went on to study for his degree. He was the only Black student of the South African College, now the University of Cape Town, after being refused entry to the universities of Rhodes and Stellenbosch because of his race. He went on to become principal of Trafalgar High, the first secondary school in Cape Town for

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

Coloured students. He was active in the African Peoples Organisation, founded the Teachers League of South Africa and edited its journal. He passed away of influenza in 1916. Harold Cressy High in District Six, Cape Town is named after him.

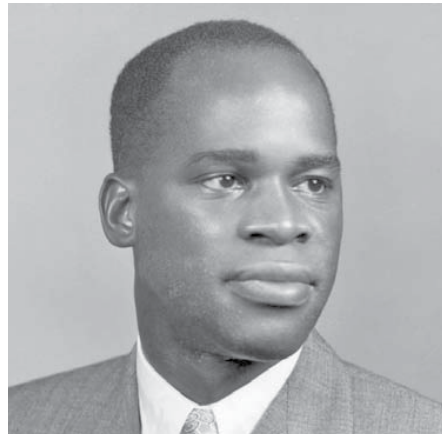
2 February 1959 King Kong premiers



The hit musical about the life of boxer Ezekiel 'King Kong' Dhlamini opened in Johannesburg. The All-African Jazz opera cast of 70 featured amongst others Miriam Makeba, Nathan Mdelele, Hugh Masekela, Gwigwi Mrwebi, Phyllis Mqoma, Todd Matshikiza and many others. The production was not without its challenges, with an actor almost daily arrested for pass law violation and would have to be bailed out the next morning. Nelson Mandela attended the opening in Johannesburg. *King Kong* ran from 1959 to 1961, touring the country.

2 February 1969 Eduardo Mondlane assassinated

Eduardo Mondlane was the founding president of the Mozambican Liberation Front (Frelimo), fighting against Portugal's colonization of his country. Born in the Gaza province on 20 June



1920, he did high school in Limpopo, went to study at Wits University, but was expelled after a year with the rise of grand Apartheid. He then went to study at Lisbon University in Portugal and later in the United States, earning an MA and a PhD. He trained as an anthropologist, working for the United Nations, and as a historian and sociology professor at Syracuse University. He was elected first president of Frelimo in 1962, and returned to Tanzania to found the Frelimo headquarters. In 1969, a bomb was planted in a book sent to him at the FRELIMO Headquarters in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. It exploded when he opened the package, killing him. After the liberation of Mozambique and Frelimo took power, the Universidade de Lourenço Marques in Maputo was renamed the Eduardo Mondlane University in 1975.

2 February 1981 Sowetan founded

The Sowetan newspaper was



founded to give voice to black South Africans across the country. Important names associated with the paper included owner Dr Nthato Motlana who purchased it through NAIL after 1994, editors Percy Qoboza, Joe Latakomo, Aggrey Klaaste and others. It remains one of South Africa's leading newspapers, and also exists online.

2 February 1990 Nelson Mandela release announced

In a state of the nation address to the apartheid Parliament, President FW de Klerk announced that his government would release Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners and immediately unbanned the ANC, SACP, PAC and other organisations.

2 February 2020 Somalia's National Locusts Emergency

Somalia declared a national emergency as large swarms of locusts spread across east Africa. The Ministry of Agriculture said the insects, which consume large amounts of vegetation, posed "a major threat to Somalia's fragile food security situation". The UN says the swarms are the largest in Somalia and Ethiopia in 25 years

3 February 1976 Abuja founded as new capital

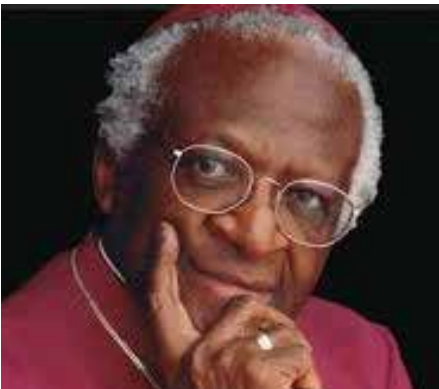
The City of Abuja was chosen as the new capital of Nigeria, from amongst 33 cities which bid for the honour. The planned city houses the federal government, with a three arms zone with the Presidential Villa, the National Assembly and the Supreme Court, all surrounded by a ring road in close proximity. Abuja replaced

Lagos as capital officially on 12 December 1991.

3 February 1976 Lourenço Marques becomes Maputo

The capital of Mozambique, named Lourenço Marques after a 16th century Portuguese trader and colonizer, is changed to Maputo by then President Samora Machel. The city takes its name from the nearby Maputo River, which starts as the Pongola river in South Africa, joined by the Great Usuthu river from Eswatini.

3 February 1985 Rev. Desmond Tutu becomes first black Anglican Bishop



Desmond Mpilo Tutu was appointed and ordained as the first Black Anglican Bishop of Johannesburg after winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984. The following year he was elected archbishop of Cape Town, which made him the head of the Anglican Church with a 1.6 million membership in South Africa. He used this position to intensify his opposition to the Apartheid system in the country.

3 February 1996 South Africa hosts and wins AFCON

For the first time since the end of

Apartheid, South Africa hosts the African Cup of Nations Football tournament. In the final on this day, Bafana Bafana, captained by Neil Tovey plays and wins 2:0 against Tunisia.

3 February 2000 1300 Volkswagen workers dismissed

1300 auto workers were dismissed by Volkswagen on 3 February 2000 in Uitenhage, Eastern Cape, for not returning to work after a wildcat strike. It was possibly the first major example of workers, after 1994, striking not just outside of the auspices of their trade union but ultimately against their union. The immediate source of conflict was a productivity agreement between NUMSA (the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa) and VW management in 1998 to ensure that the production of vehicles would be doubled the following year. In 1999, the Concerned VW Workers collective campaigned against the latest agreement during the shop steward elections, citing a lack of democratic accountability in the union. This group was made up of older, long-serving workers who had been politicised during the heyday of the workers' movement. They opposed the productivity agreement and were suspicious of the younger layer of shop stewards that had initially agreed to it. After complicated internal politics, the union leadership expelled all 13 newly elected stewards. A month later, the union obtained a court interdict to forcibly remove the stewards from their offices. Thousands of rank-and-file members responded with an immediate strike action. VW warned that striking workers would be retrenched if they did not return to work, a

call which was echoed by NUMSA. The official COSATU press release read: COSATU General Secretary, Zwelinzima Vavi will address a NUMSA General Meeting at Barks Madlakane Hall, Kwanobuhle Uitenhage this afternoon at 5PM. The meeting has been called by NUMSA to address the illegal strike at the Volkswagen plant in Uitenhage. Vavi will urge all NUMSA members to go back to work and distance themselves from agent provocateurs bent on disturbing production at the plant. At the time, this response was considered by a number of labour analysts to be a clear indication of the COSATU leadership's ever-increasing willingness to collaborate with capital. As a result, it stands out as an important moment in the Federation's history.

4 February 1906 Sunday Times published



The first edition of the first Sunday newspaper in South Africa, the Sunday Times, appeared with New Zealander George Herbert Kingswell as editor.

4 February 1959 Tsitsi Dangerembga born

The renowned Zimbabwean author was born in Mukoto. Her first novel *Nervous Condition* (1988) was a hit, the first novel published in English by a black Zimbabwean woman and making the BBC 2018 list of the top 100 books that shaped the world. Other works include the play *She No Longer Weeps* (1987),

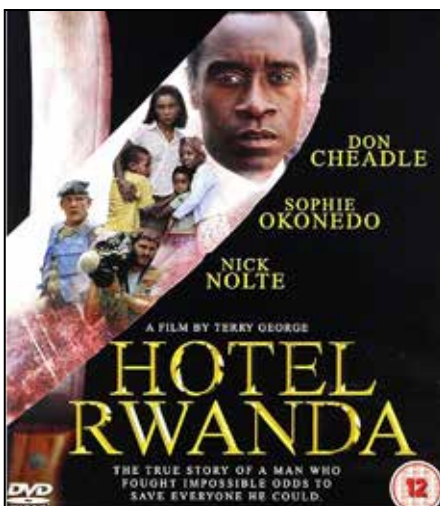
THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

a feature film that she directed *Everyone's Child* (1986), and novels *The Book of Not* (2018), *This Mournable Body* (2020) and essay collection *Black and Female* (2022)

4 February 1972 Addis Ababa UN Security Council Special session against Apartheid

At the United Nations Security Council's Special Session on Colonialism and Racial Injustice in Southern Africa held in Addis Ababa, a resolution was adopted against apartheid. The UNSC adopted resolution 311 (1972) condemning apartheid; recognising the legitimacy of the struggle of the oppressed people of South Africa; calling upon South Africa to release all those imprisoned as a result of apartheid; calling upon all States to observe strictly the arms embargo against South Africa; urging governments and individuals to contribute to UN funds to assist victims of apartheid; and commending organisations and individuals assisting in the education and training of South Africans. The vote was 14 in favour and one abstention (France).

4 February 2005 Hotel Rwanda



The feature film, about Paul Rusesabagina, a hotel manager in Kigali, that gave refuge in his des Milles Collines hotel to over a thousand Tutsi refugees fleeing from Hutu attacks during the 1994 Rwanda Genocide, is released to critical acclaim. The movie was shot in Kigali and Johannesburg and features American actor Don Cheadle, as well as South African actors Leleti Khumalo, Desmond Dube, Tony Nkoroje and Fana Mokoena.

5 February 1905 Herman Charles Bosman born

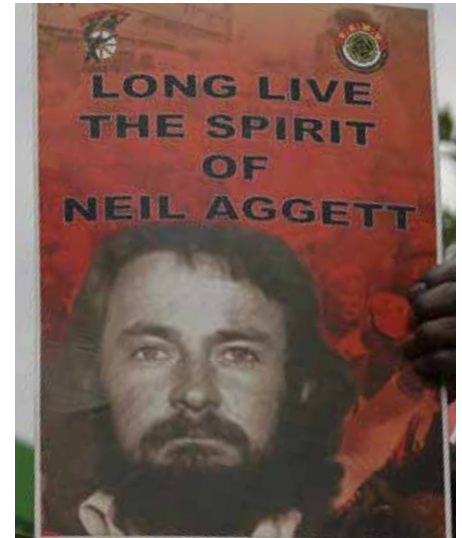
Considered one of South Africa's great short story writers, Bosman was born in Kuilsriver, Cape Town on this day. His short stories were published in the collection *Mafikeng Road* (1947)

5 February 1977 TANU and Afro-Shirazi party merge

The Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) founded by Julius Nyerere in 1955, and Zanzibar's ruling Afro-Shirazi Party merge to form the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM). This lays the basis for the United Federation of Tanzania, still governed by a CCM majority.

5 February 1982 Neil Aggett killed in detention

Medical doctor and activist Dr Neil Aggett, who was Transvaal organiser for the Food and Canning Workers Union and African Food and Canning Workers Union, died after 70 days in detention without trial, at the hands of apartheid security police. Dr Aggett was just 28 years of age. Aggett was born in Nanyuku, Kenya and moved to South Af-



rica in 1964 to complete his education, earning a degree in medicine from UCT in 1976. He worked as a physician in Umtata, Tembisa and later Baragwanath hospital in Soweto. About 15000 people attended Aggett's funeral in 1982, including Bishop Desmond Tutu, and 90,000 workers went out on strike in a show of solidarity. The first inquest in his death, with Aggett family represented by George Bizos, found no-one was responsible. Another inquest that started into his untimely death continued in 2021.

5 February 2016 Morocco Noor 1 solar array

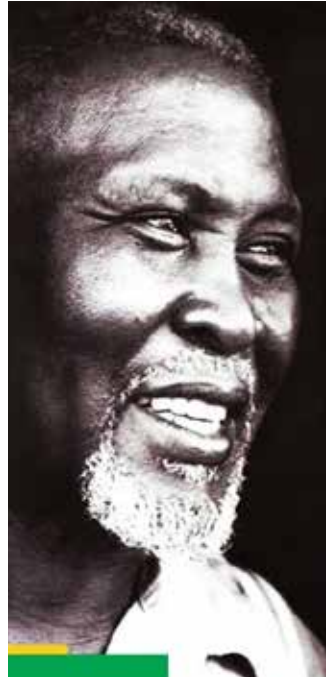
Morocco's Noor 1 solar array, covering 450 hectares delivering 370 Giga watts of solar power, begins to generate electricity.

6 February 1993 Arthur Ashe, tennis star and anti-apartheid icon passed on

Arthur Robert Ashe, a prominent African American tennis player who was born and raised in Richmond, Virginia died on 6 February 1993. Ashe, a vocal protester against apartheid, was approved a visa to visit South Africa in

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

1973, after a number of refusals. He became the first black player to win a title – a doubles match – in the South African Open. During his career, Ashe won three Grand Slam titles, making him the first black man to win the singles title at Wimbledon, the US Open, and the Australian Open. He also set a record in 1968, winning both the U.S. Amateur and the U.S. Open championships. For 12 years, Ashe was ranked among the world's top ten tennis players. He was ranked number one in 1968 and 1975. He was one of the founders of the powerful Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) in 1972 and served as its president.



May the day come soon, when the peoples of the world will rouse themselves, and together effectively stamp out any threats to peace, in whatever quarter of the world it may be found. When that day comes, there shall be peace on earth and goodwill between men.

CHIEF ALBERT LUTHULI, 1961

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

31 January–6 February 2026

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

31 January

African Day of Peace and Reconciliation

The day is commemorated as part of the African Union Agenda 2063 commitment to **Silence the Guns**, by working for peace, social cohesion, national unity and regional cooperation for the Africa We Want.



1 February

World Hijab Day

February 1st, 2013 marked the first annual World Hijab Day in recognition of millions of Muslim women who choose to wear the hijab. The brainchild of this movement is a New York native, Nazma Khan, who came up with the idea as a means to foster freedom of religious expression and cultural understanding, by inviting women from all walks of life to experience the hijab for one day on February 1st annually. The day hopes to counteract some of the controversies surrounding why Muslim women choose to wear the hijab.



1-7 February

African Heritage and Health Week



The African continent brings an incredible heritage of delicious and nutritious food to the world, and African Heritage & Health Week focuses on sharing our cuisine with the world. As Africans spread throughout the world – as a result of the Slave trade, colonialism and migration – our traditions of incredibly flavourful food has spread, fusing with the local cuisine to create something familiar yet powerfully new. Throughout the Caribbean, South America, and all the other regions of their world, African influence has touched global cuisine and left an indelible mark. African Heritage & Health Week brings these delicious traditions to the world.

2 February

World Wetlands Day

Wetlands are areas where water covers the soil or where water is present very near to the surface for prolonged periods, creating conditions that favour the growth of specially adapted plants (hydrophytes) and wetland (hydric) soils. Wetlands are important for their biodiversity and ecosystems,

Wetlands and traditional knowledge: Celebrating cultural heritage.



their contributions to the groundwater systems and as carbon sinks, are and must therefore be protected. South Africa's 300,000 wetlands make up only 2.4% of the land, but nearly half are endangered, due to urban encroachment and development, mining, and agriculture, invasive alien plants, and erosion. The St Lucia wetlands system in KZN is amongst the most renowned. The theme for World Wetlands Day 2026 is **Wetlands and traditional knowledge: Celebrating cultural heritage**. This recognize the timeless role of traditional knowledge in sustaining wetland ecosystems and preserving cultural identity, highlighting the deep-rooted connections between wetlands and the cultural traditions and practices of communities around the world. (<https://www.environment.gov.za>)

2 February

Number Day

Unleashing curiosity, sparking puzzles, and making numbers an exciting adventure ignites young minds, fostering a lifelong love for math.

4 February

World Cancer Day

Cancer can develop anywhere in the body, starting when cells grow out of control and crowd out normal cells, making it hard for the body to function as it should. Each year, over 10 million people die from cancer and this figure is expected to rise to 13 million by 2030. Factors contributing to high incidents of cancer include tobacco and alcohol, obesity, diet and nutrition, lack of physical activity, radiation, workplace hazards, infections as well as



non-modifiable risk factors such as age, genetics and carcinogens.

4 February

International Day of Human Fraternity

We need — perhaps more than ever before — to recognize the valuable contribution of people of all religions, or beliefs, to humanity. The declaration *“Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together”* – co-authored by His Holiness Pope Francis and His Eminence the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Sheikh Ahmed El Tayeb – is a model for interfaith harmony and human solidarity.

4 February

World Read Aloud Day



Storytelling and the oral tradition were and remain important part of preserving history, traditions, indigenous knowledge, education and history. Today we have books, but reading aloud for children and each other, listening to audio books remain important part of how we learn. World Read Aloud

Day is therefore celebrated by over 170 million people globally and is growing, celebrated every first Wednesday of February. *“Storytelling creates connections among people and communities that exchange stories and engage in reading aloud together become stronger and show improved family health and nutrition, civic engagement and participation in the labor market.”* South Africa’s Nal’bali celebrates the day, encouraging a reading culture and targeting 3.5 million people to read aloud. (worldlit.com, <https://nalibali.org/wrad2026>).

6 February

International day Against Female Genital Mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures that involve altering or injuring the female genitalia for non-medical reasons and is recognized internationally as a violation of human rights, the health and the integrity of girls and women. Girls who undergo female genital mutilation face short-term complications such as severe pain, shock, excessive bleeding, infections, and difficulty in passing urine, as well as long-term consequences for their sexual and reproductive health and mental health. FGM is a universal problem, concentrated in 30 countries in Africa and the Middle East and is also practiced in some countries in Asia and Latin America and amongst immigrant populations in Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand. The African Union has a continent-wide campaign to end FGM, with the president of Burkina Faso as the AU champion on the campaign. To date, more than 22 AU member states have legislation to criminalise female genital mutilation.

