



# ANC TODAY

VOICE OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

6–12 March 2026

## Conversations *with the* **President**



# A budget to accelerate our economic and social recovery

■ By **PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

**L**AST week, Minister of Finance Enoch Godongwana presented a Budget that will accelerate the momentum of inclusive growth, create jobs and tackle poverty.

Every budgetary allocation is a developmental choice: ensuring there are teachers in classrooms, nurses and doctors in clinics, electricity and basic services in homes and businesses, infrastructure to grow the economy, and employment opportunities for communities.

After a prolonged period of economic uncertainty, this Budget builds on the progress made over the last few years to stabilise, reform and transform our economy. Improvements in pub-

lic finances, stabilising debt, a narrowing budget deficit, credit rating upgrades and improved market confidence all signal the beginning of an economic recovery.

A stable macroeconomic environment boosts investor confidence and increases government's capacity to invest in both growth and poverty relief without compromising sustainability.

The stabilisation of public finances gives us space to accelerate public investment, sustain the social wage, and direct resources to reforms that drive growth and job creation.

The social wage accounts for over 60% of government spend-

ing after interest payments. The allocation for this financial year will enable us to provide health-care services to 84% of the population, social grants to 26.5 million beneficiaries and free basic services to over 11 million indigent households. It will support approximately 13.6 million learners at school.

This is a redistributive budget that reduces inequality, builds the capabilities of our people and strengthens the foundations for inclusive growth.

Basic education is one of those key foundations. We will be allocating additional spending to employ more educators. Additional funds have been allocated to the early childhood

development grant to reach an additional 300,000 children and to align the National School Nutrition Programme to food inflation.

The Budget supports inclusive growth by accelerating public investment, particularly on infrastructure. Improved infrastructure lowers the cost of doing business, raises productivity and supports our country's exports.

Over the next three years, public spending on infrastructure will exceed R1 trillion to build and maintain roads and rail lines, expand energy infrastructure, and build and maintain water and sanitation infrastructure.

Government alone cannot finance the scale of infrastructure our country needs. We are therefore mobilising investment from private and other sources, and opening the space for public-private partnerships. As we encourage private investment in electricity, rail and port operations, we are maintaining state ownership of strategic national infrastructure.

Under Operation Vulindlela, government departments and public entities are undertaking impactful reforms in energy, telecommunications, water and logistics.

The Budget acknowledges that many municipalities are in financial distress, driven by weak revenue collection, poor management and substantial service delivery backlogs.

Many municipalities are not spending appropriately. For



several years, water and electricity revenue has not been invested in infrastructure maintenance or expansion, but has been redirected to cover other municipal costs.

Local government finances have to be placed on a more sustainable footing to support the delivery of basic services. Over the medium term, R19.2 billion will be reallocated to the reform of electricity, water, sanitation and solid waste trading services in metros. These allocations will be linked to performance against clear targets.

The Municipal Infrastructure Grant is being reformed to address underspending and misuse of funds. Over the next three years, R86.9 billion has been allocated to support the provision of free basic services to indigent households.

This year's budget reflects government's goals of inclusive growth and job creation through additional support for mass public employment programmes and relief for small businesses.

An additional R4.1 billion has been allocated to the Presiden-

tial Employment Stimulus to provide work opportunities to more young South Africans.

To ease the regulatory burden for small businesses, the threshold for business to register for VAT has been increased by more than double. For small business owners who wish to sell or transfer their businesses, the capital gains tax exemption has also been significantly increased. Together, these measures will help small and informal businesses to grow and employ more South Africans.

This year's Budget focus on three imperatives: maintaining fiscal sustainability, driving inclusive growth and protecting society's most vulnerable. It is a balanced budget that reflects the realities of our economy, limited financial resources, high unemployment and urgent infrastructure needs.

As we build on the momentum of our recovery, we will continue to be guided by fiscal discipline, structural reform, targeted investment and an overarching commitment to improving the material conditions of every South African.

# HUMAN RIGHTS MONTH 2026:

## Defending Our Sovereignty and Democratic Gains

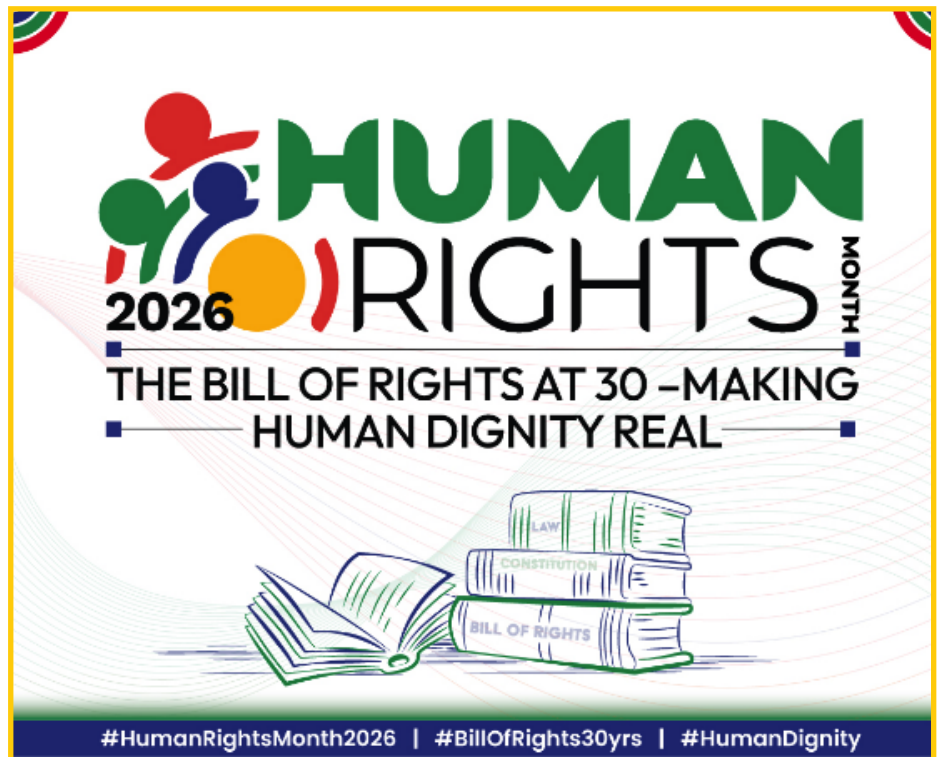
■ By **ANC SECRETARY GENERAL FIKILE MBALULA**

**A**S South Africa commemorates Human Rights Month 2026, the African National Congress (ANC) calls on all South Africans to reflect on the sacrifices that secured our freedom and to recommit ourselves to defending the democratic gains achieved through decades of struggle.

This year's commemoration carries particular significance as our country marks 30 years since the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the supreme law that entrenches the rights, dignity and freedoms of all who live in our country.

In honour of this historic milestone and the enduring struggle for human rights, the ANC will mobilise communities across the country under the banner of ***"The People's March: Defending Our Sovereignty and Democratic Gains,"*** which will take place on 21 March 2026, Human Rights Day.

In Johannesburg, the march will begin at Mary Fitzgerald Square and proceed peacefully to the Constitutional Court, the guardian of our Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Across



the country, communities in various provinces will gather in solidarity to celebrate our democratic achievements and reaffirm the values of justice, equality, human dignity, constitutionalism and national sovereignty.

Human Rights Month draws its historic significance from the tragic events of 21 March 1960 in Sharpeville, when apartheid police opened fire on peaceful protesters opposing the unjust pass laws of the apartheid regime. The blood of those who

fell in Sharpeville became a turning point in the struggle for freedom, justice and human dignity in our country.

Their sacrifice was not in vain. The ideals that inspired that struggle were captured in the Freedom Charter of 1955, which proclaimed, amongst others, that the people shall govern. Those principles were later entrenched in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, which remains the supreme law of our land. At the heart of the Constitution lies

Chapter Two, the Bill of Rights, which affirms the dignity, equality and freedom of all who live in South Africa.

The Bill of Rights is not merely a legal framework; it is a living covenant between the democratic state and the people of South Africa. It embodies the aspirations of generations who fought against colonialism and apartheid, many of whom paid the ultimate price so that future generations could live in a society founded on justice, equality and human dignity.

As we mark three decades of constitutional democracy, the ANC reaffirms that the rights contained in the Bill of Rights must find practical expression in the daily lives of our people. The commitments outlined in the recent State of the Nation Address and the 2026 National Budget are directed at fulfilling these constitutional obligations.

The focus on strengthening and fixing local government, investing in water infrastructure, improving energy security, expanding infrastructure investment and protecting the social wage represents concrete steps to advance the rights to dignity, basic services, economic participation and social justice.

The Budget further affirms government's commitment to a people-centred developmental path that prioritises economic inclusion, job creation and social protection. By strengthening state capacity, investing in network industries such as energy, logistics and water, and supporting vulnerable communities through the social wage,

the democratic state continues to give practical meaning to the vision of the Freedom Charter that the people shall share in the country's wealth.

Human Rights Month also reminds us that the Constitution affirms not only the rights of individuals, but also the collective rights of our nation. South Africa's sovereignty, territorial integrity and right to self-determination remain fundamental pillars of our constitutional democracy.

Our country is a sovereign democratic state with regular free and fair elections, a vibrant and independent media, constitutionally protected rights and an unwavering commitment to transformation and redress the

injustices of colonialism and apartheid.

As we commemorate Human Rights Month and thirty years of our Constitution, the message remains clear, South Africa is a sovereign democratic nation. Our democracy is not for sale and our sovereignty will never be compromised.

The ANC therefore calls on all South Africans to join the commemorations of **Human Rights Day** on **21 March**, including participation in **The People's March: Defending Our Sovereignty and Democratic Gains**, as we celebrate our constitutional democracy and recommit ourselves to the ongoing task of building a better life for all.



**NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY MARCH**  
21 MARCH 2026

**Defend our Sovereignty**

#SAWillNotBeBullied  
#DefendOurSovereignty  
#MarchForSouthAfrica

START Luthuli House  
Mandela Bridge  
Constitutional Court END

ANC COSATU SACP ANC

# STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS

## NORTHERN CAPE

“All development indicators highlight positive trends, and we intend to intensify our work in tackling the high levels of poverty, unemployment, and inequality in the province.” **Premier Dr Zamani Saul**

### Northern Cape (2020-2026) Pushing the Frontiers of Poverty and Underdevelopment



**GDP** increased from R119 billion to **R166 billion**.



**Employment** rose from 255 000 to **337 000** people.



**Unemployment dropped** from 31% to 27%, with the highest decreases in both official and expanded unemployment occurring in the last quarter of 2025.



**Grade 12** results improved from **66%** to **87.79%**, making us the best-improved province in the country for two successive years.

The number of **learners** in the public schooling system increased from 267 000 to 311 000, with 270 000 being fed at schools.



**PFMA** clean audits rose from 2 to 9 out of 13 auditees.



The number of poor households decreased from 64% to **42%**.



In-facility **infant mortality decreased** from 17.3 per 1 000 live births to 12.5.



Maternal mortality decreased from 109.9 per 100 000 to 90.4.



HIV transmission dropped from 4% to 2%, the lowest in the country.



**Life expectancy for women** is up, from 54.3 years to **66** years.



**Life expectancy for men** is up, from 50.1 years to **59.5**.



Infrastructure investment increased, reaching a record high of R30 billion in both social and economic infrastructure, including 19 new schools and 11 clinics.

**Affirmative procurement increased**, with blacks now accounting for 64% of the R14 billion Provincial Government procurement.



The number of **teachers in public education** rose from 9 200 to almost 10 000.



The number of doctors in public healthcare increased from 242 to 503.

The number of **social workers** rose from 143 to 208.



Expenditure on **MIG grant** by municipalities rose from 62% to 85%.



A fully-fledged and functional Provincial office of the **Special Investigative Unit (SIU)** was established.

A fully functional provincial office of **SANRAL** was established.

Cushioning the poor through social security programmes increased from R4.6 billion to R7 billion this financial

More than 200 000 hectares of land allocated to the previously disadvantaged.

Income inequality decreased, from a Gini coefficient of 0.658 to 0.608.

Investment in renewable energy stands at R82 billion.

Investment in water infrastructure stands at R1.2 billion, with 90% of households now having access to piped water.

Houses with access to adequate sanitation increased from 76% to 84.3%.

**Formal housing rose by 6%**, mainly due to our human settlements programme.



## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2026

# Recentering Social Justice and Human Rights for Women and Girls

**SPEECH** BY DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY **NONCEBA MHLAULI** (MP)  
AT THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES **DEBATE ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

**I**NTERNATIONAL Women's Day was first observed in the early twentieth century. It was not born in ceremony, but born in struggle. It emerged from the marches of garment workers, the defiance campaigns, and the collective refusal by women across the world to accept their own erasure.

Over a century later, we gather in Parliaments, in community halls and in the streets not only to celebrate how far women have come, but to confront, with honesty, how far the world still must go.

The theme before us today, "**Re-centering social justice and human rights for women and girls**," is not a slogan. It is a diagnosis. It is an acknowledgement that the centre shifted. That progress, where it came, was uneven. That rights, where they were won, were not always protected. And that justice remains, for too many women and girls, a promise still deferred.

To recenter is to return, but it is also to interrogate. We must ask what displaced women and girls from the centre of our social justice agenda in the first place. The answer demands honesty.

It was the persistence of patriarchal systems that treat women's rights as a concession rather than a constitutional imperative. It was the normalisation of violence as a private matter rather than a public emergency. It was the quiet tolerance of economic exclusion, the unpaid care burden, and the glass ceilings that keep women on the margins of opportunity and power.

Yes, policy and legal frameworks exist. They are in place through the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, the Beijing Platform for Action, the AU Agenda 2063 and our own South African Constitution. What has wavered is not the law, but the political will to enforce

it, to fund it, and to live by it.

The real test is not how well we can recite these conventions but whether a woman can walk home safely. Whether a survivor can access justice without being re-traumatised. Whether a girl child can learn without fear. Whether a woman-owned enterprise can access markets, finance, and procurement without being blocked by old networks and gatekeeping.

Thirty years on, as the world marks Beijing+30, we are compelled to take stock with honesty. Progress has been made: maternal mortality has declined, girls' enrolment in schools has improved, and women's representation in legislatures has grown. But the progress is fragile, uneven, and in many parts of the world, it is reversing.

In fact, it would be amiss of me not to mention what a devastating time it has been for women in Sudan, The Democratic Republic of Congo, in Palestine and most

recently the Middle East as well as in other regions of the world plagued by conflict.

In these theatres of war and political upheaval, it is women and girls who bear the heaviest burden. They are displaced from their homes, stripped of access to education and healthcare, subjected to violence, and denied even the most basic forms of dignity. Conflict does not only destroy infrastructure. It erodes the social fabric that protects women. It turns their bodies into battlegrounds and their rights into collateral damage.

We must be unequivocal in our call for peace. Peace is not an abstract diplomatic ideal. It is the foundation upon which women are able to live safely, to participate economically, to raise families without fear, and to contribute meaningfully to society. Where there is no peace, there can be no justice for women. Where there is no stability, empowerment becomes an empty promise.

We therefore reiterates its principled position in support of peaceful resolution of conflicts, dialogue over destruction, and the protection of civilians, particularly women and children. We affirm that the empowerment of women must extend to every sphere of life political, social, and economic. Women must not only survive conflict; they must be included in peacebuilding, reconstruction, and governance processes. Sustainable peace is only possible when women are present at negotiation tables and in leadership structures shaping the future.

In South Africa, International Women's Day carries a particular weight and a particular promise. We placed gender equality at



## ACTION AGAINST GBVF

### South Africa has declared Gender-based Violence and Femicide a national disaster.

the heart of our democratic project as a founding principle. Our Constitution guarantees equality without qualification. Yet we remain confronted by the brutal reality of gender-based violence and femicide, the feminisation of poverty, and structural barriers that still deny dignity and opportunity to millions of women, particularly in rural and peri-urban communities.

If we are serious about recentring social justice, then we must be equally serious about re-centering implementation. That is why the work of the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities which we are presenting here today is not peripheral. It is structural. Its mandate is to drive mainstreaming, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation across government, so that women's rights are not treated as a side programme, but as a standard in every plan, every budget, and every delivery outcome.

This is also why our focus must be practical and measurable: focusing on prevention, protection, justice, and economic power.

First, on safety and justice. South Africa has built key parts of the survivor-support ecosystem, but

access remains uneven and the system remains too slow for the urgency of the crisis. The Department of Justice's Gender-Based Violence page makes it plain that survivor support includes the Gender-Based Violence Command Centre, a 24-hour call centre that can refer cases directly to SAPS and deploy social workers, including accessible channels for persons with disabilities.

What matters now is scale, coordination and consequence. In April 2025, the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster convened an urgent special sitting in response to escalating GBVF, and adopted a 90-day acceleration programme to fast-track implementation of the National Strategic Plan on GBVF.

That intervention is not only a statement. It includes concrete measures: revitalising and re-constituting the Inter-Ministerial Committee on GBVF under the 7th Administration, establishing a dedicated GBVF Priority Committee within NATJOINTS, revitalising provincial JCPS structures, integrating GBVF statistics across the value chain from arrest to incarceration, and accelerating the rollout of Thuthuzela Care Centres across all provinces.

This is what “*recentering justice*” looks like in practice: a criminal justice value chain that is aligned, time-bound, measurable, and survivor-centred.

And in November 2025, the National Disaster Management Centre took a further step by classifying Gender-Based Violence and Femicide as a national disaster in terms of the Disaster Management Act. This classification is a profound acknowledgement that GBVF is not only a social crisis. It is a national emergency that demands coordinated response, mobilisation of resources, and accountability at every sphere of government.

Second, on economic justice. A society cannot claim to advance women’s rights while women remain locked out of productive assets, procurement, and finance. South Africa has placed a clear stake in the ground through policies and programmes that target women’s economic inclusion.

The State of the Nation 2026 address reflects that government has put a national policy in place to ensure that 40% of public procurement goes to women-owned businesses, and that thousands of women-owned enterprises have been trained to participate in procurement opportunities. It further notes that the IDC has earmarked significant funding to invest in women-led businesses, alongside commitments by other entities to support women-owned enterprises.

This matters because procurement is not a technical matter. It is a redistribution instrument. It is a lever for inclusion. It is the difference between women being beneficiaries and women being builders of the economy.

The Presidential Youth Employment Intervention (PYEI) which is multi-stakeholder programme dedicated at accelerating empowerment and development opportunities for young people. By the third quarter of the 2025/26 financial year, the PYEI facilitated nearly 295,000 earning opportunities for youth, most of which went to young women in particular.

What we must do is upscale these efforts to ensure that women, particular young people are empowered in such a way that they do not fall prey to social ills which sets them up for a life of poverty and destitution. For us to do that, we must ALL be concerned with the status of women in our society.

This is where the National Council of Provinces has a decisive role. Recentering social justice is not achieved only through national declarations. It is achieved where people live. It is achieved through provincial implementation, local coordination, and budget alignment.

The NCOP must therefore use its constitutional mandate to ensure that provincial departments and municipalities do not treat women’s rights as an unfunded mandate. Oversight must ask direct questions: Are shelters funded and functional? Are police stations equipped to respond with dignity and speed? Are courts safe for survivors and witnesses, especially children? Are provinces participating in integrated GBVF reporting and case-flow management as required by the JCPS acceleration programme? Are procurement opportunities reaching women-owned enterprises outside major metros?

We must also speak plainly about the role of men and boys. We cannot build a future without confronting the socialisation that produces violence, entitlement and control. The justice system itself acknowledges programmes that focus on positively changing the attitudes of men and boys in areas with high levels of violence against women. This is not optional work. It is prevention.



To the boy child, we must say: your strength is not dominance. It is discipline. It is respect. It is accountability. It is the courage to reject peer pressure, to reject violence, and to protect the dignity of women and girls in your home, your school, your community, and online.

To fathers, brothers, coaches, faith leaders, traditional leaders and community leaders, we must say: silence is not neutrality. Silence is permission. If we are serious about ending GBVF, then positive masculinity must become a societal norm, not a campaign for 16 days.

Our G20 Presidency last year provided an opportunity to elevate women's empowerment in ways that are practical and globally relevant. The G20 Empowerment of Women Working Group Chairperson's Statement of 31 October 2025 places the care economy and financial inclusion at the centre of women's empowerment, and recognises the importance of shared social responsibility for caregiving, including encouraging the active engagement of men and boys in care work. It also frames women's financial inclusion as a fundamental enabler of women's economic empowerment and inclusive development.

This is deeply aligned with our domestic reality: women carry disproportionate unpaid care burdens, and that burden is an economic constraint. If we want women to participate equally in the economy, we must invest in care infrastructure, remove barriers to women's access to finance, and recognise that economic justice is a form of violence prevention.

This year also carries profound

historical meaning. In 2026, we mark 70 years since the women's march of 9 August 1956, when thousands of women, mothers, workers, organisers, and leaders marched to the Union Buildings to declare that they would not accept injustice. Their message is not only history. It is instruction. It tells us that courage is collective, and that rights are defended through action.

As we look to the year ahead, the call of this debate must be clear:



*To the boy child, we must say: your strength is not dominance. It is discipline. It is respect. It is accountability. It is the courage to reject peer pressure, to reject violence, and to protect the dignity of women and girls in your home, your school, your community, and online.*

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We must move from commemoration to implementation.

From promises to measurable outcomes.

From policy intent to lived reality.

We must strengthen access to justice, not only by improving laws, but by fixing the system: faster case processing, safer courts, better survivor support, integrated data, and accountable consequences for perpetrators.

We must strengthen economic justice, not only by speaking about empowerment, but by opening procurement, expanding finance, building capability, and ensuring that women-owned enterprises can compete and win.

We must strengthen prevention, not only by protecting women and girls, but by actively shaping the values of boys and men, and rebuilding communities that refuse violence as normal.

And we must do so together: national government, provinces, municipalities, civil society, business, labour, communities and households.

When South Africa says we are "recentering social justice and human rights for women and girls," we are making a declaration about the kind of country we choose to be. A country where safety is not luck. Where justice is not delayed. Where economic participation is not gatekept. Where dignity is not negotiable.

Let this House, and the society we represent, leave this debate with one shared commitment: that justice for women and girls will no longer be a deferred promise, but a lived reality.

# Recovery and Renewal requires that we Speak Truth to Power and that the President Speaks Truth from Power

■ By **Dr. MICHAEL SUTCLIFFE**

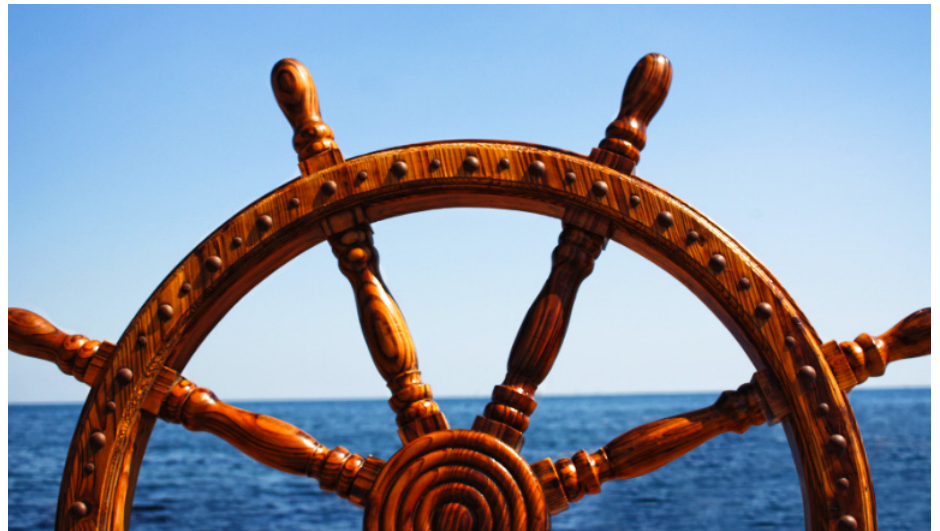
**T**HE 2026 February speeches – President Ramaphosa’s State of the Nation address and Minister of Finance’s Budget Speech – are refreshing for their honesty and macro analysis. We hope that continues to be our turnaround.

There can be no doubt that our international standing has increased dramatically as President Ramaphosa speaks truth to power demanding a future based on our principles of democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights as we help to recast a family of nations.

The budget programme to stabilise debt, invest in infrastructure and spend better are now bearing fruit as we work to rebuild our fiscal state.

As the courts and Commissions by Zondo and Madlanga are showing, though, that path is not going to be easy as the public now bears witness to some leaders who only display signs of corruption, arrogance and incompetence.

At a macro level, we must congratulate the President and Government of National Unity for showing us and the world that in spite of our differences we can



work together for the macro good.

But it is at the micro level that we must remain worried. We should be concerned that our President feels the need to take such drastic steps as directly needing to oversee metros like eThekweni and Johannesburg, create a national focus group like Operation Vulindlela, and now directly oversee the water and sanitation challenges across our country. Surely, we should recognise that steps like that are an indictment on the existing political and administrative leadership who are unable to do their jobs and be accountable.

After all, diagnostics of the challenges we face all show that at the heart of our developmental

problems are usually one or more of three things: a lack of responsiveness/poor communication, incompetent or unskilled officials, and/or corruption. The Minister of Finance, too, correctly argues that we must strengthen financial sustainability, accountability and transparency.

Responsiveness is simply about being honest with, and communicating directly to, people who are sick and tired of poor delivery. And such responsiveness must be ongoing. How many times do we see motorcades kicking up dust as politicians, officials and media get their pictures taken, promises are made, but then communities are left with only the dust to remember this by, sometimes for years on end.

Incompetent officials are seen at the most local level, from contractors who cannot fix simple things to technical leaders who are not professionals. Of course this is in part because we focussed far more on building a compliant state, valuing audit results over developmental delivery, when both should get equal attention. The tragedy now is that the courts are defining accountability instead of that being done by municipal councils and other legislatures.

And the scourge of corruption still dominates. Try and find out why you lost a tender bid, and to whom you can appeal. There is simply no transparency.

And so firstly, we must demand of every public servant accountability and transparency and that is what must be shown by every leader. The President cannot be the one who is now going to be all seeing because all that results in is hundreds of meetings with power points galore, with not much really changing. We cannot centralise everything under the presidency: we must address the underlying causes of failure.

Secondly, the budgetary shifts to address the persistent logistics



Too many business people have **excellent solutions not requiring money from the state**, but they are **often not heard** because there are **no tenders from which money can be made**.



bottlenecks and weak public infrastructure are to be welcomed. But these should be coupled with clear time frames on turnaround times for deciding on delivery programmes and their implementation. Too many business people have excellent solutions not requiring money from the state, but they are often not heard because there are no tenders from which money can be made. Our partnerships must be pragmatic and delivery driven.

Third, we must be cautious in blindly accepting reforms in local government that are centrally driven without the flexibility to be modified given local circumstances. We have had too many impositions from national government onto local government without them understanding local circumstances. Whether it was the RED (Regional Electricity Distribution) model of the 1990s or the endless nationally-driven local government turnaround strategies, all of these have failed because they have not accepted

that we are a constitutional state, requiring intergovernmental co-operation. The World Bank inspired belief that creating utilities will solve the challenges of water, sanitation, electricity and waste, ignores the reality that municipalities are more than just these elements.

The focus should be on how we manage municipalities, not on imposing ever more rules and structural models on them.

When I worked in eThekweni, we ring-fenced finances and maintained infrastructure proactively without a utility model – and the Mayor and council never once pushed back on what was technically and financially required to run basic network services.

As for transparency – anyone who bids for work in municipalities and government as a whole will tell you about the fact that the appeal processes are either non-existent or take too long and achieve nothing.

Fourth, we all agree we must place a higher priority on spatial and housing reforms, and we should add, public transport reforms. But whilst we must welcome the beginnings of a renewal of PRASA, we worry about the scaling down of the Public Transport Network Grant and the Urban Settlements Development Grants.

Finally, whilst the Finance Minister states that local government is the sphere where communities experience the state most directly, that is not realised if one examines the fiscal split, where local government gets only 9.4%. We must be talking about a minimum of 12-15% of the fiscal split going to local government otherwise the delivery needs will simply not be met.

We have many challenges to overcome, all of which are compounded by historical inequalities, the legacy of apartheid-era planning, and complex intergovernmental dynamics.

The trajectory of these speeches are positive and reinforce once again that there is no better place on earth to be.

However, I still feel the President and our leadership as a whole need to be far more proactive in speaking truth from power through demanding every local, provincial and national leader accounts for what they have done and if they have not done they must be replaced.

But to do this too, we require a multi-faceted, community-centred approach to strengthen his hand.

*Dr. Michael Sutcliffe is a Director at City Insight (Pty) Ltd.*



## The paragons of service delivery

■ By **SIBONGILE BESANI**

**S**OUTH Africans are bombarded with negative news daily to distract them from seeing areas of progress. Consequent to this bombardment, the national discourse is poisoned to a point of demoralizing society. We must confront an uncomfortable reality: a nation repeatedly told that it is failing will eventually begin to believe it.

In the recent past, the country experienced the crisis of electricity, which consequently normalized loadshedding. However, President Ramaphosa took a bold

decision to appoint Minister of Electricity Dr Kgosientsho 'Sputla' Ramokgopa with a singular mandate: stabilise, reform and deliver.

Today, Eskom has turned the corner and it is profitable. Eskom improved plant performance, strengthened maintenance regimes, and rebuilt institutional discipline. The grid stabilised. Load shedding is dramatically reduced and hence we have experience more than 300 days without it. Confidence began to return – not through slogans, but through lights that stayed on. This change



When you've **accepted the narrative** that everything is corrupt, that the ANC has destroyed the country, that black leadership equals failure, then **hearing about actual progress feels wrong**. It triggers cognitive dissonance. **Your brain rejects it."**

*Given Shingange, 15th February 2026.*



of the situation is a reflection of visionary leadership with uncompromising commitment to action.

Dr Ramokgopa's approach embodies a leadership culture rooted in responsiveness. Whether addressing transformer failures in urban communities or resolving supply constraints affecting rural farmers, the emphasis has been practical intervention. Systems thinking replaced paralysis. Delivery replaced excuses.

The turning around of Eskom disrupts the fatalism that says decline is inevitable. Most impor-

tantly, his work has demystified any notion that there is no black excellence in the public sector.

Dr Ramokgopa's understanding of the energy sector is always articulated with clarity that aligns with high levels of performance. His mastery of continuous communication and giving feedback to society speaks volumes of commitment to serving the greater South African population. This is about pushing back attempts to reverse democratic gains. In a democracy, information empowers the nation. Accordingly, this approach is typical of an incisive

leadership that walks the talk.

The provincial government under the stewardship of Premier Dr Phopi Ramathuba has embarked on a programme called Dikgerekgere Wednesday. The programme involves de-bushing, re-gravelling and roads blading. This is roads maintenance in strategic areas that lead to public amenities and centres of economic activities. The usage of internal capacity for this programme has ensured that many rural and urban areas are easily accessible. This programme is implemented in all districts of Limpopo since the launch in July 2024.

Dr Ramathuba appointed comrade Tonny Ernest Rachoene as MEC of Public Works and Roads department to carry out this task, including Dikgerekgere Wednesday programme. The youthful energy of comrade Tonny has seen 102000 km of roads being bladed, 313km of roads have been re-gravelled and 792000 square kilometers of potholes being repaired through black top patching. The department has invested in this programme through appointing 590 officers attached to the programme in all 36 centres of Limpopo.



**Dikgerekgere Wednesday**

The Dikgerekgere Wednesday is a good example of youth dynamism, versatility and upholding sense of urgency. In addition, it is important to applaud a leadership that keep trusting young people of our movement with responsibilities of this high caliber. Equally, it is inspiring to see the youth rising to the occasion and performing beyond expectation.

The electoral fortunes of the ANC in Limpopo are a function of hard work and commitment, not luck. The people of Limpopo continue to register their satisfaction through the ballot.

It is therefore incorrect to assert that people are merely following liberation injunction when they vote ANC. The voters are wise and they follow these developments and progress objectively.

These stories empower us to broaden our approach to service delivery than to confine it to financial outcomes. They also challenge us to continue to fight corruption so that many of these services are extended the broader population.

In Kwa-Zulu Natal comrade Siboniso Duma is also engaged in serious work of changing lives of people. More than 200 people have been trained and appointed and thus improving visibility of Traffic Officers on our roads. This approach has seen 18% reduction in roads fatalities. The building of over 6000 houses affirms the longstanding commitment serve the people. This represents continuity

and change in advancing interests of the people.

Failure cannot be the only story told in the midst of this good work taking place. We should refuse to submit to narratives that deliberately obscure progress. We reject the creation of collective demoralization of our people. As a nation, we must guard against internalising narratives that strip us of confidence in our own capacity. Constructive criticism

strengthens democracy; blanket condemnation weakens it. To rebuild trust between citizens and the state, we must be courageous enough to acknowledge both shortcomings and successes. The struggle for social and economic transformation has always required resilience.

**Sibongile Besani** is the ANC Head of Presidency. He writes in his personal capacity.

## #SONA2026 HIGHLIGHTS

FROM COMMITMENT TO ACTION: ANC PRIORITIES REFLECTED IN #SONA2026

### ANC JAN 8 PRIORITY



**TASK 1: FIXING LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND IMPROVING BASIC SERVICES**

Government has prioritised the water crisis through a National Water Crisis Committee and major investment in water and sanitation infrastructure, alongside reforms to strengthen accountability in local government.



**TASK 2: SPEEDING UP ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION, INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND JOB CREATION**

Government has committed over R1 trillion to infrastructure investment to drive inclusive growth and job creation.



**TASK 3: WAGE WAR ON CRIME AND CORRUPTION; GBVF AS A NATIONAL DISASTER**

- Organised crime is being confronted as a direct threat to democracy through SANDF support, intelligence-led policing and criminal justice reform.
- Government is acting on the findings of the Madlaga Commission to reform policing and strengthen accountability.



**TASK 4: BUILDING A SOUTH AFRICA THAT BELONGS TO ALL THROUGH THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE AND THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONSTITUTION**

The National Dialogue will expand nationwide to forge a new social compact and shape the next phase of national development



**TASK 5: MAKING ORGANISATIONAL RENEWAL VISIBLE AND IRREVERSIBLE**

State renewal is being secured through legislation that professionalises the public service and strengthens governance and accountability.



**TASK 6: BUILDING A BETTER AFRICA AND A BETTER WORLD**

South Africa is advancing African integration and Global South cooperation through trade, peacekeeping and multilateral engagement.



2026: The Year of Decisive Action to Fix Local Government and Transform the Economy

# Algorithmic Tightrope: Next-Generation Artificial Intelligence (AI)'s Leadership to Master Innovation and Ethical Governance

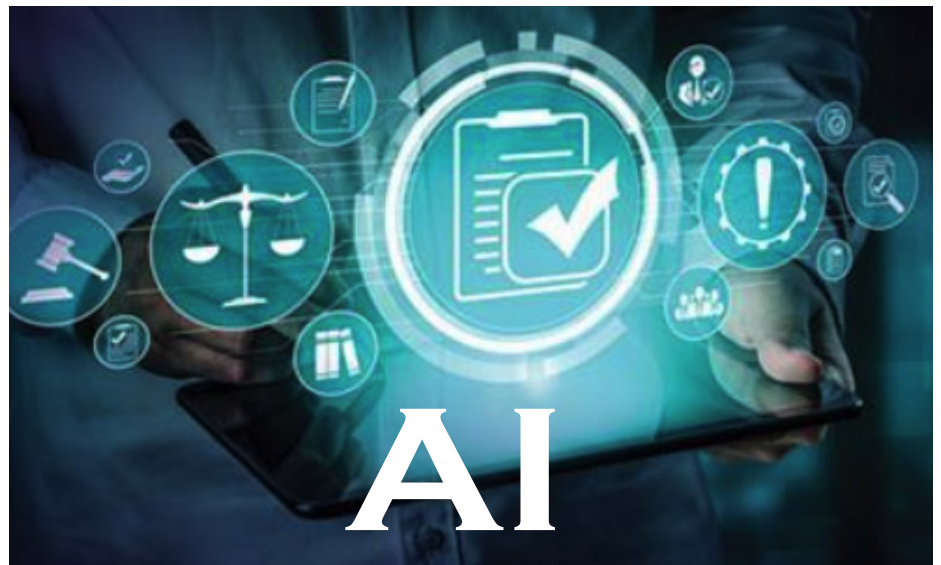
■ By **TSHILIDZI MUNYAI**

**T**HE terrain of artificial intelligence is rapidly evolving beneath our feet. We have transcended the era of mere experimentation into a critical phase where generative AI crafts code, computer vision pilots autonomous vehicles, autonomous weapons and machine learning models influence decisions spanning loan approvals to medical diagnoses. As AI systems become deeply woven into the fabric of our daily lives, a pressing question arises: Are the engineers behind these systems prepared to shoulder the immense responsibility?

A new wave of academic rigor, embodied by advanced AI and machine learning programs, suggests the answer lies in a dual mandate. Today's AI leaders must transcend the role of technical virtuosos masters of vector matrix multiplications and deep neural networks. They must also be vigilant guardians of national security, adept navigators of global regulatory frameworks, and strategic auditors of algorithmic bias whilst addressing the associated existential risk of human extinction.

## **Beyond the Black Box: The Technical Backbone**

At its core, AI remains an intensely technical discipline. Prospective experts typically enter the



field with foundational knowledge in electrical or computer engineering, underscoring the inseparable hardware and software nexus. Curricula delve into the classical pillars: supervised, unsupervised, and reinforcement learning; the nuances of classification and linear models; and the evolution from perceptrons to complex artificial neural networks (NN).

Yet, today's industry demands more than theoretical mastery. The surge of generative AI and Large Language Models (LLMs) requires professionals to command the entire machine learning lifecycle from initial software development and inference to rigorous performance constraints.

This challenge is especially pronounced in "Low Resource Em-

bedded and Edge AI." Here, the focus pivots from the virtually limitless cloud computing to the stringent hardware limitations on edge devices. Experts must solve system-level puzzles around energy efficiency and scalability, ensuring that sophisticated AI operates reliably where every milliwatt counts.

## **The New Frontier: Securing the Intelligent Enterprise**

Technical prowess alone no longer suffices. The embedding of AI into critical infrastructure and business workflows exposes unprecedented vulnerabilities, spawning a specialized focus on Security and Privacy in Machine Learning.

Emerging programs now cultivate experts who recognise AI models themselves as attack surfaces.

From data poisoning to adversarial inputs that deceive computer vision systems, the threats are tangible and sophisticated. This demands deep expertise in safeguarding sensitive data and architecting secure AI/ML systems whether deployed in cloud environments or on-premises data centers.

### The Human Element: Bias, Law, and the AI Act

Arguably, the most intricate challenges emerge at the intersection of human and machine. *“Human-AI Interaction”* transcends interface design, probing the philosophical and ethical dimensions of distinguishing humans from machines and assigning accountability when AI errs.

Here, the *“black box”* nature of deep learning (DL) becomes a critical liability. AI professionals are now trained to detect and mitigate algorithmic bias and to ensure transparency in automated decisions. Why was a loan application denied? Why did an AI-driven hiring tool exclude a candidate? Addressing these questions is not merely ethical it is rapidly becoming a legal imperative.

The regulatory landscape is evolving swiftly, and South Africa should not be left behind. China enacted Cybersecurity Law, in the context Cyberspace Administration which explicitly addresses AI or *“human-like interactive artificial intelligence services”* and The European Union’s regulatory landscape for Artificial Intelligence is currently navigating a complex period of transition. Although the EU AI Act (Regulation (EU) 2024/1689) has officially entered into force, its practical application is being dynamically



recalibrated. The implementation timelines and specific compliance obligations are now subject to active reshaping by the newly proposed *“Digital Omnibus on AI”* legislation, signaling a phase of strategic refinement as the EU seeks to balance regulatory certainty with adaptability.

The European Union’s AI Act and similar frameworks worldwide are setting new standards, Tomorrow’s AI leaders must be fluent in these laws and ethical norms, capable of mapping compliance requirements to specific systems. They must guide innovation with safety and trustworthiness baked in from the design phase not as an afterthought. Meanwhile, developing regions, including South Africa, are pioneering governance frameworks that could set the tone for the broader African continent.

### From Theory to Practice: The Strategic Imperative

Ultimately, the objective is to close the gap between academic research and real-world application. Emerging doctoral and professional programs are research-driven but anchored in practical implementation. Students are challenged to not only master neural network theory

and generative modeling but also to deploy these technologies to solve concrete business challenges through rigorous capstone projects.

Strategic leadership in the AI era requires augmenting business decision-making with AI insights, mastering the full lifecycle of AI systems, and exercising foresight through comprehensive audits to preempt failures.

The message to the technology community is unequivocal: the era of the purely academic AI researcher or the code-only engineer is over. The future belongs to hybrid professionals – those who can build high-performance AI models while ensuring compliance with evolving regulations like the AI Act, who can design complex computational engines and simultaneously detect bias within data.

As we navigate the algorithmic tightrope between relentless innovation and stringent ethics, these are the leaders who will keep us balanced and prevent us from falling.

**Tshildzi Munyai** is an ANC Member of Parliament (NA) and writes in his personal capacity.

# A Critical Look Into the Madlanga Commission and Parliament's Ad Hoc Committee on Allegations Made by Lt-General Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi

■ By **SEPHOKA DAVID SEKGOBELA**

**S**OUTH Africa is engaged in unconventional warfare with itself that is characterised by mistrust, jealousy, backstabbing, undue victimization, and unethical tendencies, whose root causes include racial stereotyped prejudices, systematic discrimination, and factional politics across the political spectrum.

With Constitutional Democracy like ours, everyone is entitled to basic fundamental human rights that enjoy protection of the Constitution, such as the right to life, dignity, fairness and justice, privacy, freedom of expression, etc. The challenge however, is how to balance basic individual

rights such as the right to dignity and privacy against the right of the public to know the truth, especially when it relates to issues such as alleged corruption. With rampant corruption, it might be justifiable that those caught with their hands in the cookie jar have to be exposed and shamed publicly, because public has the right to access and share information pertaining to misuse of public funds.

Following explosive allegations by KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Police Commissioner, Lt-General Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi, on 6 July 2025, of corruption amongst politicians, senior police officers, prosecutors, intelligence oper-

atives and elements of the judiciary in South Africa, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced the establishment of a public inquiry, namely Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Criminality, Political Interference, and Corruption in the Criminal Justice System, better known as the Madlanga Commission, Chaired by retired judge Mbuyiseli Madlanga, to investigate those allegations.

Terms of Reference (ToR) of Madlanga Commission includes looking into the veracity, scope, and extent of Mkhwanazi's allegations, and make recommendations for criminal prosecutions, disciplinary actions, and institutional reform where required.



Key focus areas of the Madlanga Commission include investigating:

- Whether criminal cartels have indeed infiltrated or exert undue influence over institutions like the SAPS, NPA, and the judiciary.
- Whether there has indeed been corruption and interference with investigations by senior officials and politicians as alleged.
- Effectiveness and efficiency of the prevailing oversight mechanisms, and/or the adequacy of current policy directives, legislative instruments, and institutional arrangements.

On the other hand, Parliament established another parallel process, namely Ad Hoc Committee, Chaired by ANC MP, Molapi Soviet Lekganyane, to also investigate allegations made by Lt-General, and the ToR almost similar to those of the Madlanga Commission were provided.

At a media briefing prior to commencement of the Commission, Justice Madlanga pledged that the inquiry would be conducted with *“transparency and impartiality”*, insisting that *“the public has a right to know the extent of corruption within the institutions tasked with upholding the rule of law”*.

However, South Africa seems to have taken transparency to absurd levels, because not everything should be aired in public. Protection of identity of witnesses and management of sensitive information should be prioritized. It was wrong to hold public hearings in both the Ad Hoc Committee and Madlanga Commission. They should have been held in camera, and provide the public with the reports thereafter.



In pursuit of the public's right to know, wilful misinformation, disinformation, and a woven web of untruths could be peddled by those with dishonest and evil intentions. People can say, write, or, publish whatever they like about someone for their own selfish ends, and whilst investigating, interviewing, or, gathering information about allegations of corruption, serious mistakes could also be committed if those involved are not objective, or allow themselves to be manipulated by those with ulterior motives.

Whilst the public has the right to know the truth, investigators and/or interviewers are also supposed to do so in a fair and balanced manner. They should make it a habit to listen to the witnesses in an objective manner without being judgmental.

Observation thus far is that, some of the MPs in Ad Hoc Committee, and Commissioners or Evidence Leaders in Madlanga Commission, are not only hostile, intimidating, confrontational, abrasive, accusatorial, and adversarial in their approach towards some of

the witnesses, such as General Shadrack Sibuya, Brian Mogotsi, Vusi “Cat” Matlala, Major-General Lesetja Senona, EMPD Deputy Commissioner Julius Mkhwanazi, to mention a few. In some instances, both the Ad Hoc Committee and the Madlanga Commission were obviously biased against certain witnesses in favour of other witnesses, like Lt-General Mkhwanazi. Witnesses were generally victimized and treated in disdain as if they were the accused or had already been found guilty of something. Some of those interview processes are not, by any stretch of imagination, fair. Strong words and unsavoury terms are used to describe witnesses – *“liar”*, *“criminal”*, *“corrupt”*, *“thief”*, etc. Sometimes interviewers don't seem to be keen to establish the actual facts, but rather seem to have already made up their minds about witnesses appearing before them, and merely trying to justify their decisions and/or preconceived ideas about witnesses or the issues at stake.

Despite the above observation, some of the crucial witnesses

who have not been given a fair deal due to stereotyped prejudices, came out better than the interviewers. Some were asked questions, but not given the opportunity to respond, due to constant interruptions. With that line of questioning, not much of substance would be deduced from the witness.

Some of the interviewers in both the Ad Hoc Committee and Madlanga Commission were obviously playing to the gallery – ridiculing or making mockery of witnesses, with some trying to score cheap political goals. They were asking leading questions to get to their preconceived answers, and not interested in what witnesses actually presented. Whilst exploiting their Parliamentary Privilege, some of Ad Hoc Committee members were rude and disrespectful to the witnesses. The kind of irrelevant questions that they were asking would definitely not lead to the real issues.

Release of Interim Report is welcomed, but Madlanga Commission shouldn't have made rec-

ommendations until finalization of the entire process. By making recommendations in a piecemeal manner, whilst the process is still ongoing, the Commission just muddied the whole process, and sown confusion, especially amongst those implicated. When reports with recommendations are released in trenches, they were like a cat thrown among the pigeons. Whilst witnesses like Major-General Lesetja Senona were still being interviewed, it was grossly unfair to release information that he was one of the individuals recommended by the Madlanga Commission to be prosecuted. Injustice and humiliation cannot be worse than that.

There are people who are agitating for law enforcement agencies to take drastic and urgent action against certain individuals, particularly high-ranking government officials and politicians implicated, based on the findings and recommendations of Madlanga Commission Interim Report. Wouldn't that be exposing the state to civil actions by the aggrieved parties who feel like their

rights have been violated unfairly or unlawfully due to unlawful arrests? People cannot just be arrested willy-nilly. They cannot just pounce on people because there are allegations levelled against them during the Madlanga Commission hearings, lest they be sued for wrongful arrests. The NPA also need a winnable case before charges are laid against anyone implicated for wrongdoing. Others are even suggesting that Minister Senzo Mchunu should have been on the list of people recommended for further investigation. Except for the dissolution of the Political Killing Task Team (PKTT), what has he been accused of in the Madlanga Commission? Besides, there are processes in South Africa, because we subscribe to the rule of law. Moreover, justice system deals with evidence, not hearsay. Hearsay is not admissible in court.

Since Lt-General Mkhwanazi's exposé in July 2025, there has, of course, been a lot of allegations and counter-allegations against many people, but until proven to be true by competent authority like court, they remain such – just allegations. Watching or listening to some of witnesses appearing before the Commission or Ad Hoc Committee painted a different picture, because some of the allegations against them were apparently not based on facts, but other subjective factors. People should never judge others on the basis of what their detractors are making of them, because there could be ulterior motives. The *audi alteram partem* rule is one of best tenets of our law, and everyone should indeed be presumed innocent until proven guilty.

It is regrettable that some of the



interviewers in both the Madlanga Commission and Ad Hoc Committee became personal and aggressive against witnesses. Instead of establishing facts, they are playing to the gallery – talk down on witnesses, and make all sorts of insinuations and innuendos against them. The public want facts, raw and unpalatable as they could be, not their individual opinions, which should rightfully go into their reports. Witnesses should be interviewed in a fair and decent manner, and the public will make their own opinions, based on the information presented.

It is not necessary for MPs to make remarks about witnesses' demeanour. There is nothing honourable about the way certain MPs behaved when interviewing witnesses like Vusi "Kat" Matlala, Shadrack Sibiyi, and Paul O'Sullivan. They were not only abrasive, but also rude and contemptuous to witnesses. They should spare their anger and contempt until witnesses are done. Their personal opinions count for nothing, because we are only interested to know what actually happened, when, and how.

The final decisions of the Ad Hoc Committee and Madlanga Commission should come later after they have heard all the evidence brought forward before them. For now, it is still accusations and counter-accusations. It is not for the Evidence Leaders and Commissioners in the Madlanga Commission or MPs in the Ad Hoc Committee respectively to indicate outright and publicly whether they believe or disbelieve what witnesses are saying. For instance, to call Brown Mogotsi "a pathological liar", whilst he was still testifying, was just out of line.



## The SACP's strategic blunder to contest elections

■ By **YONELA DIKO**

**T**HE South African Communist Party (SACP), in its 2022 congress took a resolution to contest elections independently. They have long alleged that many of its governing suggestions to the ANC on how to govern and which policies to adopt have always been ignored.

The incidents around the 2024 elections, where the party accused the ANC of ignoring their suggestions and preferences in how the Government of National Unity was to be constituted, seems to have been the last straw that broke the Carmel's back, in an otherwise long held view by the party that it was being treated as a junior partner in the alliance and its ideas and requests not always considered.

The resentment goes back many years. Most recently the party's unmet expectations after playing a major role in getting Jacob Zuma elected as President of the ANC and country only served to deepen their feelings of indignation. The party had requested, among other things, to be given its own department to run as it sees fit. Presumably this would help the party show the ANC how to govern.

SACP has always felt it can do a better job in governing, only if it was allowed by the ANC to lead the Alliance and decide how the alliance must govern and who must be in the government.

This is of course a classic Dunning-Kruger effect, where one's lack of experience and knowledge of governing leads them to

overestimate their own abilities and competencies.

This is puzzling because history is littered with rude awakenings from some of the celebrated communist and socialist leaders, who came into government with this Illusory superiority, one being the great Vladimir Lenin, only to be humbled by the realities of governing and adjust his governing theories.

Lenin soon found out that governing your country in a global capitalistic architecture is a complex affair and certain theoretical assumptions can run one's country to the ground, not because the intentions are wrong, but because the very people you think you are fighting for have a different orientation that is not a product of politics alone.

The Italian communist Antonio Gramsci, who was imprisoned for much of his life by Mussolini, wrote in his highly influential *Prison Notebooks* that "the capitalist state is made up of two overlap-

ping spheres, a 'political society' (which rules through force) and a 'civil society' (which rules through consent)".

Gramsci was of course not referring to civil society as commonly known today, which defines civil society as a 'sector' of voluntary organisations and NGOs.

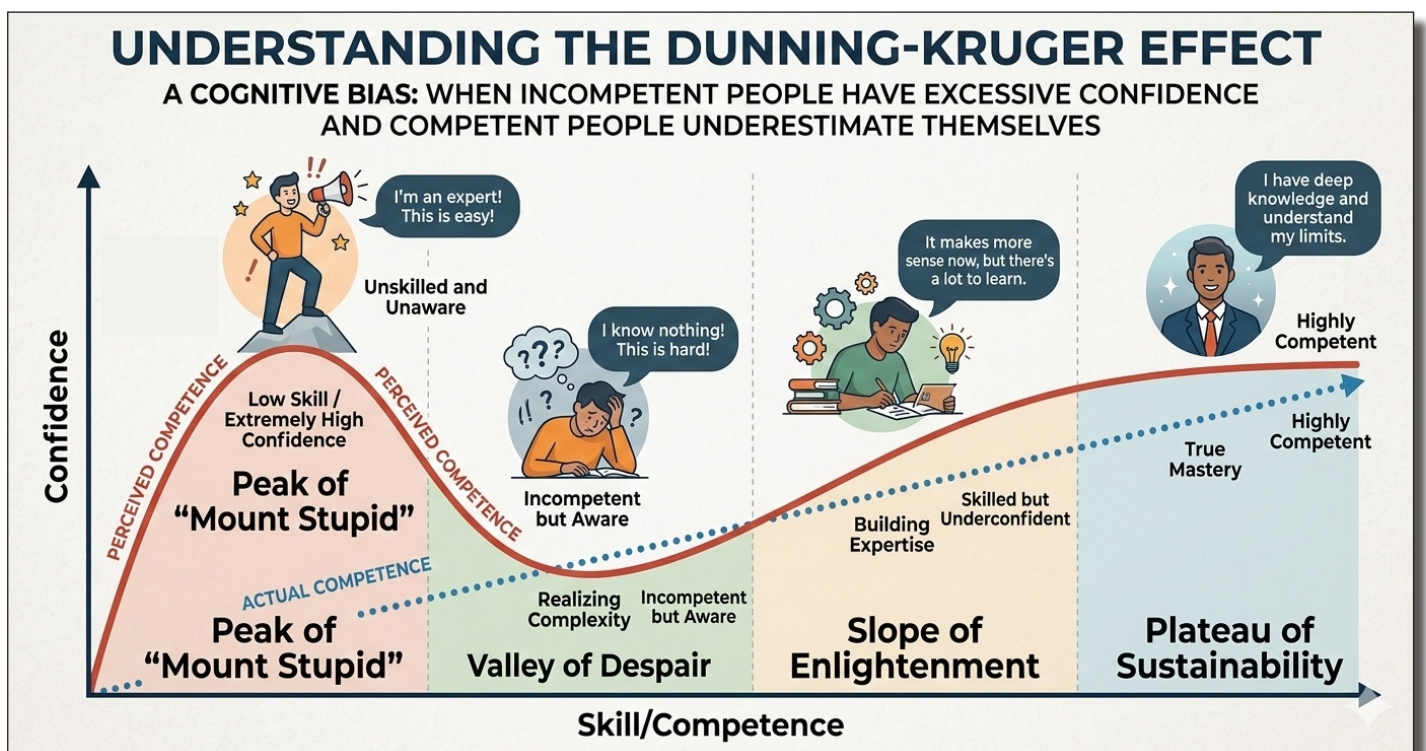
He saw civil society as the public sphere where bourgeois 'hegemony' was reproduced in cultural life through the power of the media, universities and religious institutions to 'manufacture consent' and legitimacy. Gramsci thought a much bigger war against capitalist exploitation was the 'war of position' in the form of struggle over ideas and beliefs, to create a new hegemony. He thought that, without this war of position, the direct revolutionary struggle for control of the means of production would be limited.

This is where the SACP, could have focused most of its efforts, to fight a much larger role in the 'counter-hegemonic' struggle, a

role that cannot be fought and won through politics, to advance alternatives to dominant ideas of what has been made normal and legitimised. There is work to be done to maximise intellectual powers, against the existing 'knowledge' which is a social construct that serves to legitimate current social structures.

Historical evidence has shown that power that exists in the realm of ideas and knowledge – expressed through consent rather than force – trumps any political power and without explicit strategies to contest hegemonic norms of legitimacy, the revolution may never be realised.

There is also a much larger role to be played in the battle for an alternative education, research, media and communication, and culture, which if lost to liberalism, the party, even if it had political power, would only have to settle for a few trade union concessions for the working class that can be achieved in an entrenched liberal system.



Given that the SACP has always regarded itself as the ideological, intellectual, and thought leader within of the Alliance, a more strategic battle for the party, even as the ANC fights the governance and electoral challenges, would have been to fight against the decline of both the socialist ideas in the public sphere and to create another front of struggle against the elites world view that now permeates and dominates the thinking of every citizen.



Today, alternatives to the status quo are viewed as unrealistic or threatening. Alternatives to the status quo seem far-fetched, unreasonable, or even dangerous.

The chances of SACP's ideas succeeding in a local and global society whose very thinking has already been shaped through societal institutions – such as media, religion, education, and popular culture, would naturally lead to a rejection of the party by the very people it would be trying to save. The party would soon realise it actually needs to save itself.

Marx himself recognised that economic exploitation was not the only driver behind capitalism, and that the system was reinforced by a dominance of ruling class ideas and values – leading to Engels's famous concern that '*false consciousness*' would keep the working class from recognising and rejecting their oppression.

Given the power of cultural hegemony that the capitalists possess, which enables them to govern with the manufactured consent of the majority, there is nothing that currently suggests that if the South African Com-

munist Party were to govern the country they would do any better than the ANC. If anything, historical evidence suggests they would fare worse.

Stuart Hall, Jamaican-born emeritus professor of sociology at the Open University in the U.K, argued that capitalists were using the "*the mental frameworks – the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the representation to entrench their class and social group in order to make sense of and define for everyone the way society works.*"

Most people were not even aware of these class ideologies and the tremendous impact they have on their lives. This was done largely through tools of cultural hegemony such as mass media to maintain the dominance of their position of power.

Noam Chomsky also articulates the power of such tools as media and education to entrench the interests of the capitalist class. They do this by selection of topics for mass media distribution, by choosing which concerns to distribute, by emphasis and framing of issues, by filtering of information, by bounding of debate with-

in certain limits. They determine, they select, they shape, they control, they restrict – in order to serve the interests of dominant, elite groups in the society.

The mass media is widely seen as significantly responsible for the implementation and promotion of the neo-liberal doctrine, which first emerged as an ideology and policy regime during the economic crisis of the 1970s.

The SACP has an opportunity to learn from the ANC, that fighting for political and economic power alone is not enough. The ruling economic class has used languages, concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and many representations to entrench their class. They have done that through their control and ownership of tools of cultural hegemony such as mass media, religion, education, popular culture to maintain the dominance of their position of power.

The truth is that where the ANC has failed, the SACP will not do any better.

**Yonela Diko** is author of the book, "*Ramaphosa – The Long Game*".

# Expanding the Circle of Dignity in South Africa and reimagining the National Democratic Revolution

■ By **ANDILE LUNGISA**

**T**HE National Democratic Revolution (NDR) remains the guiding vision of the African National Congress (ANC) and the foundation of South Africa's democratic project. It is not simply a slogan from the liberation era. It is a long-term programme aimed at transforming a society shaped by centuries of colonialism and apartheid.

At its heart, the NDR seeks to build a South Africa in which race no longer determines life chances, where the economy serves the majority, and where the dignity of those who were historically oppressed is restored.

When South Africa achieved democracy in 1994, the struggle did not end. Political freedom created the opportunity to tackle deeper social and economic inequalities. The democratic state became the key instrument for this transformation. The challenge was whether the new government would merely inherit the structures of the past, or would it reshape them to serve the people?

Perhaps the most important achievement of democratic South Africa has been the expansion of what we might call the *"circle of dignity."*

Under apartheid, citizenship was



racialised. Rights were denied to the majority. Black South Africans were treated as subjects, not full citizens. Democracy changed this. Political rights were universalised. The Constitution guaranteed equality, freedom, and human dignity to all.

But dignity is not only about legal rights. It is also about material conditions. Since 1994, millions of households have gained access to electricity, clean water, and sanitation. Communities that were once deliberately neglected have been connected to national infrastructure. These were not just service delivery programmes, they were acts of social inclusion and historic redemption. A home with electricity and running water represents more than convenience, it symbolises belonging

in a democratic society.

South Africa has implemented one of the largest state-led housing programmes in the Global South. Millions of families have received homes. For many, an RDP house meant the first experience of secure shelter and property ownership. It was a visible sign that the state recognised their humanity and their right to stability.

The expansion of social grants has been one of the most significant redistributive measures in democratic South Africa. Grants now support millions of children, older persons, and people with disabilities. In a country facing high unemployment and deep inequality, these grants have reduced extreme poverty and

helped families survive difficult economic conditions. They are part of what is often called the “social wage”, the state’s contribution to protecting the most vulnerable.

Democracy has also dramatically expanded access to education. Schools and universities that once excluded the majority have opened their doors. Student financial aid has enabled many young people from poor backgrounds to access higher education. While serious challenges remain, the demographic composition of South Africa’s professionals, academics, and public servants has changed profoundly.

The transformation of public institutions, from the judiciary to the civil service and the corporate sector, reflects a broader shift. South Africa’s public life is no longer dominated by a racial minority. The leadership and visible face of the country increasingly reflect its people.

The NDR has always understood South Africa’s struggle as part of a broader global movement for justice and equality.

Since 1994, South Africa has played an active role in continen-

tal and global affairs. Its participation in BRICS has signalled a commitment to a more balanced global order, one in which developing countries have a stronger voice. Through alliances in Africa and the Global South, South Africa has advocated for reform of global institutions, fairer economic systems, and solidarity with oppressed peoples. This international role reflects the same values that shaped the liberation struggle, anti-colonialism, equality among nations, and the right to self-determination.

No long-term political project unfolds without difficulties. The ANC itself faces serious challenges – including internal divisions, bureaucratisation, and the corrosive effects of patronage. These problems risk weakening the movement’s connection to the people.

If the NDR is to continue advancing, organizational renewal is essential. The ANC must remain rooted in communities while also attracting capable leaders from across society.

Leadership should not be confined to narrow internal processes if broader society contains individuals committed to constitutionalism, social justice, and transformation.

The central question is whether the movement can renew itself while remaining true to its historic mission.

The NDR has always been based on alliances, between workers, the poor, and sections of the middle class. In today’s economy, there are also business leaders whose interests align with national development, industrial growth, and social stability.

Engaging such individuals does not mean surrendering to private interests. It means recognising that national development requires broad cooperation under democratic political leadership.

Capable and ethical business leaders who support transformation and inclusive growth should not be excluded from contributing to leadership and governance.

The goal is not to serve capital, but to ensure that economic activity supports national development and social progress.

The National Democratic Revolution is not a completed chapter, it is an ongoing process. Its achievements are visible in the expansion of rights, services, housing, education, and global influence. Yet its future depends on renewal, integrity, and the ability to adapt to changing realities.

At its core, the NDR remains about one central idea, expanding the circle of dignity so that every South African, regardless of race, class, or background can live a life of opportunity, security, and recognition.

**Andile Lungisa** is an ANC NEC Member and Former ANC YL Deputy President.



# Leading the ANC is not an entitlement to deployment

■ By **NTUTHUKO MAKHOMBOTHI**

**U**PFRONT, I must state honestly that I do not have intimate knowledge of the specific circumstances surrounding the resignation of Cde. Jongizizwe Dlabathi as ANC Regional Secretary in Ekurhuleni from both his deployed and elected responsibilities. But there is a broader political point that this moment invites us to reflect on.

In the African National Congress, nobody, absolutely nobody, including the President of the ANC, is entitled to deployment. Deployment is not a right. It is a responsibility entrusted by the movement based on the needs of the struggle, the needs of the people, and the collective judgment of the organisation. The ANC does not owe any of us a position in

government, and leadership positions within the organisation must never be used as leverage to secure deployment.

To be clear, the roots of this problem did not begin with any individual comrade. In many ways the seeds were planted in 2007 at the Polokwane Conference. Delegates at that conference, which in my view marked a particularly difficult moment in the organisational life of the movement, must take some responsibility for the political culture that gradually emerged thereafter.

At Polokwane a resolution was adopted that the President of the ANC would automatically become the ANC's candidate for the Presidency of the Republic. This decision did not arise in a

vacuum. At the time, Cde. Jacob Zuma was facing serious legal challenges, and there was a real concern within the organisation that these processes could be used to prevent him from becoming the ANC's candidate for President, even if he had been elected President of the movement. In that context, the organisation acted in what it believed was the interest of protecting its leader at great expense. It was, in essence, an expedient political decision, one that prioritised the circumstances of an individual leader in order to guarantee that the President of the ANC would automatically become the presidential candidate of the movement.

But while it may have resolved an immediate political problem at

**52nd National Conference  
held in Polokwane in 2007**



the time, the longer-term consequence of that decision was that it began to hardwire the idea that election to a leadership position in the ANC automatically translates into state office. In other words, the organisational election started to be seen as a guaranteed pathway to government deployment.

Before 2007, the process was different. The ANC would run a list process in which even the President of the organisation had to be nominated and considered through the candidate list process of the movement. The list conference would ultimately determine the ANC's candidate list and the leadership that would go into government. In practice, the President of the ANC emerged as the President of the Republic, but it was never automatic, it remained subject to the internal processes and collective decisions of the movement.

Equally important, the ANC President exercised influence in determining the deployment of Premiers and Metro Mayors, and this was not a defect in the system, in many respects it was a strength. It allowed the movement to deploy cadres on the basis of merit, experience, political balance, and the capacity to govern, rather than reducing government leadership to a mechanical extension of organisational positions.

This arrangement preserved an important distinction between leading the organisation and leading the state. It meant that Chairs and Secretaries of ANC structures could focus on building and strengthening the movement, while capable cadres, women and men, were deployed into government based on their ability to carry the responsibilities



of executive leadership.

As a result, many Premiers and Mayors were not necessarily the Chairs of ANC structures. The movement was able to deploy leaders with the requisite competence and experience to run provinces and municipalities, while the elected leadership of the ANC continued to focus on organisational work. This also opened space for women to be deployed into executive leadership in government.

Of course, there were cases where a comrade held both organisational and governmental leadership positions, but this was not treated as an automatic entitlement. Where it happened, it was justified by merit and the political circumstances of the time. KwaZulu-Natal under Cde. S'bu Ndebele is a good example, he served both as Premier and ANC Provincial Chair, but this was based on political merit and capability, not on a crude formula that says "*Chair equals Premier*" or "*Regional Chair equals Mayor.*"

Unfortunately, after 2007 a different political culture gradually emerged. The expectation took root that election to a leadership position in the ANC guaranteed

deployment into government. From 2009 onwards we increasingly saw Provincial Chairs becoming Premiers and Regional Chairs becoming Metro Mayors almost as a matter of course.

This has had serious consequences for the organisation.

Firstly, it has undermined the ANC's commitment to gender transformation. Because ANC structures often elect male Chairs, the automatic linkage between Chairpersonship and executive government roles has meant that women have been structurally excluded from positions such as Premiers and Metro Mayors. To this end, I recall a press conference in 2014 where the ANC DSG, the late Jesse Duarte called out the movement for only having one female Premier, comrade Lucas from Northern Cape.

Secondly, it collapsed the important distinction between organisational leadership and governance capability. Being elected to lead an ANC structure does not automatically mean one has the experience, expertise, or administrative capacity required to run a province, a metro, or even the state itself. Political leadership and executive governance require different skills.

This culture of entitlement also gave birth to what became known as the "*Premier League*" a degenerate project that profoundly weakened the organisational integrity of the ANC. It manipulated internal processes, entrenched patronage networks, and played a central role in the broader project of state capture. The damage it inflicted on governance and on the credibility of our movement is immeasurable.

Whether this dynamic applies directly to the situation of Cde. Jongizwe, I do not know. He is neither a Regional Chairperson nor a Mayor. But the political culture that has developed in the organisation has created a generalised expectation: once one holds a political leadership position in the ANC, one becomes entitled to government deployment.

From there we begin to hear poorly conceptualised arguments about “two centres of power,” as if organisational leadership must automatically translate into control of the state. In reality, this thinking has produced serious governance crises, particularly in local government.

Across many municipalities, Regional Executive Committees have become overly consumed with municipal affairs instead of focusing on the core task of building strong, disciplined and politically grounded ANC structures. In some cases, the greatest governance risk within municipalities has actually come from the political interference of the very structures that are meant to provide leadership.

When every member of the REC believes they must sit in the municipal executive or influence municipal appointments, the REC ceases to function as a political leadership structure. It becomes a battleground for access to government positions. The result is instability, factional conflict, and weak governance.

Ironically, the ANC itself warned about the importance of principled deployment long ago. The Polokwane Conference emphasised that:

*“Deployment must be guided by the strategic objectives of the*



**The interests of the revolution must come first; the interests of individuals must be subordinated to them.**

*Vladimir Lenin*

*movement and the need to ensure that the most capable cadres are placed in positions where they can best serve the people.”*

The principle is clear: deployment must serve the revolution, not individual ambition.

Revolutionary theory also guides us on these questions and teaches us to deter these tendencies. Chairman Mao wrote in *Combating Liberalism*:

*“To let things slide for the sake of peace and friendship when a person has clearly gone wrong... this is a type of liberalism.”*

In other words, avoiding difficult organisational questions in the name of unity only weakens the movement.

Lenin expressed a similar principle about revolutionary discipline: *“The interests of the revolution must come first; the interests of individuals must be subordinated to them.”*

That principle must guide us today as well.

As we move towards the 2027 Conference and the more imminent local government elections, the ANC must seriously revisit this question. We must restore the principle that organisational

leadership does not automatically translate into government office. The movement must deploy cadres based on capability, integrity, and the needs of the people, not based on entitlement.

If we fail to correct this culture, we risk further weakening both the organisation and the state. But if we confront it honestly, we have an opportunity to restore the integrity of the ANC and strengthen the movement for the struggles that lie ahead.

It is as a result of these political decisions we made in Polokwane that our Cadre Development & Deployment Policy has come under attack by reactionary forces, who have bastardised it as “cadre deployment.” In many instances, like this one, we create the conditions for the weakening of the movement and its fighting capacity.

I welcome engagement on this issue, but more importantly, those of us who are ANC members have an obligation to reversing the consequences of this strategic misstep.

**Ntuthuko Makhomboti** is an ANC KZN Provincial Task Team (PTT) Member.

# Breaking the Deafening Silence – Genocidal blockade of Cuba and the drums of solidarity

■ By **AMB PHATSE JUSTICE PIITSO**

*Dear Ambassador Marcos Rodriguez Costa*

Along the silent valley of rain-forest Malampuzha, Palakkad, Communist state of Kerala, India, where the sun greets the Arabic sea and stars the blue mountain skies, heart deeper reflections, necessity of revolutionary struggles, who do I talk my great conversation, breathing no word, I shall be repudiating posterity, immense tasks posed to our generation by history.

I write the forethought epistle, harvesting from medieval wisdom, that a generation which forgets history, cannot make history. Five hundred and thirty four years, since the arrival of the European coloniser, Christopher Columbus, on the shore of the Caribbean archipelago, Island of Cuba, the empire is still waging a relentless acts of aggression, trammelling the peaceful nation, not to live by her dreams but fear.

The recent attempts by US sponsored mercenaries, carrying deadly weapons to incite insurrection against socialist Cuba, to obliterate her sovereignty and right to independence, prompting memories of historic battle of Playa Giron, empire abstraction, geopolitical power relations in



the Caribbean peninsula. I salute tenacious inspiring men and women of our homeland, birth of a new generation of revolutionaries, defending with their own blood, indestructible foundations of our socialist revolution, living dreams of future humanity.

The universal Ambassador of the Antilles, Apostle Jose Marti, writing a letter to his friend, Rafael Mendive, expressing his deep emotions, torture of the soul, the evil heart empire, colonial dispos-

session and oppression, says: *“I have suffered a lot, but I am convinced that I have known how to suffer, I have come to understand, that the only strength and only truth in life is love, patriotism is nothing else than love, friendship is nothing else than love.”*

His return from imposed exile in Spain, addressing dozen people at the event to inaugurate a new high school in Havana, making a clarion call for the bravest, exercise the right to carry the flag, of

the homeland into the battle, calling for the unity of all the Cuban and people of our America, fight for the freedom and dignity of the motherland. Constructing our America, a new society of ideas, love for the freedom of the people, building a better future.

During the years of his second exile in the USA, historic speech at Steck hall, making a call to all the Cuban revolutionaries, to unite and reject rivalries, dividing revolutionaries and hindering victories, vowing that Cubans are not resigning to living without a homeland, calling for the children of the first war of independence, to fearlessly repeat the feats of those courageous men, who nourished themselves with roots, that great rights cannot be bought with tears, but with blood.

Vividly cautioning a bleak future for the land of the Americas, if her people, abandon the brave who struggle for their efforts, the danger of disloyalty to the cause. *"To abandon those who die, and then enjoy the well being of their*

*death, is not the work of worthy men."*

In a letter to General Maximo Gomez, the Haitian internationalist, who travelled to assist Cuban patriotic forces in the war against Spanish colonialism, bolstering the Cuban independence movement, joining great revolutionary legends of the homeland, such as Antonio Maceo and Mariana Grajales, when he said:

*"There is another greater danger, arguably greater than all other dangers, in Cuba, there has always been a group of counter revolutionary men, proud enough to abhor Spanish rule, but timid enough not to risk their personal well-being by fighting it.*

*"For this class of men, aided by all who would like to enjoy the benefits for freedom, without paying a bloody price, vehemently favouring annexation of Cuba, to the United States."*

In a response to an article published in the "Manufacturer", a Philadelphian newspaper in

1889, proposing for a possible scenario, of the United States purchasing or annexing Cuba, Apostle Jose Marti, rejected the proposal with contempt, declaring that no Cuban worthy of the name, will humiliate himself to the point of being received as a moral plague, amongst people who deny his capacity, insult his virtue and despise his character, declaring that those who fought in the little war, do not want Cuba, to be annexed by the United States.

Succinctly declaring that *"Cubans do not believe in excessive individualism nor worship of wealth, or immoderate appetite for power acquisition, or triumph contrary to goodness and justice. Cuban people are not destitute of vagabonds or immoral pygmies, they have suffered impatiently under the tyranny, fought like men, and sometimes like giants to be free, we deserve in our time of misfortune, the respect of those who have not helped us."*

Later in the year 1889, he wrote another two letters to one of his



friends, Gonzalo de Quesada, fearful about the possibility of the United States, annexing the Island of Cuba, in the first letter he says: *"I do not know the position of this greedy neighbour."*

On the second he says: *"On our land Gonzalo, there is another plan darker than what we have known, so far, is the iniquitous enterprises of forcing the Island, of throwing it into war, in order to have the pretext to intervene and with the credit of the mediator and guarantor, to seize it. There is not worse cowardice in the annals of free peoples."*

Throughout his life, Jose Marti, has been worried by endless conspiracies by the empire, to capture the soul of the Cuban nation and denying her people, future of abundance and possibilities. He was equally, concerned by some of the Latin American leaders, to sell the heart and the soul of the Americas, to the evil hand of the oppressors.

Today we are living his times, the empire is still determined to annex Cuba, to use every reason it will create, suitable for the subtle intentions, purchasing Cuba, denying its people the right of freedom of expression. His *"Nuestra America"* is a sacred call upon our shoulders, solidarity of the people of the world, working together for a future of peace and prosperity.

I am walking on the valley of Malampuzha, anguished by fathom pages of history, deafening silence of leaders of the world, from the Americas to the African, from Asiatic region to Europe, revolutionary and mass democratic movement, diaspora, civil society, religious and business fraternity, deafening silence at the

## REVOLUCION CUBANA



I began a revolution with 82 men.  
If I had to do it again,  
I do it with 10 or 15  
and absolute faith.  
**It does not matter  
how small you are  
if you have faith and  
plan of action.**

- Fidel Castro -

## Muerte Al Invasor VENCEREMOS!

*G.C. Khwela 2021*

wake of the genocidal blockade by the empire, holocaust looming the horizons, modern age highest form barbarism, time has come, not to keep quite anymore, but for the world leaders, to stand true to the tasks of history, the bravest are those able to say and do worthy, for the noble cause of the freedom of humanity.

With the Cuban flag high on the horizons of the African continent, immediately after the victory of the battle of Playa Giron, when mercenaries sponsored by the United States, attempted to submerge the newly born revolutionary Cuba, when the heroic nation defended their motherland, Commander in Chief, Fidel Castro, took the very same weapons confiscated from mercenaries, giving some of the African liberation movements. A revolution which is the best school of the world, humane acts of solidarity and internationalism.

The warship Bahia de Nipe, docked in Casablanca, carrying dozens war artilleries, rifles, mortars, machine guns, and ammunition, carrying some medical

supplies and few medical professionals, supporting the Algerian liberation movement, against French colonial aggression. The warship, returned home, carrying wounded soldiers of the Algerian liberation front and war orphans, giving unequivocal solidarity to the noble cause, of the struggles of the African people for liberation.

When Fidel Castro took his first tour to the African continent in 1972, visiting Guinea Conakry, Guinea Bissau, Algeria and Ethiopia, when asked about the safety of the revolution in his seven months absence home, he reaffirmed *"I am making this trip without worries, the Cuban revolution is like a rock of an immovable granite"*, demonstrating unyielding solidarity of the Cuban revolution to the people of Africa and the world. In the dire situation of unprecedented aggression by the empire, violating the sovereignty of the independent state of Cuba, unity of the revolution, rock of an immovable granite.

The Cuban revolution, is the only revolution in the history of the struggle of human society, to

have paid back debt to humanity, to have healed the wounds of the African people, wounds inflicted by atrocities committed by the European colonialism, exterminating millions of the indigenous people of the Americas, and millions of the African people as slaves through the Atlantic passage.

Thousands of your compatriots, have volunteered their lives in the battles, taking forefront trenches in the wars of liberation of the African people, their blood have cleansed the pains of atrocities, slavery and untold forms of human abuse, they were there in Ethiopia, Algeria, Somali, Guinea Conakry, Guinea Bissau, Egypt, Congo, Angola, Mozambique, Zambia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, showering our mother continent with their blood, for our freedom and dignity.

They have volunteered their professionals for the reconstruction and development of the continent, medical doctors, engineers, teachers, professors, they have been there, during times of wars, famine, catastrophic disease and other natural disasters such earthquakes and floods, they are still there today to serve the people of our continent, a nation with bounds of love, a revolution dosed in love, we are who we are, dedication and unyielding commitment, noble cause of our struggles, liberation of mankind.

I am deeply concerned by the deafening silence of African leaders and the diaspora, their silence have even bothered the waves of the Atlantic, the glimpse of the stars on the horizons of the Caribbean no more brighter, the orbit of the universe slower than the slave ships, I make a call for the African leaders, for the African Union, to equal the task posed by history to



our generation, the moral obligation to support the Cuban people at the time of need.

I am making a call, to the African leaders, to convene an extraordinary meeting of the African Union Assembly in Havana, by so doing making history, showing acts of solidarity to the heroic nation, history calls unto them, to descend into the highway of solidarity the Atlantic ocean, following the footprints of our forebears, whose monumental footprints, ocean waves cannot erase, echoes of the drums of freedom, we are who we are, because of their selflessness and enduring leadership.

I am making a call to our African sisters and brothers, to make history, giving humane and material support to the poor nation, less bless the continent with a movement of solidarity, giving what the empire does not know, patriotism, love and comradeship. Less fortify our solidarity movement, calling for the end of the genocidal blockade and respect of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Cuban nation.

We are continent shaped by the heroism of this small island of the Caribbean, a homeland which has become the mirror of the universe, torchbearer of the struggles for the freedom of humanity, envelope of heroism and resilience, hope and courage, we cannot built too many walls, we have to build many fronts of bridges of solidarity, for we are

the embodiment of unprecedented virtues of internationalism, bringing to the peaceful nation of Cuba the inevitable, impetus of revolutionary struggles, triumphs of humanity freedom.

To you my brother and dear Comrade, to all sons and daughters of our mother homeland, descendants of Antonio Maceo and Aponte, Mariana Grajales and Carlota, the rare nation of humanity history, architects of the enduring change of human civilisation, you have not just shaped the present but the future, a nation born out of difficulties, a nation which cannot be defeated by the siren songs of the empire.

You are living mortals of our age, history example of bravery and patriotism, courage by stone truth, answering questions of history, than those who know but giving wrong answers. Never relinquish your souls to heartbeat, knowing well that freedom never dies, on the blue horizons of the Caribbean Sea, refusing to obey adversity, giving humanity the inevitable, the future of freedom and equality.

I am sure my dear Comrade, it may seems to be far-fetched, but in our life time, humanity shall achieve, heroic people of Cuba, shall be counted by generations of mankind, to have stood true to noble ideas, aspirations of freedom and equality, highest forms of human development. The empire may fight ideas with weapons, but not knowing, that you can kill a man, but not his ideas.

**Ambassador Phatse Justice Piitso** is a member of the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party. He writes in his personal capacity.

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

# THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

7–13 March 2026

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

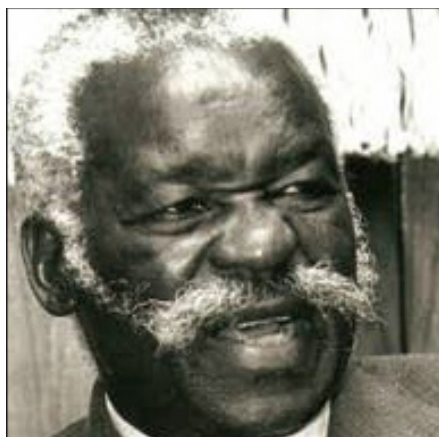
### 7 March 1921 Todd Matshikiza born in Queenstown



Todd Tozama Matshikiza was born to a musical family in Queenstown in the Eastern Cape on 7 March 1921. He obtained music and teaching diplomas and took up a teaching post in Alice. In 1947, Matshikiza moved to Johannesburg where he established a music school, the Todd Matshikiza School of Music. He was also one of the first black journalists to work for Drum Magazine. Matshikiza wrote the music for the musical *King Kong*, which became a huge success both locally and abroad. In 1960, he and his family left South Africa and relocated to London. After a few years of performing in night clubs and freelancing for a few London Publications, Matshikiza moved to Zambia. He took up a post as a newscaster and producer for the Zambian Broadcasting Cooperation. Matshikiza missed South Africa and was pained by the fact that he was banned in his own country. He died in 1968 and

was survive by his wife and two children. His son John Matshikiza was a well-known actor before his untimely death in 2008.

### 8 March 1986 Moses Mabhida dies in Maputo



Moses Mbheki Mncane (Baba) Mabhida, trade unionist, politician, Umkhonto weSizwe commander and Secretary-General of the SA Communist Party, died of a heart attack in Maputo, Mozambique, and was buried there in a temporary grave on 29 March 1986. In 2006, Mabhida's remains were transferred to South Africa by the South African government for reburial at his home in KwaZulu-Natal. The eulogy at his funeral was done by then ANC President Oliver Reginald Tambo, and he said:

*"We have gathered here today to bid farewell to a warrior. We have converged from all corners of the globe to pay homage to a revolutionary. We have convened on this grieving piece of*

*the earth to salute a patriot. We who have walked with the giants know that Moses Mbheki Mabhida belongs in that company too. We who have failed among the ranks know that he was proud to count himself a foot soldier. A colossus because he was supremely human. Like the pure note of a bugle, (his) voice rose from the depths of the Valley of a Thousand Hills, and multiplied. It rose and grew and multiplied, reverberating from Durban's Curries Fountain until it was heard in Dar es Salaam and Havana, Moscow and Managua, London and Jakarta, Beijing and Rio de Janeiro, Prague and Washington. And in Pretoria the centres and symbols of oppression and repression – the Union Buildings and the Voortrekker Monument – heaved and trembled as they received his message: **Death to Fascism! Down with Fascism! Freedom for my People!**"*

### 9 March 1947 Three Doctors' Pact signed



The signing of the 'Three Doctors Pact' between president of the African National Congress, Dr.

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

AB Xuma, Natal Indian Congress president, Dr GM Naicker and Dr. Yusuf Dadoo of the Transvaal Indian Congress, taking forward unity of all oppressed and non-racialism.

### 9 March 2015

#### Chumani Maxwele ignites the #RhodesMustFall Movement at UCT

On 9 March 2015, Chumani Maxwele threw human excrements at a statue of Cecil John Rhodes, situated on the University of Cape Town campus. This became a catalyst for heightened student activism and movements throughout universities in the country, and the birth of what became known by the collective name #FeesMustFall movement. Maxwele's protest, staged as a political performance, was in response to the lack of attention given to the symbols of White supremacy and Black oppression that is rooted in South Africa. By taking human excrement from Khayelitsha, his action sought to make a connection with the lack of human dignity given to Black people living in townships. Dressed in running shoes and tights, a pink construction hat and carrying a whistle, a drum and a placard reading "Exhibit White @ Arrogance U.C.T.", Maxwele's performance was a radical protest against UCT's institutional racism and the lack of transformation on campus. By midday Maxwele was joined by other students, resulting in the birth of #RhodesMustFall.

### 10 March 1922

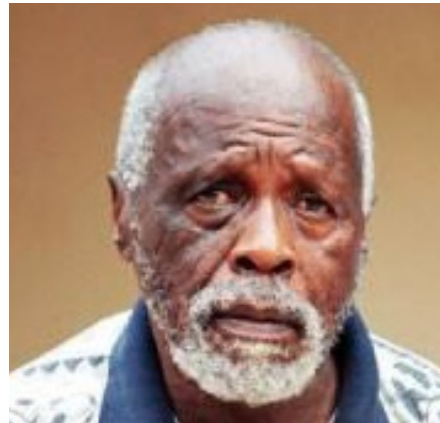
#### Miners' strike turns violent

A white mineworkers strike, which started in December 1921 turns violent, with workers occupying police stations, railway stations

and mines in the Witwatersrand, attacking a power station and main post office. The strike became known as the Rand Revolt, leading to certain positions in mines being reserved for whites, called Job Reservation.

### 10 March 1926

#### Artist Michael Zondi born



On 10 March 1926, Michael Gagashe Zondi, a South African sculptor was born in Msinga, Greytown. He was trained in woodworking at the Swedish Lutheran Mission Trade School. During the late 1950s he received instruction in Fine Arts at the UN, Pietermaritzburg. He obtained certificates in building construction and design and worked at the Appelsbosch mission hospital in Natal, executing the design, construction and decoration for the hospital chapel, whilst doing his sculptures. In 1965, he became only the second black artist to exhibit at the Durban Arts Centre, during the height of apartheid. He worked for the Department of Information until 1972, after which he moved to Johannesburg. Zondi had several exhibitions of his work, and his sculptures are part of art collections across the country and internationally. He has been described as "one of the greatest South African sculptors of the 20th century." Michael Gagashe Zondi passed on 15 March 2008, and was buried in Mtulwa.

### 10 March 1978

#### Journalist Percy Qoboza released from detention



Percy Qoboza, editor of the banned newspaper, *The World*, was released from detention, together with nine other Black leaders seized in security raids in October 1976. Qoboza was freed as a result of an international campaign for his release. After his release, Qoboza remained in the country for another three years and joined the Black weekly, *The Voice*, which was later also banned. He then joined the *Post Transvaal* and *Sunday Post*, two newspapers established to replace the banned *World*. Qoboza finally succumbed to the government pressure and left the country to live in United States.

### 10 March 1990

#### Welcome Ncita wins International Boxing Federation title

Mdantsane born Welcome Ncita became the first South African to win the International Boxing Federation (IBF) world bantam weight title on 10 March 1990, when he beat Israeli Fabrice Benichou in Tel Aviv, Israel. Known as "The Hawk", Ncita went on to defend the title seven times. He lost the title to American, Kennedy McKinney in 1992.

### 11 March 1870 King Moshoeshoe passed on



King Moshoeshoe, founder and first paramount chief of the Basotho nation died and was buried on Thaba Bosigo.

### 11 March 1982 Soweto students, Mary Loate and Khotso Seathlolo sentenced

Two former Soweto student leaders, Khotso Seathlolo, 25, and Mary Loate, 23 were given long term imprisonment under the Terrorism Act. Seathlolo was given 15 years and Mary was given 10 years. The two were convicted for events related to the 16 June 1976 uprising. Seathlolo faced additional charges. These included leaving South Africa illegally and being a member of a banned organisation in exile.

### 11 March 1998 Jazz legend Basil Coetzee passed on



Legend jazz musician and saxophonist, Basil 'Manenberg' Coetzee died on this day. Born in District Six, Cape Town Coetzee started playing the penny whistle, went on to drums and flute and eventually saxophone. His family were forcefully removed from District Six to Manenberg. As a factory worker during the 1960s and 70s, he continued his music part-time, and with others of his generation forged the unique sound of South Africa jazz. He played at the launch of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in Rocklands, Mitchell's Plain in 1983, and recorded two albums, *Sabenza* and *Monwabisi* under Mountain Records label.

### 12 March 1868 British annexed Basotholand

Now the Kingdom of Lesotho, it was annexed as a protectorate on request from Moshoeshoe, credited as the founder of the Basotho Kingdom. This happened after invasions by the Boers from the Orange Freestate in 1867 and 1868. King Moshoeshoe appealed to the British for protection, and on 12 March 1868 his country became a British protectorate, and the current borders of Lesotho were established. Most of their previous territory was lost, specifically fertile farming area west of the Caledon River, which was ceded to the Boers. Lesotho only regained its independence from Britain, over 100 years later, in 1966.

### 12 March 1968 Mauritius independence day

The African island state of Mauritius on this day gained independence from Britain. The island was first colonized by the French



in 1767. Mauritius is described as a "melting pot of different nationalities – descendents of African, Chinese, Indian, and European immigrants and slaves." Since independence, the island state has from a low-income, agriculturally based economy to a high-income diversified economy with growing industrial, financial, ICT and tourist sectors. In 2018, Mauritius had a higher education enrolment rate of 40.8%

### 12 March 2005 Pioneer tomato farmer Bertie van Zyl buried in Mooketsi

Bertie van Zyl (72), founder and owner of ZZ2, the biggest tomato growing operation in the country and one of the biggest in the world, was buried in Mooketsi, Limpopo. He had died the week previously in a Pretoria hospital. The funeral was attended by top government officials, amongst them Thoko Didiza, the minister of agriculture, Tito Mboweni, the Reserve Bank governor, Mbhazima Shilowa, the premier of Gauteng, MECs and farmers. Thousands of his farm workers also attended the service. Didiza said Van Zyl played a crucial role in the development of emerging farmers.

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

**13 March 1980**

**Lillian Ngoyi passed on**



Lillian Masediba Ngoyi, one of the four leaders of the 1956 Women's March passed away on this day. Born in 1911 in Pretoria, she worked as a nurse, a short stint as a domestic worker, and later as a textile worker, where she joined the Garment Workers Union. She was amongst the founding members of the ANC Women's League, and became active in the Defiance campaign of the 1950s. She served on the ANC Transvaal executive, and was the first woman to be elected to the National Executive Committee of the ANC in 1954, a decade after the ANC opened full membership to women. She was elected the first president of the Federation of South African Women, and a leader of the 1956 Women's march. She was one of the 156 Treason Trialists, and was detained and banned by the apartheid regime; newspapers were not allowed to quote her. Throughout her life, she remained active in the liberation struggle and an icon of the women's movement.

**13 March 1888**

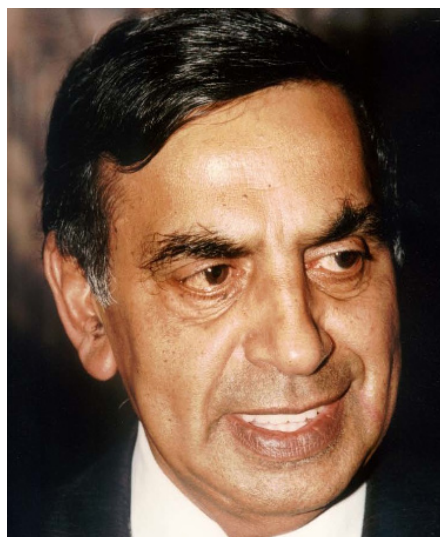
**De Beers Consolidated Mines formed**

The hitherto monopoly over South African diamond trade was reg-

istered in Kimberley, with Barney Bernato at the helm. Cecil John Rhodes in 1871 bought shares into De Beers, and in 1929 Ernest Oppenheimer became De Beers board chair. Anglo America became the largest shareholder in De Beers in 2011 when it bought into the Oppenheimer family stake of 40%. At some point, De Beers controlled between 80-90% of the rough diamonds trade in the world, but with new entrants, this is now 30-40%, and is still regarded as the world's *'leading diamond company.'*

**13 March 2004**

**Dullah Omar passed on**



Dullah Mohamed Omar was born in Observatory, Cape Town on 26 May 1934 and grew up in District Six. After matric he did a law degree at UCT, became involved in the New Unity Movement and after gaining his LLB in 1957, went on to practice law, taking on political trials and human rights issues. He was active in the New Unity Movement, but later joined the Rylands Civic Association and the National Association of Democratic Lawyers (NADEL) – both became affiliates of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in 1983. As a human rights lawyer, he represented Poqo, PAC, ANC, BCM

and student activists, and was detained, surveilled and banned by the regime. He was elected as the UDF W.Cape chairperson and Vice President of Nadel in 1987. Omar was the first Minister of Justice of the new South Africa and was later appointed Minister of Transport by President Thabo Mbeki. He died of cancer on 13 March 2004 and is survived by his wife and three children.

**13 March 1989**

**Pop icon Yemi Alade born**



Nigerian Afro-pop singer and actress Yemi Alade was born in Abia state. Top artist during the 2010s and 2020s, she was the first African female artist to reach one million YouTube subscribers in July 2019.

**13 March 2009**

**Afro Samurai unveiled**

The original artwork of popular anime character Afro Samurai who first appeared in a manga in 1998 was unveiled at the Japan Society in Tokyo. The Afro Samurai anime was a creative collaboration between Samuel L. Jackson, Takashi Okazaki, and Gonzo, with the music scored by RZA of the Wu-Tang Clan.

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

# INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

7–13 March 2026

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



### 8 March International Women's Day



International Women's Day has its origin in a strike and march by over 15,000 women in New York in 1908, demanding better pay, shorter working hours and the right to vote. In 1910, at the International Conference of Working Women, Clara Zetkin proposed that it be celebrated as International Women's Day, and the first celebration of the day was held in 1911. The day has been used by women to organise and mobilise against their social, political and economic exclusion and exploitation, and to celebrate the achievements that women have made. A century later, the struggles against gender-based violence, for equal pay for equal work, for representation, and for the recognition of women's rights as human rights are ongoing. The theme for International Women's Day 2026 is **Give To Gain**. The IWD 2026 Give To Gain Campaign encourages a mindset of generosity and collaboration. **Give To Gain** emphasizes the power of reciprocity and support. When people, organizations, and communities give

generously, opportunities and support for women increase. Giving is not a subtraction, it's intentional multiplication. When women thrive, we all rise.

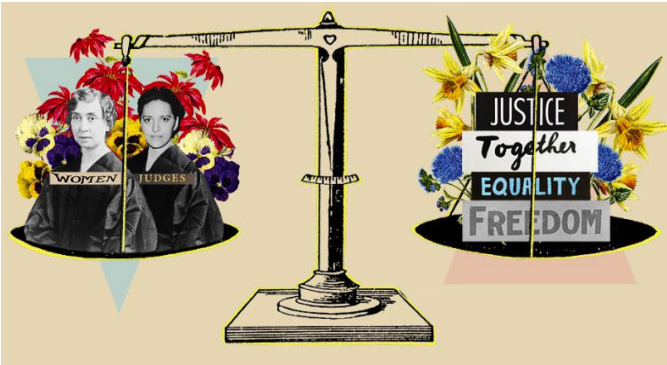
### 9 March International Commonwealth Day

The Commonwealth referred to all the countries and colonies that used to be part of the British Empire, Commonwealth day (second Monday in March) also used to be known as Empire Day. In the UK, an Anglican church service is held in Westminster Abbey, attended by Queen Elizabeth II, the Secretary General of the Commonwealth and other Commissioners. The Commonwealth consists of 56 former colonies or territories of Britain who have gained independence, although 16 still regards the British Queen as their monarch. #Commonwealth-Day highlights unity, collaboration & shared progress. The theme 2026 is **Unlocking opportunities together for a prosperous Commonwealth**.



## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

### 10 March International Day of Women Judges



Achieving gender equity in all spheres of public life is an important part of the struggle for a non-sexist world, and the judiciary is no exception. In 2017, 40% of judges were female, in comparison with just 5% in 2008. In South Africa, by September 2020 there were 134 male judges (58,5%) and 95 female judges (41,5%). During the recent interviews by the Judicial Services Commission for the position of Chief Justice (the most senior judge in the country), only one out of four candidates was a woman, and she scored the highest. In Africa at the moment, there are, currently just six women Chief Justices, in Ethiopia, Niger, Lesotho, Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire and Zambia. The theme for 2026 is **Women Judges on the Bench and Beyond: Protecting Access to Justice**. This year's theme highlights the leadership of women judges both on the bench and beyond – in their courts, institutions, and communities – working to strengthen public trust, uphold the rule of law, and expand access to justice for all, especially vulnerable and marginalized populations. (Source: <https://www.iawj.org/women-judges-day-2026>).

### 12 March Mauritius National Day



The African island state of Mauritius, located in the Indian Ocean celebrates this day, when in 1968 it

gained independence from Britain, and on the same day in 1992 when it became a Republic.

### 13 March World Kidney Day

World Kidney Day aims to raise awareness of the importance of our kidneys to our overall health and to reduce the frequency and impact of kidney disease and its associated health problems worldwide. Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is estimated to affect approximately 850 million people worldwide. If left undetected and not treated timely, CKD can progress to kidney failure, leading to severe complications and premature mortality. By 2040, CKD is projected to become the 5th leading cause of years of life lost, highlighting the urgent need for global strategies to combat kidney disease. People at high risk for kidney disease should undergo targeted testing. The major risk factors for kidney disease are: Diabetes, Hypertension, Cardiovascular disease, Obesity and Family history of kidney disease. Early detection policies for individuals at risk should be implemented globally to reduce the healthcare costs associated with kidney failure and improve quality of life. Primary care clinicians and frontline health workers should be trained to integrate CKD testing into routine care for high-risk populations, even when time and resources are limited. CKD testing should be integrated into existing community interventions (e.g., those targeting maternal health, HIV, tuberculosis, and other non-communicable diseases) to decrease cost and enhance efficiency. Testing may also occur outside of medical settings, such as in town halls, churches, or markets, depending on local regulations and available resources. Efforts should also focus on raising awareness among the general population, promoting health, and implementing education programs that empower patients.



# LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE PLAN PILLAR 1



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Issued by the African National Congress, **ANC Headquarters**, 54 Pixley ka Isaka Seme Street, Johannesburg, 2001. [www.anc1912.org.za](http://www.anc1912.org.za)





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