



ANC TODAY

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Conversations *with the* President



Investment conferences are turning commitments into jobs

■ By **PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

SINCE the start of this year, we have held a series of high-profile engagements with domestic and international investors.

These have included business forums on the margins of visits to Brazil and Spain, the sixth South Africa Investment Conference in March, and, last week, an Infrastructure Investment Summit convened by BlackRock, one of the world's largest infrastructure investment managers.

These engagements are not 'just for show', as some people have suggested. They are an opportunity to connect investors with local opportunities, and bring together governments, business, banks and development finance

institutions.

Around the world, investment conferences and summits are platforms to attract foreign direct investment in a global investor landscape that has become increasingly competitive. The fact that international and domestic investors are willing to commit capital to South Africa demonstrates confidence in our country as an attractive investment destination.

Since we launched our first national investment drive in 2018, we have attracted investments in energy, telecoms, infrastructure, automotive, mining, advanced manufacturing and many other sectors.

On the back of R1.5 trillion in

pledges, a total of R634 billion has already been invested into factories, mines, data centres, power plants and other infrastructure, and have been creating jobs.

These include the R4.2 billion investment by BMW to electrify its Rosslyn plant in Gauteng and to support new energy vehicle production; the R500 million investment by Tetra Pak to upgrade its plant in KwaZulu-Natal; Corobrik's R500 million investment to build its Kwastina plant in Gauteng; and the Newlyn PX terminal in the Port of Durban that began operating in 2024.

Last year, I opened the Ivanplats Platreef mine in Mokopane that originated from a R2.8 billion investment conference pledge.



In addition to creating jobs, these investments are supporting skills development to better equip young South Africans for the rapidly evolving world of work. For example, Microsoft has partnered with the Youth Employment Service (YES) to offer globally recognised certification in high-demand AI Skills. This forms part of a more than R5.4 billion investment by Microsoft to expand its cloud and AI infrastructure in South Africa by 2027.

We welcome all forms of investment, whether it is planned or new.

Investment is a long-term commitment. Moving from pledges to large-scale growth and employment creation takes time, particularly in sectors where projects take years to reach implementation.

The reality is that we are a long way from where we need to be.

One of the most used measures of investment in the economy is gross fixed capital formation (GFCF), which is currently around 14% of our gross domestic product. The National Development Plan challenges us to reach 30% by 2030.

Our GFCF reached around 21% in 2008, driven by a sustained commodity boom, the start of Eskom's build programme and infrastructure expansion ahead of the 2010 FIFA World Cup. There has been a steady decline since then, as the global financial crisis and the period of state capture progressively undermined private investment and business confidence.

Since 2018 we have sought to arrest this decline. We have matched intent with action, moving to stabilise public finances, resolve the energy crisis and advance structural reforms.

Yet there is still a disconnect between improved investor sentiment and greater investment.

The message we have been taking to our meetings with investors is that we are creating the conditions for growth and providing the necessary policy certainty. As we reiterated at last week's Infrastructure Investment Summit, we are improving project planning, funding and execution.

Through this, we aim to narrow the gap between investment pledges, implementation and eventually job creation.

We aim to encourage the substantial private capital that is in reserve to be used for productive domestic investment. According to the South African Reserve Bank, by July 2025 South Africa's non-financial companies held R1.8 trillion in reserves.

The task of building a more prosperous, inclusive society is a collective one. It relies on productive investment at scale. That is why we are encouraged that the greatest number of pledges made at the sixth South Africa Investment Conference were from domestic investors. Local businesses – those who know our economic and social conditions best – are making substantial investments in our economy.

As we forge ahead with efforts to attract new investment, we call on the local private sector to be at the forefront of rebuilding investment momentum in our economy. Their confidence will encourage more international capital to follow.

It is now abundantly clear that the engagements and commitments made in conference halls are steadily and increasingly translating into the economic activity that creates jobs and opportunities for South Africans.

MESSAGE OF CONDOLENCES

**from the Deputy President of the African National Congress,
COMRADE PAUL MASHATILE
ON THE SAD PASSING OF
COMRADE KAOBITSA “BUSHY” MAAPE**

THE Deputy President of the African National Congress (ANC), Comrade Paul Mashatile, extends his deepest condolences to the family, friends, comrades, and the people of the North West Province following the passing of Comrade Kaobitsa “Bushy” Maape.

Comrade Maape dedicated his life to the noble cause of freedom, justice, and the upliftment of the people of South Africa. As a freedom fighter, uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK) operative, former Robben Island political prisoner, and seasoned leader of our Movement, he embodied discipline, courage, humility, and an unwavering commitment to the ideals of our liberation struggle.

As a committed cadre of uMkhonto we Sizwe, Comrade Maape played a vital role in the underground structures of the ANC during some of the most difficult years of apartheid repression. His involvement in MK operations reflected both bravery and strategic discipline, contributing to the broader armed struggle that forced the apartheid regime to the negotiating table. Even under conditions of severe repression and incarceration following his arrest in 1986, he remained steadfast, using his imprisonment on Robben Island as an opportunity to deepen his political con-



sciousness, engage in collective learning, and contribute to the formation of a new generation of disciplined cadres.

Throughout his political career, Comrade Maape continued to build on this foundation of principled activism. He played a decisive role in strengthening ANC structures in the North West Province, including as Chairperson of the ANC in the Kgalagadi Region and in various leadership capacities within Government. His tenure as Premier of the North West Province from 2021 to 2024 was marked by efforts to stabilise governance, rebuild public trust in state institutions, and advance service delivery, particularly to marginalised and rural communities.

A defining pillar of Comrade Maape’s legacy was his unwavering commitment to education. While incarcerated, he pursued academic development despite harsh conditions, affirming his belief that education is both a weapon of liberation and a pathway to dignity. In the democratic era, he championed initiatives aimed at improving access to quality education, community development programmes, and youth empowerment. He consistently advocated for education as a tool to eradicate poverty, inequality, and underdevelopment, ensuring that future generations are better equipped to contribute meaningfully to society.

Comrade Mashatile notes that the passing of Comrade Maape



**HAMBA KAHLE
COMRADE BUSHY
MAAPE**

is a profound loss to both the African National Congress and the nation. His life stands as a testament to a generation of selfless leaders who placed the collective interests of the people above personal gain.

“Re latlhegetswe ke mongwe wa bagale ba rona ba mafolofolo, monna yo o neng a direla batho ka boikanyego le tlotlo. Jaaka Mapeling a kile a bua, ‘mošomo wa tokologo ga o fele – o tswela mo melokong e e tlang.’ Ka jalo, re tshwanetse go tswela boswa jwa gagwe ka tsotlhe tsotlhe.”

The Deputy President conveys heartfelt condolences to the Maape family and all those who were touched by Comrade Maape’s life and work.

May they find comfort in knowing that his legacy will endure in the democratic South Africa he helped to build, and that his contributions to the liberation struggle, governance, and education will continue to inspire generations to come.

May his revolutionary soul rest in eternal peace.

The ANC Mourns the Passing of Comrade Kaobitsa “Bushy” Maape

By **ANC SECRETARY GENERAL FIKILE MBALULA**

THE African National Congress (ANC) has learned with a deep sense of loss and sadness of the passing of Comrade Kaobitsa “Bushy” Maape, a longstanding member of the movement, former Premier of the North West Province, freedom fighter, uMkhonto we Sizwe operative, and former Robben Island political prisoner. Comrade Maape dedicated his life to the struggle for liberation, the advancement of the people of South Africa, and the empowerment of communities through education, serving the movement with discipline, humility, and unwavering commitment throughout his life.

Comrade Maape was recruited into the underground structures of the ANC during the apartheid era and became an operative within the liberation movement. In 1986, he was imprisoned for his political activities and incarcerated on Robben Island, where he continued pursuing education and intellectual development despite the harsh conditions of apartheid imprisonment. His passion for education remained a defining feature of his life, as he believed deeply in the power of learning to liberate and uplift communities. Following his release, he

served the people in various leadership roles, including as Chairperson of the ANC in the Kgalagadi region, senior government official in the North West Province, and Premier of the North West Province from 2021 to 2024.

The ANC dips its revolutionary banner in honour of Comrade Bushy Maape and extends its heartfelt condolences to the Maape family, his comrades, friends, and the people of the North West Province. His life remains a testament to a generation of cadres who sacrificed greatly for freedom, democracy, education, and development in South Africa and yet are not in formal leadership structures.

May his revolutionary soul rest in eternal peace.



COSATU STATEMENT

COSATU is deeply concerned by the dangers posed by the Constitutional Court challenge to the Public Procurement Act

THE Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) is deeply concerned by the dangers posed by the Constitutional Court challenge to the Public Procurement Act by the Western Cape Provincial Government and the City of Cape Town. We are not convinced by their arguments presented to the Constitutional Court and fear they are putting cart on top of the horse in this instance. We believe their concerns would best be addressed by engaging Treasury on the Regulations. The risks of their court action would be to allow the wild west that is public procurement to continue.

COSATU supports the Public Procurement Act, in particular its objectives to boost emerging SM-MEs, historically disadvantaged communities and local businesses. We believe the Act drafted by government led by the African National Congress will be a critical weapon in the war against state capture and corruption that has become a cancer across the state, especially in State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and municipalities.

Workers have paid a horrific price with the explosion of state capture and corruption that has become the norm across the state. At its heart are the porous public

procurement systems. Key targets as highlighted in gory details by the Zondo Commission into State Capture and Corruption have been SOEs, in particular Eskom, Transnet, Metro Rail and countless municipalities and departments.

It defies logic that in the 21st century where communications have become digitised, that many municipalities opt for manual written quotes. Many state entities have shown a dogmatic resistance to any sense of oversight and transparency, let alone universal systems. The reason being that corruption thrives best under chaos and darkness. Moves towards transparency and accountability are a direct threat to that.

The Western Cape Provincial

Government and the City of Cape Town claim an absence of public participation in the drafting of the Act as a basis for their court challenge. Yet this Act went through extensive engagements and re-drafting during 3 years of deliberations with labour, business and members of the public at Nedlac and later in both Houses of Parliament. The nation's leading procurement specialists from various universities as well as international experts were brought into this process as part of enriching the Act.

Whilst COSATU has often butted heads with Treasury, we appreciate how open and inclusive they were in the drafting of this important Act. Parliament's Finance Committees both went the extra mile in providing space for public





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participation and actively included proposals from COSATU and other stakeholders.

The Province and City allege that

the Act amounts to an undue interference in provincial and local government's ability to procure. Again, concerns with regards to agility can and are best dealt with through Regulations. Different organs of state will still determine their procurement policies. All that will be expected is for the state to use a single online and transparent public procurement system, as is already done with public service institutions, including provincial departments. Equally they will be expected to, where possible, support emerging SMMEs, historically disadvantaged communities and local businesses. This is fundamental if we are to nurture and sustain local businesses and jobs which are under dire threat from cheap imports, and to give space for SMMEs to emerge and grow.

Why the City is rushing to court claiming the Act will be a hindrance to service delivery and emergency procurement is baffling as the Act, much to COSATU's disappointment, actually provides for significant exemptions and where regulations and

circulars are issued by national and provincial treasuries, these will not be binding upon municipalities or their entities. How the City and Province claim that they will be straight jacketed makes little sense.

The ability of Treasury's Chief Procurement Office to oversee, and where state institutions fall foul of the law, to act and hold them accountable is crucial if the state is to turn the tide against endemic public procurement corruption, save scarce public resources, support emerging SMMEs and protect badly needed local jobs. The Province and the City make the mistake of assuming that whilst they have strong systems in place, that this is replicated across other provinces and municipalities. It is not, and in fact it is a horror story and hence the need for a drastic overhaul for the entry point for state capture and corruption; our weak public procurement systems.

*Issued by COSATU.
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Water is Life, Sanitation is Dignity: Our Collective Journey Towards a Water-Secure South Africa

■ An extract from the Budget Vote Speech by **PEMMY MAJODINA**

AS we mark the 30th anniversary of our Constitution, which enshrines the fundamental right of every South African to clean water and dignified sanitation, we stand at a pivotal moment in our nation's development.

This milestone is a powerful reminder of the promise we made to our people in 1994 – a promise to dismantle the inequities of the past and build a society where basic services underpin human dignity and economic opportunity. While we have made remarkable strides in extending access to water and sanitation across the country, we must confront the reality that the reliability of these services has faltered in too many

places. By confronting these challenges with honesty and resolve, we are forging a brighter, more secure future for all.

President Cyril Ramaphosa rightly highlighted in his State of the Nation Address that, since democracy, South Africa has achieved significant progress in expanding basic water and sanitation infrastructure while securing national raw water supply. On a macro level, our raw water resources remain roughly in balance with demand, though localised shortages persist. The deeper crisis lies in municipal water services, where disruptions, sewage spillages, and deteriorating water quality have eroded public trust.

Many households now have a tap, but too often it runs dry or delivers water unsafe to drink. This reflects the daily struggles that test our commitment to the ideals of the Constitution. Recognising this, the President convened mayors on 30 April 2026 to launch the National Water Action Plan, a bold initiative that tackles the root causes with urgency and precision.

At the heart of the plan is the imperative to ring-fence revenue from water sales, ensuring that funds generated from this essential service directly support operations, maintenance, upgrading, and long-term sustainability. We cannot afford to treat water revenue as a general municipal piggy bank.

Where this discipline has been embraced – in municipalities like Ekurhuleni, Steve Tshwete, Thembisile Hani, and Bushbuckridge – we see tangible improvements in financial health and service delivery. These success stories light the way for others. The plan also confronts crime, corruption and sabotage head-on, because no infrastructure investment will endure if undermined by those who prey on public resources.

Our recent Water Indaba webinar demonstrated that meaningful progress is underway, particularly on national-level commitments. We are accelerating support to the most vulnerable municipalities through targeted interventions. This financial year, the Department of Water and Sanitation has been allocated R12.3 billion in infrastructure grants. The Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant is funding 70 major projects and the Water Services Infrastructure Grant is supporting 341 initiatives across provinces.

These investments are already yielding results. In the Eastern Cape, the Misgund Bulk Water Scheme and Sterkspruit Water Treatment Works refurbishment have been completed. In Limpopo, Phase 1 of the massive Giyani Water Project now serves 24 villages, while the Babanana Bulk Pipeline and Mametja Sekororo Scheme have brought relief to thousands. Similar breakthroughs have been recorded in KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, Gauteng, and North West, with major schemes like Klipdrift Water Treatment Works in Hammanskraal now poised to operate at full capacity.

We are particularly focused on the 107 worst-performing mu-



nicipalities identified through our rigorous Blue, Green, and No Drop assessments. The 2025 Green Drop Report, released at our awards ceremony in Steve Tshwete, painted a sobering picture. It shows that the percentage of wastewater systems in critical condition rose from 39% to 47%. We refuse to sugar-coat this decline, but we also refuse to accept it as inevitable.

By deploying Water Boards and partners like the Development Bank of Southern Africa as implementing agents, we are fast-tracking repairs and modernisation. At the same time, we are addressing the crippling debt owed by municipalities to Water Boards, which now exceeds R27 billion. Through credit control measures, coordinated engagements with provinces and National Treasury's withholding of equitable share allocations for serial non-payers, we are restoring financial accountability. Water Boards must remain financially

self-sustaining if they are to continue serving as reliable bulwarks of our water security.

Beyond urban and metropolitan challenges, we are intensifying efforts to reach unserved rural communities. Our nationwide Rural Access Programme has identified over 2,600 settlements lacking formal water infrastructure. Through cost-effective solutions such as borehole development, spring protection, and rainwater harvesting – supported by the Adopt-a-Village initiative – we are closing the gap. In the Eastern Cape alone, 14 borehole projects are underway, while KwaZulu-Natal advances 28 boreholes and spring protections. These interventions embody our belief that no community should be left behind.

We are equally committed to building the institutional and human capacity needed for lasting success. The establishment of the Water Sector Anti-Corruption Forum on 5 March 2026,

in partnership with the SIU, law enforcement, private sector, and civil society, marks a new chapter in safeguarding public resources.

Internally, we have reduced our vacancy rate and filled critical engineering and scientific posts while expanding our Learning Academy, which has awarded bursaries to over a thousand young South Africans. These future water engineers, scientists, and project managers represent the skilled workforce that will carry our sector forward.

On the global stage, South Africa continues to provide leadership. Through the African Union's Africa Investments Programme and our co-chairing – with France – of the investment theme at the 2026 United Nations Water Conference, we are mobilising resources and partnerships that will benefit the entire continent.

This Budget Vote is more than numbers on a page. It is a declaration of hope and a roadmap of possibility. It acknowledges our



challenges without apology, yet it radiates optimism rooted in action. Every completed scheme, every ring-fenced rand, every young professional trained, and every act of accountability brings us closer to the South Africa we envision, where water flows reliably, sanitation restores dignity, and infrastructure drives inclusive growth.

The road ahead demands even greater urgency and unity. Let us commit, as government, municipalities, Water Boards, private sector partners, civil society, and communities, to accelerate implementation, eliminate waste and corruption, and invest wisely in the systems that sustain life.

Let every mayor, every councillor, and every citizen embrace the principle that water revenue must serve water. Let us turn policy into practice and plans into pipes that deliver.

Water is Life. Sanitation is Dignity. Together, with courage, creativity, and collective effort, we will build a water-secure South Africa that honours our Constitution and inspires future generations. Victory is within our grasp. Failure is not an option.

Pemmy Majodina is an ANC NEC member and Minister of Water and Sanitation.



Water Regulation as an Instrument of Justice:

Africa's Path to Resilient and Equitable Development

■ By **DAVID MAHLOBO**

THIS week, I addressed the *4th Africa Water Supply and Sanitation Regulators Conference*. The central question is no longer whether water regulation matters. The real question is whether our regulatory systems are capable, transformative and resilient enough to confront the harsh realities of the 21st century.

Those realities are unforgiving: accelerating climate change, explosive urbanisation, population growth, crumbling infrastructure, deepening inequality, chronic financing gaps, rising energy costs, ecological degradation and intensifying competition for scarce water. In this environment, regulation can no longer be a routine administrative exercise. It must become a powerful instrument of justice, sustainability, accountability and inclusive development.

In South Africa, this conviction is anchored in our Constitution. Section 27 explicitly recognises access to sufficient water as a fundamental human right. This provision places a clear obligation on the state to take reasonable measures, within available resources, to progressively realise that right for all citizens.

The National Water Act of 1998



and the Water Services Act of 1997 gave practical effect to this vision, breaking decisively from the exclusionary, race-based water governance of the past. These laws established a new foundation grounded in equity, sustainability and the principle that water is a national resource that belongs to all the people of South Africa.

The National Water Act, in particular, introduced one of the most progressive governance frameworks in the world by requiring that water resources be protected, used, developed, conserved, managed and controlled in ways that meet the needs of both present and future generations. At its heart lies the principle of water

justice. It means access to water and sanitation must never again be determined by race, income, geography or historical privilege. Rural communities, informal settlements and small towns must enjoy the same dignity and opportunity as affluent urban areas.

Water justice also demands balance. Water institutions must be financially viable and operationally efficient. No society can claim true progress while millions still endure unreliable supply, unsafe sanitation and frequent infrastructure failure. Regulation, therefore, is not merely about compliance. It is about protecting human dignity, safeguarding public health, enabling economic participation, preserving the environment and

deepening democracy through equitable service delivery.

South Africa is a naturally water-scarce country, with average annual rainfall well below the global mean. Climate variability has worsened the frequency and severity of droughts and floods, while demand continues to surge from urban growth, industry, mining, agriculture and the moral imperative to expand services to underserved communities. In this context, effective regulation is not optional, but indispensable.

Strong, independent regulation enables equitable water allocation, performance monitoring, consumer protection, efficiency gains, reduction of non-revenue water and greater financial sustainability. Most importantly, it builds public trust. Communities must believe that water institutions are transparent, accountable and capable of delivering consistent, quality services.

It is for these reasons that the South African Government, under President Cyril Ramaphosa, has made water sector reform a national priority. These reforms are aligned with the National Development Plan, the National Infrastructure Plan 2050 and Operation Vulindlela. Two flagship initiatives stand out.

First, we are establishing an Independent Economic Regulator for the water sector. Its goal is to strengthen tariff oversight, promote transparency, support evidence-based benchmarking and create a predictable environment that balances affordability for consumers with the financial health needed for long-term infrastructure investment. This is not narrow price control. It is about building a credible, fair and



investor-friendly regulatory system.

Second, the proposed National Water Resources Infrastructure Agency will significantly enhance our capacity to finance, develop, operate and maintain strategic bulk water infrastructure - the backbone of national water security. Without renewed investment in storage, treatment, conveyance and maintenance, neither economic growth nor universal access is sustainable.

Complementing these institutions are targeted amendments to the National Water Act and Water Services Act. These changes will strengthen equitable water allocation, improve governance, tighten resource protection and introduce operating licences for water services providers. The licences will ensure that every institution delivering water and sanitation possesses the necessary technical, financial and operational competence, and that persistent failure carries real consequences.

Regulation must ultimately be judged by its impact on people's daily lives, such as reliable taps, dignified sanitation, healthier communities and responsive institutions.

Across Africa, the challenges

are formidable – ageing infrastructure, limited financing, weak municipal capacity, high non-revenue water losses, pollution and climate vulnerability. Yet within these difficulties lie historic opportunities to modernise systems with new technology, harness innovation and data, deepen regional cooperation, mobilise blended finance and responsible private-sector participation, and place water justice at the centre of public policy.

Africa will not achieve Agenda 2063 or the Sustainable Development Goals without secure, sustainable water and sanitation systems. Water is not peripheral to development. Water is development.

As regulators, governments, utilities, financiers and development partners, we share a profound responsibility. We must build institutions that are ethical, capable, transparent and rooted in the lived realities of our people. Regulation must never become detached bureaucracy. It should encourage innovation while protecting the vulnerable. It must remain financially sustainable while staying socially responsive. It must ensure that future generations inherit water systems that are resilient, inclusive and environmentally sound.

The future of Africa's development, public health, economic prosperity, environmental sustainability and social stability will depend, to a significant degree, on how effectively we govern, regulate, protect and manage our water resources today.

David Mahlobo is an ANC NEC member and Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation.



The truth about xenophobia in South Africa

■ By **MAVUSO MSIMANG**

SOUTH Africa is once again confronting a resurgence of xenophobia, marked by violence, intimidation and organised hostility directed at foreign nationals, particularly African migrants. The scenes are familiar, the slogans recycled, the explanations depressingly predictable. Once more, migrants are blamed for unemployment, crime and social decay — and once more, the deeper causes of those problems are left largely undisturbed.

This moment, however, should not be treated as an aberration. Xenophobic violence did not emerge decades after democracy took root; it appeared disturbingly early in the democratic dispensation. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, foreign nationals were already being attacked

in townships and inner city areas, accused of stealing jobs and housing from communities themselves still struggling under the weight of exclusion.

I have, over the years, written op eds condemning such violence, often in response to assurances that the latest outbreak would be the last. Those assurances have consistently proved hollow. Some of the violence in the early democratic period was extraordinarily cruel, including cases where victims were doused with petrol and set alight — acts designed to terrorise as much as to kill. Yet even then, the country failed to undertake a sustained reckoning with what this violence revealed about our social fractures.

The latest spurt of xenophobic sentiment is occurring in an en-

vironment of genuine hardship. Unemployment remains unacceptably high, particularly among young people. Violent crime continues to ravage communities, and the spread of hard drugs has intensified social breakdown. These are serious problems that require serious policy responses. What is indefensible is the insistence on attributing them, reflexively and incorrectly, to foreign nationals.

Migrants are accused of taking jobs, driving crime and draining public services. This narrative is politically convenient but empirically false. Research by reputable institutions has repeatedly shown that migrant entrepreneurship contributes to employment creation. On average, small migrant owned businesses employ roughly two people each. These

firms often operate in under served areas and generate livelihoods where few alternatives exist. Yet such findings are routinely dismissed, not because they are flawed, but because they complicate a simpler story of blame.

Even basic economic reasoning struggles to gain traction in the public debate. The suggestion that mass deportations would reduce unemployment is not supported by evidence. South Africa's unemployment crisis is structural, rooted in persistently low economic growth, policy uncertainty, infrastructure failure and long standing skills mismatches. Removing migrants would not raise growth or meaningfully expand job creation; it would simply destroy existing economic activity.

It is possible to understand the frustration of an unemployed South African who sees foreign nationals working in restaurants, construction sites or other visible sectors while they themselves remain excluded. Unemployment erodes dignity and breeds resentment. But understanding that frustration does not justify exploiting it – and when political leaders do so, the consequences are serious.

When politicians ignore the reality that low GDP growth is the primary driver of high unemployment, and that weak growth is largely a consequence of poor economic planning, regulatory incoherence and institutional decline, they are not merely mistaken. They are diverting attention away from state failure. Scapegoating migrants may win applause, but it offers no credible path to economic recovery.

The same avoidance of responsi-

bility is evident in the treatment of immigration enforcement. Widespread corruption in the Department of Home Affairs, the police and traffic authorities has undermined border management and immigration control from within. Documents can be purchased, arrests negotiated away, and enforcement selectively applied. This, more than any external factor, explains why irregular migration appears unmanaged.

Responding to these institutional failures with raids and mass expulsions is deeply counterproductive. When a leaking roof lets water into a house, mopping the floor does not solve the problem. The leaks must be fixed. Yet political energy is repeatedly directed at symptoms rather than causes, leaving the underlying system unchanged.

There are, however, reform efforts that deserve acknowledgement. The Minister of Home Affairs' plan to introduce an Electronic Travel Authorisation system for visa applications has the potential to significantly reduce opportunities for corruption by limiting discretionary decision making and face to face interactions. Digitisation will not eliminate misconduct entirely, but it is a necessary step towards restoring credibility and basic functionality in a department that has been compromised for years.

In the longer term, South Africa should be thinking beyond crisis management towards regional integration. A genuinely functional Southern African Development Community – one that allows capital, goods and people to move more freely across borders – would address migration



CLEANING UP HOME AFFAIRS

- Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) closing systemic loopholes
- Machine learning detecting fraudulent passports
- Biometric identity matching
- Automation reducing discretion

home affairs
Department: Home Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DELIVERING DIGNITY FOR ALL



pressures far more effectively than raids or expulsions ever could. Such an arrangement would take time to negotiate and implement, but if done properly it would expand regional growth, reduce irregular migration and align labour supply with economic demand. Ironically, once such a system is in place, South Africa may well find itself wishing more people were coming to work here rather than before.

Incompetence also compounds the problem. Thousands of asylum seekers have lived in South Africa for years while awaiting decisions on their claims. Administrative backlogs, understaffing and poor management within Home Affairs have left many people in legal limbo – unable to work lawfully, yet expected to survive. This limbo fuels informality and resentment while doing nothing to restore order to the system.

There is also an uncomfortable regional dimension to the migration debate. Many Zimbabweans, Mozambicans, Basotho and Ma-

lawians in South Africa are economic migrants, driven here by collapsing economies and limited opportunity at home.

Among Zimbabweans, in particular, there is resentment towards South Africa over its longstanding diplomatic support for a government widely seen by its citizens as corrupt and undemocratic.

That resentment was sharpened after Zimbabwe's most recent disputed election, when President Emmerson Mnangagwa's inauguration was attended by only a small number of regional leaders, including South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa and Mozambique's president, while most SADC leaders stayed away. The symbolism was not lost on Zimbabweans.

A bitter joke circulated soon after: that President Ramaphosa would have found his flight back to Johannesburg increasingly crowded – filled with citizens who felt compelled to follow him south after he had helped celebrate what

many viewed as a dictator's return to office. Beneath the humour lay a serious accusation: that regional diplomacy has helped entrench the conditions that export poverty and migration.

None of this excuses xenophobic violence. Collective punishment and vigilantism are never justified. But the persistence of xenophobia in South Africa cannot be separated from economic failure, institutional decay and political evasion. Migrants did not create these conditions. They are navigating them.

Until South Africa confronts the real sources of unemployment, crime and governance failure – and until political leaders stop trading analysis for applause – xenophobia will continue to return in new forms, with new targets, but the same destructive consequences.

Mavuso Msimang is the Deputy President of the ANC Veterans League.

The time for unity is now

*Address by SANCO DP, Chris Malematja
in Community Platform*

COMRADES, bahlali, revolutionaries of our time, greetings to you all. We stand here today as the children of a proud history, the inheritors of a struggle that was written in blood, sweat and defiance. The South African National Civic Organisation was born in 1992 from the merging of the very civics that shook apartheid to its foundations. We are the Vaal Civic that led the rent and service boycotts of 1984 and made the townships ungovernable. We are the Soweto Civic that confronted forced removals and Bantu education with mass defiance. We are the Alexandra Civic, the Natal Civic, the Eastern Cape civics that stood firm under the state of emergency when the enemy thought they had broken our spirit.

Our struggle is carried in the name of Cde Sam Ntuli of Thokoza, who gave his life defending bahlali against state-sponsored violence. It lives in Tembisa Civic, in Kattlehong, in Sebokeng, in every ward where ordinary men and women decided that fear would no longer rule them. SANCO was never formed to beg for service delivery. We were formed to organise it, to demand it, and to hold power accountable until it is delivered.

We know what organised power can do. The Rand Boycott brought white capital to its knees because we understood that our money was our weapon. The rent and

service boycotts in the Vaal forced a bankrupt apartheid regime to the negotiating table.

Our anti-eviction and anti-cut-off campaigns stopped thousands of families from being thrown onto the streets after 1994. Every time bahlali stood together, the state had to move. That is the power we must revive now.

As Dr Martin Luther King Jr reminded the world, injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We cannot pretend that freedom is complete when a child in a rural village still walks five kilometres for dirty water while suburbs run swimming pools. We cannot pretend that democracy is alive when corruption eats the budget meant for clinics, roads

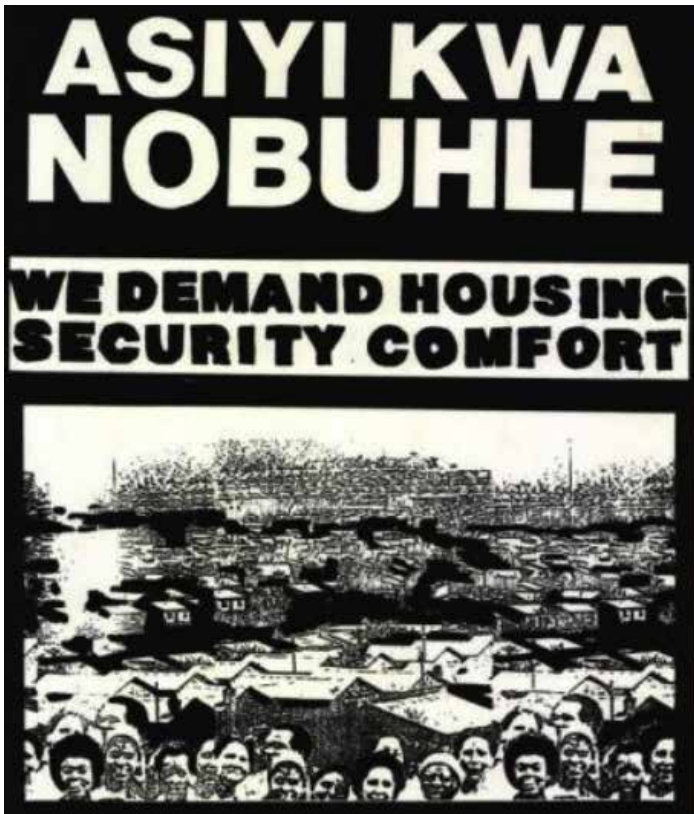
and jobs. That is injustice, and we are duty bound to confront it with the same militancy our forebears showed in the streets.

But we are also a movement of reconstruction, not only of resistance. As Mother Teresa taught us, if we really want to love, we must learn how to forgive. We forgive the past so that we can unite for the future, but we will never forget the pain of bahlali. Forgiveness without justice is surrender, and SANCO will never surrender.

Today our mission is clear and it is carried in three strategic objectives that must guide every branch, every ward, every province.

First, we defend and advance service delivery. Our task is to





Community struggles of the 1980s

keep its hands off our sovereignty and to respect our democracy. Africa is not a playground for regime change. Africa belongs to Africans, and we will defend it.

Comrades, the time for empty slogans is over. The time for unity is now. Let us unite SANCO from branch to national, one organisation with one voice. Let us unite the Alliance, ANC, SACP, COSATU and SANCO, working as one fist against poverty, unemployment and inequality. Let us unite all South Africans, black and white, urban and rural, citizen and legal migrant, under the banner of a common future.

We respect the rule of law, but we will not respect lawlessness by those in power. We will wage war against corruption, against crime, against gender-based violence, and against the unemployment that is stealing the future of our youth. We will build cooperatives, we will support MSMEs, and we will take back our economy street by street, village by village.

This is our duty. This is our hour. Let every branch rise, let every comrade organise, let every bahlali stand up and say enough is enough.

***Amandla! Mayibuye iAfrika!
Nothing for bahlali without bahlali!***

recruit and organise every street and every village into active civic structures. No municipality will hide behind empty budgets while millions vanish into the pockets of tenderpreneurs. SANCO will be in the wards, monitoring, reporting, mobilising, until water flows, lights are on, and refuse is collected without fail.

Second, we enforce inclusive economic growth and job creation. Nothing for bahlali without bahlali. We demand that forty percent of municipal and state procurement goes to local cooperatives, MSMEs and township businesses. We will establish Civic Economic Forums in every ward to link our people to SEDA, SEFA and real markets. Jobs must come from within our communities, not only from foreign investors who extract and leave us poorer.

Third, we defend sovereignty, regional unity and international solidarity. SANCO stands for a strong and united SADC. We are

one with our brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho, Eswatini and beyond. But we reject open and illegal immigration that destroys jobs, housing and services for our people. Borders must be managed with dignity and law, and the rights of citizens must come first.

We extend our solidarity to the people of Palestine, Iran, Lebanon and Venezuela who stand under the boot of imperialist aggression. We call on Trump-led Western imperialism to cease fire, to respect international law, to



The Time for Africa to Claim Itself Is Now or Never

■ By **SELLO SHAI-MORULE**

MAY 25th was declared Africa Liberation Day and later Africa Day by the Organisation of African Union (OAU). As we celebrate this day, let us remember, the good host and one of our own, Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia. When the Organisation of African Union became the African Union (AU) in 2002, the day kept its significance. Africa Day celebrates African unity, cultural diversity, and progress. It is a public holiday in several African countries and is marked with cultural events, speeches, and discussions on Pan-Africanism and Agenda 2063. Africa Day did not start as a celebration of culture alone. It started as a political act – African leaders locking arms to finish decolonization and speak with one voice.

For Africa to claim itself, it starts with me. I was born into a family already shaped by exile. Apartheid and colonisation tore many of us from our loved ones. We were among the fortunate ones. Our loved ones came back with nothing but their lives –bodies intact, minds unbroken. Many went on to serve in the newly formed South African National Defence Force, only to reach the beginning of their pension years just as they were starting over. Two of my relatives were in North Africa before I took my first breath. Even then, the war cry of *Mayibuye iAfrica* “Africa, come back from the colonizers” was in my bones. At first, I thought it was just a slogan. That changed the day I chose to stand with those who were prepared to lay down their lives for freedom.

In a few days, we will mark 25 May, Africa Day. On this day in 1963, the Organisation of African Unity was founded in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It was born from the conviction that Africans must unite, govern themselves, and define their future. Sixty-two years later, the question remains urgent. Has the OAU and its successor, the African Union, silenced the guns? Has Africa wrapped the wealth beneath its soil in cotton wool and kept it for its people? Has it ended poverty, starvation, and preventable disease? Has it united across the artificial borders drawn by others and dismantled them in practice, not just in speech?

Most critically, Has Africa told its own story, or is someone else still telling Africa who she is?





Founding Fathers of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).

The answer to that last question determines everything else. If we do not control the narrative, we will not control the resources, the politics, or the destiny that flows from them. The time for Africa to claim itself is now or never.

The education system we pass down to our children today remains a system of master and servant. It teaches them to think, but only in someone else's language. If the Bible could cross oceans in slave ships and be translated into hundreds of languages, why is it still difficult to translate physics, mathematics, biology, history, and other core subjects into our own mother tongues? Why is it that the language we speak at home, the language of our first thoughts and first prayers, is treated as inferior and embarrassing in our own classrooms?

Are we our own worst enemies, or have we been cursed into believing that knowledge only lives in foreign tongues?

As we mark these days of remembrance, reflecting on the pain and

sorrow of our yesterday, we must ask ourselves a difficult question. Are we making real progress, or are we simply observing these days out of compliance, as mere decorations of a past we refuse to confront? If we are not careful, that very history may melt away like snow in the sun. I hope that one day these questions will find practical answers in the lives of our people.

Even as I raise these painful observations, I must acknowledge that Africa Day remains vital. By the early 1960s, most of North and West Africa had won independence from colonial rule. African leaders sought a way to coordinate the struggle against the remaining colonial regimes in Southern Africa, and to promote African unity, economic cooperation, and non-alignment during the Cold War.

From 22 to 25 May 1963, thirty-two independent African states met in Addis Ababa. Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia hosted the summit. After heated debate between the "Casablanca Group," which wanted a Unit-

ed States of Africa immediately, and the "Monrovia Group," which preferred looser cooperation, a compromise was reached. On 25 May 1963, the Charter of the Organisation of African Unity was signed, and the OAU was born.

Those leaders committed to coordinate economic, political, and cultural cooperation among member states, to defend sovereignty and territorial integrity, to eradicate all forms of colonialism in Africa, and to promote unity and solidarity. Yet today, as wildfires of xenophobia and Afro-phobia burn across the continent, one cannot help but feel that Emperor Haile Selassie and those who dreamed with him are turning in their graves.

Mayibuye iAfrica. The time for Africa to claim itself is now or never.

Sello Shai-Morule is Chairperson of the ANC Branch in Ward 17, Mbombela Sub-Region in Mpumalanga, and political and social activist. He writes in his personal capacity.

CONCOURT JUDGEMENT ON PHALA PHALA: Hypocrisy and the Politics of Selective Outrage

■ By **CORNELIUS MONAMA**

POLITICAL vultures have begun circling above the Union Buildings with renewed anticipation, convinced that they have finally detected blood and that their prey is within reach. However, for all the noise and manufactured outrage, the buffalo is neither wounded nor collapsing. If anything, President Cyril Ramaphosa is destined to survive this desperate campaign which seeks to seize, through underhand means, what they have repeatedly failed to achieve at the ballot box.

A political frenzy triggered by the recent Constitutional Court judgment on Parliament's handling of the Phala Phala matter has reached a crescendo, with predictable calls for Ramaphosa's resignation. These demands, amplified mainly by the MK Party, the Economic Freedom Fighters, and their so-called "*political analysts*", are neither legally sustainable nor politically principled. Rather, they expose a dangerous pattern of selective outrage, constitutional opportunism, and the cynical weaponisation of accountability mechanisms for factional and electoral gain.

What exactly did the Constitutional Court actually decide? Firstly, the President was not on trial, and the judgment did not



conclude that he violated the Constitution. The court did not establish corruption, money laundering or criminal conduct. The Court dealt with process, legality and parliamentary procedure. It focused on the conduct and constitutional obligations of Parliament, particularly whether the National Assembly properly discharged its oversight responsibilities in handling the Section 89 independent panel report relating to the Phala Phala allegations. Those who claim otherwise are either misrepresenting the judgment or weaponising it for political mobilisation. The loudest voices demanding Ramaphosa's resignation behave as though the President had been convicted. This is intellectually dishonest

and constitutionally reckless.

The irony is staggering. Many of those now presenting themselves as guardians of constitutional morality are individuals and organisations with deeply troubled relationships with accountability and the Constitution itself. Jacob Zuma, whose supporters now seek to lecture the nation about accountability and constitutionalism, was found by the Constitutional Court to have violated his oath of office. He defied the Constitutional Court during the State Capture era, continues to attack judges and institutions and was ultimately imprisoned for contempt of court. Who will forget his daring escape from the Commission of Enquiry during lunch?

To this day, he remains a fugitive from accountability.

Similarly, Julius Malema and the EFF have repeatedly attacked the judiciary whenever judgments do not go their way. From verbal assaults on judges to reckless insinuations about judicial conspiracies, their conduct has often undermined public confidence in constitutional institutions. It is therefore astonishing that these same characters now seek to position themselves as custodians of constitutional purity. Their outrage is selective because it is politically manufactured. When adverse judgments are handed down against them, they denounce the courts as captured, biased or politically compromised. When judgments appear politically useful against Ramaphosa, they suddenly rediscover respect for judicial authority. This contradiction reveals that their commitment is not to constitutionalism, but to expediency.

Attacking President Ramaphosa for taking a flawed report to judicial review, and criticising the ANC for backing him, is equally mind-boggling. The accusation that Ramaphosa is “evading accountability” by pursuing legal remedies is flawed and nonsensical. Seeking judicial review is not evidence of guilt or avoidance. It is the lawful exercise of



constitutional rights available to every citizen, including the President. Given the serious legal defects identified in that report, Ramaphosa’s decision to challenge aspects of the Section 89 panel report is entirely legitimate. Seeking judicial review is not only reasonable but necessary to protect the integrity of the constitutional process.

Given that any impeachment process would rely heavily on a report whose legality and ratio-

nality are still being contested in the courts, rushing impeachment proceedings before the judicial review is completed defies logic. This is not about accountability, but naked political desperation.

Both the woodwork and Nkandla fellows have used the appeal process with monotonous regularity, a right they feel President Ramaphosa is not entitled to. Consider the glaring inconsistency. Jacob Zuma has repeatedly appealed verdict after verdict, employing what has become known as the “Stalingrad strategy” to delay his corruption trial for years. Similarly, Julius Malema, a convicted criminal, has postponed his imprisonment by lodging an appeal. Those who have systematically exploited every legal avenue to evade accountability lack the moral and ethical authority to position themselves as guardians of the Constitution or to lecture us on accountability and the need

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness.

Matthew 23:27

for immediate compliance with court orders.

The true test of democratic leadership is not whether one always wins in court, but whether one respects the constitutional system even in disagreement. On that measure, Ramaphosa's conduct reflects constitutional maturity and stands in sharp contrast to many of his critics. Unlike Zuma and Malema who routinely attack judges and delegitimise institutions whenever outcomes are unfavourable, Ramaphosa has consistently affirmed the authority of the courts and the supremacy of the Constitution. He has not mobilised supporters against the judiciary. He has not accused judges of conspiracies. He has not undermined the legitimacy of constitutional institutions. Instead, he has utilised lawful constitutional mechanisms to challenge decisions he believes are flawed. This distinction is crucial.

Yes, judges are fallible human beings. That is why constitutional democracies make provision for appeals, rescission and dissenting judgments. I firmly believe the Constitutional Court judgment itself is unlikely to survive an application for rescission on grounds of judicial over-reach. The Court did not merely tell Parliament what to do, but prescribed, step by step, how it must do it. If left unchallenged, such an approach risks ushering in what some have called "the dictatorship of the judiciary." The judiciary must be the first to preserve the delicate balance between constitutional oversight and respect for the separation of powers. This judgment has severely curtailed Parliament's institutional autonomy.

The clamour for Ramaphosa's removal must be understood in

its broader political context. The Phala Phala controversy erupted at a time when his anti-corruption agenda was directly threatening entrenched patronage networks that had flourished during the State Capture era. It is therefore unsurprising that some of the loudest calls for his ousting come from those who feel most threatened by the restoration of independence to law-enforcement agencies that were systematically hollowed out during the Zuma era.

This does not mean Ramaphosa should be above scrutiny. But accountability must be grounded in fairness, legality and evidence, not factional vendettas. Alleged constitutional violations should be subjected to formal judicial scrutiny and due process, not surrendered to the anarchy of mob justice.

There is also a dangerous double standard at play. South Africans witnessed years of systemic corruption, institutional collapse and open constitutional defiance under Zuma's presidency. Many who remained silent during those years, or actively defended constitutional delinquency, now sud-

denly demand immediate resignation over a judgement that does not implicate the President.

This inconsistency exposes the opportunistic outrage and hypocrisy of his detractors. They invoke constitutional morality and the rule of law only when it suits their political agenda, while disregarding them whenever they become inconvenient.

Even the accusation that the ANC has been abusing its parliamentary majority rests on shaky grounds. Democracy is, by definition, founded on majority rule. Political parties fight hard in elections to win the majority to implement their mandates. There is nothing wrong with the ANC exercising the parliamentary majority it legitimately commands. Winning a motion through that majority is not an abuse of power, but democracy in action. It should neither be criminalised nor turned into a source of shame.

Cornelius Monama is a former National Communication Manager of the African National Congress. He writes in his personal capacity.

WHAT IS HYPOCRISY?

Hypocrisy is the practice of claiming to possess certain beliefs, values or feelings but behaving in a way that contradicts those claims. It involves presenting a false appearance of virtue or goodness while concealing real character traits or inclinations. Essentially, it is saying one thing and doing another.

The Revolution does not need Empty Noise – it needs **Politically Trained Cadres**

■ By **STAN ITSHEGETSENG**

A revolutionary without political education is dangerous. Very dangerous.

An activist without ideological grounding becomes emotional instead of strategic. He shouts before he thinks. He attacks before he understands. He mistakes anger for leadership and confusion for militancy. Such a cadre becomes radar less, directionless, shooting from the hip like a political cowboy drunk on slogans and social media applause.

That is how demagogues are born.

The African National Congress was never built by political tourists, gossip merchants, or slogan engineers. It was built by disciplined revolutionaries who studied politics, history, economics, law, organisation, international solidarity, and the science of liberation.

OR Tambo understood this. Moses Kotane understood this. Chris Hani understood this. Nelson Mandela understood this.

Even the great revolutionary movements of the world understood one permanent truth: political education is the backbone of revolutionary survival.

Mao Tse tung correctly warned that cadres are decisive once the political line has been deter-



mined. (marxists.org) Mao insisted that education for cadres must focus on understanding the practical problems of the revolution guided by revolutionary theory and not empty abstract rhetoric.

The Chinese Revolution did not survive because people were merely angry. It survived because cadres were politically trained, ideologically disciplined, mentally hardened, and organisationally prepared.

Today the Communist Party of China still invests heavily in political schools, cadre development, ideological training, and disciplined leadership development. President Xi Jinping recently reminded Party schools that their mission is “fostering talent for the Party” and producing officials capable of carrying the national mission forward. Chinese

government statement on Party schools and cadre development Xi further warned that without firm ideals and beliefs, cadres collapse under pressure and become consumed by selfishness and political weakness. Xi Jinping on ideals and beliefs in cadre development

That is not accidental.

China understands that a movement without political education eventually becomes a supermarket of factions, opportunists, careerists, influencers, and populists.

Look at the Asian Tigers. Their rise was not built on noise and emotional politics. It was built on disciplined planning, patriotic education, long term thinking, developmental consciousness, and leadership preparation. Nations

rise when cadres think beyond themselves.

Political education is therefore not some side programme in the ANC.

Political education is Sunday to the church.

It is where cadres sharpen their minds. It is where revolutionaries learn discipline. It is where activists understand the balance of forces. It is where emotional reactions are transformed into strategic interventions. It is where slogans are tested against reality. It is where the movement develops political stamina to withstand propaganda, media warfare, infiltration, and temporary political storms.

A cadre without political education becomes easy to manipulate.

Today political parties are mushrooming everywhere like weeds in a rainforest. Every angry voice with a microphone now calls itself revolutionary. Every populist with a TikTok account believes they are a liberator. Every slogan merchant believes shouting is leadership.

But history is merciless.

Movements led by emotionalism collapse quickly because they are driven by impulse instead of strategy. A well-trained revolutionary understands the bigger picture. A disciplined cadre knows when to speak, when to organise, when to mobilise, when to negotiate, and when to hold the line under pressure.

A politically educated activist does not panic during storms. They understand contradictions. They understand balance of forces.



es. They understand that revolution is not a weekend trend but a long term struggle requiring patience, discipline, and intellectual stamina.

The ANC must therefore return aggressively to the culture of reading, studying, writing with purpose, debating, organising, documenting, theorising, and training cadres. A revolutionary movement that stops writing eventually loses its memory, its ideological confidence, and its ability to define reality for itself. Writing is not a luxury of intellectuals sitting in ivory towers. Writing is a weapon of struggle. It is how revolutions preserve truth against propaganda. It is how movements sharpen ideas into doctrine, strategy, policy, and mobilisation. Every disciplined cadre must become a student of political thought and a producer of political thought.

The movement must open the floodgates of political education without fear or factional gate keeping. Political education cannot become a private tuckshop controlled by cliques, factions, friendships, and political camp

managers. The classroom of the revolution must never be reduced to a loyalty test for proximity to power.

If a comrade possesses knowledge, revolutionary experience, organisational wisdom, intellectual depth, strategic clarity, or historical understanding, that comrade must be allowed to teach, to train, to guide discussions, to lead political disquisitions, and to sharpen the consciousness of cadres regardless of factional labels or personal friendships with leaders.

A movement that silences its thinkers because of petty internal battles weakens itself intellectually and spiritually. Political education must rise above gossip, camps, factional vendettas, and temporary leadership contests. The revolution is bigger than factions. The National Democratic Revolution is bigger than individual ambitions.

The ANC once produced giants because it allowed rigorous engagement of ideas. Debate was not feared. Intellectual sharpness was not punished. Political



thought was not quarantined behind factional walls. The movement welcomed organisers, theorists, trade unionists, writers, activists, diplomats, underground operatives, students, and community leaders into one revolutionary school of thought.

That spirit must return.

Because an organisation that gate keeps political education eventually produces followers instead of thinkers, praise singers instead of revolutionaries, and emotional mobs instead of disciplined cadres.

Without political education, a movement becomes blind.

Without ideology, power becomes reckless.

Without disciplined cadres, revolution becomes theatre.

The ANC must produce cadres who can defend the movement in communities, in universities, in churches, in courts, in parliament, on radio, on television, and in the battlefield of ideas.

Because the future does not belong to the loudest voice.

It belongs to the most politically prepared.



Our Alliance is like a cup of coffee – its ingredients are distinct yet inseparable

MY OATH CANNOT CHOOSE BETWEEN THE ANC AND THE SACP, BUT COMMITS ME TO DEFENDING THE TRUE TRADITIONS AND CULTURE OF OUR REVOLUTIONARY ALLIANCE, LED BY THE ANC IN THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

■ By **AMBASSADOR PHATSE JUSTICE PIITSO**

EARLY morning today, disquieted by difficult realities facing our national democratic revolution, before browsing the fascinating prologue, Raul Castro, A Man in the Revolution, by his friend and comrade, Nikolai Leonov, cold winter visiting shores of our motherland, the most beautiful geographical location on the universe, home of episodes of our heavenly and earthly, where destiny is the marathon of patience, resilience and selflessness.

Tormented thoughts, ransacking my kitchen, yearning for the aro-

matic winter coffee, trapping heat to survive complex phenomenon of nature, could not imagine the noise I incurred, waking my wife from her deep sleep, as I mix the coffee capsules, milk, sugar and hot water, came the realisation that even the epoch of the modern scientific world, would take what humanity might not discover, ability to separate again the ingredients in my cup of coffee.

The fundamental question is what do we make of ourselves in the domain, how would the future generations perceive of us, having betrayed the aspirations

our forebears stood for centuries, perishing for the very noble cause, struggled for the freedom and dignity of all humanity. I pose the question to all renegades within the ranks of our revolutionary alliance *“who are we in our generation, to break the revolutionary Alliance, led by our national liberation movement, the African National Congress?”*

I found it the most difficult question to answer, but to take responsibility, that I was there, when some of these unknown tendencies, infiltrated our liberation movement, contributing to the demise of its revolutionary character, distorting its historic mission, forces of counter revolution conniving to transform our democratic republic into a lumpen state, derailing our forward march to attain the objectives of our national democratic revolution, arising out of the womb of centuries-old legacy of colonialism and imperialism.

Glancing at the rising sun from the horizons, gathering strength and determination, the beauty of our mother nature, I began to appreciate the fundamental theoretical question, that our alliance remains inseparable from its revolutionary task, living organism of our struggles, like a cup of coffee, whose ingredients are inseparable from each other. We must constantly be reminded that our revolutionary task, as the Alliance, is to build a new democratic society.

I felt agitated to make a call to all renegades, masters of demagoguery, mawkish

snivelers, vacillating against our revolution, those hellbent on the destruction of our Alliance, talking left but walking right, destroying

its historic necessity, its traditions and culture. The Alliance of the South African Communist Party, Congress of South African Trade Unions, South African National Civic Organisation and mass democratic formations is led by the African National Congress.

History bears reference that it is only the ultra-left or the ultra-right, who sufferer from the common disease, of calling the working class into a revolution, where there is no revolutionary situation. For they are not equipped with the necessary tools of our revolutionary theory, to appraise objective and subjective realities, in a given concrete historical conditions.

In the words of wisdom from Vladimir Lenin, the revolutionary leader of the world working class movement, it is indisputable that a revolution is impossible without a revolutionary situation, and that it is not every revolutionary situation that leads to a revolution. It is only when the ruling class can no longer rule in the old way and the working class is capable of making the bourgeois state ungovernable, that a revolution can take place.

He further says that without these objective changes, which are in-

dependent of the will, not only of individual groups and parties, but even of individual classes, a revolution as a general rule, is impossible. It is the totality of the concrete circumstances, when the objective changes are accompanied by subjective changes, that we can usher a revolution.

The principal reason why in 2017, when interviewed by the London Morning Star newspaper, about the South African Communist Party contemplating of standing for elections independently of the ruling party, the ANC, I said that we cannot leave the masses without a vanguard and the vanguard without the masses – quoting Lenin’s *“Left-wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder”* when he said: *“With the vanguard alone, victory is impossible.”*

Lenin warned the world communist movement of growing tendencies of leftwing populism, of the dangers of bowing to the worship of a spontaneous working-class movement, and belittling the importance of consciousness and theory. Warning of tendencies of throwing the vanguard alone into decisive battle before the whole class, before the broad masses have taken a position, of direct support of the vanguard, referring to that not be folly, but a crime.



Over the last hundred years, members of the Communist Party have been taking leadership responsibility of the national democratic revolution as first and foremost leaders and members of the ANC, appreciating the ANC as the leader of our national democratic revolution. This has been the strategic orientation of our revolutionary alliance, during the period of the underground, in prison, in exile and after the unbanning of the liberation movement.

During the negotiations period, our erstwhile revered revolutionary, the late General Secretary of the South African Communist Party, Cde Joe Slovo, mastered the art of the balance of forces, being the brain behind the historic document of the “*sunset clause*”, which was hailed by the whole world, as a strategic qualitative breakthrough, guiding our transition into the first national general elections. The “*sunset clause*” became a fabric of the ideal democratic society we want to build.

After the historic first national general elections, which ushered overwhelming support for the ANC as the leader of our newly-democratic state, dozens of communist leaders were deployed in all sectors of our society, both in the public and private sector, some becoming dominant in the national and provincial cabinets, national and provincial legislatures, in the administration as Directors-General, CEOs of state-owned and private sector entities and many other key roles in the decision making arena.

It will be untrue of members of the SACP today, to point failures at the doorsteps of the ANC, and



not to take responsibility themselves. It will be counter-revolutionary of members of the SACP, to point at the weaknesses of the ANC, as a reason for breaking our revolutionary Alliance, of leading the SACP to stand for elections alone, independent of the ANC. It will be counter-revolutionary of us to do so without looking at ourselves, without looking at the role we have played in weakening the ANC and COSATU or even the SACP itself. It will be disingenuous of members of the SACP, not to take responsibility of the challenges faced by our liberation movement in particular and our democratic revolution in general.

But the lesson we have all learn, taking cognisance of the unfolding events in our country, looking at the demise of our national democratic revolution in the hands of lumpen provocateurs, serving themselves and not the people, we have no choice but to build and consolidate on the unity and cohesion of the ANC, to renew the ANC, forge unity and traditions of our revolutionary alliance, understanding well that we are still confronted by the common enemy against transformation, against the liberation of the black people in general and the Africans in particular.

The truth is it is not difficult to be a revolutionary when the revolu-

tion has already taken place, when all people join the revolution just because they are carried away, for different reasons, mainly for careerism.

But it is far much difficult and more precious to be a revolutionary, when conditions for a revolutionary situation have not yet taken place.

I cannot choose between the ANC and the South African Communist Party, but I can choose true traditions and culture of our revolutionary Alliance, traditions and culture of our national democratic revolution, supporting the ANC as the leader of the Alliance and our revolution.

There is no other political movement in our country with the necessary capability to take forward the agenda of the transformation of the South African society, other than the ANC.

It is our revolutionary duty, it is our responsibility, to stand up and defend the gains of our national democratic revolution. Our Alliance is the heritage of the history of our heroic struggles, architecture of the kind of a society we seek to construct, how would future generations take of us, to have demolished such a historic monument of our people, with a stroke of a pen. Our Alliance is like a cup of coffee – its ingredients are distinct, yet inseparable, each giving strength, character, and meaning to the whole.

Ambassador Phatse Justice Pitiiso is a member of the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP). He writes this article in his personal capacity.

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The Wolves Circle: Why Buti Manamela is Under Attack

■ By **ANDILE LUNGISA**

SOUTH Africa's higher education and skills development sector has become the site of a ferocious political struggle, not between reformers and reactionaries in the abstract, but between those attempting to salvage public institutions and those who have grown fat from hollowing them out. At the centre of this battle stands Higher Education Minister Buti Manamela, now the target of what appears to be a coordinated and increasingly desperate campaign of vilification.

The attacks did not emerge in a vacuum. They intensified when Minister Manamela took the extraordinary but necessary decision to place several dysfunctional Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) under administration. For years, these institutions, originally conceived as engines of skills development for the largely Black unemployed youth, have been degraded into feeding troughs for politically connected networks. Boards and executives, entrusted with public resources intended to uplift millions of poor young South Africans, instead transformed SETAs into sophisticated patronage machines.

The rot was not merely administrative incompetence. It was organised looting.

The scandal lies not only in the theft itself, but in the brazenness



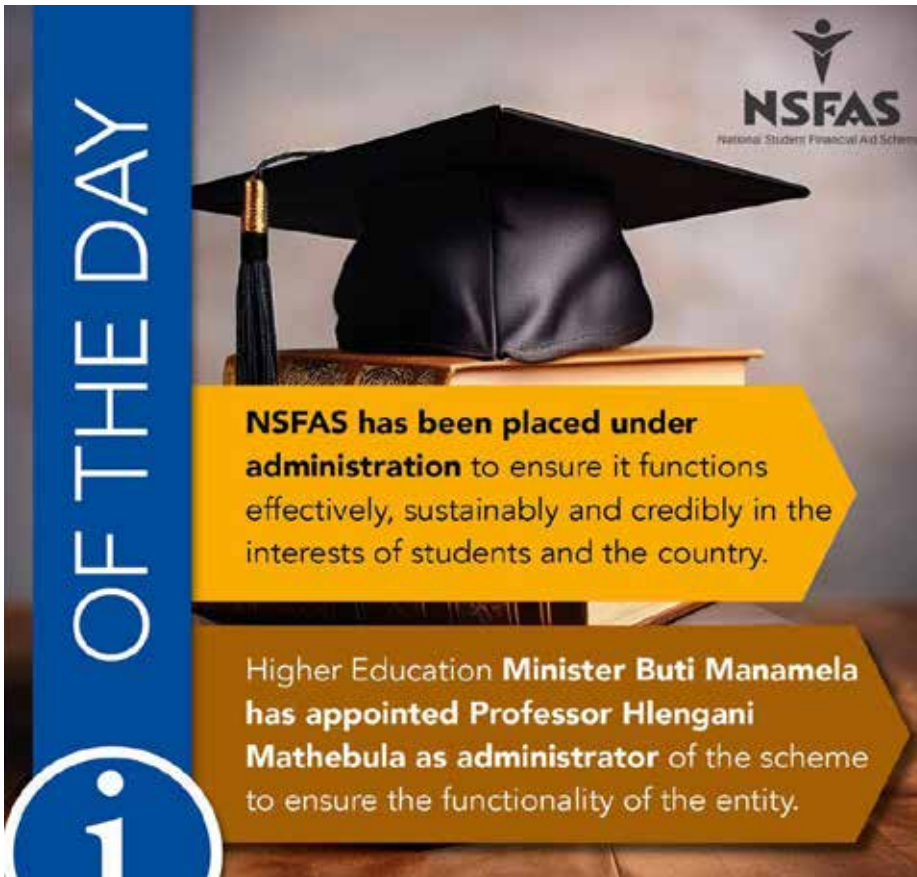
with which it has been defended. Dissolved boards, enriched through years of institutional decay, marched into court to challenge their removal as though accountability itself were an injustice. That they did so with such confidence reveals the extent to which impunity has become normalised in parts of our public life. Fortunately, the courts saw through the charade and affirmed the minister's interventions.

But the networks feeding off the carcass of our education and skills sector, and future of our children, were never going to retreat quietly.

The latest battleground is NSFAS

– the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, perhaps one of the most critical democratic instruments established in post-apartheid South Africa. NSFAS exists because this country once made a solemn promise that no academically deserving young person should be denied higher education because of poverty. It is not simply an institution, it is a social covenant between democracy and the Black poor and working class.

And yet NSFAS too has become infected by governance failures so severe that intervention became unavoidable. Hundreds of millions lost annually to ghost students as confirmed by two audit firms. Procurement scan-

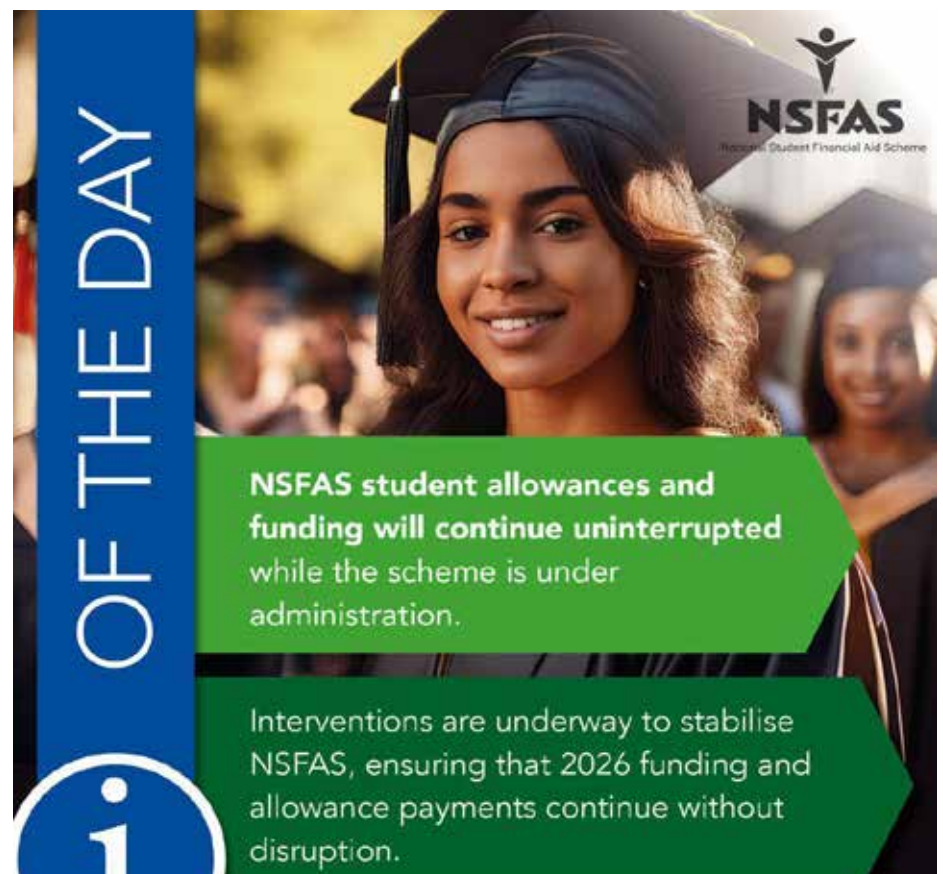


dals. Service-provider cartels operating through revolving doors between the institution and private contractors. Payment failures leaving vulnerable students stranded and humiliated. Audit crises. Administrative paralysis.

Against this backdrop, Minister Manamela's decision to place NSFAS under administration was not radical. It was overdue.

Predictably, the same script followed. Dissolved board members rushed to court, cloaking self-preservation in the language of constitutional grievance. Unable to defend the indefensible, they have resorted instead to insinuation and character assassination. The most cynical allegation, that the minister summoned board members to secret meetings and instructed them to switch off their phones is politically elegant precisely because it is impossible to conclusively prove

or disprove. It is the kind of allegation crafted not for truth, but for



contamination.

Its objective is obvious. It is meant to poison public perception and manufacture enough political smoke to force presidential intervention.

But there is a problem for the conspirators. Buti Manamela's public record exists. It is long, visible, and remarkably clean. Even his detractors, for all their fury and cynicism, stop short of accusing him of corruption because they know they possess no evidence. In an era where scandal follows ministers with exhausting regularity, Manamela's enduring reputation for integrity is not incidental, it is precisely what makes him dangerous to entrenched patronage networks.

What is perhaps most disturbing is the growing evidence that elements within Parliament itself have aligned with these



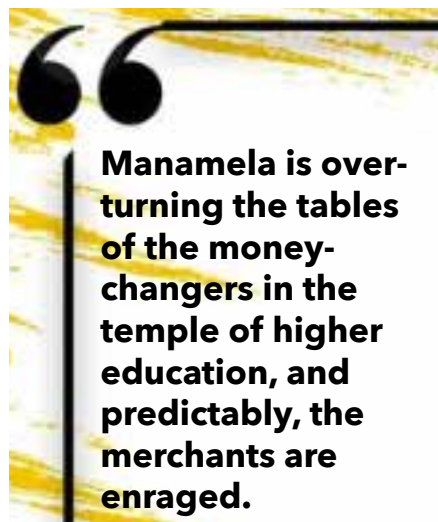
networks. Members of portfolio committees, constitutionally mandated to oversee the executive and safeguard public accountability are increasingly functioning less like watchdogs and more like political brokers within an extortion economy. This represents a profound corruption not merely of individuals, but of democratic oversight itself.

South Africa has witnessed this pattern before. Institutions are weakened deliberately, governance collapses, politically connected intermediaries move in, and any attempt at reform is met with orchestrated outrage disguised as democratic concern. The language of accountability is weaponised to protect the enemies of accountability.

This is why the battle over SETAs and NSFAS matters beyond bureaucratic procedure. It concerns whether public institutions will

serve their constitutional purpose or remain captive to parasitic and destructive scoundrels who enrich themselves while millions of unemployed young people sink deeper into despair.

Many of us remember the era of TEFSA, NSFAS's predecessor. We understand intimately what student financial aid has meant for generations of Black profes-



sionals, intellectuals, teachers, engineers, nurses and public servants who would otherwise have been excluded from higher education. We also remember Buti Manamela not as a minister ensconced in Ministerial comfort, but as a student activist and leader of the South African College Students Union, forged in the struggles for transformation within universities and colleges themselves.

His politics were not manufactured in boardrooms. They emerged from the lived realities of exclusion, despair, inequality and the urgent necessity of educational transformation.

That history matters now.

For what we are witnessing is not merely an attack on an individual minister. It is resistance against any effort to reclaim the higher education and skills sector from organised predation. Manamela is overturning the tables of the moneychangers in the temple of higher education, and predictably, the merchants are enraged.

The stakes are immense. If the reformers fail, poor Black students will continue paying the price while politically connected rent seekers feast on institutions built in their name. If the looters prevail, South Africa's already fragile social compact will deteriorate even further.

The wolves circling Minister Manamela understand exactly what is at risk. So should the rest of us.

And those of us who still believe public institutions must serve the people rather than syndicates have a responsibility to say clearly that the campaign to destroy him will not proceed uncontested.

Walter Sisulu: The Revolutionary Who Chose the People Over Himself

■ By **ATLEGANG LEKABE**

THERE are men in history who occupy positions and there are men who become the moral foundation upon which generations stand. Walter Sisulu belongs to the latter. His life was not defined by comfort, wealth or recognition, but by sacrifice, discipline and an unwavering commitment to the liberation of the African people.

As we commemorate the birth of Comrade Walter Sisulu on 18 May 1912, we are reminded that the African National Congress was built by leaders who carried the pain of the people as their own burden. Sisulu emerged from the dusty villages of the Eastern Cape with very little materially, yet he possessed something far greater: political clarity, courage and a deep understanding that freedom would never come through words alone, but through organised struggle and sacrifice.

At a time when apartheid sought to reduce black people to permanent subjects in the land of their birth, Walter Sisulu dedicated his entire existence to building a movement capable of confronting one of the most brutal systems of oppression known to humanity. He became the organisational heartbeat of the ANC. He recruited, guided, disciplined and inspired generations of revolutionaries, among them Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo, however; not for personal glory, but because he understood that lib-



eration required collective leadership rooted in the people.

What made Sisulu extraordinary

was not merely his political role, but the values he embodied. He represented a generation of cadres who understood that



leadership is service. They did not enter the movement to enrich themselves or seek validation. They entered it prepared to lose jobs, families, freedom and even life itself so that future generations could inherit dignity.

Even after decades of imprisonment on Robben Island, Sisulu emerged without bitterness. His resilience carried the moral strength of a man who knew that the struggle for justice is larger than individual suffering. In many ways, he represented the conscience of the liberation movement: calm yet firm, humble yet resolute, disciplined yet deeply compassionate toward the oppressed.

Today, South Africa faces a different battlefield. The enemies of our people are poverty, unemployment, inequality, corruption, hopelessness and social fragmentation. Yet the lessons of Walter Sisulu remain as urgent now as they were during apartheid. His life demands introspection from all of us, particularly those entrusted with leadership.

It challenges us to ask whether we still embody the values upon which this movement was built. Whether we still place the people before ourselves. Whether we still understand that revolutionary discipline and ethical leadership are inseparable.

To remember Walter Sisulu is

not simply to honour a historical figure. It is to confront ourselves. It is to recognise that the survival of the ANC as a true liberation movement depends on whether a new generation is willing to reclaim the spirit of sacrifice, integrity and service that leaders like Sisulu carried with such dignity.

Comrade Walter Sisulu belongs not only to the history of the ANC, but to the soul of South Africa. His life remains a reminder that nations are transformed by ordinary people who choose courage over fear and principle over personal comfort.

May we continue to walk in the footsteps of this giant of our liberation struggle. May his discipline guide the movement. May his humility shape our leadership. And may his unwavering devotion to the people forever remain the moral compass of the African National Congress.

Atlegang Lekabe is an ANCYL Western Cape PEC Member.



Part Two

The man who blew up a nuclear power station and disappeared

Reprint of an article that appeared in
The Guardian, 5 May 2026



ON 19 July 1982, Wilkinson was issued a Koeberg gate pass for his yellow Renault 5. He had talked his way into a short-term engineering contract that would run until mid-December. The plant was roughly six months from going live, a date the regime trumpeted in newspapers. The window was closing from two directions: the reactor going online and Wilkinson's contract running out were converging on the same deadline.

Over the next five months, Wilkinson met Rashid half a dozen times in Swaziland, a small kingdom tucked between Mozambique and South Africa where neither side's intelligence services could comfortably operate. Wilkinson never made direct contact with Rashid from inside South Africa. When he needed to reach Rashid in Mozambique, he sent a telegram disguised as a horse racing bet. They had assigned numbers to each location inside the plant, so a message

about backing "No 3", say, was really a message about a reactor.

They went through everything: targets, escape routes, how Wilkinson and Gray were holding up under the strain.

In an interview with Carrim, Gray later described the operational secrecy: *"One weekend Rod told everybody that we'd gone away, and I was literally alone in that house for the whole weekend, creeping around with the curtains closed and the lights off. That's how careful we were."*

Wilkinson was terrified. *"Often, I had serious doubts and a paralysing weakness and fear,"* he told me. *"I started to hallucinate, almost suspecting I was being followed."*

Gray was the only person he could talk to. She had one rule: *"I would never ever be able to live with a radioactive accident,"* she told him. The operation had to happen before the uranium fuel

was loaded into the reactors, and on a weekend, in the early hours, to minimise the risk of anyone being hurt.

At their final meeting, the last weekend of November 1982, Rashid handed Wilkinson a map showing where his operatives had hidden the four limpet mines: a dead letter box in the Karoo, the semi-desert that stretches across the South African interior. Wilkinson memorised the location, then ate the map. He and Gray drove out before dawn, located the four devices, packed them into wine boxes, and brought them home. They were afraid there would be a checkpoint on the way back. There wasn't. Wilkinson assembled the bombs and reburied them, all four together, at Melkbos, the beach south of Koeberg, and marked the cache with a strip of yellow plastic.

A few weeks before the operation, Gray contacted Brickhill on the secure channel they had set up in Harare. She was frightened.

Wilkinson was drinking heavily, behaving erratically, talking loosely. Brickhill asked the ANC whether backup was available. There was none. "The only back-up he had was Heather," Maharaj told me. He advised Gray to head abroad. There was no point staying to be captured if Wilkinson was no longer listening to her. She went back to Zimbabwe and sat with Brickhill, waiting.

A limpet mine is about the size of a whisky bottle. It has a magnetic plate on one side so it sticks to whatever metal you attach it to. Inside the casing is a timed fuse: when you pull the pin, a mechanism begins a slow countdown to detonation. There is no way to stop it once it starts. If the mechanism fails, it fails quickly. Wilkinson had been given the longest fuses available: 24 hours. Pull the pin on Friday afternoon, and by Saturday afternoon, if everything works, the mine detonates. If something goes wrong, it goes wrong while you're still in the building.

Rashid had opened up the Soviet-supplied devices and packed thermite into the casings, alongside the existing explosive. Thermite is an incendiary mixture of aluminium powder and iron oxide that burns at about 2,200C, hot enough to cut through steel. Once thermite ignites, water makes it burn hotter. It would turn each mine from a bomb that exploded into a bomb that exploded and then burned. Fire, unlike a blast, travels through cabling. It spreads.

The layout of Koeberg played in Wilkinson's favour. Two reactors, each in its own containment building, with two control rooms wired together through the same cabling. Rashid's logic was straight-

Koeberg plant



forward: hit just one reactor, and the regime could use parts from the other and bring it back online. Hit everything, and the damage would cascade. Wilkinson was instructed to place one mine on each of the two reactor heads, and to tuck one mine into the cabling under each of the two control rooms.

The problem was that three layers of security stood between Wilkinson and Reactor 1. First, a vehicle search at the gate. Then a pedestrian checkpoint with a guard and a dog. Finally, a changing room before the clean area of the nuclear island, where everyone had to strip and put on paper overalls. For the other three targets, he only needed to clear the first two.

For Reactor 1, he had another challenge. A tunnel connected the unclean area to the clean zone, with two pipes running along the wall. A plywood panel blocked dust from entering the clean zone, but it had been cut to let the pipes through, and between the pipes was a gap just wide enough for a limpet

mine. The device couldn't come with him through the changing room, so he would have to pass it through the gap, walk through the changing room, and collect it on the other side.

Wilkinson's office sat between the car entrance and the plant. He drove in with a limpet hidden in a void behind the dashboard panel of the Renault on Saturday 11 December, and again on Monday 13 and Tuesday 14. On Wednesday 15 he lost his nerve and left the fourth at home. On Thursday 16, the Day of the Vow – an Afrikaner nationalist holiday, skeleton crew – he brought the last device in. On every occasion, in the parking lot, he transferred the limpet from the dashboard cavity to a shoulder bag. He locked the bag in his steel desk drawer.

Late morning, the guards at the pedestrian gate would slip into the last drowsy hour before their noon shift change. That was the window. Wilkinson would pull the limpet from his drawer, slide it into his belt under his shirt, walk down the corridor, and walk through the checkpoint with his hands in his

pockets. The dog never moved. The guard never looked twice

Friday 17 December 1982. His last day of work. Between 10.30 and 11.30 in the morning, Wilkinson walked the four limpets, one by one, from his desk drawer to their intended final positions: one on each of the two reactor heads, one tucked into the cabling under each of the two control rooms. He cleared the final security check, collected the device he had passed through the panel earlier in the week, and walked toward the entrance. A guard was watching him. The reactor was about to go online. There was no legitimate reason for anyone to be in there. The guard's stare went on too long. Wilkinson froze. He turned around. He told the guard he would be back in half an hour. He walked out. He never went back. He placed that device in Reactor 2 instead.

Nobody else stopped him. Nobody asked. He went back to his desk and waited for lunch.

Pulling the pins was the afternoon's work. You pull a pin on a 24-hour limpet fuse and one of two things happens. Either a lead-shear mechanism begins a slow, silent countdown inside the casing – no ticking, no click, no outward sign that anything has changed – or the mechanism fails and the mine detonates in your hand. There is no middle outcome. There is no way to test which one you are getting until you pull.

He did the first one. He waited. He was still alive.

He walked to the second. Pulled. Alive.

One. Two. Three. Four. Four

times he stood next to a live explosive with thermite packed into the casing and pulled the pin and turned his back on it and walked out of the room, and four times the mechanism held.

Close to 5pm, he had farewell drinks with colleagues. He had told them he was going to see his girlfriend in London. (That part was true: England was his final destination, though Gray was actually in Zimbabwe at this point.) Everyone wished Wilkinson well. He stood there with a glass in his hand, saying goodbye to colleagues who were standing on top of four ticking bombs, and none of them had the faintest idea, because the bomber looked like them and sounded like them and played squash with their boss.

Wilkinson got on his bicycle and rode out of Koeberg. His friend Shauna Westcott drove him to Cape Town international airport, bicycle in the back of the car. He handed her his work boots and overalls. The boots had left tracks in the dust near the devices. He asked her to get rid of them. She didn't ask questions.

He took a flight to Johannesburg airport where his sister Cathy came to meet him. He got in her car. She looked at him and started crying. Neither of them moved.

"What have you done?"

"I can't really tell you."

"Did you kill anybody?"

"I don't think so."

"Is it political or criminal?"

"It's political."

That calmed her down a little. She put the car in gear and they headed for the Swaziland border. Wilkinson couldn't find the crossing. A herd boy eventually pointed him toward a run-down bit of barbed-wire fencing. That was the international border between apartheid South Africa and Swaziland.

On the other side, Wilkinson found a stream and lay down in it with all his clothes on. People passing were laughing at the white man in the water, and he was laughing back. Then the sky opened: a hailstorm so violent he had to crawl under a tree. He felt liberated.





The next day, Saturday 18 December, he took a bus to Manzini, Swaziland's second-largest city and its commercial hub, then carried on to the Wimpy Bar in Mbabane, the capital, where Rashid had told him someone would come for him. He was to check on the hour, every hour. He did not know who would arrive. He did not know what they'd look like.

Nobody came. *"Boy, did I wait. I was pissed off,"* Wilkinson told me.

So he tried the backup: a phone number for Rashid in Maputo, Mozambique. He stood in the queue for the telephone booth. Twenty minutes. When he arrived at the front, he dialled Rashid's number and got what sounded like an engaged tone. He hung up and went to the back of the queue. Twenty more minutes. Dialled. Engaged. Hung up. Back of the queue.

What Wilkinson did not know, and would only figure out much later, was that the South African ringtone sounded identical to the Mozambican engaged signal. Every time he thought the line was busy, it had in fact been ringing. He'd been hanging up on his own commander.

The third time he reached the front of the queue, more than an hour in, he lost patience. He pretended the call had gone through and began a conversation with the engaged signal. He nodded. He murmured. He said uh-huh. Then, suddenly, to Wilkinson's surprise, Rashid picked up.

Wilkinson kept his voice conversational. He had three things to communicate: he needed a way to get from Mbabane to Mapu-

to; the fence between the two countries was too high to jump, and he had no entry stamp in his passport because he had come in through a farm fence. He assumed the South Africans were listening to every call crossing the Swaziland lines, but he managed to get his points across in code. Rashid arranged it all.

The following evening, Sunday 19 December, Wilkinson took the 5pm flight from Mbabane to Maputo. Rashid met him on the other side with whisky and Soviet fish. It was here, in Maputo, that Wilkinson learned what had happened. All four limpets had detonated. Nobody had been hurt. Wilkinson drank and laughed. He was alive.

The first mine had detonated at 3.23pm the previous afternoon, Saturday 18 December. The second at 8.40pm. The third at 11.24pm. The fourth at 2.53am on Sunday morning. Four explosions across roughly 12 hours, at an active construction and commissioning site rather than a live reactor – every section of the plant all but empty between blasts, nobody hurt.

In Harare, Brickhill and Gray were holed up with a small group of comrades in the house of Howard Barrell, a journalist who was himself quietly working with ANC intelligence, drinking whisky and listening to the BBC World Service. Barrell knew nothing of this particular operation. When the first report came through in the early hours of Sunday 19 December, Brickhill asked him – without telling him why – to phone his newsroom contacts and find out what he could. The next morning, the story made the front page of the New York Times, under the headline *"Bombs damage atom*

plant site in South Africa".

A few days later, in Maputo, Wilkinson was taken to meet Oliver Tambo, the man who had kept the anti-apartheid movement alive from a desk in Lusaka while Mandela was in prison. Tambo looked at Wilkinson with something like surprise. Then he hugged him and they both cried. Tears of joy, Wilkinson said.

The operation had been given a code name. Joe Slovo and Rashid had called it Operation Mac, after Maharaj, whose role in recruiting Wilkinson had been central. Maharaj himself only learned about the name months later, in a Lusaka corridor, when Tambo and Slovo told him in passing. It was, in other words, a thank you and a prank.

The damage was enormous: R500m, roughly half a billion dollars in 1982, when the dollar and the rand traded at par. The project was pushed back 18 months. A manager at Eskom, the state-owned utility that ran the plant, publicly blamed the Baader-Meinhof gang, the West German far-left militants. Others suspected an inside job at Framatome, the French company that had built the plant. The identity of the perpetrators remained a mystery for 13 years. Then on 15 December 1995, David Beresford wrote a front page story for the Mail & Guardian – South Africa's newspaper of record – under the headline *"How we blew up Koeberg (and escaped on a bicycle)"*, identifying Wilkinson by name.

For Maharaj, what mattered was that, alongside the ANC's 1980 attack on the Sasol fuel refineries, Koeberg had demonstrated the capacity of the anti-apartheid movement to hit the regime's

strategic infrastructure. *“There was no target out of reach for us,”* he told me. *“Not because of our capacity. Because of the nature of the system. The overwhelming majority of the Black people who were the oppressed, even though there would be collaborators, by their very instincts would be opposed to living under the humiliation that apartheid imposed on them. And in the white community there would be young people beginning to question. We were not alone.”*

Wilkinson had assumed that his former colleagues would pin the bombing on him within a day. After all, he had openly criticised nuclear power at the whites-only bar on the construction site. But they never even considered him. He worked for the civil contractors; the operators who ran the control rooms would never have crossed his path. Dave Thomas, who had started in the control room at Koeberg that year, told me: *“He certainly wasn’t on our radar as a person at all.”* The most paranoid security apparatus on the continent had built, without intending to, the perfect cover for the man who was going to blow it up.

The ANC sent Wilkinson to England. Gray joined him there, and they married in December 1983. They settled in Woodbridge, Suffolk, pulling pints at the Mariner’s Arms while he waited for a work permit.

Maharaj’s advice was to take the £1,500 bonus the ANC offered its operatives, and vanish. Wilkinson made a counter offer: he would take £150 and keep working for them. Maharaj said this was a mistake, but Wilkinson did not want to be a ghost. Wilkinson’s next idea was a tourist truck with



a stash of weapons hidden beneath the passenger seats. Unwitting backpackers crossing into South Africa would provide the cover. The ANC, through a London-based front company called Africa Hinterland, run by Mannie Brown, an ANC exile and veteran communist, funded the project, owned it, and recruited drivers from the British and Dutch communist parties. Wilkinson designed the truck, a Bedford, and helped build it at a workshop outside Ipswich in 1986. He never went on a single trip. Africa Hinterland crossed the border about 40 times between 1986 and 1993 and was never compromised.

Wilkinson and Gray came back to South Africa in April 1991, a year after Mandela’s release, and settled in Knysna, the coastal town where Wilkinson would eventually live out his later years in obscurity. Wilkinson was still an ANC operative. With Mandela free and the movement legal for the first time in three decades, the ANC was opening offices across the country. In Knysna, Wilkinson was asked to run both the local ANC office and a Communist party office, the kind of dual posting handed to trusted former operatives.

Later that year, Raymond Mhlaba, who had spent 25 years in prison alongside Mandela and had been released in October

1989, was due to address a political rally in town. The ANC printed a pamphlet advertising the rally and listed the Wilkinsons’ home phone number as the contact. The phone was in Gray’s name. Soon after, a note appeared under the door: *“Hit No 33, Heather Wilkinson.”* It was signed by a rightwing murder squad. Bikers began driving past the house with shotguns across their backs. The couple’s two small daughters, Jessica and Amy, were inside, with only a wooden wall for protection. Gray went to her father, a man Wilkinson describes without bitterness as *“billionaire daddy”*. He said: *“Come home.”* Wilkinson wasn’t invited.

It was the sensible decision. Wilkinson knew it. He just wasn’t part of it.

Today, he is 76. His lungs are scarred from tuberculosis. Somewhere in the house where he lives on Hope Street there is a pennywhistle I sent him from a shop in Johannesburg, because I couldn’t find one in Knysna. Wilkinson learned to play as a child. The instrument belonged to the townships. In the 1950s a Black musician called Spokes Mashiyane, busking on the same Johannesburg streets where Wilkinson grew up, turned kwela street music into the biggest-selling sound of its era. It was music for the people apartheid was built to suppress. Wilkinson bombed a nuclear power station for that movement. Now, he plays kwela through scarred lungs, in a town that still doesn’t know who he is.

Matilda Knill told him, when he was sick: *“You can’t die. There’s a lot of shit you’ve got to sort out.”*

“OK,” Wilkinson said. *“What must I do?”*

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

23–29 May 2026

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

23 May 1699 Sheik Yusuf, father of SA Islamic Faith passed on

In the late 1600s, many Muslim men of wealth and influence were banished to the Cape from Asia because the Dutch feared them as a threat to their colonial occupation and exploitation. Shaykh Yusuf of Macassar is the best known of the Orang Cayen from Sumatra. Shaykh Yusuf 'Abidin Tadia Tjoesoep was born in 1626 of noble birth in Gowa in the East Indies. He fought alongside and supported Sultan Ajung of Bantam, Gowa, in his war against the Dutch. Sheikh Yusuf was banished, along with his family and followers, first to Castle in Colombo, Ceylon, Sri Lanka and later to the Cape of Good Hope. The Sheikh arrived on board 'De Voetboog' on April 02, 1694 along with his entourage of 49 which included his two wives [Carecontoe and Carepane], two slave girls [Mu'minah and Na'imah], 12 children, 12 imams [religious leaders] and several friends with their families. They were moved to a farm in Zandvleit on June 14, 1694 as a means to isolate him. However, Zandvleit became a rallying point for 'fugitive' slaves and other exiles from the East. It was here that the first cohesive Muslim community in South Africa was established. Since many of the Sheikh's followers hailed from Macassar, the district around Zandvleit is still known today as Macassar. Sheikh Yusuf is regarded by many, as the founder of the Islamic faith in the Cape and South Africa. He died in Zand-

vleit on 23 May 1699. His Kramat has been a place of pilgrimage ever since.

23 May 1926 Joe Slovo born



ANC and SACP stalwart, and one of the founders of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), Joe Slovo, was born in Obellai, Lithuania. He moved with his parents to South Africa at the age of nine (9). Slovo was an active member of the South Africa Communist Party (SACP) from the 1940s and, after becoming an advocate at the Johannesburg Bar, became well known for his work as a defence lawyer in political trials.

23 May 1939 Opera diva Evelyn Dalberg born

Opera singer, Evelyn Dalberg was born in Leipzig, Germany, married a South African and emigrated to the country in 1946.

She lectured at the South African School of Music, and also performed for across the country.

23 May 1943 ANC leader and women's activist Rejoice Mabudafhasi born



UDF Northern Transvaal Secretary, FEDTRAW and NECC organisers, ANC NEC member, former Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Mvula Trust board chairperson and Commissioner of the SA Human Rights Commission, currently serve as South African High Commissioner to Zimbabwe.

23 May 1994 South Africa admitted to the OAU

After the first fully democratic elections, South Africa was officially admitted as 53rd member of the Organisation of African

Unity (OAU) at a summit, held in Tunis, Tunisia. The South Africa delegation was led by the Foreign Affairs Minister Alfred Nzo, who was applauded after membership was authorised at an OAU Council of Ministers meeting.

24 May 1921 Bulhoek massacre

In 1921, in a battle lasting less than 30 minutes between police and Israelites, followers of prophet Enoch Mgijima, more than 180 people were killed. The battle started after police issued an ultimatum demanding that the Israelites evacuate land they were squatting on and warned that if they failed to comply, their leader would be arrested and their homes demolished. Soon afterwards a group of around 500 white-robed men, armed with sticks and spears, challenged the machine guns of an 800-strong police force sent by Jan Smuts to remove the Israelites who had settled at the holy village of Ntabelanga, Bulhoek in Queenstown to pray.

24 May 1921 First Comrades Marathon

The first Comrades Marathon race is run from Pietermaritzburg to Durban, with 34 runners competing. The winner does the 87 km race in 8 hours and 59 minutes, in 2022 the winning time was 5 and a half hours.

24 May 1929 Poet James Matthews born

Poet James Matthews is born in Cape Town. A leading writer of the Black Consciousness movement of the 1960's, his poetry collection *Cry Rage* was the first book of poetry banned by



the apartheid regime. Matthews established South Africa's first black-owned publishing house, *BLAC*, and first black-owned art gallery, Gallery Afrique.

24 May 1973 South Africa to start Uranium enrichment project

South African Prime Minister, BJ Vorster disclosed in July 1970 in the House of Assembly that the government has decided to make funds available for a uranium enrichment programme. Uranium was used to manufacture nuclear weapons by the South Africa government.

24 May 1993 Eritrean independence

Eritrea achieves national independence from Ethiopia, the date commemorates the day in 1991 when the Eritrean People's Liberation Front captured the capital Asmara, after a 30-year war for independence.

24 May 2018 MeerLICHT goes online

South African MeerLICHT, the world's most powerful wide-view visible light deep space telescope goes online in the Karoo, with its clear skies and far from light pollution.

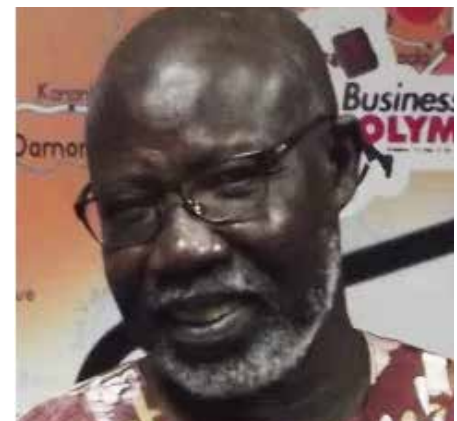
25 May 1922 Young Communist League (YCLSA) formed



The plans for the formation of the Young Communist League (YCL) were laid in 1921 when the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) was established. Youth groups were formed in Johannesburg and Cape Town. In 1922, the YCL played a supportive role during the great white mineworkers' strike when 25,000 white miners downed tools because the Chamber of Mines proposed to dismiss about 2000 of them. In May that year they established a national structure, the YCL. Amongst the founding members were Edward Roux, Sarah Sable and Willie Kalk.

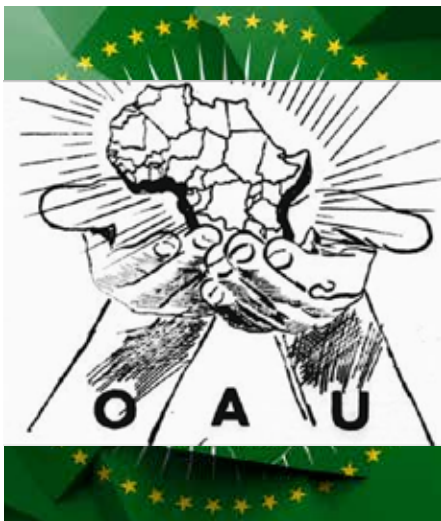
25 May 1948 Travel writer Jojo Cobbinah born

Ghananian author and travel writer Jojo Cobbinah was born in Bogosasa. Providing clear historical and



cultural descriptions of the continent, he has written travel guides on Senegal and The Gambia. His guides are legendary and ranked by UNESCO as among “the best travel guides of an African country.” Cobbinah is also the author of *Dr. Amo’s Lonely Planet*.

25 May 1963 OAU formed in Addis Ababa



The Pan African movement, born out of the early 19th century anti-colonial and anti-slavery movements, debated approaches to

African unity after colonialism, in the context of more and more countries gaining independence. Two strands emerged, the Casablanca group of countries advocated for the immediate unity of the African continent (along the line of a united states of Africa), whilst the Monrovia group of countries called for a more gradual approach. Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie convened a conference of both groups, and this Pan African conference of independent African states (and anti-colonial and national liberation movements) met in Addis Ababa, and on 25 May signed the Charter which gave life to the Organisation of African Unity Charter (OAU). The Charter was signed by thirty-two (32) independent states. The OAU regarded as its *raison d’être* to support the remaining countries still under colonialism and apartheid, mainly in east and southern Africa, through the liberation committee. In July 2002, the OAU was transformed into the African Union in Durban, with the adoption of its Constitution Act. 25 May is celebrated across the country as Africa Day.

25 May 1983 Panapress formed

The PanAfrican News Service, PanaPress begins service at its headquarters in Dakar, Senegal with regional offices in Kinshasa, Khartoum, Lusaka, Lagos and Tripoli and tells African news from the continent’s perspectives.

25 May 1986 Witdoeke attack Crossroads

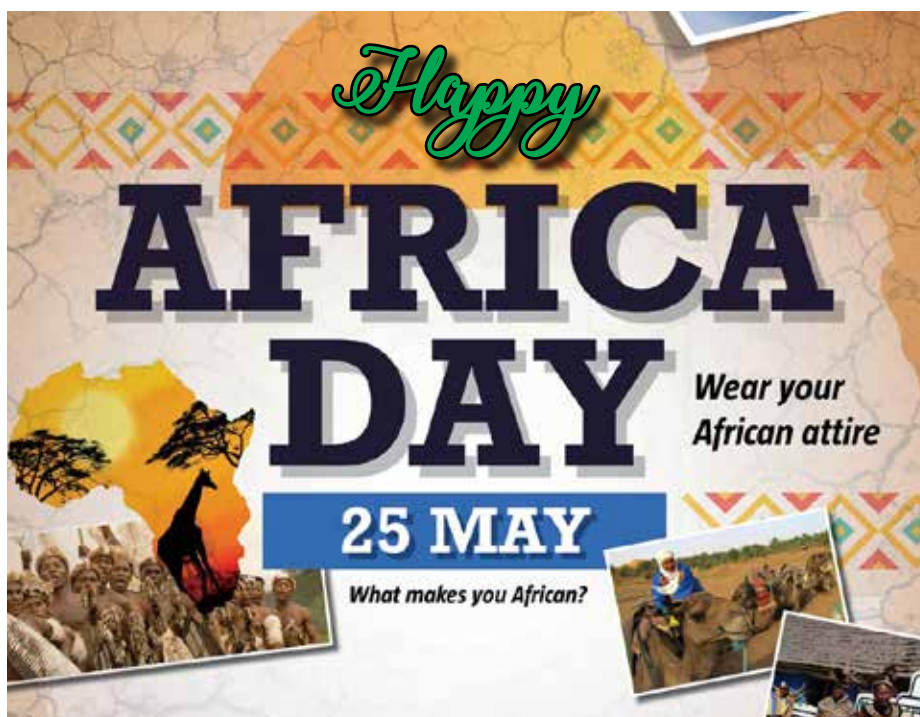
The Cape Town City Council, after years of trying to move informal settlements of Crossroads near the Cape Town Airport to Khayelitsha, eventually succeeded when on this day the so-called Witdoeke, a third force group attacked residents of Crossroads, leaving over 6,000 homeless.

25 May 1944 Term Apartheid used for first time

Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd, used the word Apartheid for the first time in Parliament to refer to his government’s policy of separate development and white privilege and domination. The word apartheid became part of a global lexicon.

25 May 2010 South Africa opera tenor Siphiwo Ntshebe passed away

Siphiwo Ntshebe was born in Brighton, Port Elizabeth. He was a great opera singer, whose career ended abruptly when he died of meningitis on 25 May 2010. Ntshebe was only 35 and was only days away from what would have been one of the highlights of his career. Former South African President Nelson Mandela had selected Ntshebe to be one of the performers at the 2010 FIFA World Cup. His sudden



death came as a shock to many who knew him. His album *Hope* was released in 2010.

25 May 2011 Togo students strike

Students at University of Lomé start strike and riot over poor living conditions and a new academic system, culminating in the closing of the university on 27 May by the government and negotiations with students starting. Finally by July that year, government acknowledges the legitimacy of the student demands and commit to finance the upgrade of the university.

25 May 2019 Mata Diop wins Grand Prix at Cannes

Senegalese/French actor and director, Mati Diop is the first black woman director to be nominated for the Palm d'Or and to win the Grand Prix award from her film *Atlantics*, a supernatural drama.

26 May 1956 Malawi human rights activist Emmie Chanika born

Malawian human rights activist Emmie Chanika was born in Lilongwe and formed the country's first human rights organisation, the Civil Liberties Committee in 1992, also focusing on women's rights.



26 May 1964 Malcolm X addresses second OAU Summit

After the founding of the OAU a year earlier in Addis Ababa, its second summit is held in Cairo, Egypt with a membership growing to 34 countries. The summit is addressed by US civil rights leader, Malcolm X.

26 May 1966 Campaigner against rape, Rebecca Katsuva born

Born in Katana, DRC Rebecca Masika Katsuva was raped four times during the Second Congolese Civil War by government soldiers and rebels. In one of the attacks, rebels killed her husband and raped her and her two daughters (ages 13 and 14), both children fell pregnant and were expelled by their dad's family. Rebecca founded the *Association des Personnes Desherites Unies pour le Development*, providing shelter to abused women, helping over 6000 survivors before her passing in 2016.

26 May 1989 Upington 14 sentenced to death

On this day, fourteen of 25 accused – also known as the Upington 14 – were handed the death sentence by Justice J. Basson for the murder of Lucas Tshenolo Sethwala, a police constable who fired at demonstrators attacking his home with stones on 13 November 1985. The rest of the twenty-five accused, the largest group ever to be convicted of murder in a single SA trial, received sentences ranging from six to eight years imprisonment and another six defendants were sentenced to community service. The group was all convicted on the basis of the “common pur-

pose” principle, “a legal doctrine that imputes criminal liability on the participants involved in criminal activity for all that results from such activity.” Campaigns for the release of the Upington 26, especially the fourteen on death row, amongst them one woman (Theresa Ramashamola) were conducted across the world and in South Africa.

26 May 2003 Sibusiso Vilane conquers Mount Everest summit



Sibusiso Vilane, a game ranger with dual South African and Swazi nationality reaches the summit of Mount Everest, where he plants a South African flag. 32-year-old Vilane is the first Black South African to successfully ascend Everest.

26 May 2021 Icon Mbuya Nehanda Myakasikana honoured

The 19th century Zimbabwe prophet and rebel is honoured with a 3 meter tall statue unveiled in Harare city center. The spiritual medium urged Zimbabweans to fight against the British South Africa Company's colonization of their lands. The uprising, called the *First Chimurenga* (1886-1897), ended with her defeat and death, but inspired decades of struggle for liberation. Nehanda is an icon of Africa's fight for independence.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

27 May 1928 Ghanaian Poet Kwesi Brew born

Osborne Henry *Kwesi Brew* (27 May 1928 – 30 July 2007) was a poet, public servant and diplomat, born on this day in Cape Coast, Ghana. He was amongst the first graduates from the University of the Gold Coast and his Afrocentric poetry widely published.

27 May 1947 France brutal suppression of Malagasy Uprising

Malagasy (today Madagascar) was a French colony and during an uprising by the indigenous people in 1947 for independence, France suppressed the uprising through a reign of terror, including torture, war rape, mass executions, burning of villages, collective punishment of families and villages, and 'death flights' where prisoners were thrown out of airplanes while alive. The Malagasy Uprising lasted until 1948, by which time the leaders were killed or captured and estimated 100,000 Malagasy killed.

27 May 1991 Comedian Mark Angel born

Mark Angel is a Nigerian comedian, scriptwriter and video producer, whose Mark Angel Comedy channel has over 8 million YouTube subscribers and 20 million Facebook followers. He was born on this day in Port Harcourt.

27 May 1992 First Hindu temple opens in Seychelles

The iconic, colourful Navasakty Vinayagar Temple dedicated to Ganesh the elephant god, opens in Victoria, Seychelles to serve the around 2% of the population who are Hindu.

27 May 2007 International Cricket Council President Percy Sonn passed on



International Cricket Council president Percy Sonn (57) passed on in a Cape Town hospital. An anti-apartheid campaigner for non-racial sports, served as vice-president on the South African Cricket Board after 1994 and president of the new United Cricket Board of South Africa until 2003

27 May 2016 Lulu Dube passed on



The youngest daughter of former ANC President John Langalibalele Dube died in Durban at the age of 84 years. Lulu Joan Dube was born in Inanda Durban in 1931 and was the last surviving daughter of John and Angelina Dube. She is well known for the community leadership she played in her home town. She was described as a humble servant, community leader and a

freedom fighter. Lulu Dube, also known as Mama Lulu is survived by three daughters, two sons, thirteen grandchildren and two great grandchildren. She was buried alongside her parents, John and Angelina Dube at the Ohlange Institute in Durban.

28 May 1913 Waihoek Women mass protest



Black women from Bloemfontein started a mass protest against pass laws, meeting in the settlement of Waihoek and marching into the city centre. The following day they managed to meet the Mayor of Bloemfontein, Ivan Haarburchen, who told them local authorities have no choice but to implement the pass laws. The women then marched to the police station, where they burn their passes. 80 women were arrested in this peaceful protest action.

28 May 1984 Linguist Ernest Sedumedi Moloto passed on

Linguist, educationist and teacher, Ernest Sedumedi Moloto, who served as chair of both the Tswana Language Committee of South Africa and the Botswana National Language Committee, passed away in Mamelodi, Pretoria. He was buried at Moruleng, Rustenburg on 10 June 1984. Moloto was Ellen Kuzwayo's first husband.

28 May 1991**Mengistu regime fall**

Ethiopia's People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), the current ruling party of Ethiopia, captured the capital Addis Ababa, overthrowing the Derg regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam, in power since 1977 when he overthrew Emperor Haile Selassie. The EPRDF was led by the **Meles Zenawi**, who became Ethiopian Prime Minister until his death in 2012. Zenawi waged a successful rebel war against the forces of Mengistu and his appointment marked the end of years of civil war in the country. 28 May is also celebrated as Ethiopia's National Day.

29 May 1887**Chief Sandile killed in battle**

Xhosa Chief Sandile, born in the Ciskei in 1820 from the Great House of Ngqika, was killed in battle in the Denge Forest. During the Seventh Frontier War (1846-47) Sandile was defeated and his territory was put under British command and called British Kaffraria. His dissatisfaction with the appointment British commissioners to rule the territory led to the Eighth Frontier War (1850-53). Sandile was deposed and a White man, Charles Brownlee, was appointed in his place as paramount chief. In 1878 Sandile, joined by Krelie of the Galekas, waged war against Colonial forces, he was defeated and fled to Denge, where he met his untimely death.

29 May 1926**President Wade born**

President of Senegal (2000-2012) was born in Kébémér, Senegal. An economics and law professor and dean at the University of Dakar, he served on the opposition benches before elected as president. President Abdoulaye Wade is one of the co-architects of the

New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD).

29 May 1935**Author Andre P Brink born**

South African novelist, Andre Philipus Brink was born on 29 May 1935, in Vrede Freestate. Brink did a BA in Literature at University of Potchefstroom (1955), a Masters in Literature (1959), a Masters in Afrikaans and Dutch literature and a PhD from Rhodes University in 1960. In the 1960s, Brink, Ingrid Jonker and Breyten Breytenbach were part of the Afrikaans literary movement, *Die Sestig* ("The Sixties"), who used literature to speak up against Apartheid and to bring about a European influence to Afrikaans literature. His books include: *Lobola vir die Lewe* (1962), *A Dry White Season* (1979), *An Act of Terror* (1991) and *The Other Side of Silence* (2002). Brink wrote in both Afrikaans and English. His novel *Kennis van die Aand* (1973) was the first Afrikaans book to be banned by the Apartheid government. Brink passed on away on 6 February 2015.

29 May 1976**ESKOM announces plan to order Nuclear generators from France**

On 29 May 1976, the South African Electricity Supply Commission (ESKOM) announced its decision to order two nuclear power reactors from France. The two reac-

tors, ordered from France in 1976 were installed at the Koeberg power station.

29 May 1998**Gen. Meiring hands over SANDF reigns to Gen. Nyanda**

Accepting a seventeen-gun salute, outgoing South African National Defence Force (SANDF) chief, General Georg Meiring, formally hands over command of the SANDF to Lt Gen. Sipiwe Nyanda in the sports stadium in Thaba Tshwane, Pretoria.

29 May 1999**Ledwaba wins International Boxing title**

Lehlohonolo Ledwaba, SA featherweight, wins the International Boxing Federation (IBF) title.

29 May 2005**Hamilton Naki passed on**

Hamilton Naki, laboratory assistant to cardiac surgeon Dr Christian Barnard, who assisted during the first heart transplant, passed on.



INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

23–29 May 2026

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

23 May International Day to end Obstetric Fistula

Obstetric fistula is one of the most serious and tragic childbirth injuries. A hole between the birth canal and bladder and/or rectum, it is caused by prolonged, obstructed labour without access to timely, high-quality medical treatment. It leaves women with incontinence problems, and often leads to chronic medical problems, depression, social isolation and deepening poverty. This problem is preventable with the correct medical assistance and its occurrence is a violation of human rights and a reminder of gross inequities.

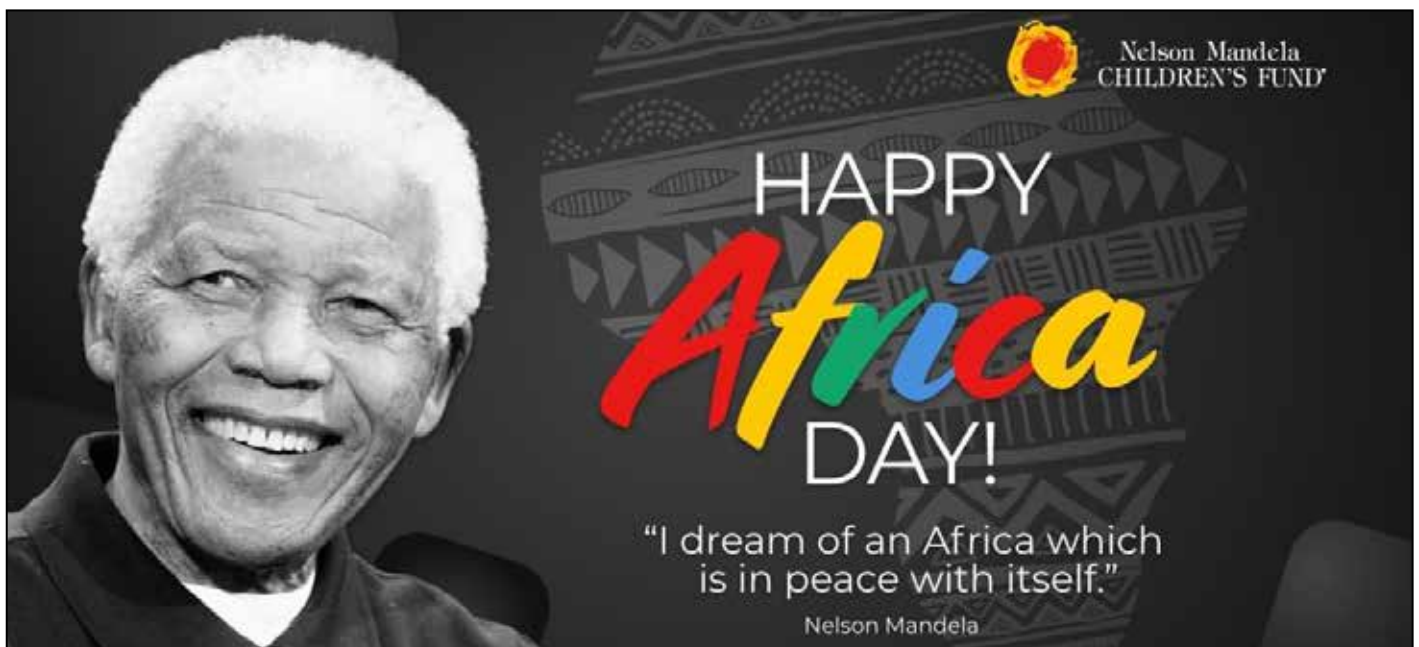
25 May Africa Day

The day celebrates the founding of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) on 25 May 1963 in Addis Ababa. During the first few decades, the focus was on supporting the decolonization process, but after the end of apartheid in Namibia and South Africa, a greater focus was on

peace, development and integration. The OAU Charter spelled out the purpose of the Organisation namely:

- To promote the unity and solidarity of the African States;
- To coordinate and intensify their cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa;
- To defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity and independence;
- To eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa; and
- To promote international cooperation, having due regard to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The OAU was officially transformed into the African Union (AU) at a historic launch in July 2002 in Durban, South Africa. It has 55 member states that make up the countries of the African Continent. The theme for Africa Day 2026 is: **Assuring Sustainable Water Availability and Safe Sanitation Systems to Achieve the Goals of Agenda 2063**. This theme elevates water and sanitation to a continental political priority, recognizing them as catalysts for economic transformation, climate resilience, public health, food security, and regional stability.



THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

25-31 May

International Week of Solidarity with Non-Self-governing Territories



The UN Charter defines a 'non-self-governing' territory as a territory "whose people have not yet attained a full measure of self-government." In many of these territories, the UN Declaration on Decolonization of 1960 apply. Solidarity Week for Non-Self-Governing Territories, established by the UN, is a dedicated period to uphold the inalienable rights of the peoples residing in Non-Self-Governing Territories. This observance underscores the importance of supporting these communities in their pursuit of self-determination, sovereignty, and fundamental human rights. Through advocacy, awareness campaigns, and diplomatic efforts, the Week of Solidarity seeks to amplify the voices of those living in Non-Self-Governing Territories and advocate for their rights on the global stage. It serves as a reminder of the international community's commitment to promoting justice, equality, and empowerment for all peoples, regardless of their political status.

25 May

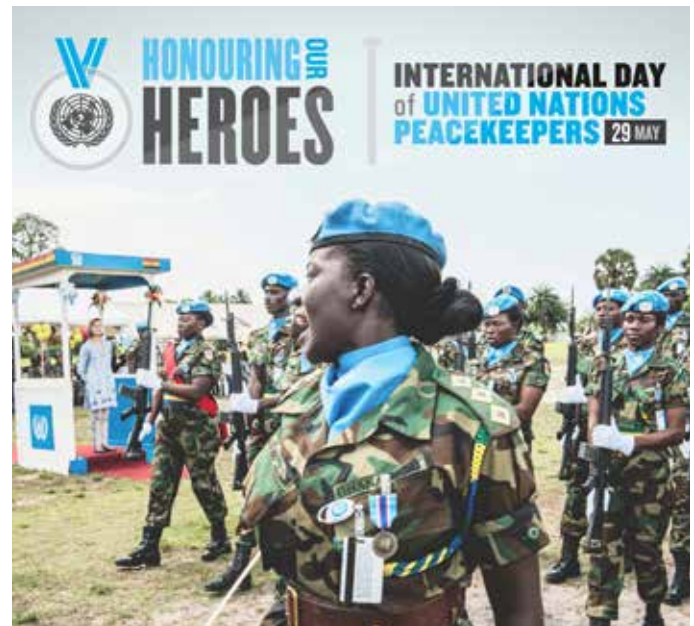
World Football Day

Football, as a prominent global sport, holds a unique position. Its broad appeal and accessibility make it a potent tool for health and well-being. It also serves as a vital platform for advancing gender equality and empowering women and girls, both on and off the field. Football serves as a catalyst for social inclusion, fostering unity and breaking down barriers between diverse communities

29 May

International Day of UN Peacekeepers

For nearly 80 years, United Nations peacekeepers have delivered tangible change to communities



worldwide. From Liberia and Namibia to Cambodia, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste, their presence has been life-saving and transformative in some of the most volatile political and security contexts, guiding countries from conflict towards lasting peace. Observed under the theme **INVEST IN PEACE** this year's International Day looks at the invaluable contributions military, police and civilian peacekeepers have made over the last nearly eight decades. It encapsulates the spirit of progress and collective action towards creating a more equal, just and sustainable world. Today, more than 87,000 civilians, military, and police personnel serve as Peacekeepers, in UN peacekeeping missions, confronting increasingly complex and interconnected challenges shaped by a shifting geopolitical landscape. Despite the challenges, peacekeepers remain steadfast in their pursuit of peace. The International Day pays tribute to their unwavering service and sacrifice, as well as the resilience of the communities they support. It also solemnly honors the more than 4,000 peacekeepers from 128 countries who have lost their lives in the cause of peace.



Now more than ever, the world needs the United Nations – and the United Nations needs peacekeeping that is fully equipped for today's realities and tomorrow's challenges.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres



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to Fix Local Government and
Transform the Economy**

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