



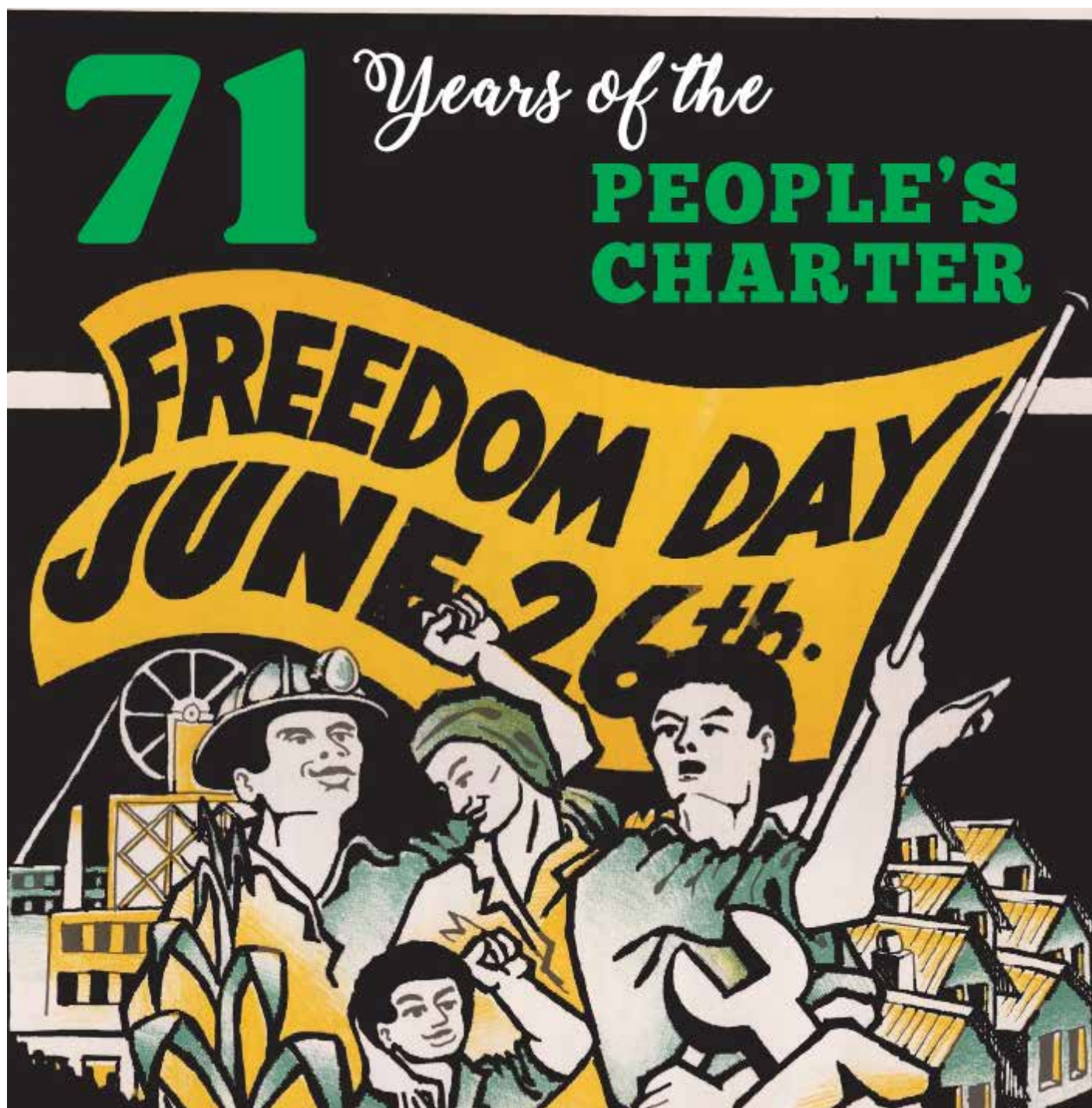
ANC TODAY

VOICE OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

26 June–2 July 2026

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African health security is vital to save lives and protect jobs

■ By **PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

A little over four years have passed since South Africa emerged from the state of disaster that had been declared in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is easy to forget just how deeply the pandemic affected every aspect of our lives.

For many, it is a distant memory: the waves of infections, hospital wards filling at alarming rates, the lockdown and the various restrictions on gatherings, travel and commerce. We sometimes forget that more than 100,000 South Africans died from COVID and that we lost around 2 million jobs.

As we set about rebuilding our economy and society in the wake of the pandemic, our concerns moved on to other matters. At this time, as we focus on tackling unemployment and poverty, crime and corruption, pandemics seem far from our minds.

Yet, the recent outbreak of Ebola in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda serves as a stark reminder that

we should not let down our guard. More than that, it reminds us that we must be better prepared for health emergencies in our country, on our continent and across the world.

Following the COVID pandemic, South Africa was appointed the African Union Champion on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response. Since then, we have been working with the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other partners to strengthen Africa's health security.

The Ebola outbreak reminds us that when a dangerous dis-

ease breaks out anywhere on our continent, it does not stay in one place. It can easily cross borders, affect communities and disrupt economies. These diseases cost both lives and jobs. Health security is therefore not only about hospitals and medicines. It is also about our economy, our development and the safety of our continent as a whole.

We learned this the hard way during COVID-19. In those early days, Africa stood at the back of the queue. Vaccines and treatments went first to wealthier countries, while our people waited. We cannot allow that to happen again.





While we appreciate the help of international partners, Africa cannot keep depending on others to supply us during a health emergency. We must be able to protect ourselves.

That is why we have been working towards stronger health systems at home. Every country needs a proper public health institute. It needs centres ready to manage emergencies, well-supported community health workers and the ability to track new diseases early.

Importantly, we must make our own medicines, tests and vaccines here on the continent. We are working to strengthen the African Medicines Agency and to set up shared systems for buying supplies, so that African producers have steady customers and African countries can get what they need when an emergency strikes.

We need to set aside money for emergencies. African leaders have agreed to create an African Epidemic Fund. It is encouraging that African countries are already contributing money towards tackling the current Ebola outbreak. South Africa has pledged \$13.5 million to the Africa CDC to treat and limit the spread of Ebola. As a continent, we are taking responsibility for ourselves and not waiting for others.

Africa needs to be part of writing the global rules on fighting pandemics. We need to stand together and make sure our people are treated fairly. We continue to call for a fair global agreement on pandemics, built on equal partnership rather than charity.

I have been heartened by how our continent has come together to respond to the Ebola out-

break. The Africa CDC has led with skill and speed. African leaders have developed common approaches. Business leaders, development partners and donors are stepping forward to help. This shows that we have the people, the knowledge and the leadership to succeed.

But we mustn't wait for the next outbreak or pandemic to get us to act. We must do the hard work now to secure the health of the people of our continent. The effort we put in today will spare us far greater suffering and cost tomorrow.

We must act with urgency to achieve the health security that is so vital for the growth and development of our country and our continent. **Health security saves lives, protects jobs and helps to safeguard our future.**

Statement on the Outcomes of the Meeting of the National Working Committee

held on Tuesday, 22 June 2026

■ By **ANC SECRETARY GENERAL FIKILE MBALULA**

THE African National Congress (ANC) held its National Working Committee meeting (NWC) on Monday, 22 June 2026 at Chief Albert Luthuli House, which assessed the state of the organisation, developments in the country and the international environment, as well as the implementation of the 2026 Programme of Action under the theme, *“The Year of Decisive Action to Fix Local Government and Transform the Economy.”*

With 132 days remaining before South Africans go to the polls on Wednesday, 4 November 2026, the ANC remains firmly on the ground, engaging communities, advancing organisational work and mobilising society around the task of fixing local government, transforming the economy and defending the democratic gains of the people.

A Nation of Winners

The ANC congratulates Bafana Bafana on their historic 1–0 victory over South Korea, secured through the decisive strike of Thapelo Maseko, which has taken South Africa into the next round of the FIFA World Cup for the first time in our history. We wish the team every success as they prepare for their next match against Canada on Sunday, 28 June 2026.



We also congratulate Prudence Sekgodiso, who became the first South African woman to win an indoor world title after claiming gold in the 800 metres at the World Athletics Indoor Championships in Nanjing, China.

Together, these achievements demonstrate that South Africans continue to compete successfully on the highest international stage. These victories reflect the enduring character of our nation. South Africans have never been defined by adversity.

The spirit of South Africa is not a spirit that surrenders. It is the spirit Madiba captured when he said: *“Do not judge me by my successes, but by how many*

times I fell down and got back up again.” It is this spirit that has carried our struggle for liberation, sustained our democratic transition and continues to inspire our collective determination to build a better South Africa.

The ANC approaches this decisive electoral period in that same spirit. We have listened to the people, reflected honestly on our shortcomings and undertaken the difficult work of organisational renewal.

Our commitment is to become a more effective instrument in the service of the people and to respond with urgency to the challenges confronting our communities.

71st Anniversary of the Freedom Charter

26 June, marks the **seventy-first anniversary of the adoption of the Freedom Charter** at the Congress of the People in Kliptown. On that historic day, the people of South Africa declared that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can claim legitimacy unless it is founded on the will of the people. Seventy-one years later, the Freedom Charter remains the moral foundation of our constitutional democracy and the guiding programme of the African National Congress.

Its vision continues to shape our efforts to build a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa. As we commemorate this important anniversary, we reaffirm our determination to defend and advance its values at a time when they are increasingly challenged by division, intolerance and narrow political interests.

Migration, Community Tensions and the Threats around 30 June

The National Working Committee reflected extensively on the growing tensions around migration, community safety and the threats of instability associated with 30 June. The ANC approaches this matter guided by the Constitution, the Freedom Charter and the rule of law. The ANC rejects the false choice between enforcing immigration laws and upholding human dignity. South Africa is capable of doing both. The democratic State has a responsibility to secure the country's borders, enforce immigration legislation and protect communities, while ensuring that every person is treated with dignity and in accor-

dance with the law.

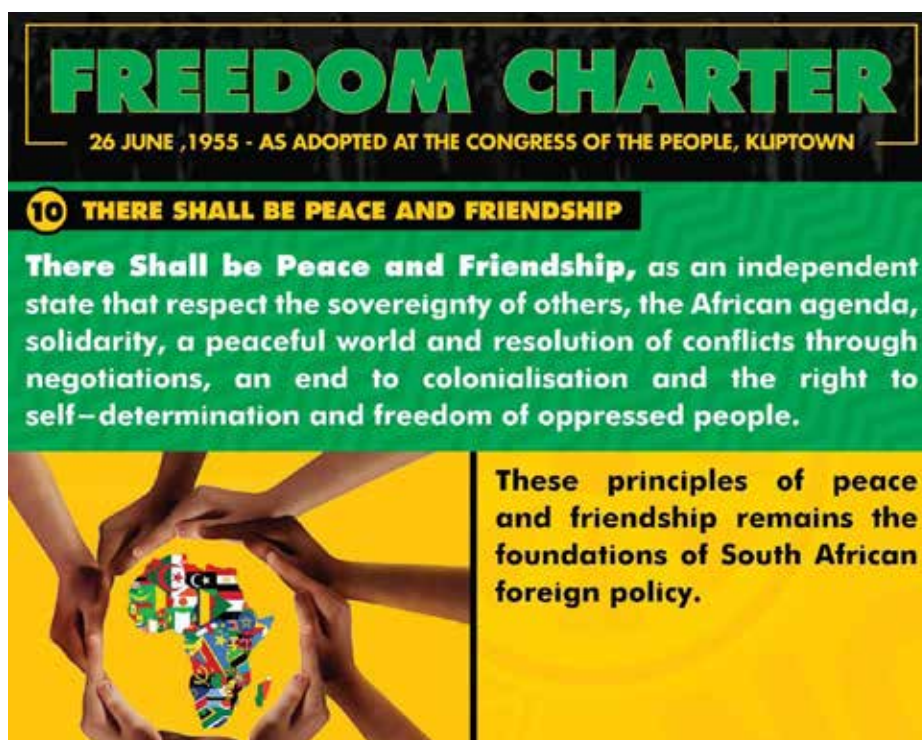
The government continues to act decisively, with the Department of Home Affairs reporting more than 110,000 deportations during the current year and the cancellation of approximately 2,000 fraudulently obtained study visas. The South African Police Service and the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Migration have reported more than 40,000 arrests of undocumented persons, including over 7,400 during the past month alone, while 143 individuals have been arrested for inciting violence against foreign nationals.

The repatriation of undocumented persons continues to be conducted lawfully, safely and humanely. By 20 June, more than 4,900 Malawian nationals had been repatriated from KwaZulu-Natal, with women and children prioritised throughout the process. Hundreds more have been returned through other ports of entry in an orderly and dignified manner. South Africa

will continue to uphold the principle that every person must be treated with dignity, irrespective of their immigration status.

Significant progress is also being made to strengthen border security. Through the Border Management Authority (BMA), government is modernising major ports of entry, deploying advanced surveillance technologies and increasing operational capacity along the country's borders. These interventions are disrupting organised criminal networks, reducing unlawful border crossings and strengthening the authority of the democratic State.

The ANC commends the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) Cluster, led by Minister Mmamoloko Kubayi and all law-enforcement agencies for their work in protecting the sovereignty of the Republic. The enforcement of immigration law is the responsibility of the democratic State and cannot be outsourced to private individuals or unlawful groupings.



FREEDOM CHARTER
26 JUNE, 1955 - AS ADOPTED AT THE CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE, KLIPTOWN

10 THERE SHALL BE PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP

There Shall be Peace and Friendship, as an independent state that respect the sovereignty of others, the African agenda, solidarity, a peaceful world and resolution of conflicts through negotiations, an end to colonialisation and the right to self-determination and freedom of oppressed people.

These principles of peace and friendship remains the foundations of South African foreign policy.

The ANC addresses these issues politically, because what is unfolding on some of our streets is not, at its heart, about immigration at all. We have seen this architecture before. In July 2021, our country was dragged to the very edge of the abyss by a coordinated assault dressed up as a grievance; an organised attempt to render the country ungovernable and to challenge the authority of the democratic State itself. What we are witnessing now carries the same fingerprints. Unlawful immigration is being manipulated by new political formations whose real purpose is to manufacture chaos, to collapse the institutions of the State, and to engineer fear and unfair conditions on the very eve of our local government elections.

There are formations in our politics that have embraced an open ethno-nationalism and that have sought to hijack the proud heritage of the amabutho and the sacred symbols of our people's history, bending them to a reckless and destructive agenda. Let us be unequivocal, the amabutho are heritage institutions that we hold in the deepest admiration and respect; they are the pride of our nation's history, and they must never be abused or hijacked as a cover for nefarious and criminal acts. The regiments of our forebears were raised to defend the nation and its people, not to terrorise the vulnerable, to loot the trader, or to burn the home of the poor.

In this, we associate ourselves fully with the wise counsel of iSilo, His Majesty the King of the Zulu Nation, who has spoken against the abuse of this sacred heritage and against the violence now being directed at foreign nationals in our communities. To clothe vig-



ilantism and mob violence in the regalia of our heritage is to desecrate it, and the ANC condemns this without reservation.

The ANC states firmly that illegal immigration is unacceptable and the anxieties of South Africans about work, shelter, dignity, safety and access to services are real and legitimate. These concerns must be addressed through lawful enforcement, effective governance and practical measures that protect communities while upholding the dignity of every person.

The burden carried by receiving countries is also real. It must be confronted honestly by the continent as a whole, because this responsibility cannot rest on South Africa's shoulders alone. This is a continental challenge, and it demands a continental solution. The ANC has tabled concrete proposals in the Continental Compact on Immigration, to be advanced through the African Union. This framework provides for managed, lawful, and humane migration; shared responsibility among countries of origin, transit, and destination; protection for local workers and local economies; and orderly, dignified returns.

At home, the ANC is advancing legislation to protect certain sectors of the economy for South Africans. This includes regulating spaza shops and protecting local economic development. The ANC also rejects, without reservation, the recycled and fabricated images now in circulation that are designed to inflame communities and damage South Africa's standing on the continent and the world at large.

On Recent By-Elections and LGE Preparations

The African National Congress is running an energetic, disciplined and joyful campaign, in the way the ANC has always won face-to-face, door-to-door, in every street, every ward and every town. ANC volunteers are out in their numbers. The instructions to structures are firm and are being met. Every region must constantly and consistently reach every ward, ahead of polling day. Volunteer Assemblies are convening across the country, and the spirit on the ground is warm, welcoming and overwhelmingly positive. ANC volunteers are being met with the embrace of communities who know that it is the ANC that brought them democracy, dignity

and delivery. These are conversations of hope with neighbours speaking with neighbours about water, jobs and the future of their towns. The reception ANC cadres are receiving on the doorstep gives the movement every confidence going into 4 November.

South Africans are already demonstrating their confidence through the ballot. In recent by-elections in Mpumalanga and other parts of the country, voters once again placed their trust in the African National Congress. In Bushbuckridge Ward 3, the ANC won decisively across the voting districts of Mbatini, Hoxani and Mapetekwane. Overall, we secured a commanding 1,627 votes to 238.

The ANC does not take the confidence of our people for granted and remains humbled by this trust. The people are the only true judges of any movement, and through the ballot they are returning their confidence to a renewed, listening and hard-working ANC. This is the renewal of the movement bearing fruit, not in slogans, but in the considered verdict of communities themselves.

ANC branch work is well advanced. The overwhelming majority of wards have convened Branch General Meetings and are completing candidate selection through democratic, branch-driven processes. Where recent ward delimitation created additional administrative work, provinces are processing the transfers at a pace. This is the largest and most member-driven candidate-selection exercise of any party in the country, no other formation comes close to the depth of the ANC's roots in communities.

The ANC is sharpening its communications and ground cam-

paign for the decisive weeks ahead, with a renewed focus on reaching young South Africans, who make up the largest share of the voters' roll, on the platforms where they are. The ANC is the only organisation with a history, structures, and a programme to fix local government and transform the economy.

Parliamentary and Legal Matters

The ANC wishes to address a number of legal and parliamentary matters frankly because we believe in transparency and because much of what has been said about these matters in the public domain remains incomplete.

Following the Constitutional Court order of 8 June 2026, the Section 89 matter has been referred to the relevant committee of the National Assembly. This is the ordinary constitutional course of Parliament's business, and it should be understood as nothing more and nothing less than that.

Let us be very clear about the role of the Speaker of the National Assembly, who stands above this contest. The institution of the National Assembly must remain neutral, and the Speaker is properly preserving that neutrality

by filing a notice to abide by the Court's decision. The Speaker has acted correctly, constitutionally, and with complete propriety throughout, and the ANC stands fully behind both the Office of the Speaker and the person occupying it. Any attempt to draw the Speaker into the merits of this matter is misplaced, and the ANC will not approve it.

On the question of why ANC members serving on the committee took the view they did regarding the President's application, the ANC's approach is guided by a single principle that Parliament must function skilfully, constitutionally, efficiently, and as one. The ANC is a champion of an undivided, unfragmented Parliament. Our Parliament is built to seek consensus first and to work from a settled and reliable record.

Some have asked why the ANC first gave notice of its intention to participate in the President's urgent application and then withdrew that notice. The explanation is straightforward and procedural. By agreement between all the parties, the Court issued a case-management directive on 18 June, setting a tight timetable for the urgent application, which is now set down for hearing on 15 and 16 July. That directive required any party represented in



the National Assembly wishing to intervene or oppose to file its notice by no later than 19 June, a window of barely one day. To preserve our position within the Court's timeline, while our posture was still being considered on the advice of senior counsel, a protective notice was filed in the ordinary course.

Once that considered position was settled, namely that the ANC would come in only as a friend of the Court, confined strictly to questions of process and sequencing under section 237 of the Constitution, and taking no position whatsoever on the merits, the earlier notice had served its purpose and was withdrawn. There is nothing untoward in any of this. It is the ordinary management of litigation, conducted by agreement between the parties and under the Court's supervision. We considered being a friend of the Court in order to offer information that we believed the Court ought to have regarding the operation of the National Assembly in general. We retain the right to participate as a friend of the Court and may invoke that right at any stage during the proceedings.

The question for the ANC is not who wins a procedural skirmish. The question is whether Parliament does its work properly. The foundational report on which this process rests is itself the subject of a review before the courts, to be heard in September.

Our considered view is that it cannot be sound for Parliament to charge ahead with a full inquiry on a foundation that a competent court may yet set aside, when that very court is seized with assisting Parliament to settle the base record from which it must work. It is

better to allow another competent forum to do its work so that Parliament proceeds once, properly and on solid ground, rather than twice, and on contested ground.

That is not obstruction or delay; it is respect for the Constitution and for the economy and dignity of Parliament. This remains the ANC's consistent position, confined strictly to process and sequencing and taking no position on the merits.

The Recall of the Executive Mayor in the North West Province

The ANC confirms that it is proceeding with the recall of the Executive Mayor of Madibeng in the North West. We have approached the courts urgently to seek the suspension of the existing order, which prevented the ANC from exercising its organisational right, and to seek rescission. Deployment to public office is a deployment of the ANC, made in service of our communities, and the ANC will exercise its right to redeploy its public representatives where it is in the interests of good governance and service delivery.

The Eastern Cape and the Conduct of Litigation Against the ANC

The ANC regards the decision of setting aside the ANC EC Provincial Task Team as unfortunate and, with respect, as itself unlikely to be sound in law. We say so soberly and responsibly. The ANC has observed a pattern in a section of the Eastern Cape Bench of decisions that appears to hamstring the constitutional powers of the African National Congress and to intrude upon the right of our members to manage the affairs of their own organisa-

tion. This pattern calls for deep introspection, and we do not rule out the possibility of escalating our treatment to a formal complaint through the appropriate legal channels.

Consider what is at stake. There are 703 branches in the Eastern Cape. Everyone wishes to proceed to the conference. Every one of them wishes to be free to run its own affairs and to prepare to win on 4 November. Yet a mere handful of individuals, not a single ward and not a single branch among our 703, are party to this litigation, yet have been able to bring the entire body of our membership to a standstill. These complaints were not first brought to the ANC's own internal dispute-resolution mechanisms, as our Constitution requires, before they were rushed to court. We therefore face an extraordinary situation: a conference cannot be held, and when the ANC acts, using its own constitutional tools to regularise leadership so that a conference can be held, that too becomes the subject of litigation.

This cannot be what our democracy intended. It cannot be right that three persons, squealing from the margins, can effectively stop a movement of millions from running its own affairs. When the democratic will of 703 branches is held to ransom by the complaints of a few who declined even to use the remedies provided by their own organisation, democracy itself is placed in jeopardy.

The ANC will therefore return to court, on an urgent basis, to seek leave to appeal and such further relief as will enable us to run our own affairs. We will ask that a full Bench correct what we regard as the misguided direction these matters have taken since March.

The regions of the Eastern Cape are united in this, all of them, without exception. Not a single ward or branch stands with this litigation.

This is not the work of true members of the ANC. No genuine member would labour so hard to damage the organisation that is their political home merely to be declared a leader of structures that no longer favour them. This is the work of a small pack of individuals determined to disrupt the ANC's election preparations. It is political. We cannot say with certainty where it begins or who funds it, and we will not speculate beyond the evidence. However, the ANC has every right to ask the question, and we do ask it, in whose interest is it to paralyse the oldest liberation movement on the continent on the eve of an election? These are questions that warrant the deepest introspection by all who care for our democracy.

On the Geo-Political Environment

The ANC remains seized with developments in the international arena that bear directly on the standing of our country and on the cause of justice in the world. We are deeply concerned by the decision of the Bureau of the Assembly of States Parties of the International Criminal Court, taken on 9 June 2026, to set aside the unanimous clearance of the Chief Prosecutor, Mr Karim Khan KC, by an independent three-judge panel; a panel that included Justice Leona Theron of our own Constitutional Court; and to record a finding of serious misconduct against him. That this decision was driven by a qualified majority dominated by a narrow bloc of States should trouble all

who believe in a fair and impartial system of international justice. The matter now proceeds to a special session of the Assembly of States Parties in New York on 24 July 2026.

The ANC's position is unambiguous; South Africa must work harder to protect the system of international justice and to rally around the Office of the Prosecutor. We believe our country should not abstain in these forums, for in a contest of this kind, abstention is a concession. We have therefore urged our government, through the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, to work across the African continent and the Non-Aligned Movement to defend the integrity of the Court.

On the meeting of the Group of Seven at Évian-les-Bains from 15 to 17 June, to which South Africa was not invited, the ANC is clear-eyed. This is the price of principle, not a wound to be nursed. Our country hosted a successful G20 in November 2025, and we will not apologise for the values we carry into every room we enter. The substantive question arising from that summit, the scramble for critical minerals; only strengthens our resolve: the answer for Africa is beneficiation at home and negotiation as a

bloc through SADC, the African Union and the African Continental Free Trade Area. This is the substance of the second radical phase of our National Democratic Revolution.

We also welcome the adoption by the African Union–CARICOM Commission of a nineteen-point plan on reparatory justice in Accra, building on the United Nations resolution of March 2026, which recognised the transatlantic slave trade as the gravest crime against humanity. As President John Mahama reminded us, history does not ask us to inherit guilt, but to inherit responsibility.

The ANC reaffirms the need for even-handed application of South African law to all our nationals. We note the published figures indicating that South African citizens serve in foreign armed forces, including the Israeli military. The law of the Republic applies equally to every citizen, and this principle is consistent with our country's principled posture before the International Court of Justice.

The ANC also reports that a delegation led by our Secretary General undertook a successful bilateral visit to our sister liberation movement, FRELIMO, in Mozambique from 16 to 19 June.



We paid our respects at the Matola Memorial, where twelve of our cadres were murdered by the apartheid regime in 1981. The bonds forged during our struggle endure.

Organisational and Other Matters

The NWC also attended to a few further matters in the ordinary course of its work. On the security of members' personal information, the ANC takes the protection of our members' data with the utmost seriousness. We acted immediately upon the allegations brought to our attention. Our forensic assessment indicates that this is not a breach of our current membership system. We have nonetheless reported the matter to the Information Regulator in terms of the Protection of Personal Information Act, to the South African Police Service, and to the relevant authorities. We are preparing to communicate directly

with affected members.

On the economy, the NWC noted the continued pressure on the cost of living, with inflation increasing in May, driven largely by fuel prices. We welcome the relief expected at the pumps in July, and we reaffirm that fixing local government and transforming the economy, fixing infrastructure, water, roads, electricity, and restoring dignity to our people's lives, remains the central mission of our movement, led by the ANC.

On safety, the ANC welcomes the latest crime statistics, which show a second consecutive quarter of decline, including a meaningful reduction in the murder rate. This is progress, but we are under no illusion: every life lost to violent crime is one too many, and the work of building safer communities continues.

On the matter of our National Spokesperson, Comrade

Mahlengi Bhengu, the ANC wishes the Comrade a full recovery and confirms that two Acting Co-Spokespersons, Comrades Nonceba Mhlauli and Zuko Godlimpi, have been deployed to ensure the seamless continuation of the ANC's communications work. They will soon call NEC sub-committee media engagements so that we can engage more deeply on issues in a focused, subject-specific manner.

CONCLUSION

The African National Congress enters the final stretch of this campaign united, disciplined and confident. We are on the ground. We are with our people. And we are listening.

To the people of South Africa, we say: the ANC hears you, the ANC is working, and the ANC asks for your hand once more as we fix local government and transform the economy together.



We are confronting the challenges affecting the water and sanitation sector

■ By **PEMMY MAJODINA**

WATER is life. It is the foundation of public health, economic development, human dignity and social progress. When water systems function effectively, communities thrive, businesses grow and opportunities expand. When they fail, the consequences are dire and they are felt in every household, school, clinic and workplace.

It is for this reason that we have chosen to confront the challenges facing the water and sanitation sector honestly and without hesitation. We will not hide from difficult realities, nor will we allow them to define our future. Instead, we are using them as a catalyst for decisive action, institutional reform and accelerated investment. While the challenges are significant, so too is our determination to overcome them.

On the 31st March 2026, we acknowledged that the latest Blue Drop, Green Drop and No Drop reports, which provide an accurate assessment of the state of municipal water and sanitation services, paint a concerning picture.

The reports revealed that 74% – that is, 107 of the 144 Water Services Authorities – scored poor or critical in the management of their drinking water systems (2023 Blue Drop) and/or wastewater systems (2025 Green Drop), while non-revenue water stands



at an average of 47% across all Water Services Authorities.

We have also acknowledged the escalating municipal debt owed to Water Boards, which has now reached R27 billion, as well as the growing threat posed by pollution of our water resources.

While we have recorded solid progress on the resolutions adopted at the Water and Sanitation Indaba that fall under the direct responsibility of the national government, we remain concerned that progress by many Water Services Authorities in ring-fencing water revenue and expenditure has been insufficient.

However, there are encouraging signs that reform is possible

and that improvement can be achieved where there is political will, sound governance and capable administration. Notable examples include the Ekurhuleni and City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipalities, as well as the Steve Tshwete and Thembisile Hani Local Municipalities in Mpumalanga, all of which have registered significant progress in strengthening financial and operational management.

Another positive example is Bushbuckridge Local Municipality, which has completed its Section 78 assessment, separated its Water Services Provider and Water Services Authority functions, and is now ring-fencing its water and sanitation budget. These examples demonstrate that the

reforms we are advocating are both practical and achievable.

The 2026/2027 Budget

On 15 May 2026, we tabled our Budget Vote before the National Assembly. We have now presented it before the National Council of Provinces, outlining our programme to strengthen water security, improve sanitation services and restore confidence in the water sector.

The Department has been allocated a budget of R22 billion for the 2026/27 financial year, compared to R23.4 billion in 2025/26 financial year, representing a reduction of approximately 6%. While this reduction presents challenges, it also compels us to focus resources where they will have the greatest impact and to strengthen partnerships that can unlock additional investment into the sector.

More than Half of the Budget Goes to Infrastructure

More than 56% of our 2026/27 budget – amounting to R12.3 billion – has been allocated to fund 70 bulk infrastructure projects across all provinces through the Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant (RBIG), as well as 341 projects under the Water Services Infrastructure Grant (WSIG). Importantly, at least 175 of these projects are scheduled for completion during the current financial year.

Looking ahead, strategic projects valued at several billion rand are expected to be completed during the coming financial year, including the Loskop Regional Bulk Water Supply Scheme, the George Water Supply Project,

the Brits Water Treatment Works, the Mafikeng South Bulk Water Supply Scheme, and several major projects in the Eastern Cape, Limpopo and North West.

These projects will build on the momentum generated by a number of major projects that have already been completed, including:

- The R15 million Misgund Bulk Water Scheme and the R9 million Sterkspruit Water Treatment Works refurbishment in the Eastern Cape;
- The R759 million Klipdrift Water Treatment Works in Hammanskraal, which can now produce its full capacity of 50 megalitres per day in Gauteng;
- Phase 1 of the R4.8 billion Giyani Water Project, which is supplying water to 24 of the 55 targeted villages, the R736 million Babanana Bulk Water Pipeline, and Phase 1 of the Mametja Sekororo Bulk Water Scheme in Limpopo;
- Phase 3 of the R1.5 billion Maphumulo Bulk Water Scheme in KwaZulu-Natal;
- The R52 million Piet Retief Water Treatment Plant refurbishment and the R234 mil-

lion Easterhoek and Ekulindeni Bulk Water Scheme in Mpumalanga; and

- The R351 million Moretele South Bulk Water Supply Scheme in North West.

At the same time, more major national water infrastructure projects, amounting to approximately R130 billion in investment, have been unblocked and are now being implemented, with a significant proportion of the funding being mobilised from the private sector.

Added to this is the significant progress being made towards establishing the National Water Resource Infrastructure Agency. This reform will position the sector to mobilise substantially greater levels of finance for strategic water infrastructure.

Key milestones already achieved include the appointment of the Board and preparations to appoint a Chief Executive Officer, as well as plans to facilitate the transfer of approximately 2 500 employees from the Department and 150 employees from the Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority.



Expanding Rural Water Access

Access to safe water remains one of the most fundamental measures of social justice and human dignity. Through our Rural Water Access Programme, we have identified more than 2 600 settlements requiring urgent intervention. These communities will benefit from groundwater development, spring protection, rainwater harvesting systems and the Adopt-a-Village initiative.

This programme reflects our commitment to ensuring that rural communities are not left behind as we expand access to reliable and sustainable water services.

Strengthening Efforts Against Pollution

Protecting our water resources is as important as expanding infrastructure. We currently have 96 active criminal cases relating to sewage pollution involving municipalities across all nine provinces. Forty-two of these cases have already been referred for prosecution decisions, while additional investigations continue against municipalities, industries, mines and other polluters.

To strengthen transparency, accountability and consequence management, we will launch the National Polluter Register in July 2026. This important initiative will ensure that polluters are publicly identified and held accountable for actions that undermine our water resources and threaten public health.

Water Security is Inseparable from Financial Sustainability

A financially sustainable water sector is essential if we are to



maintain infrastructure, expand services and ensure long-term water security. To address escalating municipal debt owed to Water Boards, we have intensified engagements with municipalities, Premiers, MECs and National Treasury to improve payment compliance.

National Treasury has already implemented equitable share withholding measures affecting 62 municipalities, while Water Boards continue to implement credit control measures to protect their financial viability and operational sustainability.

Investing in People

Beyond infrastructure and finances, we are investing in people because the future of the water sector depends on skilled professionals, capable institutions and a new generation of technical expertise.

During the past financial year, the Department filled 116 engineering, scientific and technical positions and appointed 54 candidate engineers and scientists.

Through our Learning Academy, more than 1 000 young people have benefited from bursary programmes, with 226 bursars currently studying engineering, science, construction and project management disciplines that are critical to the future of the sector.

These investments are helping us build a professional, capable and technically skilled water sector that will serve future generations.

Institutional Reforms

Institutional reform remains central to building a modern, efficient and equitable water sector. As required by the National Water Act, all 6 Catchment Management Agencies have now been established and their respective boards appointed.

The Act also provides for the transformation of irrigation boards into Water User Associations, which are voluntary associations of water users established to undertake water-related activities for their mutual benefit within defined functional areas.

All irrigation boards within the Vaal-Orange Water Management Area have now been transformed, and we are prioritising the transformation of the remaining irrigation boards located in the Limpopo-Olifants and Breede-Olifants Water Management Areas. We will also finalise a draft Bill during the course of this year to establish an independent economic regulator for the water sector. This reform will regulate the entire water value chain and help ensure that water pricing reflects the true cost of efficient water production.

Furthermore, we have tabled the National Water Amendment Bill before Parliament to advance the equitable allocation of water resources. The Bill seeks to eliminate the hoarding of water allocations through the introduction of the “use it or lose it” principle, repeal water trading, and provide for unused water allocations to be returned to the State for reallocation in pursuit of equity and inclusive development.

Conclusion

The challenges facing the water and sanitation sector are real, and we do not underestimate them. However, neither should anyone underestimate our resolve to confront them.

Across the country, infrastructure is being built and rehabilitated. Long-delayed projects are being completed. New institutions are being established. Polluters are being pursued. Young professionals are entering the sector. Partnerships are being forged. And communities that have waited for too long are beginning to see progress.

The task before us is not merely to fix pipes, pumps and treatment works. It is to restore dignity, unlock economic opportunity, protect our environment and secure a better future for generations to come. The success of this mission will require all of us to work together – national government, provinces, municipalities, Water

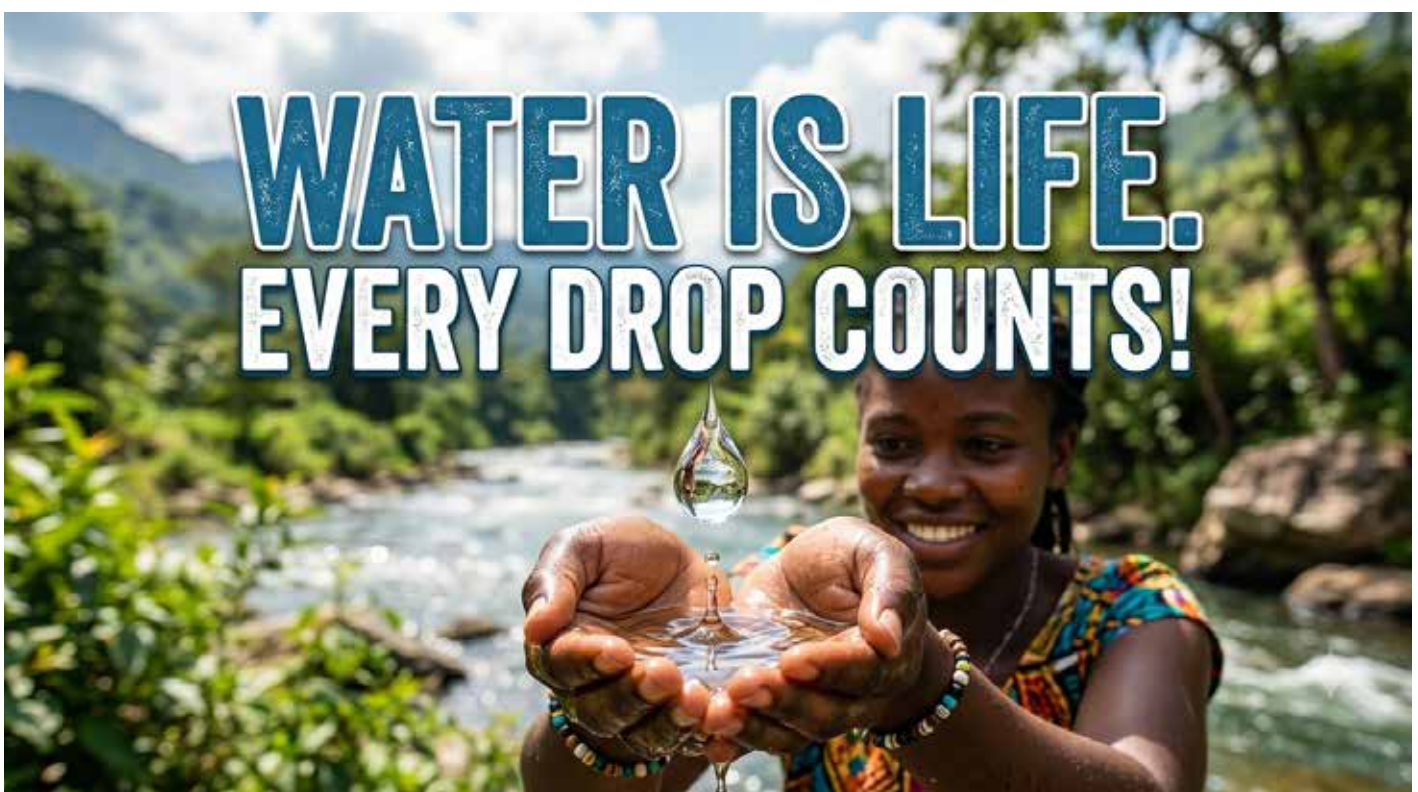
Boards, business, organised labour, civil society and communities themselves.

Let us therefore move forward with urgency, determination and a shared sense of purpose. Let us reject complacency and embrace accountability.

Let us protect every drop of water as the precious national resource that it is. And let us build a water-secure South Africa in which every household, every community and every generation can thrive.

The challenges that lie ahead are huge, but our collective capacity to overcome them is even greater. Together, let us turn commitment into action, action into results, and results into lasting change.

The future of South Africa flows through the choices we make today. Let us act boldly, act together, and act now.





Local Government Election 2026:

More parties, new rivalries and new rhetoric; But we are not enemies, we are like captains of different cabins in the same boat. Somewhere in the noise, patriotism is crying out. Let's pay attention!

■ By **DARKEY AFRIKA**

SOMETIMES, the future can seem very tricky and difficult to predict, even at the best of moments. But it must not compel us to succumb to an imagined scenario defined by doom and gloom. We are entering an era which is likely to mete out reawakening at local level, urging us to reluctantly embrace new commitments spawned by new mandates. We must accept to contend with the inevitable reality that it is but a phase in our democracy when macro challenges tend to cloud micro realities, leading to a cacophony of voices and advertisements aimed at crowding out discernible facts. Sometimes deliberately, and at other instances, unwittingly.

However, what we are certain about in 2026, is that South Afri-

ca will be going to one of the most consequential local government elections since the first non-racial local elections in November 1995, almost 31 years ago. The interest in this election is unparalleled, and the number of parties contesting is overwhelming, with almost 500 political parties, and unprecedentedly, with the South African Communist Party (SACP), abandoning its historical ally, the ANC, and going it fully alone, since the establishment of the alliance. But the fracturing between the ANC and the SACP, was not unexpected, it has been observable and threatening since 1996. South Africans, as many commentators are fond to assert, will be spoiled for choice. Given this new environment, we can expect more rhetoric, misinformation, disinformation, deep fake

news as political parties and independent candidates scramble for our attention to outshine each other. It is going to be frighteningly overwhelming. There will be an overload of information, and the public discourse could be corrupted with prejudices and polarisation. With objective truth and rational debates being sacrificed in the process. The likely scenario on the other hand, is that declining public trust could impact negatively on the turn out, suggesting some disinterest in our infant democracy. Such negative outcome could signal the urgent need for sustained civic and democracy education and heightened political education from all concerned, especially political parties. A post-election empirical analysis could help to determine the way forward.

Some new and some old parties will engage in ugly and visceral battles with catchy slogans disguising apparent deception and invoking all sorts of misfortunes to galvanise our support. Old rivalries will be revived. Clichés will regain their original meaning. The familiar words of WB Yeats will be rolled out of the trolley of commentary, especially **“Things fall apart”** and **“the centre cannot hold”**. Flowery languages will adorn T-shirts with a mosaic of colours beautifying rallies and meetings. Manifestoes, some containing the obvious, some the incredible and impractical, will be presented to the nation. Fretful speeches will deny us the ability to relax. Solutions to our problems will be simplified and chanted *ad nauseum* in all gatherings. Out of desperation, some will even shamelessly misrepresent symbols, distort histories, simply to gain traction.

Amidst all our obvious challenges, colourful posters with exaggerated messages will be everywhere, promising everything under the sun. Leaders with no discernible record in governance, will attempt to lure us with implausible predictions containing simple solution to our complex problems and easy victory in the coming elections. In all villages, small and big towns cities and metros, there will be cars of all shapes and colours, which we never knew existed!

Personalities or simply power seekers, desperately seeking to sublimate their inadequacies in power, will emerge, visiting places and houses they have never been to before. And we will also, strangely, see them in churches, places they would have seriously and knowingly, avoided in the last five years or even more. Ce-

lebrities, populist and generally unknown individuals, posing as leaders will not be in short supply. Even your neighbour, who is nowhere near being a leader, will this time around, suddenly emerge with remarkable enthusiasm, singing out the solutions to all the problems you have both experienced, with exaggerated claims of a new beginning. Don't be surprised-because we shall have entered a period of amazing miracles.

Political communication will be at a new high and the crescendo will increase with the cacophony of **“not so soothing”** noises which will reverberate across the country. This is something we must not fear but vigilance will be necessary. Our new country is 32 years old, with a 30-year Constitution. And we have solid institutions which will make this journey not so scary.

We must, however, with renewed and consistent determination, engage everyone, sincerely and seriously about the incredulous claims they will be throwing at us. Our country will not be at the precipice of collapse. Nothing will be falling apart. Nor will there be any imminent apocalypse. **(We hope)**. As political communica-

tion will be at an unprecedentedly high temperature, it will also be fraught with opaque and bizarre messages.

The geography of underdevelopment, poverty, unemployment and inequality including all our problems and challenges, will be reshaped in the heads of some political leaders and resold to us in a strikingly passionate and sometimes unbelievable determination. But still, we must not fear, we must listen attentively and critically, fathom, decipher and decide. Our future lies in our decision and not in the colourful untruths we will be tortured with. Afterall, we the people, are the embodiment of those who came before. We know how our people will extend their reach into their future as they embark on the next 30 years of our hard-won democracy. And those who ascend the political ladder must not forget what they must fix!

As some political scientists say, *“very few questions about democracy can be answered without referring to elections. If politics is about making decisions and implementing them, elections are the first decision, they determine how we entrust the power of making these decisions through*



institutionalised procedure and for a given period. Elections must never be reduced nor limited to some “deathly” competition for power between friends and foes. Elections are at the core of democracy. And we the people, are not simply hapless participants therein.”

The IEC has reminded us of and emphasised our role in these elections with a simple but powerful tagline **“Get up, Show up, Vote!”** Good and serious patriots never stay away!

Two years ago, when formally launching the 2024 National and Provincial Election program (NPE 2024) the Chairperson of the Electoral Independent Commission (IEC), Mr Mosotho Moepya, made a profound statement and said *“As we gaze upon 2024, an election year of unique significance, making not only another stride in South Africa’s democratic journey but also celebrating the 30th birthday of our electoral democracy, let us remember that democracy is not a destination, it is a perpetual journey. It thrives on our active engagement, reverence for its values, and collective effort to surmount challenges.”*

Two years since, the message still rings true. But conflicting political noises and false rhetoric could deny us the focus to decipher the essence and relevance of this reminder.

It cannot be denied that our politics is seriously polarised and that there is always a rush to the extremes of the spectrum – to paraphrase Matthew D’Ancona. He further advises that... *“civilised disagreement should always be a hallmark of a decent society”*.

All those who will be participating



in this local election are therefore not enemies. They must see themselves first and foremost as patriots offering the people different option for the good of our country. Power seekers, various leaders, independent candidates and members of political parties, black and white, must see our country as one boat with nine cabins (provinces). If our old or new rivalries, competition, disinformation, misinformation and post-truth narratives sink the boat, we will all go down with all its cabins. That means we will be sinking our country for short term benefits.

We must avoid the temptation to mar our democracy and rubbish our own Constitution at every turn when groping for solutions to our surmountable problems. Our diversity remains our strength. The team of lawyers who represent us at the Hague, drawn from our diverse society to defend the progressive values enshrined in our Constitution at the ICJ, are a profound testament to this. They are patriots of all races, using their brilliance for the common good of humanity and the Palestinian people.

Our political leaders must learn and be inspired by this and deploy their collective efforts for

the prosperity of our villages, cities and towns and eventually, the bigger prize, South Africa. They must, as a civic and patriotic duty, take hatred out of our politics. South Africa is our only Plan A. We have no Plan B. So, we can’t rubbish and destroy the only country we have. In his book, *Identity, Ignorance, Innovation*, Matthew D’Ancona, warns about the post-truth era we live, and he cautions that *“We live in an age in which the collapse of trust in institutions, experts and hitherto standard sources have transformed the way in which we consume information. Simultaneously, digital technology has weaponised the primacy of emotions over facts, it amplifies the shrill, rewards intensity with traffic drive users algorithmically towards content that bolster prejudices instead of challenging them. In this setting, truth is not determined by reasoned evaluation, assessment and conclusion. You pick your own truth as if from a menu.”*

But we need to be resilient, fathom, decipher and decide rationally. Afterall, we cannot be transformed into enemies because of elections. Like that team of our diverse brilliant lawyers, our leaders in all political parties must strive for honour and civility for the common good, deploying their collective political brilliance to frame narratives which propel our country to greater heights, building thriving rural villages, industrialised cities, small towns and metros.

Darkey Africa is a member of the ANC and Veterans’ League in good standing. He writes in his personal capacity. (This article was originally published and has been updated).

Beyond Liberation Credentials: Can South Africa Rebuild Trust in Local Government?

■ By **SASABONA MANGANYE**

SOUTH Africa's democratic breakthrough in 1994 represented far more than a political transition. It was the culmination of a national democratic revolution led by the African National Congress (ANC), allied forces of the liberation movement and millions of ordinary South Africans who struggled against racial capitalism, apartheid exploitation and systemic exclusion.

The democratic state inherited by the ANC was not a neutral instrument. It emerged from a society characterised by deep inequalities in wealth, land ownership, infrastructure and economic opportunity. Local government was therefore envisioned as a transformative sphere of governance, tasked not merely with administering services but with fundamentally changing the material conditions of the historically oppressed majority.

Yet, three decades into democracy, local government faces a crisis of public confidence. Service delivery failures, governance instability, corruption and administrative weaknesses have undermined the transformative potential of municipalities and weakened the relationship between communities and the democratic state.



The central question confronting South Africa today is not whether local government can be restored, but whether it can reclaim its original developmental and transformative mandate.

The Crisis of Trust and the Contradictions of Democratic Transformation

The decline in public trust cannot be understood outside the broader contradictions of South Africa's political economy.

Despite significant advances in housing, electrification, social protection, water provision and access to basic services since 1994, municipalities continue to operate within conditions shaped

by structural inequality, unemployment, poverty and uneven development. Local government often finds itself at the frontline of social and economic crises generated by both historical dispossession and contemporary economic challenges.

Communities experience these contradictions directly. When refuse is not collected, roads deteriorate, water systems collapse or housing projects stall, local government becomes the visible face of state failure.

At the same time, genuine grievances have been compounded by instances of corruption, factionalism, patronage and weak governance. These practices

undermine the values of the liberation movement and weaken the capacity of the state to advance the interests of the working class and poor communities.

Trust is therefore eroded not only by material conditions but by the perception that public institutions are drifting away from their revolutionary and developmental purpose.

The ANC's Historic Responsibility

As the leader of the National Democratic Revolution and the governing party in most municipalities, the ANC carries a special responsibility in rebuilding local government.

This responsibility cannot be fulfilled through appeals to liberation history alone. The legitimacy earned through decades of struggle must be continuously renewed through ethical leadership, accountable governance and tangible improvements in people's lives.

The ANC's historic mission has always been rooted in the aspirations of workers, the poor, women, youth and marginalised communities. Municipalities governed by the movement must therefore become centres of developmental governance, capable of driving local economic development, expanding public services and improving the quality of life of the people.

Renewal requires a decisive break from careerism, patronage networks and the use of public office for private accumulation. Cadres deployed to local government must embody the values of servant leadership, revolutionary discipline and accountability to

the communities they serve.

The ANC's programme of renewal and organisational rebuilding must therefore find practical expression in municipalities across the country.

Building a Developmental State from Below

The reconstruction of local government requires the strengthening of the developmental state.

Municipal administrations must be professionalised and equipped with the technical capacity necessary to deliver services effectively. The appointment of municipal managers and senior officials should prioritise competence, experience and commitment to public service.

A capable developmental state requires both political leadership and administrative excellence. The relationship between elected representatives and professional administrators must be guided by a common commitment to transformation and service delivery rather than factional interests.

Investment in infrastructure, maintenance, planning and local economic development should become central pillars of municipal governance. Municipalities must serve not only as service providers but also as catalysts for inclusive growth, job creation and economic participation.

People's Power and Democratic Participation

The Freedom Charter declared that *"The People Shall Govern."* This principle remains as relevant today as it was during the struggle against apartheid.

Communities must not be reduced to passive recipients of government services. Democratic participation is essential to rebuilding trust and strengthening accountability.

Ward committees, community meetings and participatory planning processes should become genuine instruments of people's power. Residents must have meaningful opportunities to shape development priorities, monitor implementation and hold





public representatives accountable.

A vibrant democracy depends on organised communities actively participating in governance rather than engaging only during elections.

The ANC, together with civic organisations, trade unions, youth formations and community structures, has an important role to play in revitalising democratic participation and strengthening the relationship between the state and society.

Local Government as a Site of Democratic Renewal

South Africa's democratic future will largely be determined at local level.

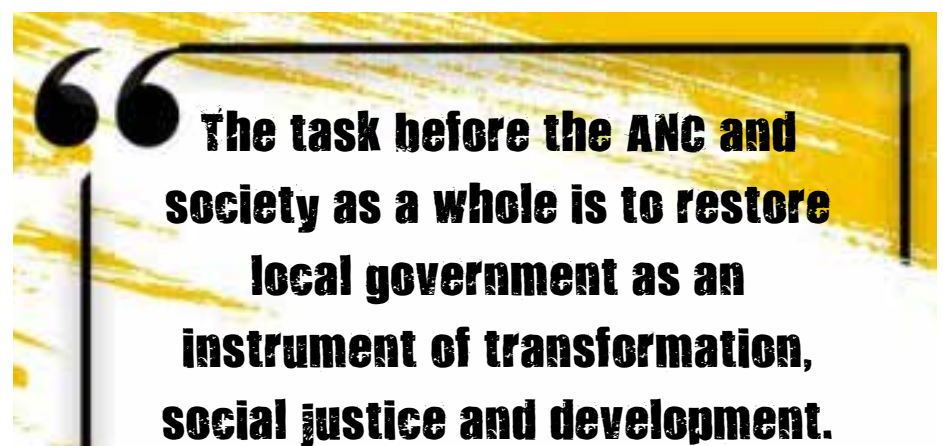
Municipalities represent the point where citizens interact most directly with the state. They are therefore the primary arena in which confidence in democratic institutions is either strengthened or weakened.

The task before the ANC and society as a whole is to restore local government as an instrument of transformation, social justice and development. This requires ethical leadership, professional administration, active citizenship and a renewed commitment to the values that guided the liberation struggle.

The generation that fought for freedom did not envision a democratic state detached from the needs of the people. They envisioned a society founded on dignity, equality and shared prosperity.

Rebuilding trust in local government is therefore not simply an administrative challenge. It is a political and developmental imperative central to the advancement of the National Democratic Revolution and the construction of a more just, inclusive and democratic South Africa.

In this sense, local government can indeed become the frontline of democratic renewal – provided it remains rooted in the people, accountable to the people and committed to the transformative vision that inspired South Africa's liberation struggle.



The Freedom Charter at 71: From Kliptown to the Unfinished Journey of Freedom and Democracy

■ By **CORNELIUS MONAMA**

TODAY, Friday, 26 June, marks 71 years since the adoption of the Freedom Charter. When thousands of delegates gathered in Kliptown on 26 June 1955, they were not merely condemning the injustices of apartheid. They were articulating a bold and far-reaching vision of a society founded on equality, citizenship and shared prosperity.

Drawn from the collective aspirations, grievances and hopes of ordinary citizens across the country, the Freedom Charter emerged as the most authoritative and comprehensive articulation of the democratic vision of the liberation movement, one that would profoundly alter the course of South African history.

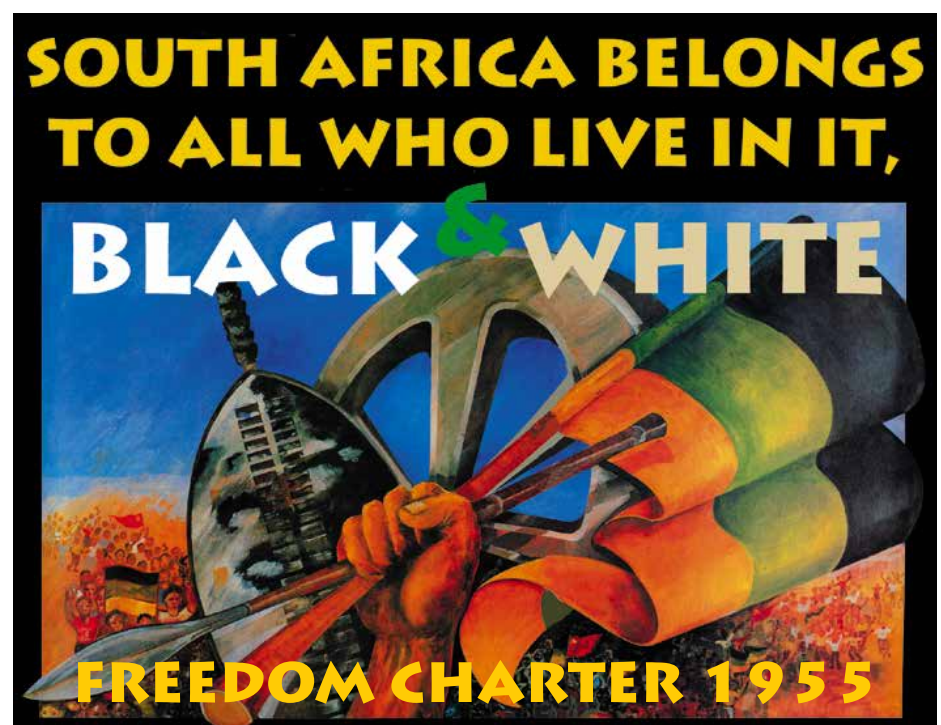
Since its adoption, the Charter has generated sharply divergent interpretations across the ideological spectrum. It is simultaneously a foundational statement of democratic aspirations, a contested ideological text and a site of enduring political struggle over the meaning of liberation itself. Its critics have variously dismissed it as a liberal-bourgeois compromise that diluted the revolutionary potential of African nationalism and socialism, while its defenders have viewed it as a transformative programme for social justice, economic redistribution and popular sovereign-

ty. Others have interpreted it as an early articulation of a social democratic compact that sought to reconcile political freedom with social equality through a synthesis of market mechanisms and developmental state intervention.

These competing readings have often reduced the Charter to a symbolic proxy in broader ideological disputes, obscuring its historical complexity and intellectual richness. The challenge, therefore, is not merely to praise or condemn the Freedom Charter, but to rescue it from the ideological caricatures imposed by competing sides, and to re-engage it

as a historically rooted, yet intellectually vibrant document whose aspirations, contradictions and insights continue to inform debates about democracy, citizenship, social justice and national liberation in contemporary South Africa.

The Freedom Charter is not a relic of the past, but a living political text. Its enduring relevance lies in its ability to speak simultaneously to the conditions of its time and to the unfinished questions of our own. More than seven decades after its adoption, it continues to offer both a framework for understanding South Africa's democratic journey and a benchmark



against which progress can be measured.

The Charter was not merely a protest against apartheid. It was a proposition for a different society. It not only rejected oppression but also articulated an alternative future. It confidently and eloquently answered a fundamental question confronting the oppressed majority: What kind of South Africa should emerge from the ruins of racial domination?

At a time when apartheid appeared invincible and democratic rights seemed unattainable, the Freedom Charter boldly declared that ***“South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white.”*** This was not merely a political slogan. It was a profound declaration of national identity. It challenged the ideological foundations of apartheid and offered a vision of a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa decades before such a future appeared possible.

The democratic breakthrough of 1994 and the adoption of the Constitution two years later represented, in many respects, the practical realisation of the Charter’s central principles. The Constitution’s commitment to equality, human dignity, non-racialism, democracy, socio-economic rights and the rule of law bears the unmistakable imprint of the Freedom Charter. While the Constitution reflects the realities and compromises of democratic governance, its moral and political DNA can be traced directly to Kliptown.

The Charter remains both a mirror and a compass! A mirror through which we assess the distance travelled since 1955, and a compass that continues to orient



the national project towards freedom, equality and social justice. Its enduring strength lies in its practicality. Contrary to claims by some critics, it was never an exercise in utopian idealism or wishful thinking. It was rooted firmly in the material realities of South African society. Each clause addressed a concrete injustice experienced by millions of people and proposed a tangible alternative.

When the Charter proclaimed that ***“The People Shall Govern”***, it challenged a political system that excluded the overwhelming majority from citizenship and democratic participation. When it declared that ***“All National Groups Shall Have Equal Rights”***, it confronted a legal order founded on racial hierarchy. When it proclaimed that ***“The Doors of Learning and Culture Shall Be Opened”***, it challenged an education system designed to reproduce inequality.

And when it asserted that ***“There Shall Be Houses, Security and Comfort”***, it recognised that po-

litical freedom without social justice would remain incomplete. These demands were practical responses to lived realities. Their enduring significance today lies not only in the many gains that have been partially realised, but also in the extent to which they continue to shape public policy and democratic governance.

Since 1994, South Africa has achieved near-universal enrolment among school-age children, expanded access to higher education dramatically, delivered millions of houses, extended access to electricity and clean water to millions of households, and built one of the most extensive social protection systems in the developing world. The Charter’s vision of social justice continues to find expression in contemporary efforts to expand healthcare, strengthen education, improve economic inclusion and extend basic services.

While significant progress has been made, many of the structural inequalities inherited from apartheid remain deeply entrenched.

Unemployment remains unacceptably high, particularly among young people. Poverty continues to affect millions of households. Inequality remains among the highest in the world. Spatial patterns of exclusion continue to shape access to opportunity. Corruption, governance failures and institutional weaknesses have, at times, slowed the pace of transformation. These realities do not invalidate the Charter. They reaffirm its relevance.

Authors of the Freedom Charter understood that centuries of dispossession, exploitation and exclusion could not be reversed overnight. They understood that freedom would be a journey rather than a destination.

However, it would be intellectually dishonest to attribute the gaps between the Freedom Charter's aspirations and the lived realities of many South Africans solely to structural constraints or historical legacy. A significant part of the challenge lies in the decline of leadership quality within sections of the liberation movement and the state. The Freedom Charter cannot be implemented, nor its transformative vision realised, by leaders lacking ideological grounding, strategic vision, intellectual clarity, ethical character or administrative capability.

Implementing an ambitious programme such as the Freedom Charter demands an ethical, capable and developmental state led by men and women who have a deep appreciation of the historical mission entrusted to them. Overcoming poverty, inequality and underdevelopment requires leadership that combines integrity with competence, principle with performance and revolutionary commitment with practi-

cal capability. It requires leaders who understand that public office is not a platform for personal advancement, but an instrument for social transformation and service to the people.

The African National Congress has long captured this through the injunction that leaders must "*pass through the eye of the needle*" – a metaphor for leaders whose conduct, values and commitment place the interests of the people above self-interest. So, let the best among us lead! Not the loudest, not the most connected, not the most ambitious, but the most capable, ethical and committed to freedom and justice. Ultimately, the success of the Freedom Charter depends on the quality of those entrusted with carrying its vision forward.

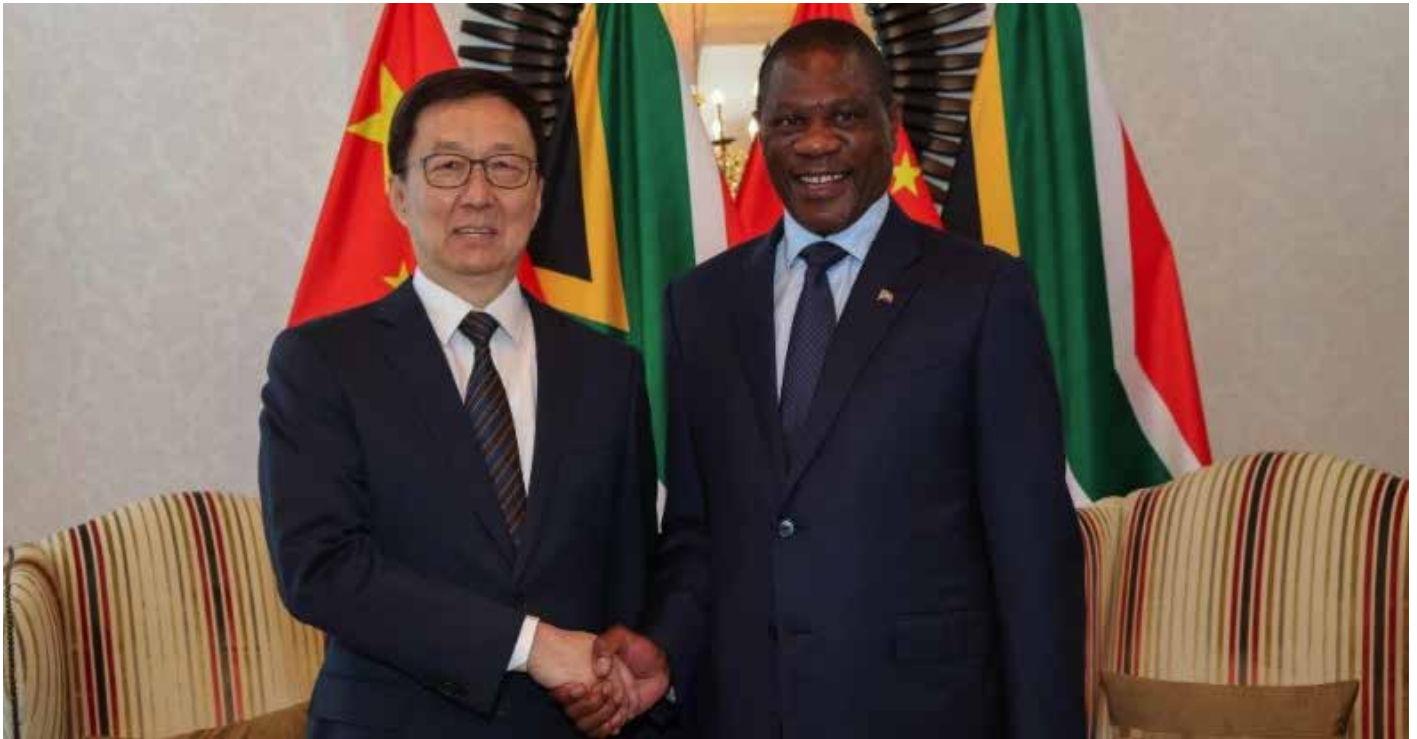
Our forebears knew that the journey towards fulfilling the vision of the Freedom Charter would require persistence, patience and collective effort. It is a journey

marked by achievements and challenges, victories and setbacks. It remains a journey from which we cannot retreat and a destination we cannot abandon.

Few political documents have demonstrated such durability, relevance and moral clarity as the Freedom Charter. Fewer still have shaped the destiny of a nation so profoundly. The generation of Kliptown handed us more than a document. They handed us a mission. Let future generations say that we were faithful custodians of the dream born in Kliptown – a dream of a South Africa united in its diversity, prosperous in its development, democratic in its governance and unwavering in its commitment to freedom, justice and human dignity.

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





From Diplomacy to Delivery: Beijing and the Work After the Handshake

What South Africa must do to turn strategic partnership into production, jobs and state capability

■ By **FAIEZ JACOBS**

AT Tuynhuys in March of this year, Deputy President Paul Mashatile and Chinese Vice President Han Zheng co-chaired the 9th South Africa China Bi-National Commission.

The Commission reaffirmed the strength of the political relationship and identified areas for deeper cooperation across trade, investment, infrastructure, energy, mineral beneficiation, agriculture, science, technology and environmental development.

This week in Beijing, I have been able to reflect more closely on the

work that must follow the handshake.

I came to China as part of an exchange programme on China Africa cooperation, modernisation and leadership in the Global South. Over several days, I have engaged academics, policy specialists, universities, business platforms, technology enterprises, financial institutions, development practitioners and South Africans building commercial relationships in China.

I also attended a South African business networking engagement in honour of Deputy Pres-

ident Mashatile, whose working visit is building on the outcomes of the March Commission and advancing investment, industrial and supply chain cooperation and official welcome of HE Ms DB Letsatsi-Duba as South Africa's Ambassador to China.

One conclusion has become increasingly clear. South Africa does not suffer mainly from a shortage of international goodwill, potential investors, technology or development opportunities.

Our deeper constraint is conversion and implementation capacity.

We do not consistently convert political relationships into prepared projects, projects into investment, investment into production, and production into jobs, skills and stronger institutions.

That is the work after the handshake.

China has capabilities. South Africa must organise its demand

There is genuine interest in South Africa.

Chinese institutions and enterprises have capabilities in advanced manufacturing, infrastructure, renewable energy, electric mobility, mineral processing, digital systems, water treatment, environmental engineering, agricultural technology and technical training.

South Africa, in turn, has significant mineral resources, financial institutions, industrial experience, universities, infrastructure, a sophisticated regulatory environment and access to the wider African market.

But complementary strengths do not automatically produce development.

Chinese enterprises frequently ask practical questions:

- What is the project?
- Who is the client?
- Who owns the land?
- What approvals are required?
- What is the procurement route?
- Who will purchase the service or product?
- What are the risks?
- How will the project be financed?
- Who is responsible for implementation?

These are not unreasonable obstacles. They are the disciplines that distinguish an interesting idea from an investable project.

Too many South African opportunities remain at the level of concepts, presentations and memoranda. They have no completed feasibility studies, no agreed client, no funding structure, no regulatory pathway and no accountable project leader.

Our first lesson from Beijing must therefore be this: South Africa must become better organised on its own side of the partnership.

Cooperation must serve South Africa's developmental objectives.

Strategic friendship does not mean passive acceptance of every proposal.

It requires clarity about our national interest.

Not every imported technology creates development. Not every investment produces industrialisation. Not every training programme leads to employment. Not every infrastructure project strengthens local capability.

Cooperation becomes developmental when it produces measurable national value.

Every major partnership should therefore answer five questions.

1. How many South African jobs will be created?
2. Which local suppliers will participate?
3. What skills and technologies will be transferred?
4. What capacity will remain in South Africa after implementation?
5. How will the project strength-

en our productive economy rather than deepen dependency?

This is cooperation with purpose.

South Africa must not become merely a market for finished products or a source of unprocessed raw materials. We must become a production base, a technology partner, an exporter and a platform for African industrialisation.

That means moving from raw mineral exports to beneficiation.

From importing equipment to local assembly and manufacturing. From once off training to accredited skills linked to work. From local companies attending networking events to participating in real supply chains. From purchasing technology to acquiring the capacity to install, operate, maintain, repair and eventually produce it.

Five practical actions after Beijing

The relationship now needs a simple, disciplined delivery architecture.

1. Establish a South Africa China delivery register

Every significant commitment arising from the Bi National Commission and related engagements should be captured in one implementation register.

It should identify:

- The project;
- The South African and Chinese partners;
- The responsible department, municipality or public entity;
- The investment required;
- The funding source;
- The approvals outstanding;
- The localisation and skills commitments;

- The anticipated jobs; and
- The implementation deadline.

The register should be reviewed quarterly by political principals and senior officials.

Projects that are progressing should be accelerated. Projects that are blocked should be escalated. Projects that are not viable should be closed rather than carried indefinitely as diplomatic promises.

A partnership should be judged by what is implemented, not by how many agreements appear in a communiqué.

2. Select five catalytic projects and prepare them properly

South Africa should resist the temptation to announce dozens of loosely defined initiatives.

We should select a small number of catalytic projects that respond directly to national priorities.

One could address municipal water and wastewater infrastructure.

One could focus on electrici-

ty losses, smart metering and energy storage. One could advance mineral beneficiation or advanced manufacturing. One could establish an agricultural export and agro processing corridor. One could create a skills, technology and enterprise platform linked to actual investment projects.

Each project should have a dedicated project preparation team responsible for technical feasibility, finance, regulation, procurement, localisation, community participation and implementation. Going deep on five credible projects would produce more development than announcing fifty aspirations.

3. Make localisation a binding development compact

Localisation cannot remain a paragraph near the end of an agreement.

It must be designed into the project from the beginning.

Every significant investment should include a clear development compact covering:

- local employment;
- supplier participation;
- technical training;
- maintenance capability;
- technology transfer.

South African engineering and professional services; opportunities for Black industrialists and township enterprises; and, where scale permits, local assembly or manufacturing.

The purpose is not to obstruct investment. It is to ensure that investment expands South Africa's productive capacity.

A water treatment plant that cannot be maintained locally is not sustainable development.

A digital platform that leaves no South African technical capability behind is not transformation.

A factory that imports almost every component and creates only a few low skilled jobs is not industrialisation.

The terms of partnership determine whether technology becomes dependency or development.



4. Use municipalities as sites of practical modernisation

Local government must become part of South Africa's industrial strategy.

Municipalities are where water, electricity, waste, roads, land, planning and local enterprise development converge. When these systems fail, investment stalls and communities lose faith in the state.

A small number of municipalities should be selected for carefully structured demonstration projects in areas such as:

- water leak detection and pressure management;
- wastewater rehabilitation;
- electricity loss reduction;
- smart metering;
- waste recovery and landfill rehabilitation;
- renewable energy and storage; and
- digital monitoring of infrastructure.

These should not become technology showcases disconnected from municipal reality.

Every demonstration project must train municipal artisans and tech-

nicians, involve local businesses, include affordable maintenance, establish measurable baselines and report publicly on savings and service improvements.

The test is not whether sophisticated equipment is installed. The test is whether water losses fall, electricity revenue improves, breakdowns are repaired faster, local people gain skills and the system continues working after the external experts leave.

5. Connect skills directly to work and enterprise

China has significant technical education and training capacity. South Africa has universities, TVET colleges, SETAs and millions of young people searching for a pathway into productive work.

The opportunity is to build a China South Africa Skills and Enterprise Bridge linked to real sectors and real projects.

Priority skills could include renewable energy, water treatment, smart municipal systems, electric mobility, cybersecurity, cloud infrastructure, industrial automa-

tion, agricultural technology and technical maintenance.

But training cannot be an end in itself.

Every programme should identify the qualification, employer, workplace opportunity, enterprise pathway or supplier contract available after training.

We must stop celebrating the number of certificates issued while ignoring what happens to the learner afterwards.

The developmental question is not only, "How many were trained?"

It is, "How many entered work, built enterprises, acquired contracts or became productive technicians?"

Reconnecting politics to production

My Beijing experience also carries a lesson for the ANC.

The movement's renewal will not be secured through communication alone. It will be secured when people experience material improvement in their lives.

When a young person gains a technical skill and enters work.

When a municipality reduces water losses and restores reliable services.

When a South African business becomes part of a manufacturing supply chain.

When minerals are processed locally.

When farmers gain access to new markets.



When international cooperation produces visible opportunity in districts, townships and rural communities.

The ANC has historically understood itself as the leader (organiser) of society. In the present phase of the National Democratic Revolution, we must also become the leader (organiser) of implementation.

This means bringing the state, labour, business, universities, communities and international partners into disciplined programmes of production and delivery.

Cadres in government must unblock implementation.

Cadres in business must build ethical and productive enterprises.

Cadres in municipalities must connect local needs to investment and technical capability.

Cadres in communities must ensure that development includes local people and protects the public interest.

Political leadership must create direction, coordination and accountability.

Service beyond public office

At the Beijing business engagement, I introduced myself to the Deputy President not in my former role as a Member of Parliament, but in my present role as an entrepreneur and project developer through The Transcendence Group.

It reminded me that public service does not end when public office ends.



Cadreship is not a title. It is a continuing obligation to build, organise and contribute wherever one is located.

The experience, relationships and institutional knowledge accumulated in public life must be redirected towards solving problems, creating opportunities and strengthening South Africa's developmental capacity.

My own task is to help connect South African needs with credible partners, technology, skills and finance, and then to assist in converting those connections into implementable projects.

Delivery must now give the relationship meaning

The political foundation between South Africa and China is strong.

The technology exists.

The industrial capacity exists.

The capital exists.

South Africa's need is urgent.

What remains is the disciplined work of connection and conversion.

We need fewer broad declarations and more prepared projects.

Fewer ceremonial agreements and more accountable implementation schedules.

Fewer imported solutions that leave no capability behind and more partnerships that build South African skills, enterprises and production.

South Africa must not enter the changing global supply chain system as a passive consumer.

We must enter as a producer, a partner, an innovator and a base for African industrial development.

Diplomacy created the relationship.

Development defined its purpose.

Delivery must now give it meaning.

The handshake has taken place.

Now the real work begins.

Let's work.

VETERANS' Voices

From Student Boycotts to Democratic Struggle: The Political Awakening of Nyami Boo

■ By **SIVA NAIDOO**

Mnyamezeli (Nyami) Boo is a Member of Parliament for 25 years from 1994. He is currently a member of the Keith Mokopae ANC Veterans League branch in Tshwane.

THE story of Nyami Boo is inseparable from the story of a generation of young South Africans who came of age during one of the most turbulent periods in our country's history. His political awakening began in the aftermath of the 1976 student uprisings and evolved into a lifelong commitment to democracy, justice and people's power.

Reflecting on those formative years, Boo recalls that the language issue that sparked the Soweto uprising did not initially resonate with many students in Graaff-Reinet.

"At the start of the 1976 school boycott, we in Graaff-Reinet spoke, wrote and understood Afrikaans. We could not immediately relate to the boycott on the education aspect. But the deaths of students and the response of the police made us realise that this struggle was much broader than education."

Living daily under apartheid rule exposed young people to the harsh realities of racial oppression.

"We were rubbing shoulders with white oppressors every day. The



teachings of Black Consciousness, especially the message that 'Black man, you are on your own,' inspired us to take responsibility for our own liberation."

The funerals of two towering political figures, Steve Biko and Robert Sobukwe, left a profound impression on him.

"To have political giants like Steve Biko and Robert Sobukwe brought into our town influenced me deeply. It made politics real."

His political journey continued

when he left Graaff-Reinet to study in Ilinge in the Transkei. There, he encountered former ANC and PAC activists, but student activism was not welcomed.

"I was expelled from high school because of my activism. When I returned to Graaff-Reinet, many senior activists had gone into exile, and the Special Branch constantly pressured us to account for their whereabouts."

Determined to complete his education, Boo moved to Uitenhage, staying with his uncle in

KwaNobuhle. While studying Mathematics and Physical Science, he became increasingly involved in underground political work and student organising.

"I arrived highly politicised. I read extensively and remained committed to my studies, but politics was always present. The invisible hand of the Congress movement was helping to shape many young activists."

By the early 1980s, student resistance was once again gaining momentum in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage. Organising was difficult. COSAS leadership had been arrested, detained or imprisoned, and many students feared association with the organisation.

"The ANC wanted to test the level of political consciousness among students and the broader community. The instruction came through underground channels that we should assist in reviving the boycott."

Booi, together with fellow activists Wantu Zenzile and Lamani, began consulting students. *"We listened carefully. Many students supported the boycott but struggled to explain exactly what our demands were."*

One issue quickly emerged as central. *"Our first demand was the rejection of the prefect system. We saw it as a miniature version of the Bantustan system. Students had no democratic say in choosing their leaders."*

The campaign called for democratically elected Student Representative Councils (SRCs). *"It seemed like a small demand, but it raised a fundamental question: who should hold power in schools? We believed students*



should elect their own leadership rather than accept leaders imposed by Bantu Education authorities."

Parents largely supported the demand, while school principals were instructed by the authorities to resist it. As the struggle intensified, arrests, harassment and detention followed.

"The Special Branch wanted to portray us as ANC operatives. They linked our demand for democracy directly to the ANC. But I insisted that I was representing students who had elected me. I was defending their democratic mandate."

Despite intense interrogation, the security police failed to secure the answers they wanted. *"They could not find the terrorist they were looking for. They found a student leader defending democracy."*

The introduction of Section 10 detentions saw student leaders rounded up and transported to prisons far from their homes. *"We were thrown into the back of vans and told we were no different from terrorists. For the first time*

we travelled to Modderbee Prison in Johannesburg."

Prison became another school of politics. *"We met AZAPO leaders, debated ideas and learned from one another. The South African Council of Churches intervened, providing food and books that helped sustain us."*

While detained, resistance outside prison walls continued. Students and parents demanded the release of their leaders before classes resumed.

"The authorities eventually gave in because students and parents were united. Once our demands were substantially met, we agreed to suspend the boycott and encouraged students to return to school."

Looking back, Booi believes the greatest achievement of those struggles was not simply the victory of particular demands, but the introduction of democratic practice among ordinary people.

"The seeds of democracy were planted. Students learned that they had the right to participate in

decisions affecting their lives."

Equally important were the lessons of non-racialism and non-sexism. *"We worked alongside students from different communities. Young coloured women challenged male chauvinism and insisted on equal participation. Democracy and non-sexism were not slogans; they were being practised in action."*

Although many activists were members of underground political structures, organisational discipline was maintained. *"We never publicly discussed our political affiliations. Protecting students was essential. The objective was to build influence among the people, not to create personality cults."*

Today, Booi remains convinced that the decisive factor in defeating apartheid was the active participation of ordinary people. *"Revolutions are about people, not cultism. If you allow people to have a say in shaping their future, they will defend that process."*

His message to the youth of today remains as relevant as ever.

"The greatest lesson we learned was to trust the people. Social distance from the people is dangerous. No military effort alone could defeat apartheid. Our success came from mobilising, educating and empowering people to become active participants in shaping their own destiny."

For Nyami Booi, that remains the enduring lesson of the struggle: democracy is strongest when it is rooted in the daily experiences, aspirations and collective power of ordinary citizens

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A Revolutionary Journey from Underground Activism to the Classrooms of Higher Education – the story of Shanil Haricharan

■ By **SIVA NAIDOO**



VER the course of South Africa's long and arduous liberation struggle, many heroes emerged from modest towns and ordinary working-class families, displaying extraordinary commitment to justice, freedom and human dignity. Some became household names. Others worked quietly behind the scenes, risking everything so that future generations could inherit a democratic South Africa.

Shanil Haricharan is one such

son of the soil. His life story embodies courage, sacrifice, humility and an unwavering commitment to serving others.

Shanil grew up in the vibrant working-class community of Tongaat during one of the most turbulent periods in South African history. Apartheid was not merely a system of laws; it was a brutal machinery of oppression that penetrated every aspect of daily life. Communities were divided, opportunities restricted and human dignity systematically denied.

Shanil says:

"As someone who also grew up in Tongaat, I understand the political awakening that shaped our generation. I was in Standard 8 in 1976 when the Soweto Uprising inspired young people across the country to challenge injustice. The death of Steve Biko in detention the following year further deepened our political consciousness. I matriculated in 1978, and like many young South Africans, I witnessed how a generation was transformed by the struggle for freedom."

It was within this environment that young activists such as Shanil Haricharan emerged.

Growing up in a politically conscious Indian family, Shanil developed a strong sense of justice and social responsibility. His late father, Billy Haricharan, was an activist who instilled values of courage, discipline and service. His maternal grandfather, Mr Ramesar Bhugwandass, a successful sugar-cane farmer from Isnembe, was a philanthropist and member of the Natal Indian Congress.

Reflecting on those formative years, Shanil recalls:

"The injustices of apartheid were impossible to ignore. Very early in life I realised that remaining silent was not an option. We all had a responsibility to contribute in whatever way we could."

In his mid-twenties, Shanil became actively involved in the underground operations of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the military wing of the African National Congress. Operating under the alias "Ben", he became a key member and deputy commander of the



Ashley Kriel

Ashley Kriel Detachment (AKD) in the Western Cape.

These were dangerous times. Activists faced relentless surveillance, detention without trial, torture and even death. Yet Shanil remained steadfast in his commitment.

In late 1987, together with his comrade and AKD co-commander Shirley Gunn, he undertook a high-risk mission transporting weapons and communications equipment from Johannesburg to Cape Town. The weapons had been couriered from Botswana and were destined for MK operatives in the Western Cape.

Police roadblocks were commonplace. Discovery would have meant arrest, torture and the collapse of underground networks. Yet Shanil maintained remarkable composure throughout the journey.

After dropping Shirley off in Green Point, he was approached by police officers who questioned his presence in a white residential area. They searched his vehicle but found nothing. The mission succeeded.

Looking back on those years, Shanil says:

"Fear was always present, but the cause was bigger than any individual. We understood the risks. What sustained us was the belief that freedom was worth every sacrifice."

To avoid detection by the Security Branch, operatives frequently changed communication methods and relied on public telephone booths. Every meeting, every journey and every operation required meticulous planning.

AKD co-commander Aneez Salie remembers Shanil's contribution with admiration:

"When we redeployed him from Johannesburg to Cape Town, he held down a legal job while working underground. For eighteen months, he handed over his entire salary to the movement to help sustain our operations. That speaks volumes about his commitment."

The AKD would go on to conduct more than thirty coordinated operations targeting apartheid infrastructure, including railway lines, rent offices, magistrates' courts, police stations and military installations. The experiences of the eighteen AKD members are documented in the book *Voices*

from the Underground, co-edited by Shanil Haricharan and Shirley Gunn.

Before joining the AKD, Shanil was detained in 1986 under the Public Safety Act while teaching at a high school in the Transkei. A graduate of the University of the Witwatersrand and an activist during his student years, he was interrogated, assaulted and deprived of food and sleep while being held by security police at Maluti Police Station. He was subsequently placed in solitary confinement at Mount Fletcher Prison.

Many would have emerged from such experiences broken by fear. Shanil chose a different path.

Following his release, he rejoined MK in early 1987 after being recruited by Aneez Salie. His decision reflected a profound understanding that freedom required personal sacrifice.

"Prison taught me many things," Shanil reflects. "Most importantly, it taught me resilience. The struggle was never about individuals. It was about ensuring future generations could live with dignity and equality."

With the advent of democracy, Shanil's commitment to service did not diminish. Like many true revolutionaries, he recognised that political freedom alone could not address the deep social scars left by apartheid.

Returning to Tongaat in the early 1990s, he immersed himself in community development work. He initially served as a Community Development Officer before being appointed Director of the Tongaat Child Welfare Society, an institution dedicated to pro-



tecting vulnerable children.

During this period, he worked tirelessly to address child abuse, substance addiction, family disintegration and poverty. He brought energy, compassion and professionalism to the organisation while helping communities navigate the complex challenges of democratic transition.

Those who worked alongside him speak not only of his leadership but of his humanity. He connected effortlessly with people from all walks of life. Despite his liberation struggle credentials, he remained humble, approachable and deeply committed to uplifting others.

His contribution extended beyond welfare work into the broader civic movement and democratic development sector. Whether supporting grassroots initiatives, strengthening community organisations or promoting democratic participation, Shanil remained guided by a simple belief: that ordinary people possess extraordinary power when united around justice and compassion.

Today, Shanil Haricharan con-

tinues to serve society with distinction. He is a board member of several development NGOs and formerly served as Academic Director of the Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance at the University of Cape Town. He currently teaches and conducts research in public leadership and governance in Africa.

Prior to entering academia, he served in senior positions within government, contributing to public policy, development planning and leadership development.

Reflecting on his life's journey, Shanil remains characteristically modest:

"The struggle for justice does not end with liberation. Every generation has a responsibility to build a more caring, ethical and inclusive society. Service remains our greatest obligation."

Though decades have passed since his underground years, the values that shaped his life remain unchanged: courage, discipline, integrity, compassion, ethical leadership and service to humanity.

The story of Shanil Haricharan reminds us that the struggle for freedom was won not only by famous leaders but also by countless dedicated cadres whose sacrifices often went unnoticed. Their legacy continues to inspire a new generation of South Africans committed to building the non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society envisioned in the Freedom Charter.

Siva Naidoo is a member of the ANC Veterans League. Originally from Tongaat, he currently lives in Johannesburg.

Comrade Wandile Kese:

Journalist, Freedom Fighter, and Custodian of Truth

■ By **ERIC NAKI**

"I will not say do not weep, for not all tears are evil."

We recall these words by J.R.R. Tolkien, as we process the news of the passing of the son of the soil, Wandile Lukhanyo Kese (aka Ben Magunya)

Wandile Kese was born on 24 September 1956 at Machibi Village near King William's Town (Qonce). His parents were Mr & Mrs Lizo and Vuyiswa Kese. The family moved to Duncan Village, East London when Wandile was still young. Thus, he started his primary school there, and later continued at Nkululeko Higher Primary in Mdantsane.

Comrade Wandile Kese's life was a testament to the seamless blending of struggle and storytelling. A former cadre of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the armed wing of the African National Congress, he was steeped in the tradition of struggle. He walked in the footsteps of giants of the noble cause from the old Border region, such as Lionel Lengesi; Alcott Gwentshe; Malcomess Mgabela and Washington Bongco.

By the time he got to Matric at Mzomhle High in Mdantsane in 1975, he was a keen participant in the political struggle for Justice and liberation. He and his school-mates formed a branch of the

South African Students Movement, SASM. One of his Matric classmates, Mongezi Sigule, remembers that the Pro-Frelimo rallies of 1974, had an influence on the political outlook of students at major student institutions such as Thembalabantu and Healdtown. The students began to be restive. Wandile Kese was determined that Mzomhle would not be left behind. Consequently, he led a class boycott in July 1975. For his frequent confrontation with the system, he was detained at Cambridge Police Station, then the HQ of the Border region apartheid security police.

Former Robben Island prisoner and MK veteran, Mikki Xayiya, submits that Wandile Kese was the last surviving member of an ANC underground unit consti-

tuted in 1977, of Zolani Mtshotshisa; Ncwadi Tunyiswa; Zukile Fazzie, Pascal Macamba and Boy Mnyaka. They went through the hands of East London legendary ex-Robben Islanders, Papa Mbatyothi; Mzimkhulu Gwentshe; Slumber Jayiya and Mzwandile Majaja Mdingi, the last being the only surviving member of that lot.

Joining MK

He left the country for Lesotho in 1979 following the detection of their underground activities by the apartheid security police, joining the rest of his unit that had left earlier. Pascal, who had managed to avoid detection as an ANC operative, was left behind to reconstitute the unit, only leaving in 1981 for MK military training in Angola and GDR.



TRIBUTE

These comrades were one of the finest representatives of our June 16th 1976 generation, who helped galvanise the youth in East London to swell the ranks of the ANC and enlist for MK.

One of the commissars in Wandile's time in Angola, Tseko Nell, confirms that together, they were in a group that went for specialised training in the German Democratic Republic during the period that straddled 1981/82. Nell describes Kese as a political animal, an archetypical commissar, a cool and calm revolutionary, a fine and grounded gentleman. He says while some of them saw going to the GDR as a welcome break and reprieve from the drudgery of camp life in Angola, Ben Magunya, as they knew him, was a very diligent, studious and disciplined member of their group. He excelled in the deliberations and discussions of the Unity in the Theory and Practice of Marxism Leninism and was well regarded by their lecturers at the Magdeburg Parteischule (Party School).

Getting into Journalism

A former presenter on Radio Freedom, Clarence Kwinana (aka Patrick Makhaya) recalls that Kese cut his teeth as a journalist with Agência de Informação de Moçambique (AIM), the Mozambican News Agency. He worked there with other South Africans such as Charlie Khumalo. This was at a time when the government approached the ANC in Lusaka, to send people to Maputo to work in the English language sections of both the News Agency and Radio Mozambique. Kese's initial induction inside the country, with further political training in Angola, put him in good stead for this assignment. The idea was to



make these information channels accessible to a broader audience in southern Africa, and beyond.

Kese and his colleagues were trained by the best in the craft of News Agency journalism, who included Senior Journalists such as Paul Fauvet; Carlos Cardoso; Mia Couto; Luis Patraquim; Bernardo Mavanga and Fernando Lima. Kese reported on racist Pretoria armed attacks on Mozambique; counter-revolutionary activities of Renamo; the reconstruction efforts of the Mozambican government, support for the liberation struggle and many more. As political exiles were returning home after 1990, Kese had a stint as the editor of *Isolezwe* in Mthatha, before he moved to the East London Daily Dispatch.

Working for the Daily Dispatch

Wandile Kese carried into the newsroom the same discipline, courage, and commitment that had defined his years in exile.

I first worked alongside Wandile at the Daily Dispatch in East London, where I served as News Editor and Political Editor. On his return from exile, he was among the MK veterans deployed into the media space, joining fellow Radio Freedom stalwarts such as Mcebisi Bata (nom de guerre

Elias Thabethe), Golden Neswisi (nom de guerre Takalani Mphaphuli) and others who brought the voice of the liberation movement into both alternative and mainstream media when they joined us inside the country.

Like his comrades from the ANC's Department of Information and Publicity, Wandile was deeply versed in the craft of journalism, able to shape news articles that gave voice to the oppressed and illuminate the realities of the struggle and the plight of the masses.

Our friendship grew naturally – we shared not only the newsroom but also the battlefield of ideas that we gleaned from our participation in the struggle. Alongside another ex-MK combatant, Mvuyo 'Worker' Mati, we formed a formidable trio at the Dispatch, steering its editorial direction towards the plight of ordinary people and the broader thrust of the liberation struggle.

We managed to move the newspaper from the reactionary reporting associated with many white media outlets. Fortunately, we found co-operation from the then Editor, Prof Gavin Stewart who accommodated our approach.

As a Sub-Editor, Wandile distinguished himself as meticulous and patient, a stickler for detail who never allowed a fuzzy fact or unclear phrasing to slip through. Soft-spoken and deliberate in his manner, he would walk to the News Desk to query inconsistencies, ensuring that every story was sharpened into clarity. The copy he handled always emerged clean, factual, and precise – his quiet dedication to truth was his hallmark. I know because I was the first gatekeeper, so to speak, as the News Editor, handling all copy.

Beyond his editorial rigour, Wandile's presence in the newsroom carried the authority of lived struggle.

As a former MK member, he became our trusted source for verifying facts about ANC leaders, cadres, and comrades who were in exile. When obituaries of fallen MK members or ANC leaders needed to be written, Wandile was the one we turned to. His knowledge of the movement, its people, and its history was encyclopedic, and he enriched our work with details that might otherwise have been lost.

Yet Wandile was not only an editor and fact-checker; he was a writer of conviction. He relished political analysis, often bringing me articles on current affairs and international politics, articulated with depth and clarity. *"I have an article for you,"* he would say, and I never hesitated to encourage him – his insights were always sharp, his perspective always grounded in principle.

Comrade Wandile Kese embodied the rare union of a revolutionary and journalist. He fought for freedom with a weapon in hand, and later defended truth with a pen.

In both roles, he remained steadfast, principled, and passionate. His legacy is not only in the stories he edited or the analyses he penned, but in the example he set: that the struggle for justice continues in every word written, every fact checked, and every truth told. We received the news that Wandile passed away on 17 June 2026, after a long illness. His funeral will take place on 26 June 2026 at Amalinda Methodist Church in East London.

May His Soul Rest in Peace.



Tribute to the late **Comrade Sicelo Mleve**

■ By **ANDILE LUNGISA**

TODAY we are not merely mourning a fallen comrade, but we are honouring a life that was woven into the very fabric of struggle, service and sacrifice. We reflect and celebrate the life of Comrade Sicelo Mleve, a loyal son of the people, a disciplined cadre of the liberation movement, a cultural activist, a community servant, and an unwavering soldier in the long march towards justice and the emancipation of the African people.

The story of Sicelo Mleve is inseparable from the story of a generation of young activists who understood that freedom is not inherited, it is organised, defended and advanced through conscious political struggle. His political journey began at Phakama Senior Secondary School, where he

distinguished himself as a member of COSAS and the Student Representative Council (SRC). It was there, in the crucible of student activism, that the seeds of revolutionary consciousness were planted.

He was recruited into the movement by comrades Xolani "Pizza" Sifali, Nqaba Bhanga, Sikhumbuzo Nkebe and Mongezi Motla Mantambo, and nurtured politically by the guidance and wisdom of stalwarts such as Thozama Balfour and Mzoli Nkewu. Under their mentorship, Sicelo came to understand that political activism was not a hobby or a pastime, it was a calling. It was a commitment to stand with the oppressed, to organise the marginalised, and to dedicate one's life to the advancement of the people.

From the zonal structures of COSAS to the ranks of the ANC Youth League, Sicelo distinguished himself as a thoughtful organiser and a dependable cadre. His leadership abilities were recognised early. He rose to become ANCYL Regional Secretary, again Secretary of the South African Youth Council, and later served as its Provincial Chairperson in the Eastern Cape, working alongside leaders such as Tebogo and Mboxela. In every position he occupied, he carried himself with humility, discipline and an unwavering commitment to youth development and empowerment.

His activism was never confined to conference halls or organisational reports. Sicelo believed that politics must find expression in the lived reality of ordinary people. This conviction led him to serve as Coordinator of Youth Development in the Nelson Mandela Metro Municipality, where he worked tirelessly to create opportunities for young people and to bridge the gap between government programmes and community needs.

Within the African National Congress, he remained a loyal and trusted servant of the organisation. He served diligently as an ANC Branch Secretary, later earning election to the Regional Executive Committee and subsequently serving on the Regional Working Committee. His rise within the movement was not the result of ambition or self-promotion. It was the natural consequence of years of hard work, political consistency and organisational commitment.

Yet those who knew Sicelo best know that his effectiveness was not measured only by the positions he held. It was measured

by the spirit he brought into every room he entered.

He was a cultural artist of immense talent, a gifted praise singer whose voice could summon pride from the depths of memory. He was a gumboot dancer whose performances reminded us that culture is itself a weapon of resistance. He possessed a sharp and agile political instinct, capable of dissecting complex political questions with remarkable clarity.

And then there was his humour. Sicelo had the rare gift of making people laugh while making them think. He was mischievous in the most endearing way. Politically astute yet deeply human, he could diffuse the tension of the most heated organisational engagements with a single observation delivered in his trademark understated style. He could make an entire room erupt in laughter without raising his voice, humiliating anyone, or seeking attention for himself. His timing was impeccable, his wit effortless, and his insights often far deeper than many of us realised in the moment.

He reminded us that revolutionaries need not be bitter to be serious. He understood that humour is often the language through which truth speaks most clearly.

Throughout his life, Sicelo remained convinced that the African National Congress was the primary instrument through which African people and the marginalised could pursue self-determination, dignity and social justice. He dedicated his entire life to the service of the movement, defending it even during its most difficult moments and confronting its challenges with honesty rather than cynicism.

He chose service over comfort. He chose community over self-interest. He chose sacrifice over personal advancement.

For years he worked tirelessly, often without recognition, in communities that many had forgotten. He listened where others spoke. He organised where others complained. He delivered where others made promises.

It was therefore no surprise that the people entrusted him with public office during the 2021 Local Government Elections, electing him as councillor for Ward 27. The people did not merely vote for Sicelo, they placed their confidence in a man they knew, trusted and could reach.

His tenure as councillor became a living demonstration of servant leadership. The clearest testimony to the love and respect his community had for him is that Ward 27 witnessed neither protest nor instability during his leadership. Not because problems did not exist, but because the people knew their councillor would answer their calls, hear their grievances and stand alongside them in seeking solutions. Accessibility was not a slogan to Sicelo, it was a principle.

His passion for economic justice led him to serve as Chairperson of the City's Standing Committee on Economic Development. He belonged to a generation of young activists who believed that political freedom without economic emancipation remains incomplete. He was part of that proud cohort that insisted that the wealth of this country must serve the many rather than the racialized privileged few. He dreamed of a South Africa where African people would not merely survive,

but prosper with dignity and ownership of their destiny.

As we reflect on his life, we must also confront the painful circumstances of his death.

Comrade Sicelo was not taken from us by chance. He was not the victim of random criminality. He was targeted by forces that have infiltrated the bloodstream of our politics, forces that pursue power through violence, intimidation and bloodshed. These are forces that do not share Sicelo's commitment to serving the people. They seek not to uplift communities but to exploit them. They do not seek to empower the poor but to rob them of resources, hope and opportunity.

The assassination of Sicelo Mleve is therefore not only an attack on an individual. It is an attack on democratic activism. It is an attack on ethical leadership. It is an attack on the very idea that public representatives should serve the people rather than prey upon them.

We refuse to normalise such barbarity.

We refuse to accept political killings as the price of public service. We refuse to allow the memory of Comrade Sicelo to be buried beneath fear and silence.

We demand that those who planned, financed and executed this cowardly act be identified, exposed and brought before the full might of the law. We owe that to his family. We owe that to his community. We owe that to the values for which he lived and ultimately died.

As we bid farewell, we remember that Sicelo leaves behind

his beloved father, his sister, his daughters, and his life partner and comrade-in-arms, Andiswa Mama. To them, we offer our deepest condolences and our gratitude for sharing him with the movement and the people. Your loss is immeasurable, but so too is the legacy he leaves behind.

Comrade Sicelo Mleve has completed his shift.

His hands may be still, but the work to which he dedicated his life remains unfinished.

His voice may be silent, but the ideas he championed continue to echo in the hearts of those he inspired.

His enemies may have taken his life, but they cannot kill his example.

For as long as young people organise, his spirit will live.

For as long as communities demand dignity, his spirit will live.

For as long as the struggle for economic emancipation continues, his spirit will live.

History will remember him not as a victim, but as a fighter.

Not as a casualty, but as a cadre. Not as a man who merely occupied positions, but as a revolutionary servant of the people.

Hamba kakuhle, Comrade Sicelo Mleve.

Lala ngoxolo, qhawwe lamaqhawe.

Your life was your message. Your sacrifice is now our responsibility.



We are bidding farewell to a **COMMISSAR PAR EXCELLENCE**

Tribute to Naledzani “Shakes” Mashapa

By **DAVID MAKHURA** on behalf of the **National Executive Committee of the ANC**

TODAY we have come from all over the country to bid farewell to our Comrade, Naledzani Mashapa, known to many as Comrade Nale or “Shakes”. On behalf of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress (ANC), I wish to convey our heart-felt condolences to the Mashapa family and the community of Phiphiqi.

As his comrades and friends, we too share in the incalculable pain inflicted by his passing eight days ago. However, even in our grief and pain, we will not allow death to deny us the possibility to celebrate a life which has made an impact far beyond the valleys, rivers and mountains of Phiphiqi village.

We are bidding farewell to a commissar par excellence, a Marxist intellectual, master of polemics, an outstanding teacher, resolute internationalist, and a true patriot. We are sending off the second President of the South African Students Congress (SASCO).

Naledzani Mashapa has been described by his generation as a professional revolutionary and this perfectly captures his life and legacy. He was one of the finest

products of the generation that answered President Oliver Reginald Tambo’s call to make apartheid unworkable and to render South Africa ungovernable.

Comrade Shakes’ was a life of courage and conviction. It was a journey dedicated to the struggle for the total emancipation of the oppressed and exploited masses not only in South Africa but across the world. His profound life and eventual departure are

intertwined with the history he helped to shape.

There is, accordingly, something symbolic about the timing of his departure.

On the 12th of June this year, former Turfloop student leaders gathered at the University of Limpopo to commemorate the occupation of the campus by the apartheid army forty years ago. These are the generations of stu-



dents from the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s which the apartheid regime subjected to the indignity of studying under the barrel of a gun. They transformed classrooms and lecture halls into sites of resistance and converted youthful anger into organised political action.

And it was on that very day, the 12th of June, that the tragic news of Comrade Shakes's departure reached us. History had paused and called his name onto the roll of honour of patriots who, like him, lived a life of sacrifice for a cause far greater than themselves.

Why was he called in the month of June and on a day so significant to the student struggles he had led? Had Comrade Shakes negotiated with God to call him on a day of some relevance to these struggles?

Some are likely to think of Comrade Shakes's departure in June as a coincidence. Others may see it as providence. People of Faith will surely say: *"this is the day that the Lord has made"*. Amen!

But Comrade Shakes would have another view: *"point of order Comrade David...can we debate this matter."*

Since his passing, many tributes have spoken of his organisational roles, leadership positions, contribution to student politics and his role in the ANC, the South African Communist Party and the trade union movement.

This track record of service undoubtedly deserves recognition. But if we reduce Comrade Shakes to the positions he occupied, we diminish the true significance of his life because he was



much bigger than political office. He was much bigger than titles. Instead, he belonged to a rare category of professional revolutionaries whose greatest contribution was not the positions they occupied, but that they never paused or altogether ceased to involve themselves in struggle.

They never stopped believing in the people. They never wavered in their commitment to serving the people. And they never abandoned principle for convenience.

Professional revolutionaries are not defined by their material possessions, but what they impart and how they impact the lives of others. Put in another way, they are not defined by what they accumulate, but what they give away and leave behind.

Comrade Shakes leaves behind an enduring legacy of strong organisations and leadership collectives. He leaves behind a life of resilient ideas which inspired enduring institutional legacies. He leaves behind generations of activists whom he mentored. He leaves behind intellectual and political traditions that he defended and promoted. He leaves behind values that continue to shape lives and worthy of be-

ing defended and emulated. He leaves behind a standard of political commitment against which current and future generations will be measured.

In this sense, Comrade Shakes remains very much alive because ideas do not die, principles do not die and convictions do not perish.

The dreams of freedom and the ideals of liberation will not be extinguished. The struggle is not over.

As we have already stated, one of Comrade Shakes' defining characteristics was his profound love to learn and to teach. He taught and trained comrades tirelessly. He was gifted with a razor-sharp mind and a great sense of humour.

Indeed, his quick wit was unmatched; his humour was disarming.

He interrogated everything and studied and read everything voraciously and relentlessly from mathematics, science, philosophy to astronomy. He regarded knowledge not as a privilege but as a human right and its pursuit a revolutionary duty.

In an age increasingly dominated by performative politics and radically-sounding rhetoric, Comrade Shakes reminded us that genuine revolutionary politics, transformative leadership and activism require intellectual substance and ideological content – not empty sloganeering.

Comrade Shakes was impatient with people who did not read and those whose stock in trade is to noisily regurgitate fashionable but meaningless slogans. He understood that ignorance can never liberate a people, arguing that

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our generation made a mistake when at some point in the mid-1980s we shouted, *"liberation before education"*. He believed that activism without disciplined study is doomed to become mere noise, akin to the Shakespearean *"sound and fury signifying nothing"*.

Cde Shakes encouraged us to continue to study. But we must heed his warning: a degree that does not enhance your intellectual agility and capacity to serve your people is not worth the certificate and the gown. Passion without incremental political consciousness and a better understanding of the mammoth task of tackling challenges of development only serves personal ego and pomposity.

As Julius Nyerere counselled, Africa needs radical scholarship that boosts the cadre's capacity to do transformative and emancipatory politics. Listen to what Mwalimu says about the purpose of education: *"The education provided must therefore encourage the development in each citizen of three things; an inquiring mind; an ability to learn from what others do, and reject or adapt it to his own needs; and a basic confidence in his own position as a free and equal member of the society."*

In this regard: *"Those who receive this privilege [of education] therefore, have a duty to repay the sacrifice which others have made. They are like the man who has been given all the food available in a starving village in order that he might have strength to bring supplies back from a distant place."*

A revolutionary intellectual, Comrade Shakes consumed Marxist

classics and an avalanche of other texts about the history of liberation struggles all over the world. He read every book that's worth reading and mastered the strategy and tactics of the National Democratic and Socialist Revolutions the world over.

But what distinguished Comrade Shakes was not simply what he knew. He had the rare gift of making complex ideas accessible. He illuminated difficult concepts with remarkable clarity and, in doing so, transformed theoretical propositions into practical lessons. He made education an instrument of empowerment; one which, as Nyerere put it, enables recipients *"to refuse the wretchedness of mind" so as to "to develop the resources of Africa."*

And through that gift, he became one of the great political educators of his generation.

Comrade Shakes loved and enjoyed a good debate. To him, debate was an art form like playing a piano was to the late piano maestro, Abdullah Ibrahim (Dollabrand).

He relished polemics, particularly dismantling ideas with which he disagreed. His Leninist rhetoric

was the stuff of legend.

If you have never had a disagreement with and got ridiculed by Comrade Shakes, he didn't take your ideas seriously.

When he agreed with you, he did so with passion and would subsequently defend you anywhere and anytime including in his early morning dispatches and rejoinders when most of us were fast asleep. Comrade Shakes understood that ideological struggle is essential for the defense and advancement of any liberation and transformation project.

Many of us gathered here experienced his famous interventions, sharp and penetrating questions and, devastating critiques that came from his uncompromising insistence on intellectual and ideological rigour. He was, by conviction, an unrepentant subscriber to the aphorism of Karl Marx: *"To leave error unrefuted is to encourage intellectual immorality."*

When he challenged your argument, you knew you had entered serious territory. When he disagreed with you, he expected you to think deeper and thereafter read wider.

And when he ridiculed your argument, it was often because he believed you were capable of doing better. No hard feelings; he would bear no grudges.

Beneath all this was someone who was profoundly democratic and lovely human being: He respected ideas enough to engage them. He respected people enough to challenge them. And he respected truth enough to change his own position when the evidence demanded it.



That is intellectual honesty, a quality that is increasingly becoming rare in our time.

Comrade Shakes was a Young Lion who understood that youth is not merely a biological stage. Combined with political consciousness, the energy of youth was a revolutionary force he deployed to change the course of history.

When apartheid sought to silence young people, they organised. When apartheid sought to intimidate them, they resisted. When apartheid sought to break their spirits, they intensified the struggle from classrooms to campuses, villages to townships and community halls to underground structures. They built movements that changed the course of history. Comrade Shakes was among the finest representatives of his generation.

For more than four decades, he remained loyal to the cause not only when it was fashionable or rewarding but especially when it was difficult. More so when personal sacrifice was required and conditions were unfavourable. He remained steadfast, consistent, disciplined and committed.

As we reflect on his life today, we must ask ourselves the fundamental question: What lessons can future generations draw from Naledzani Mashapa's life?

There are many lessons and I would like to put forward a few:

Firstly, read as much as you can and think critically. Secondly, be a life-time activist, educator and an organiser. Thirdly, defend your convictions with courage at all times. Fourthly, the struggle is not over: continue the struggle



for a better life for all, including the struggle against all anti-people tendencies such as greed and corruption. Fifthly, serve the people with commitment, talent and skill. Sixthly, invest in others and build a pipeline of leaders steeped in the values of collective leadership. Seventh, remain humble before history.

We need to emphasise that the struggle did not come to an end when our country became a democracy in 1994. Democracy is not just about voting. It is about a better life, all-round development and complete socioeconomic freedom.

Our nation faces many challenges of poverty, unemployment, equality and social fragmentation. We have a crisis of values. Greed and corruption threaten to consign us into a malaria infested marshland.

At moments like these, we need many people like Naledzani Mashapa. We need moral clarity and courage. We must raise the standard of leadership across all sectors because it has fallen to the lowest common denominator.

To the Mashapa family, we say: thank you for sharing Naledzani

with us.

Thank you for the sacrifices you made. Thank you for supporting a man whose life belonged not only to you but an entire movement, a generation and a nation.

Today we return Comrade Shakes to the soil of his ancestors. We return him to Phiphiqi and Vhembe District, a region of the great warrior King Makhado Tshilwavhusiku Ramabulana, Alpheus Malivha, Tshifhiwa Muofhe, George Ramudzuli, Mmbenigeni Kone, Samuel Mugivhela Tshikhudo, Ntshengedzeni Carlton Nengudza, Tendamudzimu Ratshitanga, David Mbulaheni Malada, Pandelani Ramagoma, Collins Chabane, Joyce Mashamba, Amos Mbedzi, Rashaka Ratshitanga, Dean Tshenuwani Fari-sani, and other departed freedom fighters in Vhembe and beyond.

Today Naledzani Mashapa joins this rich constellation of the pantheon of patriots who are watching over us! We return him to history and the future because his voice will continue to echo loudly in the campuses and political classes of the OR Tambo School of Leadership.

He will be remembered as someone who built the movement and mentored student and youth leaders, transformed institutions and tirelessly defended the ideals of the National Democratic Revolution. In short, he will be remembered as a Professional Revolutionary.

Aluta continua.

Farewell Commissar Shakes.

Tshimbilani zwavhudi, Ndou ya Nngwekhulu tsha Ha-Madzhiga! Amandla!

Nale Mashapa, a Practising Revolutionary to the end

■ By **JOE MATHEBULA**

IN the mid eighties, we found ourselves responding to the call by the President General of the African National Congress Oliver Reginald Tambo to make country ungovernable.

The youth and the students of our country took the battle to the streets and the school premises demanding people's education for people's power. We organised around immediate issues facing the students corporal punishment, lack of representation in school governance and those in boarding schools demanded proper food and decent conditions.

The United Democratic Front, COSAS and AZASO had just been formed towards the end seventies and beginning of the eighties. In the Northern Transvaal we had to operate under difficult conditions because of having to deal with different bantustans and the apartheid regime.

Nale Mashapa's politics are shaped by these conditions. In 1979 the sham Republic of Venda is established. In the other areas of the Transvaal attempts are also being made to establish some sham Republics such as Kwandebele and Kangwane.

The people are engaged in bitter struggles to oppose these institutions and the Apartheid regime. Nale Mashapa like all young people at the time, witnessed

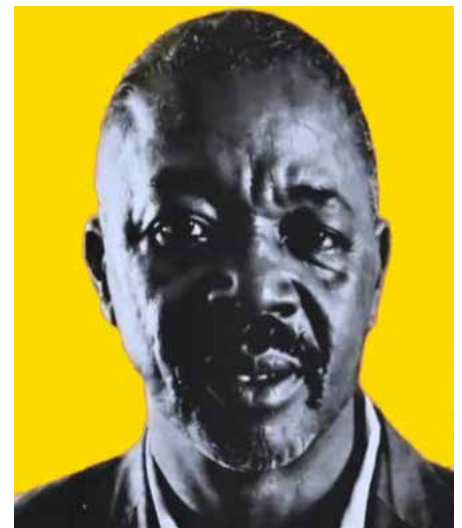
the bombing of the Sibasa police station. He hears of subsequent arrests of Dean Tshenuwani Farisani and Tshifhiwa Muofhe. The brutality of the apartheid regime led to death of Tshifhiwa Muofhe and left serious wounds on Dean Farisani.

Nale would find himself attending a normal church service where the church began to ask itself which God kills priests and brutalises people. In response the church would then play an important role in a centre of political activity to liberate people from oppression. In this respect Nale would have found refuge at Lutheran Church in Maungane in many times during the period of the struggle.

As a young trooper Nale became a runner for the COSAS, South African Youth Congress, Far-Notyco, AZASO and the United Democratic Front.

Perhaps it important to out Nale and his comrades were so impatient that they wanted to form and join AZASO while they were high school students.

Nale was a militant and a fierce debater. He always seek truth from facts. At times Nale would be dismissive if he realised that he is not winning the debate. I recall one time that we were engaging on a tense debate about whether Negotiations is a pillar of



our struggle. Unfortunately I was leading the discussion, I deliberately used the word '*Dichotomize*' derived Dichotomy. It took the whole day with Nale arguing strongly that there is no such word or concept. It is only until recently that he conceded.

Then again, Nale posted that he captured a soldier at Turfloop, University of North during the occupation of the campus by the South African Defence Force. So I was notified about that, I said good shot, I got him to withdraw unconditionally.

Nale Mashapa was a communist, a revolutionary to the core. He was very much concerned about the state of our movement. He specifically idolised those contributed to our freedom. I know he loved Peter Dambuzza, Mumsy Mamobolo, Dzivhu Muregu, Peter Mokaba and Jessie Duarte.

He was not infallible and not a saint.

One thing he taught me was how to hide liquor in his garden. He called it DLBs. This is because he was so afraid of his wife.

Go well my dear Brother.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

27 June–3 July 2026

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

27 June 1951

Musician David Kramer born on this day



The South African singer, songwriter, playwright and director was born on this day. He is especially well-known for his musicals with Taliep Petersen about the Coloured communities and the ways in which he fought Apartheid through the arts. Kramer was born in Worcester, where he completed school and went on to do a degree in textile design in Leeds. He started his music career in the late 1970s, mainly performing his satirical songs on university campuses and small towns. His album **Bakgat** (1980) was banned by the SABC. Kramer and Petersen collaborated for the first time with musical **District Six** in 1987.

27 June 1967

World's first ATM

The automatic teller machine (ATM), dispensing cash. The world's first ATM arrived at a bank in London on 27 June

1967. It was invented by John Shepherd-Barron. Sweden, Japan and the USA have all been working on similar technologies. In the USA, Luther George Simjian is credited with the invention of the bankograph machine.

27 June 1971

Ghana imposed total ban on exports to Apartheid South Africa

The government of Ghana, led by Kwame Nkrumah imposed a total ban on the export of all Ghanaian produce to South Africa and South West Africa, as a protest against apartheid. Ghana was one of the first African states to call on South African government to abolish its apartheid policy.

27 June 1986

Zwelakhe Sisulu abducted



Zwelakhe Sisulu, activist, journalist, founder and editor of the New Nation newspaper was abducted from his home in Soweto by four white men wearing bala-

clavas. He was also a founder of the Media Workers Association of South Africa (MWASA). In 1981 he was arrested under the Terrorism Act, detained without trial, tortured and released after 251 days. Five years later, on 27 June 1986, when he was the editor of the New Nation, Sisulu was abducted at his home in Soweto. Then Minister of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok later confirmed that the men who abducted him were police and that they had detained him. He was released 721 days later on 2 December 1988.

28 June 1984

Assassination of Jeanette Schoon and daughter

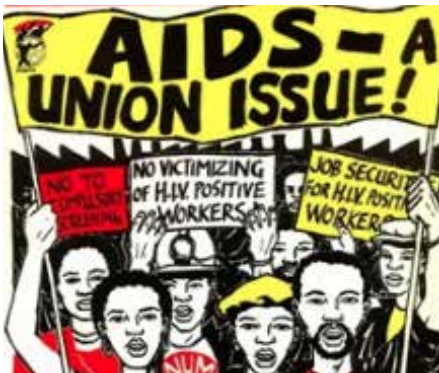


Jeanette Schoon and her daughter Katryn (age 6) were killed by a letter bomb in Lubango, Angola. Schoon was an activist of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), and vice president of the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) in 1972. She was part of the group that founded the Western Province Workers' Advice

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Bureau in 1973. She moved to Johannesburg in 1974, became a founder of the Industrial Aid Society, later working as an archivist for the South African Institute of Race of Relations collecting information on trade unions and leaders of the labour movement. She was arrested under Section 6 of the Terrorism Act in 1976, after which her family went into exile, settling first in Botswana and then Angola. The letter bomb was delivered by apartheid spy Craig Williamson, pretending to be a family friend. The younger Schoon son, Fritz (age 3), was also in the house when the bomb went off, but was not injured. Williamson received amnesty from the TRC for the murders.

28 June 2002 COSATU and TAC table HIV Treatment plan in NEDLAC



On 28 June 2002 the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) and the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) tabled a national HIV/AIDS treatment plan in the National Economic, Development and Labour Council (Nedlac). This was intended to allow Cosatu to declare a dispute with government and business should there be no agreement reached in Nedlac on the implementation of the treatment plan. A key aspect of the plan involved making antiretroviral drugs available in the public health sector for those with HIV.

28 June 2011 Artist Ronald Harrison passed on



Ronald Harrison, artist born in Athlone, Cape Town died of cancer, just before he was to exhibit his latest work. Harrison was famous for his painting *Black Christ* done in 1962, where he depicted Nkosi Albert Luthuli as Jesus, with apartheid leaders Verwoerd and John Vorster as Roman soldiers who crucified him. The painting not only challenged the apartheid system, but also the notion that Jesus was white. Harrison was arrested and the painting banned. The painting was smuggled to the United Kingdom and was only returned in 1997, now hosted in the South African National Gallery. Besides numerous exhibitions, Harrison also wrote a book, *The Black Christ. A Journey to Freedom* in 2006, published by David Phillips.

29 June 1914 Ellen Kuzwayo born

Nnoseng, Ellen Kate Kuzwayo (29 June 1914-19 April 2006) was born on this day in Thaba Nchu, Freestate. She is the author of *Call me Woman* and other books, and after completing training at Fort Hare, worked as a teacher from 1938-1952. She went on to train as a social worker at the Jan Hofmyer School of Social Work, sharing a bench with another fa-



mous social worker, Winnie Mandela. A young Kuzwayo was also active in the youth movement, firstly in the South African Association of Youth Clubs, later as General Secretary of the national Young Christian Women's Association (YWCA), in the ANC Youth League in the 1960s, and the only woman on the 1976 Committee of Ten. In 1994, she was elected to the first post-apartheid South African Parliament as an ANC MP.

29 June 1976 Entebbe stand-off

A hijacked Air France A300B airbus which was traveling from Tel Aviv to Paris, lands in Entebbe Airport, Kampala Uganda on 29 June 1979. The hijackers (from Palestine and Germany) demanded the release of 53 Palestinian political prisoners. In the stand-off, 148 non-Israeli passengers are released, whilst 94 Israeli citizens along with the Air France crew are kept hostage at the Entebbe airport building. This starts of an international incident when on 4 July, the Israel Defense Forces launches a rescue mission, freeing the hostages. In the process 20 Ugandan soldiers, 3 of the hostages and all of the high-jackers were killed. To date two movies have been made about the incident: *"Raid on Entebbe"* in 1977 and more recent *"7 Days in Entebbe"* in 2018.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

29 June 1998

Protea botanist Maria Vogts passed away

Maria Vogts, a botanist and pioneer of the South African protea industry passed away. Vogts did her PhD on the King Protea (1979), and studied and promoted protea plants as a lecturer at Paarl, and then went on to promote the growing of proteas as an industry, herself owning a farm. According to Cape Flora, a marketing organisation established in 2015 to promote proteas and fynbos, in 2016 about 712 hectares of protea flowers were planted in the country, with over 7.7 million stems of these flowers exported in 2018/2019, mostly to EU and Russia, the UK, Far East and Canada.

30 June 1921

SA Reserve Bank founded

The South African Reserve Bank opens its doors for business for the first time, after the passing of the Currency and Bank Act of 1920 by the Union Parliament, making it the oldest central bank on the African continent.

30 June 1968

Queen of Gospel Rebeca Molopa born

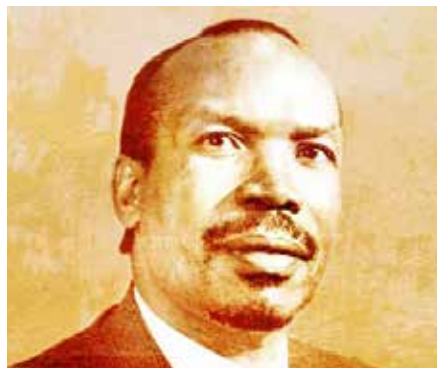


Rebecca Malope was born in Nelspruit, Mpumalanga and rose to fame when she won the Shell Road to Fame talent search in

1987, with a soulful rendition of the spiritual Sizwe Zako composition, Shine On. Initially singing Afropop, like Brenda Fassie and Yvonne Chaka Chaka, she switched to gospel with great success, not just at home but across the continent. She was awarded an honorary doctorate in 2003 from the University of Natal (now University of KwaZulu Natal – UKZN) for her contribution to music.

1 July 1921

Botswana founding President Seretse Khama born



Sir Seretse Khama was born on 1 July 1921 in Serowe in the British Protectorate of Bechuanaland, now known as Botswana. He studied in South Africa and graduated from Fort Hare College with a Bachelor of Arts in 1944. In 1966, he became the first president of the Republic of Botswana. Under his leadership Botswana developed from an impoverished and internationally obscure protectorate inherited from Britain to an increasingly democratic and prosperous country with a significant role in Southern Africa. He served as president until his death on July 13, 1980, in Gaborone.

1 July 1938

South African Press Association formed

The South African Press Association (SAPA) is formed as a not-for-

profit platform for local newspapers to share national and international news. With changes in the industry, SAPA closed shop and sent out its last story on 31 March 2015; its archives bought by Sekunjalo Investment Holdings.

1 July 1960

Ghana becomes a republic



Ghana, the first African country to gain independence from Britain in 1957, became a republic on 1 July 1960. Kwame Nkrumah became its first President, the country remained a member of the British Commonwealth and became one of the founders of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963.

1 July 1960

Democratic Republic of Somalia founded



On 1 July 1960, the independent Somali Democratic Republic, commonly known as Somalia,

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was formed out of former British and Italian territories, with Mogadishu as capital and Aden Abdullah Osman Daar as its first president. Italian Somaliland and British Somaliland, situated on the eastern coast of Africa and bordered by the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, were occupied by the two colonial powers since the early 19th century. In 1956, in accordance with a decision by the United Nations, Italy granted its territory internal autonomy which evolved into independence in 1960. The same development took place in British Somaliland when Britain ended its protectorate in June 1960.

1 July 1966

African Development Bank starts operations



The African Development Bank (AfDB) created by a treaty signed by 23 African nations in 1963 begins operations at its headquarters in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. Initially only African countries may join the bank, but in 1982, non-Africans are allowed to join. Today, the AfDB has 54 African member countries and 26 non-African members. The AfDB board is split according to the size of each member's share, currently 60%-40% between African and non-African members. The top ten shareholders are Nigeria, USA, Egypt, Japan, South Africa, Algeria, Germany, Canada, France and Cote d'Ivoire.

1 July 1970

Key African universities founded

This is a key day in the development of the university sector in Africa: the University of Nairobi, founded in 1956, becomes the first national university in Kenya. After being established as an affiliate college of the University of London in 1961, the University of Dar es Salaam is founded in post-independence Tanzania. The University of Benin becomes a fully-fledged university, on this day. On 1 July 2005, the South African Walter Sisulu University, main campus in Mthatha, Eastern Cape is created out of the merger of the Border Technikon, Eastern Cape Technikon and University of Transkei.

1 July 1975

Ethiopia nationalizes urban land

Ethiopia's Derg government nationalizes all urban land, including rental houses and apartments. Three million urban residents are organised into urban dwellers associations.

1 July 2010

East African Common Market Protocol launched

The Protocol, which permits free movement of workers, capital, goods and services is launched by the East African Community Chairperson, Kenya President Mwai Kibaki.

1 July 2011

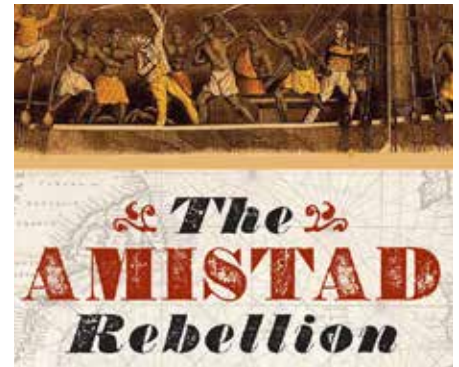
Kingdom of Morocco reforms

Morocco voters approve political reforms proposed by King Mohammed VI, giving more power to the legislature, making the prime minister head of govern-

ment and not the King, greater judicial independence from the monarchy and making the local Berber language the second official language besides Arabic.

2 July 1839

Armistad slave revolt



African slaves aboard the Amistad revolted in a bid to be free. The slaves were mainly from Sierra Leone, part of millions of Africans taken during the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Their revolt was led by a young Mende man called Sengbe Pieh, popularly known as Cinque. Cinque on 2 July managed to free himself from his shackles, helped to free other slaves and they took charge of the ship, killing the captain. A US Confederate captain, Lt Thomas Gedney highjacked the ship, taking it to Connecticut, where slavery was still legal. The US anti-slavery movement came to their rescue and the matter taken to the courts. They eventually won their freedom. In January 1842, the surviving 35 Amistad Africans who survived returned to the continent. In 1997, Steven Spielberg directed the movie Amistad, based on these historic events.

2 July 1867

Griqua leader Andries Le Fleur born

Andries Abraham le Fleur, Griqua leader and visionary, was born in Herschel, CC. He was the son

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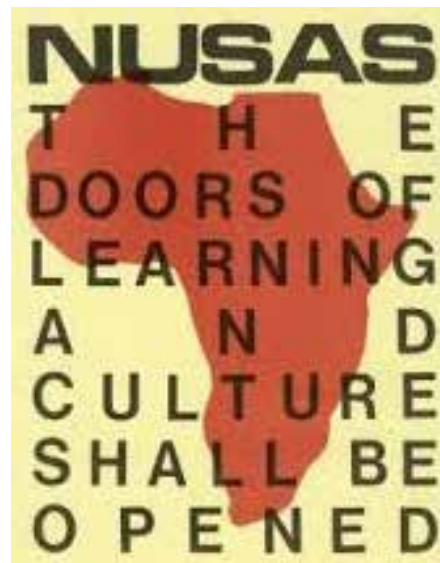
of Abraham le Fleur and one of the leading figures in Griqualand East. Both he and his father were extremely active in the 1890s on behalf of the Griqua who claimed that they had lost their land unfairly. His father, Abraham de Fleur was part of the commission appointed by Adam Kok II (1811-1875) to find alternative land for the Griqua, and served as Kok's secretary. He married into the Kok family, and after the death of Adam Kok IV, he assumed the position as Paramount chief of the Griquas. In April 1898 Andries le Fleur was sentenced to fourteen years' hard labour for sedition, but was released early in 1903. Le Fleur is also known as 'die Hervormer', the Reformer. A legendary figure, his grave is venerated among the Griqua people.

2 July 1925 Patrice Lumumba born



Patrice Emery Lumumba was born in the Katakombes region of the Kasai Province of Belgian Congo. Lumumba became involved in politics as a young man and in 1958 founded the Mouvement National Congolais (MNC). As MNC President, Lumumba helped win Congo's independence from Belgium in 1960. He was elected Prime Minister of the Republic of the Congo. After only 12 weeks in power, the new government was deposed in a coup which led to Lumumba's arrest. He was executed by a firing squad on 17 January 1961. It later emerged that Lumumba's death had been orchestrated by Belgian and US forces who opposed his vision of a united Congo.

2 July 1991 NUSAS disbanded



The National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) decided to disband on this day. NUSAS was formed in 1924, organizing university students. It was open to members of all races; and also called for the end of Apartheid and all discriminatory policies. In 1969, Steve Biko led black students in a walk-out from NUSAS to form SASO, feeling that the organisation did not represent their issues. NUSAS played an import-

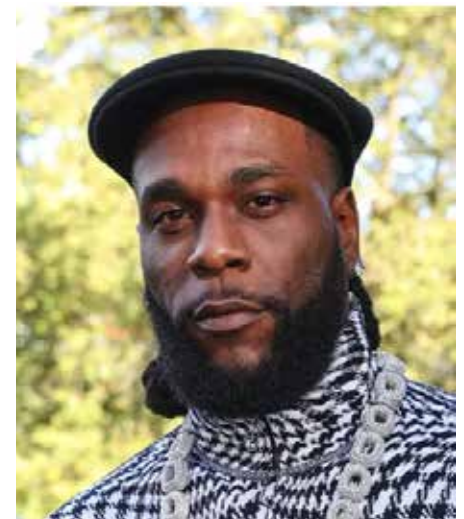
ant role in mobilizing white youth and students against apartheid; including many playing a role in the trade union movement. In the 1980s, NUSAS adopted the Freedom Charter, became a member of the United Democratic Forum (UDF) in 1981, and formed a non-racial student alliance with COSAS and AZASO (fore-runner to SASCO). NUSAS was also represented (by Leila McKenna) in the Provisional National Youth Committee (PNYC) formed in 1990 to relaunch the ANC Youth League. NUSAS members decided to dissolve the organisation ahead of its merger with black student organisation, SANSO in September 1991 at Rhodes University, to form SASCO.

2 July 2012 30 June stadium opens in Cairo

The 30th June stadium was built by the Egyptian Air Force for its team. The stadium opened on this day and was used during the 2021 Africa Cup of Nations.

2 July 1991 Burna Boy born

Damini Ebunoluwa Ogulu MFR, known professionally as Burna Boy, is a Nigerian singer, songwriter



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and record producer. He rose to stardom in 2012 after releasing *“Like to Party”*. During his world tour in 2023, he was the first African artist to sell out an American stadium when he performed in Queens, New York on July 8 and in June 2023, he was the first African artist to sell out a stadium in the United Kingdom.

3 July 1992

South Africa rejoins FIFA

South Africa's membership of the Football International Federation Association (Fifa) is reinstated on this day, 31 years after being expelled for its racial segregation policy in sports. Clubs were divided according to race, and in 1956 the apartheid government introduced its first racist policy on sport, and the South African Football Association (SAFA) became a federation of only white clubs. FIFA ruled that SAFA was not a 'real national association', and in 1961 South Africa was expelled. Before the readmittance in 1992, SAFA united into a non-racial federation for all South African footballers.

3 July 2007

AU Accra Declaration on the Union Government of Africa adopted

At the conclusion of the *“Grand debate on the Union Government of Africa”*, held in Accra, Ghana the African Union Heads of State and Government resolved that *“the ultimate objective of the African Union is the United States of Africa with a Union Government as envisaged by the founding fathers of the Organization of African Unity and, in particular, the visionary leader, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana;”* and agreed to accelerate African economic and political integration of Africa.



THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

27 June–3 July 2026

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

27 June

World Small Business Day



Formal and informal micro, small and medium enterprises make up over 90% of all firms and account, on average, for 70% of total employment and 50% of GDP. As such, they are key actors in achieving a green recovery. The Brookings Institute identifies five key opportunities for business in Africa: (a) a fast-growing and urbanizing population; (b) Africa is industrializing, and manufacturing (from agro-processing, automotives to mineral beneficiation and is expected to double in the coming decade; (c) the continent is pushing to close its infrastructure backlog, from transport to energy to ICT, as well as social infrastructure; (d) there are innovations, home-grown and imported, to unleash its agricultural and resource wealth; and (e) the potential provided by increased digital and mobile access.

28 June

International Body Piercing Day

The day celebrates all forms of body piercing, which is practiced in cultures across the world. The earliest known body piercing was in a stone relief found in Iraq, dated around the 9th century BCE. The day is celebrated on the birthday of Jim Ward, an American credited with being the father of the modern body piercing movement, pioneering many jewelry designs.

29 June

World Industrial Design Day

Industrial design refers to instruments or objects designed for mass production and it is a largely 20th century phenomenon, with German architect Peter Brehmens regarded as the first industrial designer, working as artistic adviser to AEG and a founder member of the Deutsche Werkbund, an arts, design and craft society of artisans. To become an industrial designer usually requires a bachelor's degree in either industrial design, engineering or architecture.

29 June

International Day of the Tropics

The tropic is one of Earth's climatic regions, which surrounds the Earth's equator. The tropics represent 40% of the Earth's total surface, 95% of the world's mangrove forests, 54% of renewable water sources, and generally have much higher levels of biodiversity than other regions. Countries in the tropics are also amongst the poorest in the world, number of people living in slum conditions and the most under-nourished. According to the State of the Tropics Report (2017), over 70% of global infrastructure gaps occur in the tropics, 20% do not have access to reliable water and only 30% have access to reliable electricity. The report also indicated that climate change is likely to disproportionately affect tropical regions.

30 June

Africa's Scientific Renaissance Day

Very little is known about African "science." How do indigenous knowledge systems provide ways to heal ailments, know how to read weather patterns to plan for food security and even know how to tell someone's medical condition with no blood tests and examinations? Such indigenous knowledge is

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

typically not taught and unknown to Africa's youth. The Africa's Scientific Renaissance Day highlights the importance of indigenous knowledge in the continent, past and present.

30 June

International Asteroid Day

Asteroids are small, rocky objects that orbit the sun. Although asteroids orbit the sun like planets, they are much smaller than planets. They are studied for what they can tell us about the universe, for their resources, for future exploration and finally how to protect Earth from asteroid impacts.

30 June

International Day of Parliamentarians

The day coincides with the establishment of the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) which was formed in 1889. The day celebrates parliaments and the role parliamentarians play in advancing democracy and the well-being of society. The following facts about parliaments are worth noting: every country in the world has some form of representative government; parliaments can be bicameral (with two chambers of parliament) or unicameral (with one chamber). There are 193 countries in the world with parliaments and over 46,000 members of parliament. The oldest parliament is the Althingi, the Icelandic Parliament, founded in 930.

30 June

World Social Media Day



World Social Media Day highlights the role of social media as a game changer and key tool for connecting friends, families, colleagues and people from across the world and for communications. It helps businesses, community workers, entrepreneurs, writers, artists, musicians, sports people, philanthropists and other influencers grow their brand. It allows for easy sharing of information and aid journalists to cover important news events.



Plastic-free July

Single-use disposable plastics (bags, cups, straws, packaging) are amongst the worst pollutants in our modern world. According to the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) around the world 1 million plastic water bottles are bought every minute, and 5 trillion single use plastic bags bought and disposed every year. The plastics end up in landfills, in our oceans, lakes and rivers, in the natural environment and in our communities. Plastic-free July is a campaign for all of us to try and for one month, to eliminate single-use plastic use.

1 July

International Reggae Day

This international day started in Jamaica, the birthplace of reggae music, and was inspired by a speech by Winnie Madikizela in Kingston, Jamaica in 1992, when she admired the capacity of reggae "to encourage, inspire and unite people." According to Folklife, an online music magazine, "roots or reggae music, through its close association with the philosophy and culture of the Rastafari, and inspired by Pan African Marcus Garvey, played a major role in transforming Jamaica's national identity from one of an Anglophilic British post-colony to a 'conscious' Black nation with a proud African heritage." It has since become an international day for lovers of the genre the world over.

1 July

International Joke Day

Laughter is an important part of human interaction and emotion, and jokes have been around for a long time. Laughter has many social benefits, helping us to connect with people, build bonds, relax, release stress and is good for your health. The first comedy club is said to have been established 320 BCE in Greece.

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