



# ANC TODAY

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



# Bafana Bafana inspire us to hope and to strive

■ By **PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

**I**N just under two weeks' time, Bafana Bafana will participate in the opening match in this year's FIFA World Cup against Mexico.

They carry with them the best wishes of more than 62 million South Africans who will be cheering them on at every stage of the tournament. Bafana Bafana are taking part in the World Cup for the first time since we hosted the event in 2010.

At a send-off dinner hosted by the Presidency last week, we congratulated the team going to the World Cup. Football is defined by camaraderie, teamwork and sportspersonship. The efforts of all the players in qualifying for the tournament deserve credit and recognition.

I call on all South Africans to rally behind our team and show their

support. Let us wear the team colours and fly the flag.

It has been a long and difficult journey to transform the fortunes of Bafana Bafana. Credit must go to the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, the South African Football Association, the leagues, clubs and sponsors for their commitment to developing

local football over many years. The coach and the players deserve our collective recognition.

Efforts are ongoing to professionalise the sport, develop new talent and promote football as a recreational activity for youth in communities across the country.

Bafana Bafana will be ambassadors for our country and what we stand for. The diversity of the squad and technical team is a reminder to the world that we are a united nation of many races, languages and cultures.

We are a land of opportunity where a young person born into difficult circumstances is able to represent their country at the highest level of international sport. The transformation of sport in South Africa is a reflection of the values of respect, tolerance, fairness and inclusivity

**“One Team. One Nation. Behind Bafana. Behind South Africa. United by our Flag, inspired by our Team. 62 million cheering voices. One Dream.”**



that underpin our constitutional order.

As we know from experience, sport has a tremendous capacity to unite people across the barriers of geography, race, gender and class. We remember the iconic moment at the 1995 Rugby World Cup final when President Nelson Mandela walked onto the field wearing a Springbok jersey to congratulate the Bokke.

That moment has been immortalised in writings, memoirs and film. It captured the spirit of the times, when South Africa's democracy was barely a year old. The country was energised by the team's victory, but more so by what it represented to a new nation that was emerging from a deeply divided past.

As I told the Bafana Bafana

squad last week, the people of South Africa expect them to bring the trophy home. Yet regardless of how Bafana Bafana fare in the tournament, their participation is as rich with meaning as the 1995 Rugby World Cup.

Much like the national squad, the country has emerged from a prolonged period of difficulty and now looks to the future with hope.

Our democracy has matured and is flourishing, our Constitution has been the supreme law of the land for three decades, and we have embarked on a National Dialogue to chart a new course for our country. We are seeing the signs of an economic recovery and growing confidence in our economic prospects.

So as we cheer our team on from the stands, at fan zones and

in our homes, we should also cheer ourselves on as a country. We should celebrate how far we have come in building a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa.

And like Bafana Bafana, we should keep working and striving until we have achieved a country in which all our people can thrive.

For 90 minutes, as they play for our country, we will not be divided by language, race, province, club or circumstance. For 90 minutes, as they play, we will simply be South Africans standing together behind our national team and behind our flag.

One Team. One Nation. Behind Bafana. Behind South Africa. United by our Flag, inspired by our Team. 62 million cheering voices. One Dream.

# ANC Statement on **Youth Month** and the **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of June 16<sup>th</sup> 1976**

■ By **ANC SECRETARY GENERAL FIKILE MBALULA**

**T**HE 1st of June heralds the beginning of the **Youth Month**, an important period in the country's historic calendar. It is a period which marks the **50th anniversary** of the **June 16 National Youth Day**, commemorated under the theme **"RESET@50 – The Future Calls."**

This theme is a call to action for young people to organise and drive national action. It is a day and an opportunity to reflect on the many miles travelled since the tragic day of June 1976 when the youth rose in valour and defiance against the apartheid education system of segregation which undermined our languages, culture and identity by imposing Afrikaans upon Africans as a medium of instruction.

This period changed the course history, engraved it by declaring it a national holiday in recognition of the valiant struggles of young people, and as a catalyst for an education system that guarantees access, diversity and dignity in the context of **"Opening the doors of learning and culture"** as advocated by Freedom Charter.

To give effect to the struggles of the generation of 1976, the



Basic Education Laws Amendment Act and the Constitution were passed to ensure the equality of languages, diversity, respect and universal access, school safety, free compulsory education within reach.

The African National Congress

(ANC) government established the national nutrition feeding scheme, ensured that no child walks to school bare-footed, eradicated mud schools and established national norms and standards.

A call to organise and national

## EDITORIAL

action is premised on opportunities in the economic space through SMME development and the National Youth Development Agency to create jobs and create opportunities for thriving youth businesses and access to funding and support through various government agencies. This month coincides with the year of local government elections.

As a call to the future, the ANC calls upon young people to seize the future, carve a path for a better life, amplify their voices in democracy and decision making by registering to vote on the weekend of 20-21 June 2026. This will continue the work of the ANC in building local government capable of creating job and creating opportunities for youth enterprises.

A call to action enjoins us in nation and community building, the fight against crime and drugs which destroy our future, and erode hope. It is a call for young people to reflect on the nature of society we aspire and seizure of abundant opportunities at hand, and new ventures in various fields from local tourism, sport, education and other opportunities.

The Hector Peterson monument in Soweto is a reminder of the brutality of a system that respected no children, valued no life but also serves as a chapter of history that our freedom and democracy were not gestures of magnanimity but achieved through sacrifice and the ultimate price of death which took the life of Hector Peterson and



many others. In their honour and profound remembrance, we dip our revolutionary black, green and gold flag.

As we celebrate this significant moment as a nation, we honour and pay tribute to comrades Tom Manthata, Dan Montsitsi, Hastings Ndlovu, Sibongile

Mkhabela, Mbuyisa Makhubu, Super Moloji, Seth Mazibuko, Murphy Morobe, Tsietsi Mashinini, Khotso Seatlholo, and the June 16 Detachment of Umkhonto we Sizwe. Their youthful sacrifices in the fight against the oppressive apartheid education system paved the way for the freedom we enjoy today.



**The 1st of June heralds the beginning of Youth Month, commemorate under the theme  
RESET@50 - THE FUTURE CALLS.**

**The future call is a call for young people to organise and drive national action and the seizure of opportunities, carving a future for prosperity.**

# Celebrating COSAS: A Historic Force for Transformation, Renewal, and the Preservation of the ANC's Legacy

■ By **ANCYL President COLLEN THLOLOGELO MALATJI**



**COSAS**  
**EACH ONE! TEACH ONE!**

**L**AST week, the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) marked its 47th year of existence. Since its inception, COSAS has infused radical politics into the liberation of South Africans and among the marginalized segments of society. It is known for its defiance against the despotic apartheid regime. In the context of contemporary politics and society, COSAS remains largely relevant in defending and continuously imagining a totally liberated society.

Understanding that struggle is not merely a matter of semantics, but a constant battle to build a solid democratic society that is not stripped of equity for our masses, the aspirations of COSAS remain

profoundly relevant today. This is not a matter of ideological standing, but rather an evolution in the struggle of South African learners. COSAS stands as a true symbol of the liberation movement. On January 8, 1985, Oliver Tambo delivered his most radical speech, calling on people to “*render South Africa ungovernable.*” Following the July 1985 state of emergency, he again appealed to all South Africans, both Black and White, to make apartheid unworkable and the country ungovernable.

In 1986, Tambo called for a campaign to establish an alternative education system and advocated for the unbanning of the COSAS. He contended “*United in action,*

*we have the ability to win our struggle for an alternative system of education, to secure the release of all student leaders... [and] to force the lifting of the ban on COSAS.”*

Another crucial point to reflect on is that when the ANC, as the liberation movement, was clamped down by the machinery of the apartheid government, COSAS filled the void left by the ANC in grassroots politics. The systemic threat against the ANC by the despotic government was confronted with the defiance of students across South Africa. COSAS was the first ‘congress’ organisation for students in South Africa since the banning of the ANC in 1960, and it was the first to officially

adopt non-racialism and support the Freedom Charter, preceding the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF), of which it would become an affiliate.

As COSAS described itself in a 1984 pamphlet, it recognized the need to organize and educate students about their daily problems in schools, such as corporal punishment, lack of textbooks, unqualified teachers, poor exam results, and unmarked scripts. They also saw the need to unite all students throughout the country, Africans, Indians, and Coloureds. This position remains central as COSAS continues to advance the struggle for the total liberation of South Africans.

Our ANC has experienced an electoral decline, evidenced by a 17% drop in the last general elections. This decline has been characterized as a strategic setback, a characterization I do not entirely agree with, as the signs have always been present. Among the triggers for this decline is the ANC's lack of a strong position against the neo-liberalism of our social formation. This is reflected in the economy, which for the past 10 years has not grown above 0.9% in GDP terms, and unemployment has increased yearly to 34%, despite the ANC's election manifesto committing to creating 5 million jobs in a country where 16 million people are unemployed.

These missteps lead me to deviate from calling the decline in electoral support a strategic setback. Another significant issue is that some interpret this as a sign of South Africans' discontent due to the high cost of living, poverty, and high unemployment rates. However, as we commemorate the anniversary of COSAS, we



must reflect on our ideological and political positioning for the next five years.

For the past 47 years, COSAS has fought against national oppression and persistently continued its battle against inequality, poverty, and unemployment through its advocacy in basic education. When I was President of COSAS, I stressed the implementation of the 2007 ANC resolutions to address our people's challenges. Thirteen years later, as the ANCYL President, I am still resuscitating the same argument: a call for the implementation of the 2007 ANC's resolutions for the total emancipation of our people.

COSAS's voice is also an integral part of the ANCYL, steering both the ANCYL and the ANC toward the economic liberation of South Africa after the 30th anniversary of the democratic breakthrough, as the 27th National Congress leadership is the composition of former COSAS, and SASCO leaders. South Africa is marred by the prevalence of systemic racial poverty and inequality, which is especially evident in education-

al institutions, hence, we pushed for the constellation of variety of background in our political leadership.

Our country's education system still needs to be transformed to reflect our social realities, necessitating that we address social inequality. Within the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) region, South Africa remains the most unequal society, with a Gini coefficient of around 0.67, the highest in both the world and Africa. While some progress has been made since the dawn of democracy, the education system remains characterized by racialized inequality and segregated schooling. Consequently, free quality education is still inaccessible to youth from Black and Coloured working-class and rural communities.

Our ANC is charting the way forward after the elections, facing results that pose a significant threat to its hold on state power, an essential vehicle for ushering in social transformation in our country. COSAS, as a learners movement dedicated to fighting for historically oppressed people, plays a

crucial role in this ongoing struggle. Our leaders in the ANC must learn from the lived experience of Ephraim Mogale, the first President of COSAS, who was driven by the principles of non-racialism and democracy. As we commemorate the anniversary of COSAS, it is crucial for our leaders to emulate Ephraim Mogale's selfless leadership, prioritizing the needs of all South Africans.

Students played a critical role in the liberation process of this country. The ANC has laid a solid foundation for the youth by providing free basic education and higher education through NSFAS, funded almost a million students since 1994, this can be massified but important is conscientizing those who benefit that these are gains of the ANC turbocharged by the ANC commitment to our masses. However, despite these efforts, the youth of South Africa face significant challenges, including an unemployment crisis and marginalization. Many young people, particularly from townships and rural areas, are excluded from the economic base and fall victim to substance abuse.

Our society's stratification has marginalized these youth, leading many to turn to substance abuse. It is imperative that we address these issues to ensure the inclusion and empowerment of our young population. Being a student of COSAS means learning to confront and challenge the injustices in our society. One of the central

struggles is the fight for quality, decolonial education, grounded in the principles of the National Democratic Revolution. This revolution aims to build an equitable society based on the objectives of the Freedom Charter.

To ensure that the relentless work of Ephraim Mogale is not in vain, we must uphold the high standards exemplified by the congressmen and women. We must also educate society about the dangers of narrow native nationalism and ethnic consciousness, such as those represented by the MK-Party and March to March which are opportunistically exploiting South Africans struggles for their self-gain. Our objective as the ANC is to foster nation-build-

ing by uniting all South Africans to achieve social cohesion and prosperous society.

COSAS must continue to fight for the unity of South Africans, regardless of race, ethnicity, or class. Mobilizing votes based on ethnicity or tribalism undermines the ANC's objectives of dismantling the colonial legacy, including ethnic chauvinism.

The formation of the MK-Party represents a counterrevolutionary stance, as it seeks to undermine the national identity project promoted by the ANC through the National Democratic Revolution. This formation was not an accident; it is a deliberate move to camouflage the legacy of Jacob



The poster features a background image of a crowd of young people. At the top center is the COSAS logo, which includes a map of South Africa and the text 'COSAS'. Below the logo is a large '47' with 'YEARS' underneath it. The main title 'COSAS Anniversary' is written in a stylized, white, cursive font. Below the title, there is a paragraph of text: 'Today we celebrate another year of unwavering commitment to the struggle for quality education, student activism, and the empowerment of young people across South Africa.' This is followed by another paragraph: 'For 47 years, COSAS has remained a fearless voice for learners, championing quality education, justice, and student activism. May the organisation continue to inspire and empower generations of young people.' At the bottom center, it says 'Forward to greater victories!'. In the bottom left corner, there is a small red box with the text 'ECONOMIC FREEDOM AND SOCIAL CHANGE NOW, NOT LATER!'. In the bottom right corner, there is a circular logo for the 'AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS YOUTH LEAGUE' and the text 'ISSUED BY THE ANCYL HQ'.

Today we celebrate another year of unwavering commitment to the struggle for quality education, student activism, and the empowerment of young people across South Africa.

For 47 years, COSAS has remained a fearless voice for learners, championing quality education, justice, and student activism. May the organisation continue to inspire and empower generations of young people.

**Forward to greater victories!**

ECONOMIC FREEDOM AND SOCIAL CHANGE NOW, NOT LATER!

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS YOUTH LEAGUE

ISSUED BY THE ANCYL HQ

Zuma, who presided over state capture and rooted corruption, which saw Transnet, Eskom, and SAA collapse while enriching his cronies. Jacob Zuma has never been on the side of the people; he is an accident of history, like all those who hijacked and infiltrated the ANC for their self-gain.

As we march towards the local government elections in November 2026, COSAS must form part of the aggressive forces that will defend and support the ANC from all segments of society. This involves reinforcing and reigniting the ANC's connection to its masses while educating our learners to deter from ethnically organized political parties like the MK-Party. This can be achieved by safeguarding against racial or ethnic insurgencies and continuing to unite different ethnic, racial, and religious groups in the interest of building a national democratic state.

The manifestation of ethnic mobilization or regionalism is inherently divisive to the nation and must be actively countered to preserve national unity.

The focus of the country's agenda should be on transforming our economy, as the people of South Africa and the ANC have addressed the issue of national oppression and the move

to end class oppression is eminent in the contemporary politics.

However, it is evident that this issue has not been fully resolved, as the politics of tribalism persist. South Africa should inherently reject tribalism based on its historical experience with colonization and apartheid which deployed tribalism as the strategy of divide and rule.

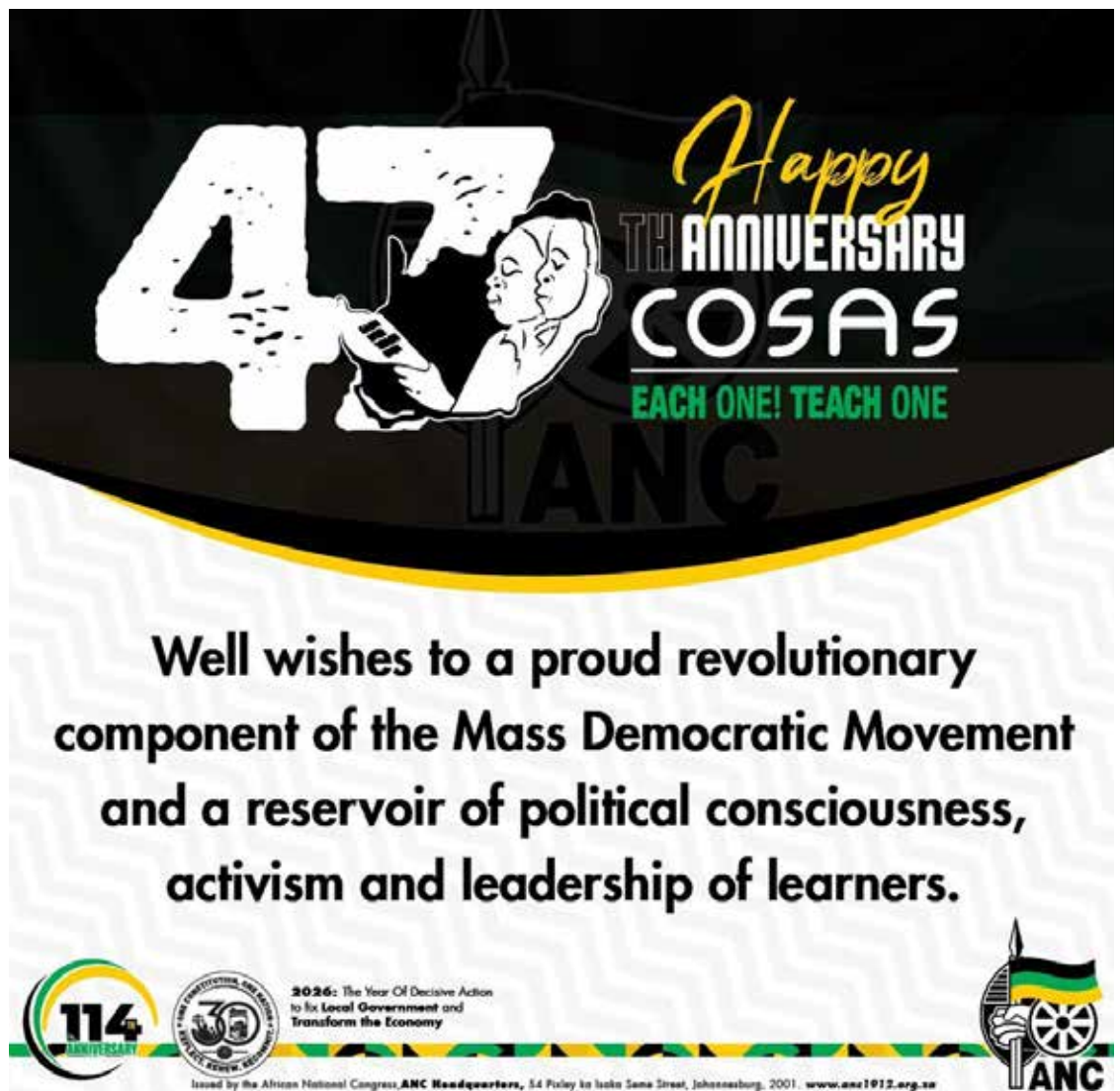
At this stage in South Africa's development, one of our key tasks is to rethink the character of people's democracy in a way that supports nation-building.

At the same time, there is increasing concern about the rise of the

MK-Party and renewed ethnic mobilization, both of which risk deepening divisions within our society. This points to the ANC's inadequate response to ethnic fragmentation and underscores the need for a united effort to redefine South Africa through the National Democratic Revolution.

Society must be mobilized to firmly reject tribal politics, as doing so is essential to preserving the legacy and historical mission of COSAS.

*Collen Malatji is a Former COSAS President and the current President of the ANC Youth League.*



**47<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**  
**COSAS**  
**EACH ONE! TEACH ONE**

**Well wishes to a proud revolutionary component of the Mass Democratic Movement and a reservoir of political consciousness, activism and leadership of learners.**

**2026: The Year Of Decisive Action to fix Local Government and Transform the Economy**

Issued by the African National Congress, ANC Headquarters, 54 Putley to Isaka Sana Street, Johannesburg, 2001. [www.anc1912.org.za](http://www.anc1912.org.za)

# One Constitution. One Nation. Reflect. Renew. Recommit.

Address by **ANDRIES NEL**, Deputy Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development during a **Joint Sitting of Parliament to Commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the Adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa** held on 4 June 2026

**T**ODAY we commemorate one of the most significant milestones in our history: the 30th Anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa in 1996.

We do so under the theme: ***One Constitution. One Nation. Reflect. Renew. Recommit.***

It is both a celebration and a call to action.

I had the privilege of serving as a member of the Constitutional Assembly that drafted and adopted our Constitution between 1994 and 1996.

Our Constitution did not emerge from nowhere, nor was it imposed upon the people of South Africa from elsewhere.

It was the product of a protracted struggle against colonialism and apartheid.

It carries within its provisions the aspirations of generations of South Africans who fought for freedom, equality and human dignity.

We remember those who were imprisoned, those who were ex-



iled, those who were tortured, those who lost their lives, and all those who refused to accept that injustice and oppression should define their being.

The Constitution is not merely a legal text. It is the product of struggle, sacrifice, and hope. The values that ultimately found expression in the Constitution did not begin in the Constitutional Assembly.

Despite being forged in the furnace of negotiations between those forces representing a dying and decaying apartheid past and those representing a demo-

cratic and progressive future, the Constitution emerged true to its ancestry.

The Bill of Rights adopted by the ANC in 1923, the Africans' Claims adopted by the ANC in 1943, the Women's Charter of 1954, and the Freedom Charter adopted in 1955 – these represent the ancestry of our Constitution.

Our Constitution is a revolutionary and transformative document.

It is the supreme law of the land, the basis for the transformation of our society into a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic state

founded on the values of human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms.

This vision can only be truly realised through the fundamental transformation of our society, a monumental historic project requiring a democratic developmental state acting in concert with all sectors of society.

Transformation is mandated, driven and guided by the Constitution.

The Constitution is not designed to obstruct transformation but to advance it. We are all duty bound continuously and critically to assess the progress we are making in discharging this mandate.

The Constitution begins with the words: ***“We, the people of South Africa.”***

These words remind us that the Constitution belongs to the people. It is not the property of government. It is not the property of Parliament. It is not the property of lawyers or judges.

It is the collective covenant of the people of South Africa.

It is, as has often been said, the birth certificate of our democratic nation. It defines who we are and who we aspire to become.

The Constitution is the supreme law of the Republic.

Every law, every policy and every exercise of public power must be consistent with it. No person and no institution stands above it.

This principle of constitutional supremacy represented a decisive break with our past.



Under apartheid, Parliament could pass unjust laws that violated fundamental rights. We do not want to return there.

Today, all public power is constrained by the Constitution and subject to constitutional scrutiny.

The Constitution creates a democratic state consisting of three, co-equal branches which have distinct but interdependent roles to play in transforming society.

The legislature exercises its legislative authority by passing laws which must progressively advance transformation of the state and society;

The executive is responsible for the implementation of laws and the development of policies geared towards the transformation of society;

The courts exercise judicial authority by interpreting the laws passed by the legislature and action taken by the executive in accordance with the Constitution.

At the heart of our constitutional order is a simple but profound principle: all are equal before the law.

Regardless of race, gender, language, religion, social status,

sexual orientation, or political affiliation, every person enjoys equal protection and equal benefit of the law.

It reflects our determination that never again shall South Africa be a country in which some are more human than others.

The Preamble sets out the kind of South Africa we seek to build. It calls upon us to heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights.

It calls upon us to improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person.

And it calls upon us to build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.

This constitutes a revolutionary programme of fundamental social and economic transformation.

For thirty years, the Constitution has provided the framework through which South Africa has pursued this transformation.

It has anchored democratic governance.

It has established independent courts and institutions.

It has expanded access to housing, healthcare, education, water, electricity and social protection.

It has helped to improve the lives of millions of South Africans.

But as we reflect honestly on these thirty years, we must acknowledge that whilst we are not where we were, and we are also

not where we need to be.

Our democracy has achieved much. But much remains to be done.

Poverty, unemployment and inequality continue to deny millions of South Africans the full enjoyment of their freedom and the ability to free their potential.

Crime and violence undermine safety and social cohesion. Corruption and deprives us of the resources we need to implement the provisions of the Constitution.

Gender-based violence continues to violate the rights and dignity of women and children.

Too many young people remain excluded from education, skills development and meaningful work.

The Constitution provides neither excuses nor guarantees. It provides a framework for united action.

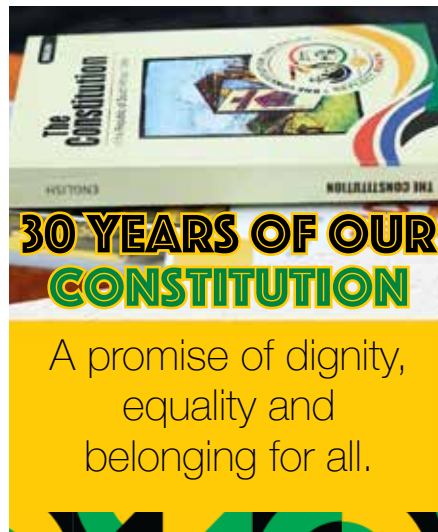
It places obligations on government, institutions and citizens alike.

It requires us to continue working to dismantle the legacies of colonialism, apartheid and patriarchy.

It requires us to build a democratic and developmental state capable of meeting the needs of our people.

It requires us to build an economy that is more inclusive, more dynamic and more capable of creating opportunities for all.

As we renew our commitment to the Constitution, we must also defend it. Across the world, democratic values are under assault.



Values such as equality, inclusion, non-racialism, non-sexism and human solidarity are increasingly being challenged.

We see attempts to spread division, misinformation and intolerance. We see attacks on democratic institutions and the rule of law. We must never take our constitutional democracy for granted.

This demands that we build the broadest united front to defend, consolidate and advance our Constitutional democracy and status as a sovereign country in the family of nations.

The Constitution survives not because it is written on paper, but because citizens believe in it, defend it and give life to it through their actions.

That is why active citizenship remains essential.

The Constitution establishes both representative and participatory democracy.

Citizens do not participate only once every few years when elections take place.

Democracy requires ongoing engagement by the people.

It requires citizens who organise, participate, hold institutions accountable and contribute to the development of their communities.

It requires citizens who recognise both their rights and their responsibilities.

This year provides an important opportunity to put these principles into practice.

On 4 November 2026, South Africans will participate in our Seventh Democratic Local Government Elections.

These elections matter because local government is the sphere where the Constitution must find most direct expression in the lives of the people.

The right to vote is among the most important rights secured by our Constitution.

Generations of South Africans struggled for that right.

We encourage all eligible South Africans, especially young South Africans, to register to vote and to ensure that their registration details are up to date and to use the Voter Registration Week-end on 20 – 21 June to do so.

The future of our constitutional democracy belongs to you.

Your generation will shape the next thirty years of our constitutional journey. Your vote matters.

Let us recommit ourselves to building a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa.

One Constitution. One Nation. Reflect. Renew. Recommit.



## What is Left about this Left?

■ By **MOJALEFA SHELLWOOD NALE**

**S**OUTH Africa witnessed the conclusion of what was styled as the “*Conference of the Left*” this past weekend, bringing together an array of political parties, trade unions, community formations, activists and intellectuals under the banner of rebuilding working-class and popular power.

The conference adopted an extensive declaration addressing some of the most pressing challenges facing the country, including unemployment, poverty, inequality, land reform, economic transformation, public ownership and the unfinished tasks of national liberation. Its organisers presented it as the beginning of a new effort to unite progressive forces around a common programme for social and economic change.

Yet the significance of the conference extends far beyond the resolutions it adopted.

It invites reflection not only on the gathering itself, but on its broad-

er meaning for South African politics, the trajectory of the liberation movement, and the future of democratic governance in our country.

For beneath the language of socialism, transformation and working-class power lies a deeper political story. The conference brought together individuals and organisations whose political journeys have, in one way or another, intersected with the liberation movement that has governed democratic South Africa since 1994. Some were participants in the exercise of state power. Some influenced policy through alliance structures. Some occupied positions of leadership and authority. Others emerged from internal political contests that shaped the direction of the governing movement over many years.

This reality raises questions that go well beyond the contents of the declaration itself.

What does the emergence of

such a gathering tell us about the state of the Left in South Africa?

What does it reveal about the strengths and weaknesses of the liberation movement from which many of its participants emerged?

What lessons should be drawn about political leadership, organisational vigilance and the long-term sustainability of the national democratic project?

And perhaps most importantly, what should ordinary South Africans make of this latest attempt to reorganise forces that were once, directly or indirectly, part of the political establishment they now criticise?

These questions deserve serious consideration because they speak not only to the future of the Left, but to the future of South Africa itself.

There is much in the declaration that resonates with the frustrations of ordinary South Africans.

Unemployment remains stubbornly high. Poverty and inequality continue to define the lived experience of millions. Economic transformation has progressed unevenly. Public confidence in institutions has weakened. The distance between the aspirations of liberation and the realities of governance has become increasingly difficult to ignore.

None of these observations are controversial. What is controversial is who is making them.

For the most striking feature of the Conference of the Left is that many of those gathered under its banner are not outsiders to the democratic project. They are not observers looking in from the margins. They are products of the very movement whose failures they now diagnose. Some occupied positions of influence within government. Others held leadership positions within alliance structures, trade unions, legislatures, state institutions and political formations that exercised considerable influence over the direction of South Africa during the democratic era.

This reality compels a simple but uncomfortable question:

### **Was this Left still Left when it had power?**

If the post-1994 settlement failed to resolve the economic question, where were these voices when critical decisions were being made? If state power was not sufficiently utilised to transform ownership patterns, who occupied positions within that state?

If the working class was abandoned, who participated in the structures responsible for advancing its interests?



If the National Democratic Revolution lost momentum, who sat in the rooms where priorities were debated, resolutions adopted and programmes approved?

These questions are not intended to delegitimise criticism. Every political tradition must be capable of self-correction. Individuals and organisations have every democratic right to reassess their positions, challenge prevailing orthodoxies and organise around alternative visions.

The issue is not that people have left.

The issue is whether they are leaving behind ideas they once defended or merely rediscovering ideas they failed to implement.

The issue is not whether citizens establish new political formations.

The issue is whether political positions are rooted in conviction or convenience. Democracy protects the right to leave. History judges the reasons for leaving. Yet to focus exclusively on those

who have left would be to miss the larger lesson.

The Conference of the Left is not merely a challenge to the ANC or the governing alliance. It is a mirror held up to the liberation movement itself.

For if many of those who now speak most forcefully about the failures of the democratic project emerged from within the liberation movement, then the movement must ask itself difficult questions.

How did such individuals rise within its ranks? How were they entrusted with responsibility?

What weaknesses within the organisation enabled them to acquire influence?

How did the movement distinguish between ideological commitment and political convenience?

How did it identify those committed to a historic mission and those attracted primarily by the opportunities associated with political power?

These are not questions unique to South Africa.

They are questions that have confronted liberation movements across Africa and the developing world.

History offers sobering lessons.

In several African countries, unresolved contradictions within governing movements weakened institutions, eroded legitimacy and created conditions for instability. In countries such as Ghana, Nigeria and Burkina Faso, periods of political paralysis and internal contestation eventually created openings for military intervention and the interruption of democratic processes.

Elsewhere, former comrades became political adversaries.

In Angola and Mozambique, political divisions that emerged from liberation-era politics evolved into prolonged conflicts involving UNITA and RENAMO, with devastating consequences for national development and social cohesion.

In Zambia, the once-dominant UNIP experienced fragmentation and decline as former leaders and cadres dispersed into competing political formations, weakening the organisational coherence that had once underpinned the national project.

South Africa's experience has been different.

Our constitutional order provides every citizen with the right to organise politically, establish parties and contest elections. This is one of the great achievements of the democratic transition and must be defended without qualification.

But democracy does not absolve liberation movements from the responsibility of learning from history.

A movement cannot become a school for its future enemies.

Nor can it become a nursery in which opportunists are politically nurtured, organisationally developed and publicly legitimised, only to emerge later as opponents of the very ideals they once claimed to defend.

The issue is not disagreement. The issue is political character.

The issue is whether organisations possess the capacity to distinguish between genuine conviction and temporary alignment.

The issue is whether political education develops cadres or merely produces careerists.

The issue is whether leadership positions are occupied by servants of a cause or by custodians of personal ambition.

The liberation movement has historically drawn strength from its ability to renew itself. Through-

out its existence it has survived ideological disputes, strategic disagreements, state repression, exile, imprisonment, factional contests and changing political conditions.

This resilience should not be underestimated.

Indeed, there is an argument that the very fact that many former insiders ultimately found themselves outside the mainstream of the ANC demonstrates the existence of an internal corrective mechanism. The ANC may have bent, but it did not break. It may have been challenged, but it was not captured permanently by every tendency that emerged within it.

There is merit in this argument.

But resilience is not the same as immunity.

The fact that a ship survives a storm does not mean that it suffered no damage.

The fact that a movement ultimately defeats a misguided tendency does not mean that society escapes the consequences.

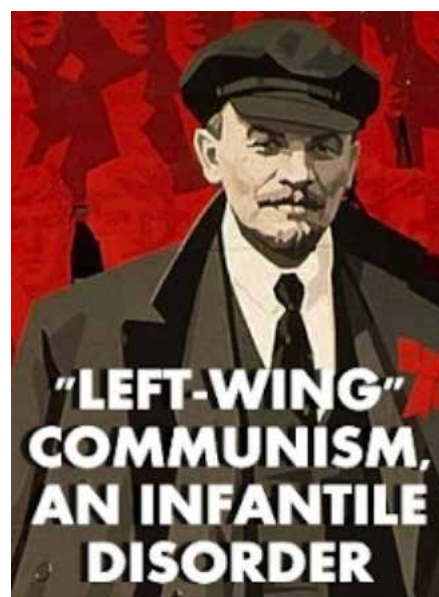
Years may be lost.

Institutions may be weakened.

Public confidence may be eroded as it is the case demonstrated by declining elections electoral fortunes in the last three or so elections results.

Transformation may be delayed.

The poor, the unemployed and the marginalised pay the price for every lost year. Years spent correcting mistakes remains a years lost to development.



This is why the lessons of the present moment must be taken seriously.

The Conference of the Left should not merely provoke debate about socialism, capitalism, ownership patterns or economic policy.

It should provoke a deeper discussion about the quality of political leadership, the purpose of cadre development and the future of liberation politics in South Africa.

Former President Thabo Mbeki frequently warns about the dangers of counter-revolution these days. More often, that concept has been interpreted narrowly as referring only to external forces hostile to transformation. Yet history suggests a more complex reality.

Movements are seldom weakened solely from outside. More often, they are weakened from within – through ideological drift, factionalism, opportunism, corruption, careerism, loss of mission and the gradual erosion of organisational culture.

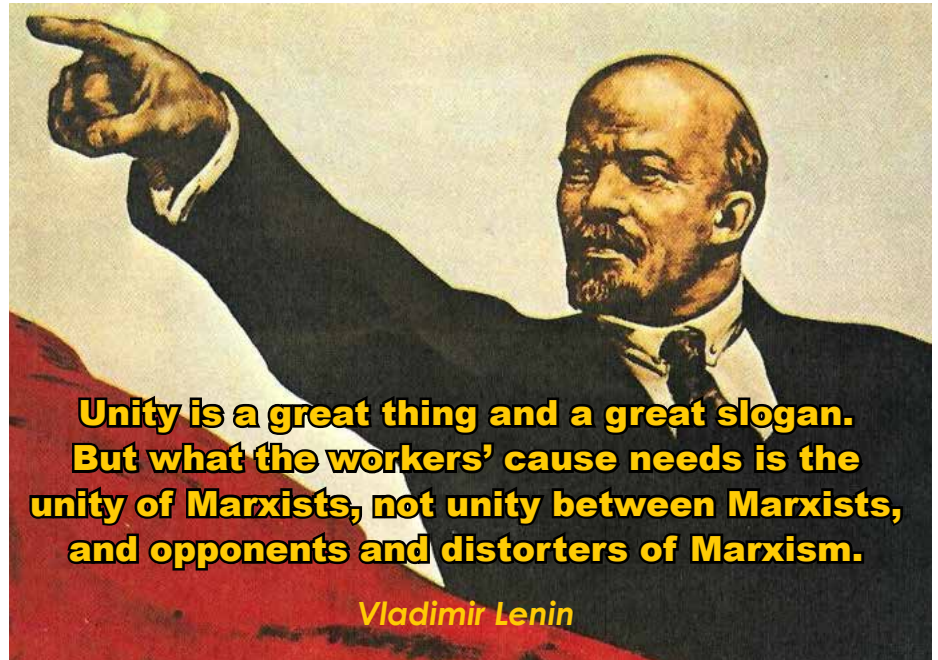
The challenge facing the liberation movement today is therefore not merely to identify external threats. It is to develop the political vigilance necessary to recognise these tendencies before they become entrenched.

The Conference of the Left may believe it has posed difficult questions to the ANC and the democratic movement.

Perhaps it has.

But it has also posed difficult questions to itself.

For if those gathered there genu-



inely believe that the democratic project lost its transformative momentum, then they too must explain their role in that history.

And if the liberation movement wishes to learn from this moment, it must resist the temptation to dismiss critics simply because they have departed.

Instead, it must ask a more important question: What allowed them to emerge in the first place?

The greatest threat to a liberation movement is not opposition from outside. Opposition is natural in a democracy. The greatest threat is the inability to distinguish between those who seek to advance its historic mission and those who merely borrow its colours until a better opportunity presents itself.

The lesson of the Conference of the Left is therefore not that some have left the movement.

The lesson is that every liberation movement must constantly ask whether it is producing revolutionaries, reformers, careerists

or future opponents.

The answer to that question determines not only the future of the movement, but the future of the nation itself.

For the future of South Africa will not be secured by declarations alone. It will be secured by the character, consciousness and integrity of those entrusted with the responsibility of transforming society.

This is not a partisan challenge but it is a patriotic one.

### **WHAT REALLY BROUGHT THIS GATHERING TOGETHER? CAN IT HOLD AS A FUTURE COALITION?**

Perhaps the most important unanswered question arising from the Conference of the Left is not what was said in the declaration, but what holds together the forces that adopted it.

Political declarations are important. But politics is ultimately tested not by declarations but by the durability of the alliances that

seek to implement them.

A casual observation of the participants raises legitimate questions. The gathering included organisations and individuals with markedly different political traditions, strategic objectives and historical experiences. Some remain committed to socialism as an organising principle. Others have embraced forms of radical nationalism. Some seek influence through mass mobilisation. Others pursue electoral strategies. Some have long histories within the liberation movement. Others define themselves primarily through opposition to it.

What then is the binding force?

Is it a shared vision of the future? Or is it a shared dissatisfaction with the present? These are not the same thing.

History teaches that coalitions built around common grievances are often easier to establish than coalitions built around common programmes.

The danger is that opposition to a common adversary can create the illusion of unity where no durable strategic unity exists.

South Africans have seen this phenomenon before.

In municipalities across the country, coalition governments formed primarily around the objective of removing a dominant party frequently proved unstable once confronted with the realities of governing. Agreements reached in opposition often unravel in administration. Shared criticism does not automatically translate into shared solutions.

The same question must there-

fore be asked of the emerging Left formation.

Does it represent a coherent alternative programme of government, or is it primarily a convergence of political actors whose paths intersect at their dissatisfaction with the ANC?

The question becomes even more relevant when one considers the diverse political circumstances of some of the participants.

Among them are those who lost internal political contests. Those who departed after failing to secure leadership positions. Others who regard disciplinary or legal processes as politically motivated. Those who believe the movement abandoned them.

Those who seek to build political relevance outside structures in which they previously operated.

Those who may genuinely hold principled ideological objections to the current direction of the

country.

These motivations are not necessarily identical nor do they necessarily produce the same political destination.

A coalition can survive differences of ideology if it shares strategic clarity. What is far more difficult is sustaining unity among actors united primarily by grievance.

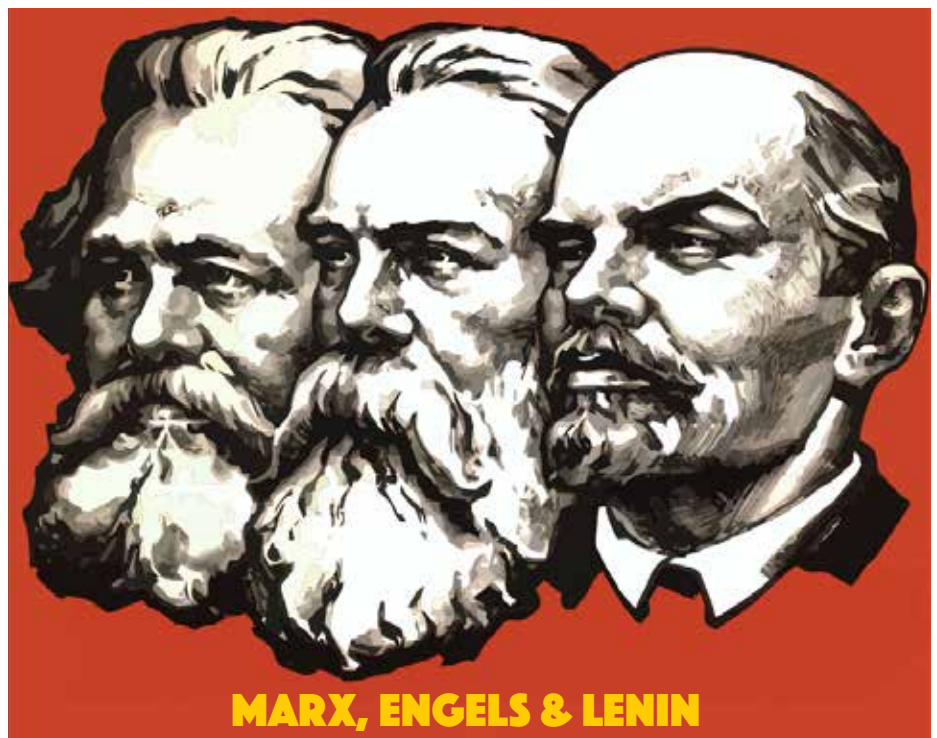
This is why South Africans should approach grand political realignments with both interest and caution.

Not because dissent is undesirable.

Not because alternative political formations are illegitimate.

But because citizens have a responsibility to distinguish between principled political projects and temporary convergences of convenience.

The ultimate test of any political formation is not the eloquence of



its declaration. It is whether it can survive disagreement, develop coherent policy, exercise discipline and provide stable governance in service of the people.

That remains a question the Conference of the Left has yet to answer.

### **The GNU, Democratic Legitimacy and the Politics of Reality**

The Conference of the Left also raises a broader question about the direction of South African politics in the aftermath of the 2024 elections.

Some participants clearly view themselves as constructing an alternative to the current political arrangement and, by implication, an alternative to the Government of National Unity. Within sections of the Left, the GNU is frequently presented as evidence of the abandonment of the liberation project, particularly because it includes parties that are regarded as ideological opponents of the National Democratic Revolution.

This criticism deserves consideration and it must be balanced against a fundamental democratic reality.

The GNU did not emerge because a political party or leader suddenly abandoned long-held principles. It emerged

because the South African electorate produced a result in which no single party secured an outright majority to govern alone. THAT OUTCOME REPRESENTED THE SOVEREIGN WILL OF THE PEOPLE.

The ANC, as the largest party and the historical leader of the democratic transition, was confronted with a choice. It could ignore the electoral message, attempt to govern without sufficient democratic support, or seek a governing arrangement that reflected the fragmented mandate delivered by voters. The ANC chose the latter.

Whether one agrees with every aspect of the GNU is ultimately a matter of political judgment. Rea-

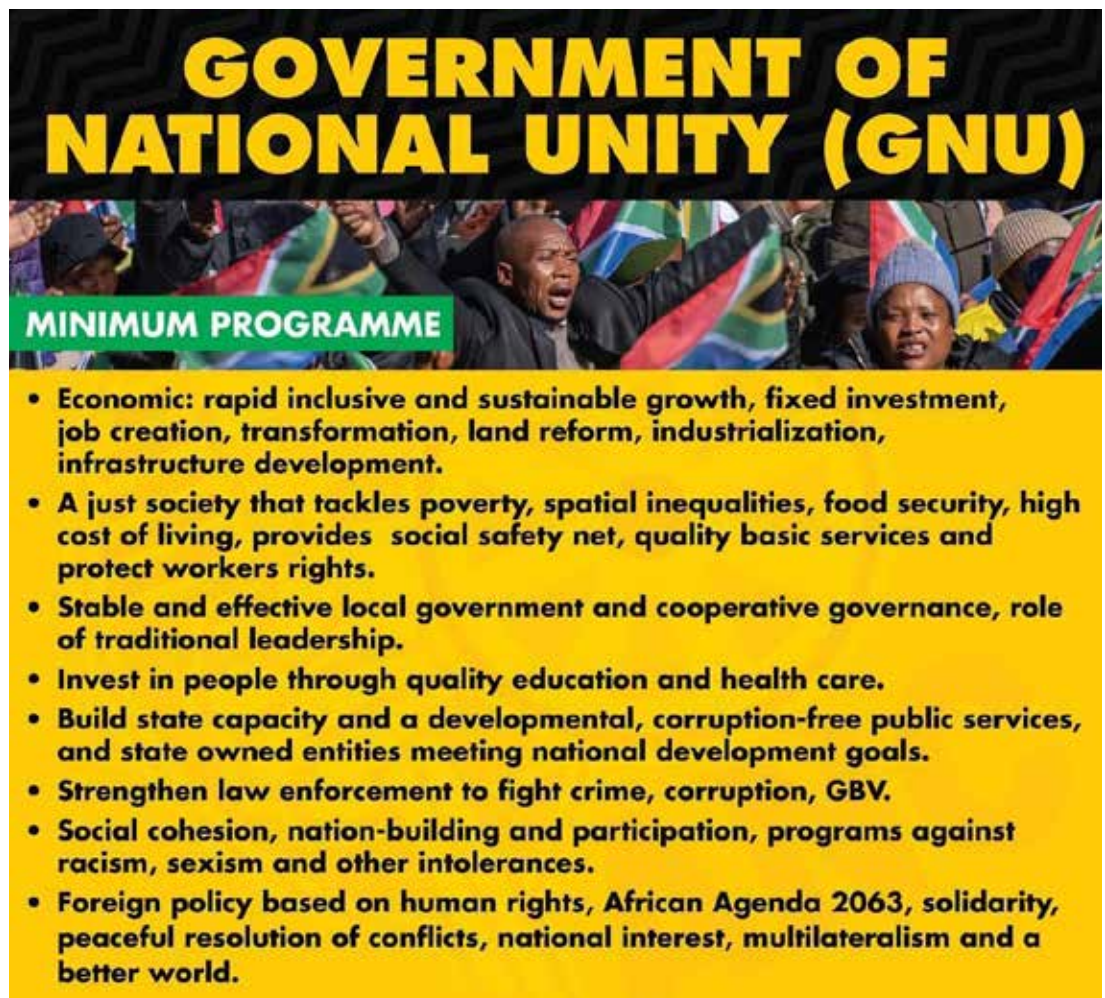
sonable people can differ on its composition, priorities and long-term prospects.

What cannot be disputed is that the parties participating in the GNU represent millions of South Africans. Their voters are citizens whose voices carry equal constitutional weight.

A democratic movement, of which the ANC is one, cannot claim to defend the will of the people only when the people produce a result it prefers.

Democracy requires accepting both victory and limitation.

The real significance of the GNU therefore lies not in the specific parties involved but in what it represents: an attempt to translate a



## GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY (GNU)

**MINIMUM PROGRAMME**

- **Economic: rapid inclusive and sustainable growth, fixed investment, job creation, transformation, land reform, industrialization, infrastructure development.**
- **A just society that tackles poverty, spatial inequalities, food security, high cost of living, provides social safety net, quality basic services and protect workers rights.**
- **Stable and effective local government and cooperative governance, role of traditional leadership.**
- **Invest in people through quality education and health care.**
- **Build state capacity and a developmental, corruption-free public services, and state owned entities meeting national development goals.**
- **Strengthen law enforcement to fight crime, corruption, GBV.**
- **Social cohesion, nation-building and participation, programs against racism, sexism and other intolerances.**
- **Foreign policy based on human rights, African Agenda 2063, solidarity, peaceful resolution of conflicts, national interest, multilateralism and a better world.**

complex electoral outcome into a functioning government while preserving constitutional stability.

This is particularly important in a society as diverse as South Africa.

The country contains multiple political traditions, ideological tendencies, social interests and historical experiences. Elections are the mechanism through which these differences are expressed peacefully. Governing arrangements are often the mechanism through which they are reconciled.

The question South Africans should therefore ask is not whether the GNU is perfect. No coalition arrangement ever is.

The question is whether those who criticise it can offer a more credible, stable and democratic alternative.

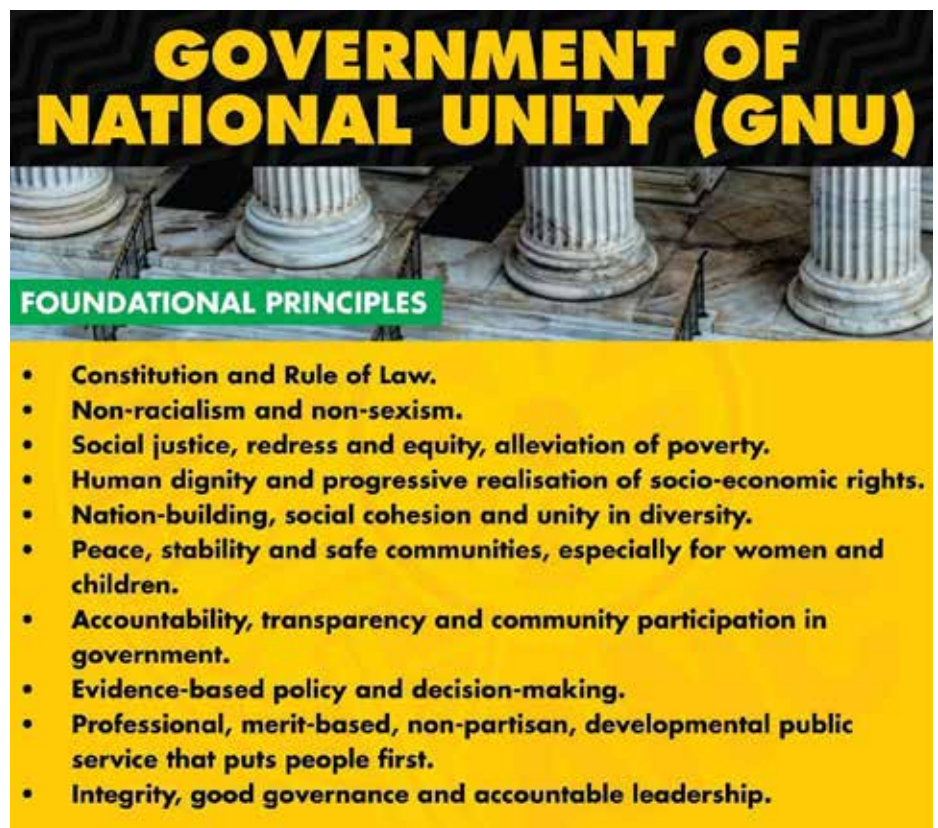
This brings us back to the Conference of the Left itself.

If the GNU is criticised for bringing together organisations with different ideological traditions, what should be made of a conference that assembles formations whose differences are equally significant?

If ideological coherence is the standard by which the GNU is judged, then the same standard must be applied consistently to all political projects.

The burden of proof does not rest only on the governing arrangement. It also rests on those who seek to replace it.

South Africans have already witnessed the consequences of unstable coalition politics in numer-



## GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY (GNU)

### FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

- **Constitution and Rule of Law.**
- **Non-racialism and non-sexism.**
- **Social justice, redress and equity, alleviation of poverty.**
- **Human dignity and progressive realisation of socio-economic rights.**
- **Nation-building, social cohesion and unity in diversity.**
- **Peace, stability and safe communities, especially for women and children.**
- **Accountability, transparency and community participation in government.**
- **Evidence-based policy and decision-making.**
- **Professional, merit-based, non-partisan, developmental public service that puts people first.**
- **Integrity, good governance and accountable leadership.**

ous municipalities. Governments have risen and fallen with alarming frequency. Administrative continuity has suffered. Service delivery has often become hostage to shifting political calculations. Citizens have paid the price for political arrangements built on arithmetic rather than principle.

The country cannot afford to reproduce these patterns on a national scale.

This does not mean that coalition politics is inherently flawed. Rather, it means that coalitions must be anchored in sufficient strategic coherence, democratic legitimacy and commitment to governance if they are to serve the public interest.

The responsibility therefore falls on all political formations – whether inside the GNU or outside it – to demonstrate not merely that they can oppose, but that they can govern.

It therefore remains a hope that citizens will ultimately judge political projects not by the passion of their rhetoric, but by their capacity to provide stability, development, accountability and hope.

The challenge facing South Africa is not simply to choose between one political arrangement and another.

It is to ensure that whichever arrangement emerges from the democratic will of the people remains anchored in constitutionalism, national stability and the long-term interests of society.

That responsibility belongs not only to governments.

It belongs equally to those who aspire to replace them.

**Mojalefa Nale** is a member of the ANC and NEC of the MKLWV. He writes in his personal capacity.

# Dear Comrade Nobhala

*An open letter to secretaries at all levels of the ANC*

■ By **FAIEZ JACOBS**

*Dear Comrade Nobhala,*

Your title is not an administrative label. It is an office of trust, an office that demands respect, solemn commitment, and daily discipline.

In our tradition, the secretary is the one with the pen. But that pen is not only ink. It is memory. It is continuity. It is the record that protects the organisation from confusion, manipulation, and organisational amnesia. It is the mechanism that turns decisions into programmes, programmes into action, and action into credibility.

I write to every Nobhala at branch, zonal, sub-regional, regional, provincial, and national level with deep respect and humility. I also write as someone who had the privilege of being a custodian of this responsibility in the Western

Cape secretariat. I will always be grateful for the honour and the trust bestowed on me. Yes, reflecting now, we could have done some things better. We should have anticipated certain dangers earlier. But I hold no regret only hindsight. And hindsight is exact sight when we allow ourselves reflective, iterative self-correction. Renewal is not condemnation; it is learning with courage.

### **Why the Secretary-General's instruction is correct and why we must support it**

The Secretary-General has now issued a clear instruction: regional secretaries must resign from municipal jobs within 30 days. The principle behind that instruction is simple and correct: these are not part-time roles; they cannot be performed properly while an official is employed elsewhere in a way that creates conflict, di-

vided loyalty, or dependency.

Comrades, we must support that instruction, and we must say so without hesitation. It is overdue. It signals self-correction. It signals seriousness. It signals a willingness to confront organisational decay before it becomes organisational collapse.

This is not about humiliating comrades. It is about restoring the integrity of an office that is meant to be the organiser's engine room.

Because here is the truth: a regional secretary is not a ceremonial figure. A region is not held together by slogans. It is held together by organisation: meetings convened properly, records kept cleanly, programmes implemented, disputes prevented and resolved, branches supported, campaigns coordinated, and discipline enforced. That work cannot be done "after hours." It cannot be done while the secretary's independence is compromised by municipal employment lines, municipal patronage expectations, or proximity to procurement and administrative power.

Even if an individual is personally honest, the perception of conflict is enough to damage credibility and in a season of nominations and deployment, perception becomes reality quickly.

So the SG's instruction is a line





in the sand: the secretary's office must be independent, disciplined, and focused on the movement's work not entangled in municipal interests.

### **The Regional Secretary is a full-time organiser not a broker of influence**

Let me describe the role without romanticism.

The ANC Constitution is clear: **the regional secretary is a full-time functionary**. Not a part-time committee member. Not a person who "checks in" between other obligations. Full-time.

A regional secretary must know the region like a doctor knows the patient: not to judge, but to diagnose, stabilise, and restore function. You must know:

- which branches are functional and which are paper structures;
- which wards are strong, contested, or collapsing;
- where membership integrity is being protected and where it is being weaponised;
- where disputes are brewing and why;
- which public reps are visible

- and which are absent;
- which communities are angry and what the top issues are;
- where organisers and resources must be deployed;
- which candidates are credible and which are liabilities.

You also carry the daily burden of coordination with the elected collective. The secretary does not rule alone, but without the secretary the collective becomes a committee of good intentions with no engine.

That is why the secretary's role cannot drift into "deal-making" and "connections." The secretary must not become an intermediary for interests. The secretary must be a custodian of process, programme, and unity unity based on discipline and service, not unity based on silence and fear.

### **Why municipal employment by secretaries is so corrosive in practice**

In our experience, the damage appears in predictable ways:

1. Meetings become contested because people believe the secretary's hand is not neutral.

2. Registers and membership processes become suspect because gatekeeping becomes easier when the secretary's office is compromised.
3. Candidate selection becomes vulnerable because municipal power lines create invisible pressures and expectations.
4. Disputes multiply because comrades stop trusting the process and start fighting the person.
5. Communities lose respect because they read the organisation as self-serving, not service-driven.

So the SG's instruction is not punitive. It is protective. It protects the organisation from slow erosion. It protects honest comrades from being dragged into suspicion. And it protects communities from a movement that looks like it is negotiating positions rather than solving problems.

### **The pen is a moral instrument**

Dear Nobhala, your pen can do two kinds of work.

It can hide truth or record truth. It can distort minutes or protect

fairness.

It can delay notice or ensure inclusivity.

It can enable gatekeeping or keep the door open.

It can protect wrongdoing or enforce consequence.

That is why the secretary's office is always a moral office. Not because the secretary must be perfect, but because the secretary sets the standard for whether integrity is real or rhetorical.

### What every Nobhala must do in the next few weeks

Let me make it practical. In a nomination season, the secretary's office becomes the front-line of renewal. The movement needs you to do five things without excuses:

#### 1. Run clean convening and notice discipline

One official notice stream. One venue and agenda. Proof retained. Confusion is a weapon do not hand it to gatekeepers.

#### 2. Protect membership integrity without weaponisation

Apply rules consistently. Explain them clearly. Keep the register process defensible. Membership is not a tool to win internal battles; it is a tool to build the movement.

#### 3. Keep a process file as organisational self-defence

Notices, proof of circulation, attendance registers, minutes, decision sheets, incident logs. If the record is clean, disputes reduce. If the record is weak, disputes multiply.

#### 4. Refuse money politics and transactional behaviour

If inducements, intimidation, or improper lobbying appear, record it, stop it, escalate it. If we tolerate it at nomination stage, we train corruption into governance stage.

#### 5. Treat the office as full-time service, not divided loyalty

Support the SG's instruction in practice: no conflicts, no municipal entanglements, no blurred roles. The secretary

must be free to serve the organisation and the people without fear or favour.

### A pledge worthy of the pen

Comrade Nobhala, here is the pledge that should live behind your signature:

- I will keep accurate records.
- I will convene fairly and openly.
- I will protect the integrity of nominations.
- I will refuse conflicts of interest.
- I will serve the collective, not myself.
- I will be a builder of unity through discipline and service.

Because the people will not judge the ANC only by its presidents and mayors. They will judge the ANC by whether its secretaries keep the movement coherent, honest, and useful.

### Conclusion

Dear Comrade Nobhala, your office is not a stepping-stone. It is a calling.

The movement has entrusted you with the pen. The SG has now drawn a clear boundary to protect that pen from divided loyalties and municipal entanglements. We must support that decision not with slogans, but with conduct.

Let your pen write order where there is confusion. Let it write fairness where there is gatekeeping.

Let it write credibility back into the movement.

May you be worthy of the pen.

*Faicy Jacobs*



# Veterans Must Return to the Branch, Not Govern the ANC from the Balcony

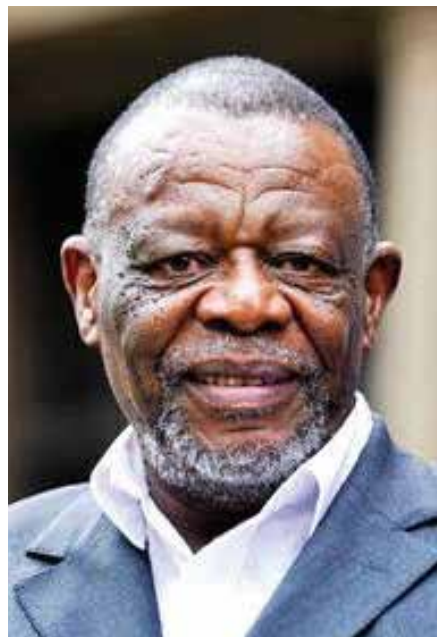
■ By **STAN ITSHEGETSENG**

**A** comrade recently shared with me a 2017 article by Mongane Wally Serote, published in the Sunday Times under the title, “*We have to find the courage to rescue the ANC, and thereby save South Africa.*” The article was shared with me by Mukoni Ratshitanga, a prolific writer and intellectual who worked with former President Thabo Mbeki. Mukoni often shares notes and reflections with me, but this particular article forced me to pause.

It reminded me of a moment when ANC veterans and stalwarts gathered out of deep concern for the condition of the movement. Their concern was legitimate. The ANC was wounded. Its moral authority had been shaken. Its organisational life had been weakened by factionalism, patronage, arrogance and distance from the people.

But eight years later, we must ask an honest question. Did that intervention bear real fruit at branch level? Did it rebuild branches? Did it deepen political education? Did it reconnect veterans with ordinary members? Did it bring experienced cadres back into the daily life of the movement? Did it produce disciplined mentoring of young activists? Or did it become another moment of moral appeal without organisational follow through?

I ask these questions with re-



**ANC veteran, Comrade  
Wally Serote**

spect, but also with necessary firmness.

Veterans are an important reservoir of memory, discipline and revolutionary experience. Their history must never be dismissed. The ANC would not exist without the sacrifices of generations before us. Many endured prison, exile, harassment, banning orders, poverty and humiliation so that this country could be free.

But history alone cannot rebuild the ANC.

A veteran cannot contribute meaningfully to renewal from an ivory tower. One cannot live far

from the people, absent oneself from branch life, avoid the heat of community struggles, and then appear occasionally to instruct those who are holding the fort. Yesterday’s activism is part of our heritage, but it is not automatically today’s contribution.

The ANC is not renewed by nostalgia. It is renewed by active membership, political education, branch participation, accountability and disciplined work among the people.

Veterans who are active in their branches are a treasure. Veterans who mentor young cadres, attend branch meetings, guide without imposing, share history without arrogance, and help rebuild political consciousness are indispensable. But veterans who participate only through commentary, public rebuke or distant instruction must also be asked difficult questions.

Where is your branch work?

Where is your contribution to political education?

Where is your presence among ordinary members?

Where is your door to door work in communities now controlled by the DA and other opposition forces?

This is why I believe the next

phase of ANC renewal must be brutally honest about the role of veterans. Not to insult them. Not to erase their contribution. Not to disrespect their sacrifices. But to reconnect history with present organisational responsibility.

The ANC is a branch based organisation. Leadership must rise from branches, through elected delegates, not through historical entitlement or imposed moral authority. The voice of every member matters, whether young or old, new or experienced. But that voice must be exercised inside the structures of the movement.

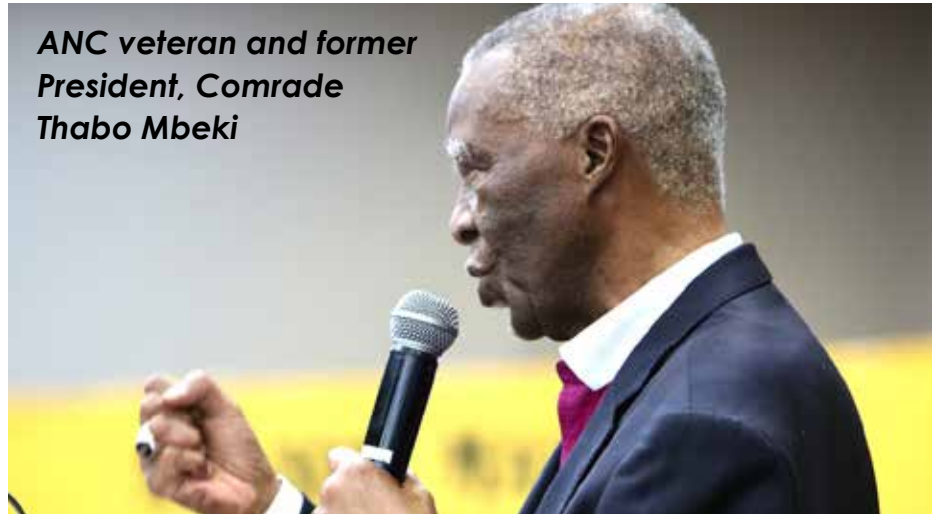
This reflection also arises against the backdrop of my recent writing on former President Thabo Mbeki and his public criticism of President Cyril Ramaphosa. I must be honest. I admire President Mbeki. I remain a fan of his intellect, his discipline, his command of history and his stature as one of Africa's finest political minds. His defeat at Polokwane left many of us with deep political pain.

But admiration must never become blindness.

What troubles me is the attitude of elders who behave as though their historical contribution places them permanently above the organisation. I worry about elders who speak as if they alone understand the ANC, while ordinary members in branches are treated as politically inferior. I worry about the culture of appearing at conferences, seminars and public platforms, yet remaining absent from the ordinary branch life where the ANC is either built or destroyed.

I have seen President Mbeki at conferences. I have sat behind him, watching him closely. Fo-

**ANC veteran and former President, Comrade Thabo Mbeki**



cused. Disciplined. Never tired. Brilliant. Commanding. I often say to myself that when I grow older, I would like to have that level of discipline and intellectual sharpness.

But that brilliance must also live at branch level.

His voice carries weight. His stature commands respect. His political experience can win over communities. If his branch is in Houghton, then the challenge is simple: let that branch feel his presence. Let the ordinary BGM benefit from his mind. Let young ANC members in that area learn directly from him. Let his influence help weaken DA dominance where he lives. Let his historical authority become practical organisational work.

This is not only about President Mbeki. It is about a broader pattern among many veterans.

Too many shout from the stands. Some even shout from outside the stadium. Yet they complain when they are not on the pitch. They are far from the heat, far from the branch, far from the door to door work, far from the difficult meetings, far from the frustration of ordinary members who must

defend the ANC in communities every day.

That is not renewal.

Renewal cannot be outsourced to occasional speeches by elders. Renewal cannot be reduced to media interviews, memorial lectures and public rebukes. Renewal must be built where the ANC lives: in the branch.

If veterans are to enjoy ex officio influence, that influence must begin at branch level. It must begin in the zone. It must be felt in the region. It must strengthen the basic unit of the movement. It must not begin and end in the NEC, at conferences, or on public platforms where ordinary members are spoken about but not spoken with.

Some veterans speak big English and revolutionary rhetoric that may impress journalists and intellectual circles, but does that language reach the ordinary branch member? Does it help the young volunteer who must campaign in a hostile ward? Does it help the branch secretary who is trying to keep records? Does it help the organiser who must face angry communities? Does it help the ANC rebuild trust on the ground?

If not, then it becomes commentary, not contribution.

The ANC does not need veterans who behave like external critics while claiming internal authority. It needs veterans who return to the trenches. It needs elders who sit with branches, teach history, explain policy, guide young cadres, caution against factionalism, and demonstrate discipline through action.

The ANC will not be saved by people ruling from the grave. It will not be saved by nostalgia. It will not be saved by moral lectures from those who are absent from the organisational battlefield. It will be saved by living, active, disciplined members who understand that the branch is the foundation of the movement.

If the branch is strong, the ANC will have a spine.

If the branch is weak, money, factionalism, manipulation and careerism will always find a way in.

The time has come for a new covenant between veterans and branches. Let every branch convene honest engagements with its veterans. Let veterans account for what they are doing now, not only what they did yesterday. Let young cadres listen with humility, but let elders also listen with humility. Let history meet present responsibility.

The ANC does not belong to the past alone. It belongs to the living struggle of the people.

Those who built it yesterday must help rebuild it today.

And those who want to speak with authority must first return to the branch.



## ANC must be bold in regulating new forms of work & AI

■ By **ISAAC MAHLANGU**

**I**NTERNATIONAL Workers Day was celebrated with much fanfare on May 1st 2026, correctly to celebrate workers and their contribution to our lives, the community and broader society, as we do every year since the dawn of democracy.

Worker's Month gives us a chance to reflect on workers' achievements and to ponder on what the future holds. In this article we suggest that this will be particularly important in the face of the increasing need to regulate what is termed "platform work" and "Artificial Intelligence" (AI) for their impact on the world of work. Calling upon the African National Congress to be bold in regulating new forms of work and AI, is really about asking it to remain true to the aspirations of a democratic movement, as expressed in

Freedom Charter and the Reconstruction and Development Programme, and advance policies in favour of "work and security".

Today, ANC's political opponents are quick to say that there is little for workers to celebrate given high levels of unemployment, and other socio-economic challenges facing workers and the broader population in the country.

However, such claims are misleading and do not tell even half the story!

### **What we inherited**

When the ANC came to power in 1994, it inherited a labour market characterized by chronic unemployment, adversarial labour relations, racially skewed earnings, and lack of skills amongst

workers. The ANC-led government was compelled to embark on a programme to transform this labour market, ensuring that it met the needs of a competitive and equitable economy.

### Three phases of labour law reform and consolidation

From 1994, the late former Minister Mboweni led a path breaking process of labour law reform to address these matters resulting in the consolidation of pieces of labour legislation, such as the NEDLAC Act 1995; the Labour Relations Act, 1995; Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997; Employment Equity Act, 1997; Skills Development Act (1998) and Skills Development Levies Act (1999). This could be referred to as the ‘first phase’ of post-Apartheid labour law reform’.

This phase was accompanied by the creation of numerous institutions that were to assist the functioning of the new labour market regulatory regime and included: The Labour Court, the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration, the Employment Conditions Commission, the National Economic Development and Labour Council, amongst others.

Under former Minister Mdladlana (1999-2009) focus was on the implementation and further consolidation of labour market policy reform. This period could be referred to as the ‘second phase’ of post-Apartheid labour law reform. A significant amendment to the Basic Conditions of Employment Act sought to address the previously unforeseen problem of ‘disguised employment relations’, e.g. clarify who is an employee, especially given the growing ‘ca-

sualization’ and ‘atypical’ work phenomena.

Minister Mildred Oliphant completed the ‘third phase’ of post-Apartheid labour market regulatory reform successfully introducing a new Employment Services piece of legislation and amendments to the LRA, BCEA and Employment Equity Acts. The new LRA and BCEA both address labour broking and other elements often referred to as ‘atypical’ work.

It was under Minister Oliphant that the National Minimum Wage Bill was signed on the 28th of November 2018 and became effective on the 1st of January 2019. Research by Professor Borhat of UCT shows that despite its widespread coverage, it did not have statistically significant negative impacts on employment, at least in the short-term.

### New challenges and why ANC is well positioned to address them

The publication of the Labour Law Amendment Bill in Government Gazette No. 54220 on 26 February 2026 has been correct-

ly observed by commentators as “marking the most comprehensive review of South Africa’s employment legislation in more than a decade”!

As outlined by the Department of Employment and Labour, the proposed changes in legislation “modernize key labour laws and introduce practical measures aimed at improving job security, promoting fairness, and extending fundamental rights to vulnerable and previously excluded categories of workers. They also improve enforcement mechanisms, ensuring that employees receive the full benefits of the law.”

According to the OECD, “Platform work encompasses a broad range of activities that have in common the use of online platforms to connect the demand and supply of particular services. Services provided by digital labour platforms are broadly distinguished as services performed digitally (i.e. clerical and data entry, translation or design services, etc.) or services performed on location (i.e. transport, delivery, housekeeping, etc.)”. E-hailing services like Uber fall under platform work.



### The labour market and worker rights in the age of AI

According to the World Bank, Artificial intelligence refers to the capability of machines or computer systems to simulate human intelligence. Although AI as a concept traces back to the 1950s, recent advances – driven by access to vast data, algorithmic innovation, and more powerful computing – have demonstrated its transformative potential. However, there is much debate between those who see AI as a form of “automation” and likely to lead to replacing of labour as opposed to those who see it as possibly augmenting human capacity and fostering productivity growth.

Early in 2026 we have seen cases of thousands of workers being laid off with the adoption of AI blamed (e.g. Snap, Oracle, Meta being among these companies).

The UNDP’s Human Development Report 2025 is spot on when it advises that when it comes to AI;

*“Rather than try to predict the future, policy makers should shape it, breaking away from trying to guess how humans will be replaced by AI, to see the potential*

*of what humans can do with AI.”*

Policy makers can take a number of well-considered steps to advance pro-Worker AI regulations that can include;

- increase transparency around firm-level use of AI technologies by requiring employers to disclose their use of electronic monitoring, surveillance, and automated decision-making systems, in a manner that is actionable for workers and their representatives.
- Strengthen regulatory standards to address issues related to discrimination, unsafe working conditions, and obscuring the employment relationship.
- Ban the use of AI-assisted decision-making processes for firing and disciplinary actions that do not include human involvement,
- Regulate employer use of automated decision-making systems to prevent dangerous risks to the safety, security, or health of workers, clients, or the public that may result from automated decisions related to staffing.
- Increase workers’ ability to leave employers who create

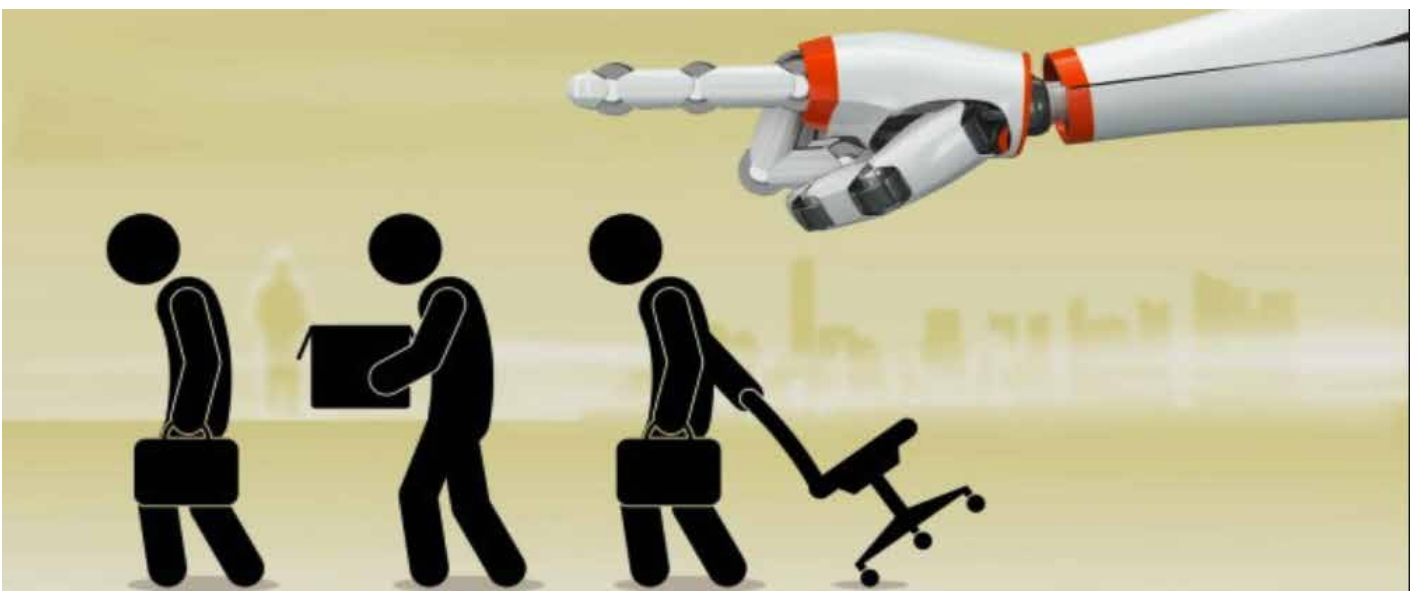
exploitative conditions with AI (or other technologies and practices) and ease job transitions.

There is no “one size fits all” policy solution for dealing with the impact of AI in the labour market but developments abroad call upon the progressive movement to be vigilant and ready to advocate pro-worker and developmental approaches. We are drawing freely upon these perspectives as they are aligned with the historic posture of the ANC and its Alliance partners.

### Conclusion

This year’s Worker’s Month is opportune for reflections on the road travelled in regulating our labour market in a manner that advances access to working opportunities that are of a good quality (“decent work”) whilst also providing security.

Without a doubt, there is much to celebrate from the past thirty years for workers but new realities of “platform work” and AI call for boldness in confronting vulnerabilities in a manner that leaves no worker behind.



# THE ROLE OF POLITICAL ANALYSTS AND THE IMPOVERISHMENT OF PUBLIC DISCOURSE IN SOUTH AFRICA

■ By **CORNELIUS MONAMA**

ONE of the most under-examined features of South Africa's contemporary media landscape is the growing tendency to present politically predisposed commentators as neutral analysts and independent experts. This is not merely a question of media diversity or editorial choice. It goes to the heart of how public opinion is shaped, how narratives are constructed, and how political legitimacy is contested in a constitutional democracy.

The issue is not that commentators hold political views. Every analyst, academic, journalist and public intellectual approaches political developments from a particular perspective informed by experience, ideology and personal conviction. The problem arises when those perspectives are concealed beneath the mantle of neutrality and presented to the public as objective analysis.

The question that deserves serious consideration is this: Why do certain media houses repeatedly feature individuals with well-known political predispositions, yet continue to introduce them as independent analysts rather than as mere commentators advancing a particular viewpoint?

Take the example of Professor Alex van den Heever. His posi-



tions on many major public policy debates are widely known and remarkably consistent with DA positions. Whether the discussion concerns healthcare reform, the National Health Insurance, state capacity, governance or broader policy questions, his interventions often align with a particular ideological outlook. There is nothing inherently wrong with that. His perspective deserves to be heard alongside others. The question is why such perspectives are so frequently presented as neutral expertise rather than one contribution within a broader contestation of ideas.

The same applies to Siphosiso Sepe. His views on the Presidency, ANC internal dynamics, national leadership and affinity for Zuma are well established. Anyone who has followed his public

commentary over the years can often predict the conclusions before the interview begins. Yet he continues to be invited onto platforms to “analyse” developments that almost invariably produce the same interpretation. At what point does predictability cease to be analysis and become advocacy?

Similarly, André Duvenhage has become a familiar voice whenever broadcasters require someone to interpret South African politics, ANC policy debates or organisational developments. Yet one often gets the impression that his understanding of the ANC is shallow and derived from newspaper clippings rather than from a deep appreciation of the ANC's policies, internal processes and internal ideological traditions. Nevertheless, his views are frequently presented as authoritative

explanations of ANC politics. The same can be said about William Gumede, Bheki Mngomezulu, Sandile Swana and countless! These examples are not offered as personal criticisms. They are intended to illustrate a broader institutional pattern.

Many “analysts” are preferred by some media houses because they are dependable in their framing. Regardless of the issue under discussion, the analytical trajectory is often remarkably similar. Many offer what can only be described as pedestrian observations, often lacking depth, historical grounding or empirical evidence. Yet, they are routinely introduced as “experts” without sufficient scrutiny of what qualifies them for such designation. The question must be posed: By what standard is expertise being determined and in whose interest is that authority being conferred?

Whenever a major political development occurs, audiences are often presented with a familiar cast of commentators. A relatively small group of commentators often appears across media platforms, offering interpretations that, while presented as independent assessments, frequently converge around the same political conclusions. The same assumptions are recycled. The same conclusions are reinforced. The same narratives are amplified. What emerges is not necessarily analysis, but the manufacture of consensus.

This raises an uncomfortable but necessary question: Are media institutions genuinely seeking diverse perspectives, or are they selecting analysts whose conclusions are predetermined? The concern becomes even more pronounced when one considers



the relative absence of analysts whose work is characterised by nuance, intellectual independence and methodological rigour. Scholars and commentators such as Steven Friedman, Mcebisi Ndletyana, Ebrahim Fakir, Khanyi Magubane, Lesiba Teffo and Sanusha Naidu often appear far less frequently than commentators whose views are more predictable and whose conclusions more neatly align with prevailing media narratives.

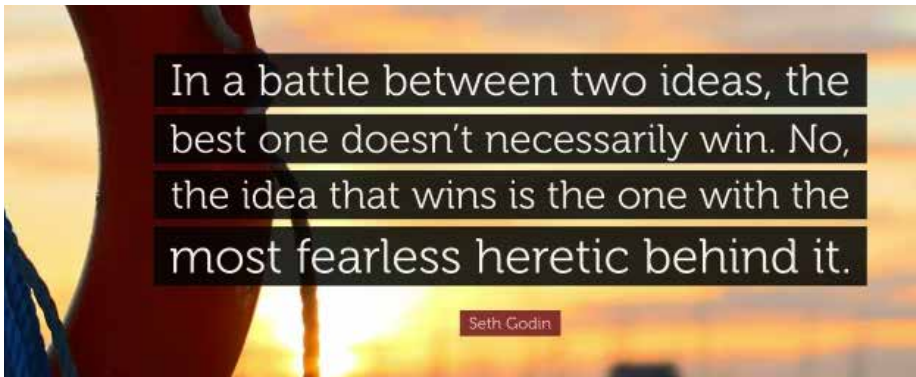
Why is this so? Perhaps the answer lies in the nature of contemporary media itself. Nuanced analysis rarely lends itself to sensational headlines or viral soundbites. Genuine intellectual inquiry introduces complexity. It acknowledges competing interpretations. It challenges assumptions. It refuses to reduce intricate political realities into simplistic narratives of heroes and villains. Predictable commentary, by contrast, is easier to package and easier to sell.

South Africans increasingly find themselves consuming commentary that privileges opinion over evidence and certainty over intel-

lectual rigour. The consequence is an erosion and impoverishment of public discourse. Commentators are rewarded not for illuminating complexity but for reinforcing existing assumptions. Political developments are interpreted through predetermined lenses. Context is sacrificed in favour of simplicity and soundbites.

A healthy democracy depends not on the loudest voices or the most predictable commentators, but on a commitment to intellectual honesty, diversity of thought and genuine analytical rigour. It requires voices willing to interrogate all centres of power, whether government or the private sector. It requires commentators who are prepared to challenge dominant narratives rather than merely reproduce them. It requires intellectuals who follow evidence wherever it leads, even when the conclusions are uncomfortable.

Above all, it requires honesty. If a commentator is advancing a particular ideological perspective, there is nothing wrong with that. What is wrong is presenting that perspective as neutral expertise



while concealing its underlying assumptions and political preferences. The public deserves transparency. It deserves to know the difference between analysis and advocacy, between scholarship and opinion, between evidence and predisposition.

The real issue, therefore, is not whether analysts have biases. Every human being does. The issue is whether media institutions are being sufficiently honest about those biases when they present them to the public as independent expertise. That is a conversation South Africa can no longer afford to avoid. Perhaps, as a starting point, media outlets must be obligated to disclose the political history, affiliations, ethical track record and personal funding sources of individuals they present to the public as independent analysts?

A further challenge is that the political analysis industry operates largely without any formal standards of accountability. Unlike journalism, which is subject to professional codes, editorial oversight, and regulatory mechanisms such as press ombuds structures, political commentators and analysts are often accountable only to themselves and the platforms that choose to host them.

There is no professional body that

requires analysts to adhere to common standards of evidence, transparency, or methodological rigour. There is no ombuds office to which members of the public can turn when analysis is demonstrably misleading, consistently inaccurate, or driven by undisclosed political agendas. As a result, some commentators are able to make sweeping claims, offer speculative assertions, and advance highly partisan interpretations with little consequence when those claims prove unfounded.

Equally concerning is the absence of any expectation that analysts disclose potential conflicts of interest, ideological affiliations, political loyalties, or financial relationships that may shape their perspectives. Yet many of these individuals occupy influential positions in the public sphere. They are regularly called upon to interpret political developments, assess government performance, influence public opinion, and

even prescribe the direction the country should take on matters of national importance.

This influence carries significant responsibility. In any healthy democracy, those who shape public discourse should be subject to the same scrutiny they demand of politicians, public officials, and institutions. Transparency, intellectual honesty, and accountability should not be optional virtues; they should be minimum requirements for anyone who claims the authority to guide public understanding of political affairs.

The issue is not that analysts hold views or ideological preferences—everyone does. The issue is that individuals who exercise considerable influence over public opinion often do so without any obligation to disclose those predispositions or to account for the quality and consistency of their analysis. In a media environment where political commentary increasingly shapes perceptions of legitimacy, governance, and democracy itself, this accountability gap deserves far greater public attention than it currently receives.

That is the standard to which both analysts and media institutions should be held. And it is a standard that the South African public has every right to demand.



# John Pampallis: A Truly Remarkable Political Being

■ By **ZANDISILE (KEITH) PASE**

**J**OHN Pampallis (JP) was an honest person in all respects. He was one of the first “white South African” teachers to arrive in Mazimbu, Somfacu in early 1980.

He was accompanied by Karin, his life long wife and partner in the struggle for a Free and democratic South Africa. They arrived at the time when the college had rudimentary facilities and infrastructure.

He lived with us, ate, slept and enjoyed the cultural events performed in the basic Hector Peterson Hall with us. He never complained or looked down on the efforts made to build and improve our conditions, instead he actively participated in all the programs to build the school facilities and community structures.

His first love was to educate and guide the students in class and beyond. JP showed empathy and concern towards those who would find the curriculum content difficult to comprehend. He was always there for them, listened attentively to what they had to say and would help explain the content in simple language. He had patience and understanding to everyone’s need. Often times, students would be overwhelmed emotionally and psychologically because of the radical and sudden separation from family and friends. JP would play social worker and counsellor. Those



**ANC veteran, Comrade  
John Pampallis**

moments were difficult for him too, but he would never show that side to the young students.

I shared a house with him, Karin and a Geography lady teacher from the Netherlands. The house would be visited by students quite often. JP never tired.

We suffered from malaria, evaded food poisoning attempts and many such challenges. He lived and survived through those moments without making unconstructive noise. Of course he was human and would raise matters of serious concerns but at the right time, in the right forum and

more importantly in the right tone and language. This is what distinguished JP.

A true character of a disciplined, genuine political person imbued with the values of our movement. Dedicated to serve at all times. He was particularly committed to educating the youth. This remained so until we returned to our country.

He immersed himself in Education policy research, searching for answers and appropriate solutions to complex and ever changing circumstances in a new and emerging democracy. John reduced his ideas into writing. Those can be found in the books and academic papers he wrote and published.

After our return to South Africa we spent hours in our monthly lunches talking, debating and exchanging ideas on history and contemporary political economy facing our fledgling democratic society and ANC politics.

John was non-judgemental yet very sensitive to any leaning towards racism and superiority complex.

JP embodied what a true, free and democratic South Africa can and should be. A Measured, Considerate and Dedicated Citizen.

**Hamba kahle qabane!**

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

# THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

6–12 June 2026

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

### 6 June 1890 Chief Bambatha ascends to power



Chief Magadu kaMancinza Bhambatha, who was held responsible for the Impi Yamakhandanda (poll tax) uprising that was popularly known as the Bambatha rebellion of 1906, became chief of the AmaZondi people. Bhambatha succeeded to the throne after the death of his father and uncle, at the age of 25. He quickly established himself as a popular chief and earned the respect of the elders in the AmaZondi traditional council.

### 6 June 1913 Women Anti-pass Campaign starts

The June 1913 anti-pass campaign was probably the first recorded incidence of protest by women against the Union government. About 700 women marched to the Bloemfontein



City Council in the Orange Free State to petition the mayor. The Orange Free State was the only province in which passes were stringently enforced to control the movement of African and Coloured women residing and working in towns in large numbers. The pass had to be renewed monthly at a fee, placing financial strain on women. The Campaign gained momentum and spread to other areas in Bloemfontein. 34 women were arrested and convicted for not having passes. The direct result of this campaign was the establishment of the Bantu Women's League under the leadership of Charlotte Manye Maxeke.

### 6 June 1995 Constitutional Court abolished the Death penalty

On 6 June 1995 a historic resolution was taken by the Constitutional Court to abolish the death penalty. The court ruled that capital punishment, as provided for under the Criminal Proce-

dure Act, was in conflict with the country's 1994 constitution. The ruling did not apply, however, to the crime of treason committed in wartime. The Court ordered, with immediate effect, that *"the State and all its organs are forbidden to execute any person already sentenced to death under any provisions thus declared to be invalid."* The ruling followed the Constitutional Court's hearing on the death penalty which took place in February 1995. Until the use of the death penalty was suspended in February 1990, South Africa had one of the highest rates of judicial executions in the world.

### 7 June 1942 Muammar Gaddafi born



Former President of Libya (1969–2011) was born on this day in Qasr Abu Hadi. A nationalist who pursued the goal of an independent Libya, as a united Arab republic, came to power through a coup d'état. Committed to socialism and nationalism, he

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

ruled in accordance with his Third International Theory, contained in his simplified Green Book, first published in 1975. Gaddafi also played an important role in the African continent, and in the formation of the African Union, in the context of the Grand Debate about African unity. In 2011, NATO invaded Libya, and Gaddafi was killed during the invasion in 2011.

### 7 June 1951

#### **Pixley ka Isaka Seme passed on**



hannesburg on 7 June 1951. He was a political activist, journalist, lawyer and a co-founder of the African National Congress (ANC). His funeral service was conducted by the bishop of Johannesburg, Ambrose Reeves, on 17 June. Tributes were made by, among others, Chief Albert Lutuli, A. B. Xuma, Z. K. Matthews and D. D. T. Jabavu, a representative of the Swazi monarch and the secretary of native affairs. When a tombstone was unveiled at his grave in 1984 Mangosuthu Buthelezi spoke.

### 7 June 1953

#### **Johnny Clegg born**

Johnny Clegg, renowned South African and global music icon was born in England in 1953 to an English father and a Zimbabwean



mother. He left England for Zimbabwe where he lived until the age of seven. He and his mother immigrated to South Africa following her marriage to a South African Journalist. Owing to his step father's job as a crime reporter, Clegg became exposed to township life when he would accompany him on assignments. It was at this stage that Clegg met Siphon Mchunu, the man who would later become his music partner, when they formed the band Juluka.

### 8 June 1960

#### **Augustine Neto arrested**

Angolan activist Antonio Agostinho Neto, president of the MPLA was arrested by Portuguese authorities. His medical patients and supporters marched to seek his release. The police fired on unarmed demonstrators, killing 30 protesters, in an event known as the Massacre of Icolo e Bengo.

### 8 June 1963

#### **Naledi High school founded**



Naledi High School, the site where historic anti-Bantu Education student uprisings were first felt, commemorated its 50th anniversary on 8 June 2013. On 8 June 1976, security police arrived at Naledi High School and attempted to arrest the leader of the local branch of the South Africa Students Movement (SASM), Enos Ngutshane. In retaliation, students stoned the police and burned their car. The students were unhappy about being compelled to use Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in 50% of subjects in secondary schools. On 16 June 1976 unrest broke out at Naledi High School and Tsietsi Mashinini led the peaceful protest of learners in Soweto, in what became known as the June 16 uprising.

### 8 June 1988

#### **Four ANC cadres killed near Piet Retief**

On 8 June 1988, Surendra Lenny Naidu, Lindiwe Mthembu, Makhoisi Nyoka and Nontsikelelo Cothoza, all African National Congress members were shot dead when their car was ambushed at Piet Retief on the eastern Transvaal (now Mpumalanga) border. Eugene de Kock appeared before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in connection with their murder.

### 8 June 1998

#### **General Sani Abacha of Nigeria died**

General Sani Abacha, the 10th President of Nigeria died at the Presidential palace in Abuja, allegedly from poison, though no autopsy was committed. Abacha was the first soldier in Nigeria to reach this level, without skipping a single rank. He was Minister of Defence when he seized power from a transitional government in 1993. Abacha's rule saw significant growth

of the Nigeria economy (ending privatization, reducing inflation rate from 54% to 8.5%, investing in road infrastructure, reforming the insurance industry to support SMMEs), but also by political crisis such as the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa under his leadership.

### 9 June 1967

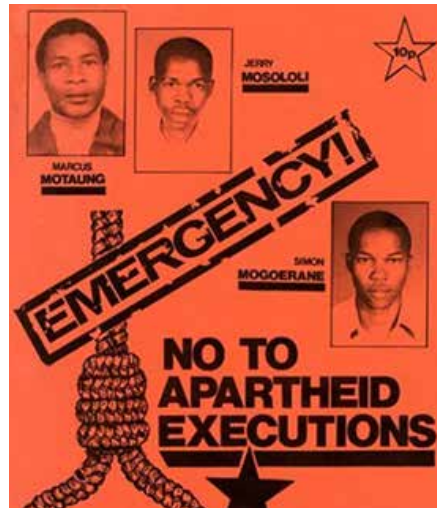
#### Military service becomes compulsory for white men

The Defense Amendment Bill, designed to make military service compulsory for White young men, was passed on 9 June 1967 – with the support of the opposition. Conscription was instituted in South Africa in the form of 9 months of service for all white males between the ages of 17 and 65 years old. Conscripts became members of the South African Defense Force (SADF), or the South African Police (SAP). They were used to enforce the government's stance against liberation movements, anti-apartheid activists and the 'communist threat'. As apartheid war in neighbouring countries and inside the country grew in the 70s, the conscription time was eventually increased to 2 years and 30 days annually for 8 years. In 1983, the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) was formed by various local conscientious objection groups, campaigning for an end to conscription and to the apartheid war.

### 9 June 1983

#### MK cadres executed

On 9 June 1983, uMkhonto we-Sizwe (MK) operatives, Jerry Mosolodi, Terry Mogoerane and Thabo Motaung were executed for their part in a hit on Wonderboom police station. The ANC declared the execution a crime against humanity and defended the attack on the police station as an act of



liberation. It called for the MK operatives to be treated as prisoners of war under the protection of the Geneva Convention.

### 10 June 1906

#### Chief Bambatha killed



The Bambatha Rebellion of 1906 was led by Bambatha ka Mancinza (c. 1860–1906), leader of the Zondi clan of the Zulu people, who lived in the Mpanza Valley (now a district near Greytown, KwaZulu-Natal) against British rule and taxation in the Colony of Natal, South Africa. On 10 June, a large militia from Durban, Johannesburg and the Cape under Colonel McKenzie engaged the Bambatha troops along the Mome stream near the Nkandla forest. In a half-hour's engagement, Bambatha's followers were massacred, and nearly 600

lives were shed. Bambatha's body was decapitated. Several influential chiefs continued resistance in the Lower Thukela River area until July, but the rebellion was effectively crushed. Over the next six months 5 000 dissidents were arrested, tried and some eventually served life sentences.

### 10 June 1962.

#### Science fiction author Ahmed Khaled Tawfik born

Ahmed Khaled Tawfik Farrag was an Egyptian author and a physician who wrote more than 200 books, in both Egyptian Arabic and Classical Arabic. He was the first contemporary writer of horror and science fiction in the Arabic speaking world and also the first writer to explore the medical thriller genre. Tawfik is considered by many to have been one of the most influential writers of his time.

### 10 June 1983

#### Bloukrans Bridge opens

The Bloukrans Bridge, joining Eastern and Western Cape, previously reached through the Bloukrans pass opens on this day. The 216 high metre bridge is the world's highest single-span bridge, and known for bungee jumping.

### 10 June 1990

#### Miriam Makeba returns after 31 years in exile

After spending 31 years in exile, living across Africa and the world and a fierce campaigner against apartheid, Mam Miriam Makeba returned home on this day, after the unbanning of organisations. Her music became synonymous with the South African struggle for freedom, and after her return home, she continued her music



career and activism, until she passed on at a concert in 2008. Her music remains amongst the African and global classics.

### 11 June 1912 Midwife Pauline Berthé born

Malian midwife and pioneer in women's health, Pauline Berthé was born in Sikasso, French Sudan. She also practiced in Senegal and Cote d'Ivoire and in 1972 was awarded Mali's highest National Order.

### 11 June 1932 Athol Fugard born

South African director, actor and writer, considered amongst the country's greatest playwrights was born in Middleburg, Eastern Cape. Fugard grew up in Gqeberha (formerly Port Elizabeth) and is known for his anti-apartheid work such as *Boesman and Lena* (1969), *Master Harold and the Boys* (1982) and *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*.

### 11 June 1963 African Women's Development Fund founder born

Nigerian feminist activist, Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi was born on this day in Liverpool, England. She co-founded the African Women's



Development Fund, which to date trained over 6000 women across the continent. Most went on to occupy senior positions in their countries.

### 11 June 1963 President Tshisekedi born

President of the DRC, Felix Tshisekedi was born on this day in Kinshasa. A member of the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDSP) since his youth, he was elected in 2018, marking the end of the Kabila government which ruled the country since 1997, the first peaceful transition of power in the country.

### 11 June 1988 British Anti-Apartheid Movement hosts Mandela Concert

On 11 June 1988, the British Anti-Apartheid Movement (BAAM) held an 11-hour rock concert at Wembley Stadium in London to pay tribute to Nelson Mandela on his 70th birthday on the 18th of July. Peter Gabriel delivered his anti-apartheid anthem Biko. Whitney Houston, Phil Collins, Miriam Makeba, Hugh Masekela, Simple Minds, Eurythmics and Dire Straits also performed. 72,000 people went to the concert and it was broadcast live on BBC-2 to sixty different countries with an estimated audience of a billion people.

### 11 June 1977 Police arrest Student leader Dan Montsitsi



Almost a year after the June 16 Soweto Student Uprising, Security Police announced the arrest of Soweto Students' Representative Council (SSRC) leader Dan Sechaba Montsitsi. Four NUSAS members were also arrested for the same reason, namely plans to commemorate the Soweto uprisings. Dan Montsitsi went on to become a leader of the civic and mass movement, and a member of parliament after 1994. He passed on in August 2021.

### 11 June 2010 Opening game of the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup in South Africa

Opening of the FIFA Soccer World Cup Finals in 2010, the first to be held in Africa, with the match between South Africa and Mexico (1:1 draw). Later that day France played against Uruguay in the second match of the day, also with a draw and no goals.

### 12 June 1917 Ansuyah Ratipul Singh, medical doctor, community worker, poet born

On 12 June 1917, Dr Ansuyah Ratipul Singh, medical doctor, novelist and community worker, was born in Durban. She moved to London where she completed



her degree in Medicine at the University of Edinburgh in 1944. In 1946, Dr Singh returned to South Africa and became involved in the Passive Resistance Movement in Durban. She published numerous professional articles. Although Dr Singh was known for her medical work, she was also known as a novelist and the author of two three-act plays; with *Behold the Earth Mourns* (1961) her most well-known. Dr Singh also lectured widely to students on a range of topics ranging from health and family planning, to the arts and the role of women in the Indian community. Dr Singh was also an accomplished pianist, and a talented amateur dramatist. She continued her medical work until her death in 1979.

### 12 June 1963 Coldest day in Pretoria

The coldest day in Pretoria in recent history was on 12 June 1963. The temperatures plummeted to a minimum of -3, 6 and a maximum of 7, 5 degrees Centigrade. It had been a 110 years since temperatures were that low and it has never been as cold since.

### 12 June 1964 Rivonia Trial judgment delivered

The Rivonia trial, which changed the course of South African his-



### The Rivonia Trial ends

Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Elias Motsoaledi, Andrew Mlangeni, Raymond Mhlaba and Dennis Goldberg are found guilty on all four charges and sentenced to life imprisonment. Ahmed Kathrada is found guilty on one charge of conspiracy while Lionel Bernstein is found not guilty. He is later re-arrested, released on bail, and placed under house arrest.



tory, judgment was delivered on this day. Eight of the accused Nelson Mandela, Govan Mbeki, Walter Sisulu, Andrew Mlangeni, Dennis Goldberg, Raymond Mhlaba, Elias Motsoaledi and James Kantor were found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment in the Pretoria Supreme Court. The accused may have received the death penalty, but for a national and global campaign to prevent this.

### 12 June 2005 Rain Queen Makobo Modjadji VI passes on

On 12 June 2005, Rain Queen Makobo Modjadji VI died in a hospital in Polokwane, Limpopo Province. Rain Queen Modjadji VI is a direct descendent of one of the royal houses of Monomotapa, which ruled over the Zimbabwean people in the 15th and 16th century. Rain Queen Modjadji VI began her reign in April 2003 when she succeeded her grandmother Mokope Modjadji V. Makobo Modjadji VI is the first Rain Queen to have received

formal education, and went on to complete high school. The legend of the Rain Queen has been told for centuries, as even Shaka Zulu is said to have asked for her blessing. As the name suggests, the Rain Queen is responsible for bringing rain, and directs an annual rainmaking ceremony in her royal compound. The legend of the Rain Queen was also popularized by the books '*King Solomon's Mines*' and '*She*' by author H. Rider Haggard, which drew the world's attention to the role of the Rain Queen of the Balobedu people.



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# INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

6–12 June 2026

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



## 6 June

### Russian Language Day

The day was proclaimed by UNESCO, on the occasion of the birth of Russian poet Alexander Pushkin, in 2010 to celebrate language diversity and Russian as one of the six UN working languages. There are about 155 million Russian mother tongue speakers, and it is the official language of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan. The Russian alphabet uses Cyrillic script and has 33 letters. Apart from being one of the UN official languages, it is also an international space language.

## 7 June

### Africa Border Day

A year after the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was formed in 1963, it adopted a resolution where countries agreed to “the principle of the respect of borders existing on achievement of national independence”, in order to prevent costly border wars between newly independent countries. These

borders were of course largely based on colonial borders decided at the Berlin conference, and are therefore often arbitrary, dividing villages, commu-



**Transforming African borders  
from barriers to bridges**

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

nities and peoples. As a result, although there was/is OAU/AU agreement on the principle, in practice there has been a number of border dispute between countries, which had to be resolved either through mediation or settled through the International Court of Justice. In 2007, the African Union Ministers in charge of Border issues adopted the Addis Ababa Declaration on the African Union Border Programme, which became a section within the Peace and Security Department. The same declaration designated 7 June as **African Border Day**, with the aim to *‘transforming African borders from barriers to bridges.’*

### 7 June

#### World Food Safety Day



World Food Safety Day takes place annually on June 7 to draw attention and inspire action to help prevent, detect, and manage foodborne risks. The global event is marked by targeted campaigns, educational materials, and worldwide participation from organisations, governments, and food handlers. The theme for 2026 is **“From burden to solutions – safe food everywhere”**. The theme highlights how data on foodborne illnesses and lost lives can guide focused, science-based, and cost-effective solutions to keep food safe across the entire chain, from farm to fork. Safe food starts with understanding which foodborne hazards cause the greatest harm. By measuring the public health burden and its causes, countries and partners can prioritize evidence-based actions, target interventions and use resources where they will have the greatest impact. The Day mobilizes policymakers, food businesses, scientists and consumers to strengthen food safety through cooperation and political commitment, protecting lives, supporting prosperity and building a safer future.

### 8 June

#### World Oceans Day

During the Rio Earth Summit, participants and activists advocated for World Oceans Day, to raise awareness about also protecting the oceans as an integral part of our planet’s ecosystems. In 2008, the UN thus declared 8 June as World Oceans Day. The ocean connects, sustains, and supports us all. Yet its health is at a tipping point and so is the well-being of all that depends on it. As the past years have shown us, we need to work together to create a new balance with the ocean that no longer depletes its bounty but instead restores its vibrancy and brings it new life.

### 12 June

#### World Day Against Child Labour

Child labour refers to any work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential, and their fundamental dignity. It encompasses activities that are physically, mentally, or socially harmful, actively interfering with their educational development. Not all work performed by minors is classified as exploitation; light household chores or skill-building family duties can be beneficial. However, work crosses the line into child labour when it exposes minors to hazardous environments or forces them into illicit activities. The International Labour Organization (ILO) established this observance in 2002 to draw unprecedented attention to these systemic abuses. By highlighting these urgent issues, the global community is pushed to reevaluate labor laws, enforce stricter regulations, and prioritize youth welfare. The theme for this year is **“Red Card to Child Labour: Fair Play for Children, Decent Work for Adults.”** This powerful slogan emphasizes that ending youth exploitation requires fundamentally stabilizing the adult workforce.





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