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Conversations *with the* President



South Africa is building a secure and inclusive digital future

■ By **PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**



OUR country's ambition to be a leading digital investment destination is being recognised by some of the world's leading technology companies.

One of these is Google, which last week hosted its first-ever African Cloud Summit in Johannesburg. That the company chose South Africa to host one of its most important technology and enterprise events affirms Africa's position as a core growth region for the global cloud ecosystem.

At the Summit, Google announced a range of investments as part of its **'Building for Africa'** initiative, which is designed *"to support the greater adoption of cloud technologies and to equip local ecosystems for AI-driven innovation."*

Among these investments is a new Digital Exchange Port that will be built in the Eastern Cape, the first of four connectivity hubs on the continent that will ensure reliable cloud services.

Google has committed to skilling the local workforce. A R3 million digital innovation centre will be built at the South West Gauteng TVET College in Soweto. Later this month, applications will open for the 2026 South African cohort of the Google for Startups Accelerator, through which 15 local startups will be selected to receive AI training, mentorship and funding.

Investor confidence in South Africa's digital economy trajectory is growing.

Beyond the Google investment,

in 2023 Amazon Web Services announced plans to invest R30.4 billion in its South African cloud infrastructure. Last year, Microsoft announced plans to invest R5.4 billion to develop local hyperscale cloud and AI infrastructure.

Just last week, Mastercard launched its Africa Cybersecurity Centre of Excellence. Starting with a phased rollout in South Africa and Nigeria, this initiative aims to strengthen cyber resilience and enable more secure digital growth across Africa.

Across the world, the digital economy is a catalyst for economic growth and job creation.

Google estimates that its Johannesburg Cloud Region can contribute approximately R1.7 trillion

in additional gross economic output by 2030 and support approximately 315,000 jobs. Digital technologies are increasingly being adopted to overcome developmental challenges in education, healthcare, service delivery and climate change.

To build the economies and workplaces of the future, countries need to build digital infrastructure, including cloud computing and AI.

South Africa currently houses a significant proportion of Africa's large data centre capacity and is the continent's largest cloud market. An increasing number of South African businesses are moving to cloud infrastructure and adopting machine learning and AI in their businesses. Small, medium and micro enterprises particularly stand to benefit, with one study estimating that SMME adoption of cloud computing could potentially unlock more than R185 billion for the country's economy by 2030.

Cloud enables small businesses to spend less on IT costs, improve their productivity and become more competitive. It can help

them to expand market access and make use of e-commerce.

As these businesses grow, they create more employment and stimulate local economies. Through the likes of the SA SME Fund, the Black Business Supplier Development Programme and digital transformation partnerships with the private sector, we are working to make cloud and other technologies more affordable for small businesses.

Cloud infrastructure rollout can also improve government efficiency and service delivery. For example, cloud-based platforms in education can improve the availability of digital textbooks and other learning materials.

As we strive to position ourselves as a continental cloud and AI gateway, there is a need for 'guardrails' to prevent abuse and other risks. The digital economy must safeguard the rights and privacy of citizens, support environmental sustainability and uphold our country's sovereignty.

Our regulatory and policy environment must match innovation with safety. We must learn

from other countries where vast amounts of sensitive public and private data have been held by private firms and outside national jurisdictions.

In the digital age, sovereignty is measured not only by territorial borders. It is increasingly measured by a nation's ability to secure its data, develop its own digital capabilities and exercise meaningful control over the technologies on which its economy depends. That is why Government is investing in its own cloud infrastructure through institutions like the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).

As a developing economy, we have a unique opportunity to 'leapfrog' outdated and obsolete technologies to grow our economy and spur development. As we harness this potential, our focus must be on building domestic capability and not fostering dependency.

As we navigate these complexities, we must deepen collaboration across government, business, labour, industry and civil society in pursuit of a digital future that is secure, inclusive and leaves no-one behind. ■



The African National Congress Mourns the Passing of Comrade Admiral Dieter Gerhardt

■ By **ANC SECRETARY GENERAL FIKILE MBALULA**

THE African National Congress (ANC) has learnt with profound sadness of the passing of Comrade Admiral Dieter Gerhardt, who departed on 8 July 2026 at the age of 91. The ANC extends its deepest condolences to his wife, Ruth, his children Tom, Ingrid and Gregory, his grandchildren, and all his comrades, friends and loved ones during this difficult time.

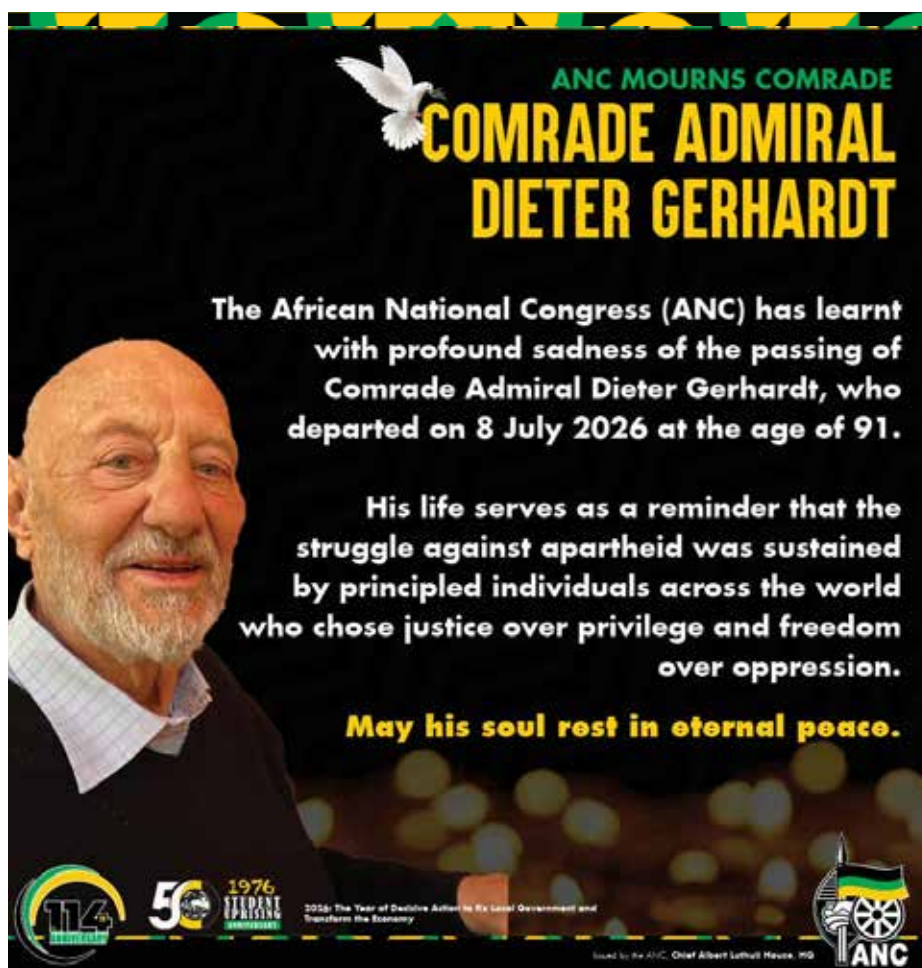
Comrade Gerhardt occupies a unique place in the history of the struggle against apartheid. During one of the most difficult periods of our liberation struggle, he used his strategic position within the apartheid military establishment to assist those fighting for a free, democratic and non-racial South Africa. His actions significantly exposed the military capabilities and vulnerabilities of the apartheid regime, contributing to the broader international and internal struggle that ultimately led to the defeat of apartheid.

For his convictions and commitment to justice, Comrade Gerhardt paid a heavy personal price, spending years in prison before his release in 1992 as South Africa entered the democratic transition. Throughout his life, he maintained that

his actions were guided by his opposition to apartheid and his commitment to justice, equality and human dignity. Even in his later years, he continued to share his knowledge and experience on matters of defence, international relations and the history of the liberation struggle.

The ANC honours Comrade Dieter Gerhardt's contribution to the liberation of our country and

recognises the sacrifices made by all those, from diverse backgrounds and nationalities, who stood in solidarity with the oppressed people of South Africa. His life serves as a reminder that the struggle against apartheid was sustained by principled individuals across the world who chose justice over privilege and freedom over oppression. May his soul rest in eternal peace. ■



ANC VETERANS LEAGUE STATEMENT

Comrade Admiral Dieter Gerhardt, a principled combatant, dies at 91

■ By **ANCVL PRESIDENT SNUKI ZIKALALA**

THE ANC Veterans League is deeply saddened by the passing of one of our veterans, Comrade Admiral Dieter Gerhardt, who passed away on 8th July 2026, at the age of 91.

He was a principled combatant against apartheid who found a unique way to contribute to its demise. His role as an underground operative from 1962 to 1983 for the Soviet Union's foreign military intelligence agency, the GRU (Glavnoye Razvedyvatel'noye Upravlenie), had a singularly destructive impact on the apartheid war machine.



claim otherwise, Dieter's espionage against the apartheid South African military was motivated by a deep hatred of racism and the injustice of the apartheid system since he was a young serviceman in the navy. This led him to contact the Soviet Union, believing he was in a key position from which to positively influence the outcome of the struggle.

When he was released from prison, he stated, *"I did not feel like a traitor...I was a political activist fighting the evil regime of apartheid."*

For 21 years, Comrade Dieter worked undercover for the GRU while occupying strategic positions in the old South African Defence Force, including as a commander of the strategic naval base at Simonstown and a member of the Comops Secretariat during the South African invasion of Angola in 1975.

He enabled the Soviet Union to develop an unusually detailed understanding of South Africa's military capabilities and strategic vulnerabilities, as well as its naval mobilisation plans. To provide such information during the height of the Cold War was in-

valuable.

After Comrade Dieter was arrested in New York in January 1983 by the FBI and interrogated by several Western intelligence services, he was flown back to South Africa to stand trial. He received a life sentence but was released in August 1992 by the de Klerk government as part of the normalisation of relations between South Africa and the then-newly established Russian Federation. Cde Dieter's wife, Ruth, received a 10-year sentence for acting as his courier.

Despite efforts by detractors to

Cde Dieter was a warm person with a strong capacity for empathy and was much loved by comrades, fellow prisoners, friends, and even political opponents. Until his passing, he continued to contribute his deep strategic understanding of geopolitics and of defence matters.

The Veterans League sends deepest condolences to Cde Dieter's wife, Ruth, offspring Tom, Ingrid and Gregory, grandchildren Samuel, Andrew, Kirsten, Ben and Henry, as well as to his friends and comrades who were privileged to share personal time with this remarkable man. ■



■ By **MADIEPETSANE CHARLOTTE LOBE**

NOW that 30 June has come and gone, can we have a frank conversation about the global migration crisis. Whilst one sympathises with the grievance of South Africans particularly on the need for stringent policies to reserve certain jobs and/or industries for citizen as well as the concerns on the acts of criminalities often associated with some of the illegal immigrants (emphasis being placed on “some”), I wish to emphasise that violence, looting, destruction of property and infrastructure in the build-up to the 30 June deadline by March to March is morally indefensible and unacceptable.

These acts of criminality undermine the rule of law, our constitutional values and in some cases destroyed livelihoods of the people the marchers are claiming to be protecting. Condemning these acts of criminality does not mean the grievances brought to the fore are not valid. But, we cannot abuse genuine concerns of our people for selfish criminal intent.

We must always respect and observe the rule of law when raising our concerns.

Hence the need to have a frank conversation on the root causes of the global migration crisis. From all indications the global migration crisis is fueled by a complex combination of systemic hardships, including armed conflicts, gross economic inequalities, political persecution, and environmental degradation as a result of climate change. Millions are displaced as they seek safety and better opportunities, highlighting global challenges that require coordinated international solutions.

South Africa consistently absorbs the brunt of regional instability, serving as a primary destination for migrants fleeing political and economic crises. The primary economic drivers of global immigration stem from vast global disparities in labor supply, wage rates, and demographic needs. Wealthy nations globally attract immigrants to combat aging

workforces and fill skill shortages, while individuals from developing regions migrate to secure higher incomes, diversify household wealth through remittances, and access better opportunities.

Although South Africa has its own challenges, the living conditions in some African countries is more desperate and people, even with the ongoing discourse still want to live in South Africa. The recent case of illegal foreigners being harboured by a South African of a Nigerian origin at his family guest house in Bloemfontein to avoid deportation is an indication of the level of desperation to remain in South Africa.

Most of these illegal immigrants are in the main economic migrants who came to South Africa illegally or legally and overstayed in search of opportunities to feed their families back home. The most fundamental economic driver for immigrants fleeing from various parts of the continent to South Africa is the difference in earning potential between their

countries of origin and South Africa as a destination of choice.

Classical economic theory, such as the microeconomic model developed by Larry Sjaastad in 1962, posits that individuals calculate the potential lifetime earnings against the upfront cost of moving. People typically move from areas with depressed economies, high unemployment, and lower per capita incomes to wealthier nations or those with better living conditions and better prospects of survival where their labor is likely to yield a significantly higher financial return.

Census 2022 recorded a 3,1% immigrants of the South African population. Recent national surveys, including the Income and Expenditure Survey recorded between 5.1% to 5.5% immigrants of South Africa's total population, which translates to about 3 to 3.1 million people out of a total population of over 63 million. Of this total immigrant population, it is estimated that a significant majority are undocumented or living in the country illegally, though isolating an exact percentage of only illegal immigrants remains difficult due to the transient nature of the population.

Despite immigrants making up a small minority of the population, the impact has been severe particularly on public services that are currently offered free for all people living in South Africa. Many cases of pregnant women who cross over our borders to give birth on our public health facilities for free have been reported mostly affecting Limpopo province. The migration crisis is putting pressure on the already fragile economy following multiple geopolitical shocks in the recent years. With South Africa facing

a 32.7% national unemployment rate the situation has led to communities taking to streets and demanding a stringent regulatory framework that will protect certain jobs and/or industries for its citizens population.

This is not a strange demand, many countries globally reserve certain occupations for citizens to manage their local workforce, support national security, and preserve cultural heritage. These job protection policies are typically enforced through labor quotas, specialized work permit restrictions, and public sector employment preferences.

As an example, Thailand strictly reserves 40 specific occupations exclusively for its citizens. Under the Foreign Employment Act, roles like street vending, barbering, and traditional Thai massage are illegal for expatriates, with the Thailand Ministry of Labour actively conducting enforcement operations.

In the Middle East (Gulf States), countries like Saudi Arabia, Oman, and the UAE implement "Localization" policies (e.g., Saudization). Private sectors are mandated by quotas to employ a minimum percentage of local citizens in key industries, including banking, telecommunications, and aviation.

In Singapore although there are more jobs than people, government still utilises the Fair Consideration Framework and a points-based Com-

pass system to ensure local citizens are prioritized in hiring, while managing the influx of foreign professionals and maintaining a highly competitive business environment. While some nations use these strategies to shield domestic workers from global competition, Singapore focus less on preserving specific obsolete jobs and more on continuous upskilling to ensure citizens remain highly employable and competitive in a changing economy.

In almost all countries, government administration, military, and law enforcement are restricted exclusively to citizens to protect national interests. South Africa on the other hand, allows foreigners to work in government, but this is strictly limited to non-permanent roles, critical skills positions, or permanent residents. This of course excludes jobs within the security sector. Foreigners with valid work visas make up a small fraction (about 0.5%) of the public service.



Lack of stringent policies reserving jobs for citizens has led to severe anti-immigrant sentiments that are further compounded by acts of criminality that are often associated with undocumented immigrants. This includes transnational crimes such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, illegal mining, financial crimes (commonly known as 419 by Nigerians), and even murder. Mind you, we have not even started to calculate the crimes that are committed through blasphemy, in the name of fake churches who purport to perform miracles.

Be that as it may, let me say upfront that not all undocumented immigrants are involved in crime, others are trying to make an honest living. However, we must also acknowledge that staying in a country illegally is a violation of immigration laws. If a person enters the country legally on a tourist visa and decides to stay and open a church or hair salon or nail studio etc. they have contravened their visa status. If a person visits South Africa on a tourist visa and overstay they would have committed a civil infraction. They may face civil penalties, detention, and deportation. There is also a challenge of people who forge immigration documents to enter South Africa or remain in South Africa beyond the visitors visa period, this is a crime, and should be punishable by law. People entering South Africa should observe its laws irrespective of the continent they come from or the colour of their skin. Being African does not mean you are immune from minimum requirements for entry and stay in South Africa. It does not mean you can commit crime in the name of hustling because Africa is your motherland. In fact because of this, you should be



more circumspect and protect Abd respect Africa and not turn it into a crime scene.

In other jurisdictions such as Germany, Japan and Singapore, any form of undocumented presence is explicitly codified as a crime. For instance, in Singapore, overstaying a visa past its expiration date is a serious criminal offense punishable by a fine, up to six months of jail time, and/or mandatory caning. I love, the latter. They bit you properly, lawfully and put sense in your head. Caning in Singapore is a severe, legally sanctioned form of corporal punishment used across judicial, prison, military, and school systems. The law prescribes up to 24 strokes for serious crimes (like robbery, vandalism, and scamming). *“Ha o sa utlwe ka ditsebe, o tla utlwa ka letlalo.”*

Now, beyond the insults and labels, beyond hiding behind slogans and not addressing the real problem, we need to ask ourselves whose responsibility is the migration crisis. Is it a South African crisis or an African crisis or a global crisis? Truth be told, in the African context, migration crisis has been put solely on the doorstep of South Africa by leaders who refuse to take responsibility

for their own role in perpetuating conditions that makes their citizens nomads, jumping from one country to the other in a search of greener pastures.

Although humanity has been on the move since its early stages of evolution, the current migration crisis is unprecedented. I am happy that some of our African leaders have chosen to take this matter to the African Union. This in my humble opinion will allow African leaders to have a better understanding of the issues that face countries that are at the receiving end of the global migration crisis like South Africa.

Nonetheless, this migration crisis is an inditement on the part of the leaders themselves and their inability to do what leaders do, to LEAD. People who choose to leave their countries they do so because of hopelessness and leadership failures to meet the needs of their citizens. Failing to discuss the migration crisis and choosing the easier option of apportioning blame on one nation or its leadership and label the crisis as something it is not leadership, it's sign of leadership failure.

The real issue is that YOUR people are leaving YOUR country

because they feel there is nothing worth staying for and YOU appear to be okay with this. How is it possible that any leader can fight for their citizens to be illegal immigrants in another country? Has it not crossed the leader's mind that there is something they need to fix about their country to give citizens a reason to want to stay home and build their country?

Perhaps before we characterise any behaviour as any form of phobia, we need to pause and reflect on what is the real problem. The real problem is not people migrating to other countries, the real problem is leadership and trust deficit. The question before us is: how African leaders and its people can work together to build an Africa We All Want where every country is able to employ its full capabilities to build agile and future ready economies that will serve our people better? In that moment of introspection I wish to draw your attention to what the former President of the Republic of South Africa, President Thabo Mbeki said in 2004 on a matter unrelated to this issue but relevant to the current discourse on the global migration crisis:

"It would be good that those who present themselves as the greatest defenders of the poor should also demonstrate decent respect for the truth, rather than indecent resort to empty rhetoric."

This statement emphasises that genuine advocacy must not be used as a political ploy for cheap political point scoring but should be grounded in facts rather than empty promises that do not deal with the root causes of a problem. In broader sociopolitical discourse, the sentiment also cautions the public to be discerning,

ensuring that a leader's claimed defense of marginalized groups translates into actual, honest improvements rather than a mere political statement without concrete and futuristic solutions.

True leadership is not defined by performative rhetoric and populist claims but the ability to confront difficult issues. Those who lead do so not to escape difficult conversation but for difficult conversations not to escape them. Leaders are moulded and refined by difficult conversations and the conversation on the root causes of the global migration crisis should not escape leaders if in deed they are concerned about resolving the challenges faced by their people.

According to Brené Brown, in her book "Dare to Lead" the core skill of leaders is described as their ability to stay in difficult conversations long enough to find clarity, rather than rushing to a premature, comfortable conclusion. There has been a view by some commentators that South Africa is a threat to African unity. It is my view that African unity is not about lawlessness and disorder where in its name relatively stable countries would be expected to carry the burden of instability and lack of better opportunities in other countries. Solidarity and human compassion are also dependent on all states in the continent to fulfil their obligations towards their citizens and creating conducive environments for economically viable society living in countries that are at peace with themselves ahead of being in peace with others.

Unfortunately, the global immigration crisis has been used for political expediency in the past few weeks by leaders who seek

relevance or wish to connect with the electorate. A good example is one loudmouth BNP leader in Lesotho, Mr Machesetsa Mofomobe who is advocating for a revolution to expel all South Africans in Lesotho including Lesotho Parliamentarians that he allege carry South African IDs. I doubt if there are illegal South Africans immigrants in Lesotho and I guess if Mr Machesetsa is really genuine about this matter, he has every right to give empirical evidence and report those South Africans to authorities so that they can be deported. Any unbacked cacophony is nothing but political expediency.



The real issue is that **YOUR people** are leaving **YOUR country** because they feel there is nothing worth staying for and YOU appear to be okay with this.

How is it possible that **any leader can fight for their citizens to be illegal immigrants in another country?**

Has it not **crossed the leader's mind** that there is **something they need to fix about their country** to give **citizens a reason to want to stay home and build their country?**



Mr Machesetsa must also fetch the illegal Lesotho foreigners in South Africa who are involved in illegal mining activities (stealing mineral resources), undermining good neighbourliness and the Msanzi rule of law. What South African are raising is not just a fallacy but an existential threat to our democracy. Throughout history South Africa and Lesotho have peacefully co-existed understanding that they are interwoven and have a shared destiny.

Nonetheless, the revolution proposed by Mr Machesetsa is not well thought out considering the fact that Lesotho is an enclaved country, sharing all its borders only with South Africa. Our economies are interdependent and interrelated, basically we are tight to the hip. His “revolution” should focus on how both countries can strengthen their ties and build a South Africa – Lesotho economic hub, deal with shared challenges of unemployment, poverty and underdevelopment. He must stand up and be counted in calling out Lesotho criminals who cross the border to commit heinous crimes and destroys the good name of the peaceful and beautiful Mountainous Kingdom. As a politician he must use his voice to ensure that our countries strengthen transnational crime fighting collaborations.

This appears to be the direction that SADC leaders including Lesotho are currently doing.

Mr Machesetsa as one of the leaders of the opposition parties in Lesotho could also consider collaborating with opposition parties in the region to keep governments accountable across SADC. Unfortunately, his focus is on driving South Africans out of Lesotho, period.



I also doubt if there are South Africans who have left the country en masse and migrated to other African country seeking better opportunities except those who left at the dawn of democracy because of the fear of the unknown and went to settle in countries such as Australia, New Zealand and a year ago a group of Afrikaners who voluntarily left the country for the US under false pretext of a genocide of white people. Safe to say, in all these instances, they migrated legally because South Africans are not wired that way.

If there is something about South Africans we respect laws of other countries. But most importantly we proud people of who we are and will always fight for what we believe in. Whilst we acknowledging that our country like any other country has problems but that can never be a reason to stop loving our country. This is apparently considered as laziness by globe trotting nomads.

If staying at home and focusing on fixing one's country is what others call laziness then that should be a good type of laziness. La-

ziness that makes you patriotic, laziness that makes you to hold your own leaders accountable, laziness that makes you to respect other countries' laws when visiting and on tourist visa or on a work visa, laziness that makes you understand the difference between tourist, business and visa, laziness that makes you understand that home may not be the land of milk and honey but yet home and a place to always want to go back to,

The FIFA World Cup came in handy for the performance of theatrics that sought to isolate South Africa from the rest of the continent. To be frank, it was a group of social media commentators from two countries in particular who presented themselves as the rest of the continent.

Most of the theatrics performed by leaders and social media commentators are not genuinely concerned about the well being of the people who are directly affected by the migration crisis because if they did, the first thing would have been to look not further than home and tackle conditions that perpetuates poverty,

unemployment, underdevelopment, inequality, political and security instability, lawlessness that amongst many ills led to kidnapping including the most recent one of babies at a pre-school, human trafficking and drug trafficking.

This had led many people to flee from home not only for economic opportunities but also for a possibility of a safer and stable environment to raise their children. This include the former Miss Universe Nigeria International and Ms South Africa Finalist, Ms Chidimma Adetshina, who according to media reports is currently in a legal battle to remain in South Africa as the Department of Home Affairs pushes for her deportation.

Authorities allege she re-entered South Africa illegally from Mozambique using a fake South African passport after previously being declared a prohibited person back in 2024. Some reports on social media claim that she fled Nigeria because of the “*appalling living conditions*”. As I said, it is alleged, I hope in the coming months we could learn more about her reason to want to return to South Africa even after being warmly welcomed by Nigerians in 2024 and being considered ahead to the Nigerian pageants that had gone through the vigorous selection processes. This should be an egg on the faces of those who progressed her thinking they are snubbing South Africa.

So, instead of hiding behind slogans let us discuss the real issue and back up our claims with tangible evidence, transformative policies in our countries to keep our people at home to contribute in building our economy or factual accountability on how our



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leaders can use their power and authority to change lives of ordinary people in our backyards for the better.

If I was a leader of any nation I would be too embarrassed to ascribe any blame on any other leader or nation for a crisis casts an aspersion on my own abilities to create conducive environments citizens of my country to want to stay at home and make my country an economic force.

It is also a reflection on the global leadership crisis identified by the World Economic Forum back in the last few years characterised by trust deficit, a huge disparity between leadership power, leadership authority, leadership responsibility and leadership competence.

When people in positions of leadership who wield power and authority but lack the vision to use this power and authority to change lives of ordinary people, it is very easy for them to shift blame from their failure to someone else. When citizens lose faith in their

leaders' capacity to improve living standards or provide stability and trust deteriorates, systemic hopelessness serves as a powerful catalyst for relocation.

Deeply rooted economic stagnation, systemic poverty, and lack of jobs in countries of origin compel many to seek better livelihoods elsewhere. While extreme poverty often leaves people without the means to relocate, persistent lack of upward mobility fuels strong aspirations to migrate.

Systemic discrimination, lack of civil liberties, and targeted political or ethnic persecution push individuals and marginalized groups to flee in search of basic dignity and protection.

The slow-onset degradation of environments, desertification, and catastrophic natural disasters undermine food and water security. These climate-related hazards disproportionately affect already vulnerable agricultural communities, forcing them to relocate.

Addressing the global migration crisis requires multifaceted, long-term international cooperation. The AU and international organisations like the International Organization for Migration (IOM) advocate for balanced approaches that manage borders safely while tackling the underlying hardships in origin countries and expanding legal protection pathways. This is what we need to build on as we pursue African unity and rebuild our continent.

Asante sana. ■

Comrade Charlotte Lobe writes in her personal capacity as a social and political activist.

Minister Majodina Launches Unserved Communities Water Programme with Borehole Handover in Mpumalanga

LAST week, 3 July 2026, Water and Sanitation Minister Pemmy Majodina officially launched the Unserved Communities Access Acceleration Programme during **Nelson Mandela Month** by handing over four equipped boreholes to long-struggling communities in Thembisile Hani Local Municipality.

The initiative marks a significant step towards fulfilling constitutional rights to water and honouring Madiba's legacy of restoring human dignity through practical service delivery.

The boreholes, constructed by the Rand Water Foundation at a cost of just over R2 million, were donated to the municipality to serve the communities of Vezibuhle, Gemsbok, Rhenosterfontein Farms (152 and 155), and Engwenyameni in the Kwa-Mhlanga area.

Each borehole includes automated purification capacity through decentralised water purification plants, along with supporting infrastructure: ten communal taps, six 10,000-litre storage tanks on steel stands, and a manhole. The facilities are expected to benefit over 1,600 residents, including school learners and farmers, providing reliable, tested, and safe drinking water in areas previously reliant on inconsistent supplies, tankers, or distant unsafe sources.



Speaking at the Vezibuhle Community Hall, Minister Majodina emphasised that the event was far more than an infrastructure handover. *"Today is not simply about boreholes. Today is about hope. It is about dignity. It is about justice. It is about fulfilling a promise that South Africans made to one another when we became a democratic nation in 1994,"* she said. She drew direct links to Nelson Mandela's lifelong commitment to equality and dignity, noting that ensuring mothers no longer walk kilometres for water and children spend more time in classrooms than fetching it represents a fitting tribute to Madiba's ideals.

The launch coincides with Nelson Mandela Month, observed

annually in July, and forms part of the Department of Water and Sanitation's broader response to persistent water access challenges. The Unserved Communities Access Acceleration Programme targets rural and historically marginalised settlements that cannot wait for large-scale regional schemes. It focuses on faster, sustainable interventions such as groundwater development via boreholes, protection of natural springs, rainwater harvesting, rehabilitation of non-functional infrastructure, and targeted reticulation extensions.

In her address, Minister Majodina acknowledged past delays in service delivery while reaffirming government's determination. *"We recognise that the journey*

towards fulfilling that promise has not always moved as quickly as our people expected or deserved," she said. "But acknowledging challenges must never become an excuse for accepting them as permanent." She highlighted Section 27 of the Constitution, which enshrines the right to sufficient water, and the Water Services Act, which imposes obligations on authorities to progressively realise this right.

The Minister noted that water security is a multi-dimensional issue affecting public health, education, agriculture, the economy, and gender equality. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored this reality, as handwashing campaigns were undermined in areas without reliable water. President Cyril Ramaphosa has prioritised water security in the Seventh Administration, including through the Presidential Water Crisis Committee. The new acceleration programme builds on this momentum, with over 2,600 settlements identified nationally in its first phase and more than R200 million committed initially for provinces including KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, and the Eastern Cape.

Rand Water Foundation and Rand Water played a central role in the Thembisile Hani project. Group Chief Executive Sipho Mosai explained that the decentralised purification plants operate on the same principles as larger facilities in Zuikerbosch and Vereeniging, scaled appropriately for local needs.

The installations at Vezubuhle Community Hall, Bawokuhle Primary School in Gemsbok, and the Rhenosterfontein and Engwenyameni sites have all undergone water quality testing and



safety measures.

Minister Majodina was joined by Deputy Minister David Mahlobo, Mpumalanga MEC for Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs Speed Katishi Mashilo, Rand Water Chairperson Ramateu Monyokolo, and Rand Water Foundation Chairperson Lusanda Netshitenzhe. She expressed deep appreciation for these partnerships, stating that nation-building cannot be the responsibility of government alone. "Your contribution goes far beyond the drilling of boreholes. It is an investment in dignity. It is an investment in healthier families. It is an investment in children who deserve a brighter future," she told the Rand Water Foundation.

Local leaders, including Executive Mayors of Nkangala District and Thembisile Hani municipalities, and traditional leaders were also acknowledged for their roles at the coalface of service delivery. The Minister stressed the need for collaborative efforts between national, provincial, and local government, as well as communities and the private sector, to strengthen municipal capacity and improve operations and maintenance.

A key theme in the Minister's speech was the importance of protecting new infrastructure. Vandalism and theft of public assets remain major setbacks nationwide, diverting scarce resources from expansion to repairs. She made a direct appeal to residents: "Protect this infrastructure as though it belongs to your own family. Because it does. Protect it for your children. Protect it for future generations." She referenced a community member, Gogo Mahlangu, who reinforced this call during engagements.

Responsible water use was another strong message. South Africa's water scarcity, exacerbated by climate change, droughts, and changing rainfall patterns, demands conservation at household level. Minister Majodina urged communities to fix leaks, report burst pipes, and instill values of preservation in children.

The impact on the recipient communities is expected to be transformative. For years, residents – particularly women, children, and the elderly – faced daily hardships from water insecurity. The new boreholes promise immediate relief from reliance on unsafe sources, improved hygiene and sanitation, better health outcomes, and

more consistent school attendance. In Gemsbok, the Minister met community members and reiterated that this project restores dignity and signals that no community is forgotten.

This handover represents an early, visible success of the Unserved Communities Access Acceleration Programme. While challenges such as infrastructure backlogs, financial constraints, urbanisation, and climate pressures remain, the initiative demonstrates a shift towards urgency and pragmatism in addressing water access gaps. By combining technical expertise from entities like Rand Water with community involvement and intergovernmental coordination, the programme aims to ensure sustainable solutions rather than temporary fixes.

As Nelson Mandela Month continues, Minister Majodina called for a commitment beyond symbolic 67 minutes of service. *“Let us dedicate ourselves not only to 67 minutes of service, but to a lifetime of service,” she said.*

“Together, let us protect every drop. Together, let us build stronger municipalities. Together, let us strengthen partnerships. Together, let us honour Nelson Mandela not only with our words, but with our actions.”

The Thembisile Hani project stands as a practical expression of the 1994 democratic promise that basic services like clean water should not depend on race, geography, or privilege. For the residents of Kwa-Mhlanga and surrounding areas, it brings tangible hope that government is acting decisively to leave no one behind in building a water-secure South Africa. ■



The Health Professions Council of South Africa **Must Turn Regulatory Authority into Public Trust**

■ By **FAITH MUTHAMBI**

QUALITY healthcare remains a cornerstone of any nation's development. Appreciating this imperative, the ANC has remained steadfast in transforming the apartheid discriminatory legacy of the two-tier system of private and public health, which differentiates quality of care based on one's race, class and geographic location.

However, South Africa cannot build a credible, patient-centred health system if the institutions responsible for regulating health

professionals are inaccessible or inconsistent in responding to challenges.

The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) occupies a pivotal place in the country's health system. Its mandate serves to build public trust, foster accountability and adherence to professional conduct. It exists to ensure that people who seek care can trust that health professionals are properly registered, appropriately trained and accountable for unethical or unprofessional conduct. That mandate

has become even more important as South Africa prepares for the NHI, where stronger regulation, reliable data and public confidence will be indispensable.

The ANC considers the effective functioning of such statutory bodies imperative for protecting patients, supporting ethical practitioners, and strengthening confidence in the health system. When these bodies fall short, the consequences are borne by patients, families and communities who already face significant barriers to quality healthcare.

Persistent uncertainty about complaints turnaround times, disciplinary backlogs and inconsistencies in the handling of cases raises important questions about the Council's ability to protect both patients and practitioners. These issues were repeatedly highlighted during ANC's parliamentary oversight engagements with the HPCSA.

The ANC, through the Portfolio Committee on Health's oversight of the HPCSA, has revealed that although the institution has acknowledged many of its shortcomings and has begun implementing reforms, it continues to face persistent challenges that must be addressed if it is to fulfil its statutory mandate.

The HPCSA has demonstrated that meaningful reform is possible. It has modernised aspects of practitioner registration through digital systems, strengthened governance measures, expanded its investigative and legal capacity, and introduced improvements to its complaints platform and disciplinary processes. These initiatives are a welcome start, signalling an institution that recognises the need for reform.

Their true value, however, will be measured not by their existence but by the results they deliver. The ANC's oversight in Parliament has increasingly focused on answering that fundamental question.

The persistence of these challenges illustrates that delayed justice is more than an administrative inconvenience; it represents a failure of protection. For patients who have suffered harm, lengthy complaint processes can amount to a second injustice. For ethical practitioners, unresolved complaints can create uncertainty and reputational harm. For the public, prolonged delays undermine confidence in the very institution entrusted with safeguarding professional standards.

The ANC in Parliament has correctly emphasised that these challenges cannot be addressed through assurances alone. Sus-

tainable improvement requires measurable targets, transparent reporting and accountability for tangible results.

Communication is perhaps the clearest measure of an effective regulator. A complainant should not be left in silence after lodging a matter involving ethical or professional concern. The Council should provide timely updates, accessible channels and clear explanations of every stage of the process. A modern regulator should also publish meaningful performance information, including the number of complaints received, pending cases, average turnaround times and the measures being implemented to improve performance.

Fairness is equally important. The HPCSA must act decisively where misconduct is proven, while ensuring that disciplinary processes remain procedurally





fair, consistent and legally sound. Practitioners must have confidence that investigations are impartial, while patients must know that serious complaints will not disappear into institutional delay. The legitimacy of any regulator depends not only on speed but also on fairness.

Accessibility must become a strategic priority rather than an afterthought. Many South Africans, particularly those in rural areas and underserved communities, remain unaware of how to report unprofessional conduct or what support they can expect throughout the complaints process. Public education is therefore not simply a communication exercise; it is central to the HPCSA's responsibility to protect the public.

Through its oversight structures, the ANC must ensure that reforms build on commitment aligned to the principles of quality health care for all and support the realisation of Universal Health Cover-

age through the NHI. These must include prioritising the clearance of complaints backlogs through a time-bound recovery plan; strengthening investigative and legal capacity; publishing regular performance information; and improving communication with complainants and practitioners. These priorities should be implemented in partnership with the National Department of Health, professional bodies, civil society and patient advocacy groups.

South Africa needs a regulator that is independent, professional and trusted. But independence must never become insulation from accountability. A statutory body that acts in the public interest must be able to demonstrate, with evidence, that its systems serve patients and ethical practitioners rather than internal processes.

The progress reported by the HPCSA deserves recognition, particularly where it reflects genuine improvement in governance

and service delivery. At the same time, sustained oversight remains essential until those reforms are consistently reflected in faster complaint resolution, greater transparency and stronger public confidence.

As the country prepares for the phased implementation of the NHI, it needs robust regulatory bodies that are accessible, reliable, effective and build public confidence. HPCSA must be supported to fulfil its mandate in line with social justice, ubuntu and equality. The ANC must ensure that regulatory bodies serve as an instrument to realise the aspirations of the Freedom Charter and Constitution in ensuring universal, equitable access to quality health care for all, leaving no one behind. ■

Comrade Faith Muthambi is an ANC NEC Member & Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Health in Parliament.

When a Party Fails to Practice What it Preaches: **THE DA'S CREDIBILITY DEFICIT**

■ By **CORNELIUS MONAMA**

WHEN opposition becomes the establishment. This, comrades and compatriots, is the story of the Democratic Alliance (DA).

Political parties are judged not only by the promises they make, but by whether they govern according to the principles they demand of others. Nothing erodes political legitimacy faster than the widening gap between professed values and actual conduct.

For much of South Africa's democratic history, the Democratic Alliance (DA) has presented itself as the paragon of constitutional virtue and clean governance, a party committed to merit over patronage, accountability over impunity and clean governance over corruption. Its principal criticisms of the ANC centred on cadre deployment, factionalism, weak accountability and the subordination of state institutions to party interests. However, since tasting power, we have witnessed the DA's growing inconsistency between principle and practice.

The closer the DA moves to the centre of power, the more difficult it becomes to distinguish its political practice from the principles it once condemned. Students of political science have long observed how the acquisition of power reshapes political behaviour. The German-Italian sociologist Rob-



ert Michels famously argued that political organisations inevitably develop an "iron law of oligarchy", a sociological theory that asserts that all organisations, even those explicitly founded on democratic principles, inevitably devolve into a self-serving elite rather than remaining faithful to their founding democratic principles. Lord Acton's enduring observation that power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely, was not merely a warning to governments. It was a warning to every political organisation that acquires power.

Every opposition party campaigns on the promise that it would govern differently and better. However, history repeatedly demonstrates that acquiring

power tests political principles far more severely than opposing those who wield it. Today, the DA appears to be failing this test.

For years, the party argued that the ANC's cadre deployment policy undermined the principles of professionalism and merit-based public administration. It maintained that appointments to senior positions should be insulated from partisan political influence and made according to competence rather than political affiliation.

We now know that during the negotiations that delivered the Government of National Unity (GNU), the DA wanted exclusive right to appoint Directors-General in departments under its political

control. DA sympathisers would argue that their ministers require senior administrators they can trust. That may be a legitimate argument, but it mirrors the same rationale the ANC has long advanced and which the DA consistently rejected when it was in opposition. Constitutional principles cannot be defended in opposition only to be abandoned once in power.

The DA has also repeatedly accused the ANC of elevating political loyalty above institutional cohesion, yet its own internal divisions, leadership contests and high-profile departures resemble many of the dynamics it once portrayed as characteristic of the ANC.

After electing a new leader, the DA reshuffled its ministers, retaining loyalists while removing others, inviting comparisons with the post-conference reshuffles it has long criticised in the ANC. More significantly, the changes were not accompanied by objective performance assessments or clearly articulated reasons, something it consistently demanded from ANC presidents.

The same principle applies to accountability. The DA has consistently argued that public office demands public scrutiny and that no public official is above accountability. Those standards must now apply equally to the DA. Credibility is measured not only by demanding investigations into your political opponents, but also by embracing scrutiny of your own conduct.

Perhaps the greatest test of the DA's constitutional commitment concerns the allegations surrounding Resolve Communications and Tony Leon. South Af-



ricans carry painful memories of state capture, making any hint of private interests influencing ministerial decisions a matter of profound public concern.

Damning allegations that Tony Leon pressured DA ministers and mayors to advance the interests of Resolve Communications' clients are difficult to shrug off. It is alleged that former Minister Dion George was removed from Cabinet, while John Steenhuisen was demoted, after refusing to succumb to similar pressure from Tony Leon.

Solly Malatsi is reportedly under pressure to amend regulations in ways that could benefit Starlink, his weak denials and deflection notwithstanding. He knows that failure to comply will earn him the same fate as those before him: dismissal, demotion or being shipped off to Harvard.

These allegations against Tony Leon do not stand in isolation. Former Johannesburg Executive Mayor Herman Mashaba and former City of Tshwane Executive Mayor, Solly Msimanga, reportedly faced similar pressures to facilitate lucrative opportunities for clients.

Viewed collectively, these accounts reveal a pattern that de-

mands public scrutiny. When senior political leaders, separated by time, office and circumstance, recount strikingly similar experiences of alleged attempts to influence executive decision-making on behalf of private interests, democratic accountability requires more than political denials. It requires transparency.

The Resolve Communications storm has invited comparisons with the Gupta era. Both raise similar constitutional questions about the integrity of democratic governance. As with the Gup-tas, Resolve Communications allegedly benefits from privileged access to senior political leaders, enabling it to lobby ministers on behalf of corporate clients while maintaining close proximity to political power.

At the heart of both controversies lies the same constitutional principle. When private commercial interests are perceived to influence public decision-making, the line between legitimate lobbying and elite capture becomes dangerously blurred. Intellectual honesty and consistency demand that one cannot condemn the Gup-tas while shielding Tony Leon.

Political analyst Ongama Mtimka captured the constitutional distinction succinctly: *"When lobbying can be construed to have coercive power and ability to impose punitive measures if the bidding of the lobbyist is not done, it's no longer lobbying, it's capture. That's the test for judging what's ethical and what's permissible."*

The more Tony Leon and his associates attempt to dismiss or deflect these allegations, the more they deepen public suspicion.

These allegations raise the spectre of a second state capture and warrant a full commission of inquiry. Given the revelations already in the public domain, it is reasonable to suspect that Tony Leon has captured the City of Cape Town and the Western Cape government. Democracy is weakened not only by proven wrongdoing, but also when credible allegations are ignored for political convenience. The DA built its political identity on exposing undue private influence over public power. It must, therefore, welcome rigorous scrutiny when similar allegations arise within its own ranks. Conduct condemned in opposition cannot become acceptable once a party acquires power.

Many have long argued that the DA harbours a desire to preserve apartheid-era privilege, despite its protestations. The party continues to preside over one of the world's most racially unequal cities. The recent Constitutional Court judgment makes clear that the DA-led City of Cape Town and the Western Cape Government have failed to fulfil their constitutional obligation to redress apartheid's spatial legacy through well-located affordable housing. A political party determined to preserve apartheid's spatial legacy cannot credibly claim to embody the Constitution's transformative vision.

Equally important is the consistency of media scrutiny. Many South Africans perceive that allegations involving the DA receive less sustained media attention than those involving the ANC, including persistent service delivery failures in Western Cape townships.

To illustrate this point, look no

further than the media's glaring double standard in its coverage of Dina Pule versus Tony Leon's scandals. One involves serious ethical misconduct, the other state capture. Both deserve scrutiny, and neither deserves proximity to public office. Yet, the mainstream media has cast Dina Pule as the real criminal, while some are granting Tony Leon context and sympathy. When some parties enjoy reputational protection while others face relentless scrutiny, public confidence in the media inevitably suffers. No political party should be shielded from rigorous examination simply because it has cultivated a false image of clean governance.

The DA increasingly exhibits many of the political practices it historically condemned. Its greatest challenge is to demonstrate that, once entrusted with power,

it consistently governs according to the constitutional principles and ethical standards it has demanded of others. It is on this test that the DA appears increasingly vulnerable.

South Africans deserve political parties that practice what they preach. History will judge political parties not by the standards they demand of their opponents, but by those they are willing to apply to themselves. The Tony Leon saga is a reminder that no political party is immune from the temptations of power or from the emergence of its own tenderpreneurs and networks of patronage. ■

Comrade Cornelius Monama is former National Communication Manager of the ANC and a member of the King Nyabela Mahlangu branch in Greater Tshwane Region.





South Africa Cannot Grant Its Way to Prosperity: **Rebuilding the Economy Beyond Social Welfare**

■ By **GREGORY NYONGANE**

AS South Africa approaches the November 2026 Local Government Elections, the country faces a defining economic and political moment. Recent figures from the National Treasury indicate that approximately 8.3million taxpayers support a social welfare system serving 26.5million grant beneficiaries. These statistics have generated intense public debate about the sustainability of South Africa's fiscal future and the direction of its developmental agenda.

However, the discussion should not be reduced to a simplistic contest between taxpayers and grant recipients. Such an approach ignores the deeper structural challenges facing South Africa's economy. The real question confronting policymakers is whether

the country has successfully created an economic system capable of transforming social assistance beneficiaries into active participants in economic growth.

Social grants remain one of the most significant achievements of democratic South Africa. Millions of pensioners, children, persons living with disabilities, and vulnerable households rely on these grants for survival. Without them, poverty levels would be substantially worse. The Constitution of South Africa commits the state to progressively realise socio-economic rights, and social protection remains an essential instrument for achieving this objective.

Yet social grants were never intended to become the primary driver of development. They were designed as a safety net while

government pursued policies capable of generating employment, investment, skills development, and economic inclusion.

From a developmental state perspective, the sustainability challenge facing South Africa is not the existence of social grants but the relationship between social protection and productive economic participation. Development economists argue that successful states simultaneously provide social support while investing in infrastructure, industrialisation, innovation, education, and employment creation.

The developmental state model recognises that poverty cannot be defeated through redistribution alone. Wealth must first be created before it can be distributed.

This is where South Africa's challenge becomes apparent.

Thirty-two years after democracy, unemployment remains among the highest in the world. Youth unemployment continues to undermine the country's future prospects. Every year thousands of graduates leave universities, TVET colleges, and training institutions only to find limited opportunities within the labour market.

Human capital theory suggests that investment in education should improve productivity and employment outcomes. Yet many qualified young South Africans remain unemployed. This reflects a growing disconnect between skills development initiatives and the realities of the economy.

The consequence is a growing dependency ratio where relatively few taxpayers support an increasingly large number of beneficiaries. This situation creates pressure on public finances and raises concerns regarding long-term fiscal sustainability.

The problem extends beyond unemployment.

South Africa has also failed to adequately invest in indigenous and community-based economic systems. Historically, African communities participated in vibrant economic activities including agriculture, livestock farming, fishing, traditional trade networks, artisanal production, mining activities, and cooperative enterprises. These systems generated livelihoods and sustained communities long before the establishment of modern welfare structures.

Today many of these indigenous economic systems remain under-



developed or neglected.

Across South Africa, communities possess significant economic assets. The Northern Cape possesses abundant solar energy resources, mining opportunities, agricultural potential, and tourism attractions. KwaZulu-Natal has extensive agricultural and maritime opportunities. Limpopo possesses rich agricultural and mineral resources. The Eastern Cape has significant potential in agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism. Similar opportunities exist throughout the country.

Yet many communities located closest to these economic resources remain among the poorest.

This contradiction reflects a failure of inclusive economic development.

National Treasury allocates hundreds of billions of rand towards social welfare expenditure each year. While these investments remain necessary, there is growing concern that insufficient resources are directed towards building productive local economies capable of creating jobs and generating wealth.

Imagine the transformative impact of sustained investment in:

- Community-owned agricultural cooperatives.
- Youth-owned enterprises.
- Indigenous livestock programmes.
- Renewable energy projects owned by local communities.
- Township manufacturing hubs.
- Cultural and creative industries.
- Local tourism enterprises.
- Mining beneficiation initiatives.
- Small business incubation programmes.

Such investments would not eliminate the need for grants immediately. However, they would create pathways towards economic independence and long-term sustainability.

The role of local government is critical in this regard.

The Constitution mandates municipalities to promote social and economic development. Local government is therefore not merely responsible for providing water, sanitation, roads, and refuse removal. Municipalities are

expected to create environments that attract investment, stimulate local economies, and support entrepreneurship.

Unfortunately, many municipalities continue to face challenges relating to financial mismanagement, infrastructure deterioration, governance failures, and weak accountability systems. When roads collapse, sewage systems fail, electricity supply becomes unreliable, and investment projects stall, economic growth suffers.

Investors do not invest where infrastructure is failing.

Businesses do not expand where service delivery is unreliable.

Jobs are not created where governance is weak.

Consequently, the November 2026 Local Government Elections should be viewed as more than a political contest. They represent an opportunity for citizens to evaluate whether municipalities have fulfilled their developmental mandate.

Voters are increasingly asking important questions:

Why are graduates unemployed?

Why are municipalities unable to attract investment?

Why do infrastructure projects remain incomplete?

Why are communities not benefiting from the natural resources surrounding them?

Why does poverty remain entrenched despite significant public expenditure?

These questions strike at the

heart of South Africa's developmental challenge.

The future sustainability of the country's social protection system ultimately depends on economic growth. South Africa cannot continue expanding welfare expenditure indefinitely without simultaneously expanding the number of people participating in productive economic activity.

This does not mean reducing support for vulnerable citizens.

Rather, it means creating more taxpayers, more entrepreneurs, more farmers, more artisans, more innovators, and more employers.

The true measure of success should not be how many citizens receive grants. The true measure of success should be how many citizens no longer require grants because they have access to meaningful economic opportunities.

South Africa stands at a crossroads.

One path leads towards increasing dependency, fiscal pressure,

and economic stagnation.

The other path leads towards investment, production, entrepreneurship, indigenous economic development, and inclusive growth.

The challenge facing political leaders, policymakers, municipalities, and communities is therefore clear: move beyond managing poverty and begin building prosperity.

The future of South Africa will not be secured by redistribution alone. It will be secured through economic growth, accountable governance, infrastructure development, skills creation, and the empowerment of communities to participate fully in the economy.

Ultimately, the question facing South Africa is not whether social grants should continue.

The real question is whether the country has the political will to build an economy that enables millions of citizens to move from dependency to dignity, from welfare to work, and from poverty to prosperity. ■



Fishing from the Wrong Pond: **When the Hunt for “Big Fish” Overshadowed Justice for Mabuyane at Fort Hare**

■ By **THABANG MASEKO**

FOR almost five years, Eastern Cape Premier Oscar Mabuyane has been the public face of alleged corruption and academic malfeasance at the University of Fort Hare.

His name became synonymous with a scandal that attracted national attention, fuelled by public statements from the university, investigations by the Special Investigating Unit (SIU), and a steady stream of damaging media reports. Today, following the recent judgment by the Eastern Cape High Court, Mabuyane may well feel vindicated.

The court set aside the University of Fort Hare’s decision to deregister him as a master’s student and directed the university to assess him properly under its Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy. Judge Lindiwe Rusi found that the university had acted unlawfully when it deregistered Mabuyane in March 2021, effectively confirming that the institution had denied him procedural fairness.

The judgment raises uncomfortable questions, not only about the university’s handling of Mabuyane’s case, but also about whether its pursuit of a so-called “big fish” compromised the principles of fairness and due process.



When Professor Sakhela Buhlungu became Vice-Chancellor in 2017, he inherited an institution plagued by allegations of corruption, maladministration and governance failures. Few would dispute that decisive intervention was necessary. Buhlungu positioned himself as an uncompromising anti-corruption crusader determined to restore the university’s credibility.

That mission earned widespread public support, and enemies.

However, the fight against corruption is only as credible as the methods used to pursue it. Once institutions abandon due process in pursuit of symbolic victories,

they risk undermining the very rule of law they claim to defend.

Mabuyane’s deregistration was followed by a forensic investigation commissioned from Cape Town-based Horizon Forensic Investigations. Rather than conclusively explaining how he had been registered, the report shifted its attention to allegations concerning his conduct as a master’s student and the alleged involvement of Professor Edwin Ijeoma and others in assisting him through ghost-writing.

The report would later find its way into the hands of the SIU, which was already investigating governance failures at Fort Hare.

Yet the SIU’s own mandate became a point of legal contention. Mabuyane successfully challenged aspects of the investigation, arguing that the proclamation authorising the SIU did not extend to investigating his master’s registration but was instead focused on other admissions, including that of former Eastern Cape Health Department official Sindiswa Gomba.

The litigation that followed transformed what may have begun as an academic dispute into a prolonged legal and political battle.

Meanwhile, Fort Hare descended



into one of the darkest periods in its history.

The institution became synonymous with violence, intimidation and multiple assassinations linked to corruption investigations. Among those killed was Buhlungu's bodyguard, Mbone-ni Vesele, a tragedy that underscored the dangerous environment surrounding the university.

Throughout this period, Buhlungu repeatedly suggested that powerful political figures were behind efforts to destabilise investigations, often referring to the pursuit of a "big fish." Although many interpreted these remarks as pointing towards Mabuyane, no court has found that the Premier was linked to the violence or to efforts to obstruct investigations.

Ironically, subsequent investigations shifted attention closer to home.

The Political Killing Task Team arrested Isaac Plaatjies, the university's Head of Investigations and Vetting, whom Buhlungu had appointed to lead many of the institution's anti-corruption efforts. Investigators later arrested Horizon Forensic directors Bradley Conradie and Sarah Burger on allegations that they had paid ap-

proximately R1 million towards Plaatjies' home bond.

The allegations suggested an improper financial relationship between those conducting investigations and the university official responsible for overseeing them.

Conradie and Burger have denied wrongdoing. Following their arrests, they publicly alleged that powerful political figures, including then Police Minister Bheki Cele, were orchestrating events to protect Mabuyane. Those claims remain allegations and have not been substantiated in court.

What cannot be disputed, however, is that for five years the cloud hanging over Mabuyane grew darker with every headline. Public perception increasingly portrayed him as someone who had fraudulently obtained or attempted to obtain a Fort Hare qualification.

The High Court judgment fundamentally alters that narrative.

Judge Rusi's ruling does not pronounce on Mabuyane's academic competence or determine whether he ultimately qualifies for the degree. Instead, it affirms a more fundamental constitution-

al principle: public institutions cannot ignore their own rules or deny individuals procedural fairness simply because they are politically controversial.

The real casualty in this saga may not be either Buhlungu or Mabuyane.

It is the credibility of an institution that once stood as one of Africa's leading centres of higher learning.

Fort Hare undoubtedly needed courageous leadership to confront entrenched corruption. But courage must always be accompanied by fairness. Anti-corruption campaigns succeed not because they produce dramatic headlines or identify politically convenient villains, but because they respect evidence, due process and the rule of law.

If the university's determination to catch a "big fish" caused it to fish from the wrong pond, then this case should serve as a cautionary tale for every public institution in South Africa.

Justice cannot be selective. Nor can it be driven by reputation, politics or public pressure. When institutions sacrifice fairness in pursuit of symbolism, they risk becoming participants in the very injustice they seek to eradicate.

Mabuyane has won his court case. Whether history ultimately vindicates everyone involved remains to be seen. But one lesson is already unmistakable: the pursuit of accountability loses its moral authority the moment it abandons procedural justice. ■

Comrade Thabang Maseko is an ANC Eastern Cape activist. He writes in his personal capacity.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

11–17 July 2026

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

11 July 1957

Djamila Bouhired, Algerian militant appears in court



Djamila Bouhired (b.1935), a militant of the Algerian War of Independence appear in a French military court. She and co-defendants are charged with the bombing of an Algiers café that killed 11 people. She was eventually sentenced to death by guillotine, but her sentence was converted to life after pressure. Bouhired joined the Algerian Liberation Front as a student activist. She was released from prison after independence and became chair of the Algerian Women Association. She remains active in Algerian politics.

11 July 1960

Katanga declared secession from DRC

Congolese businessman and politician Moïse Tshombe declared that the mineral-rich Katanga region is seceding from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

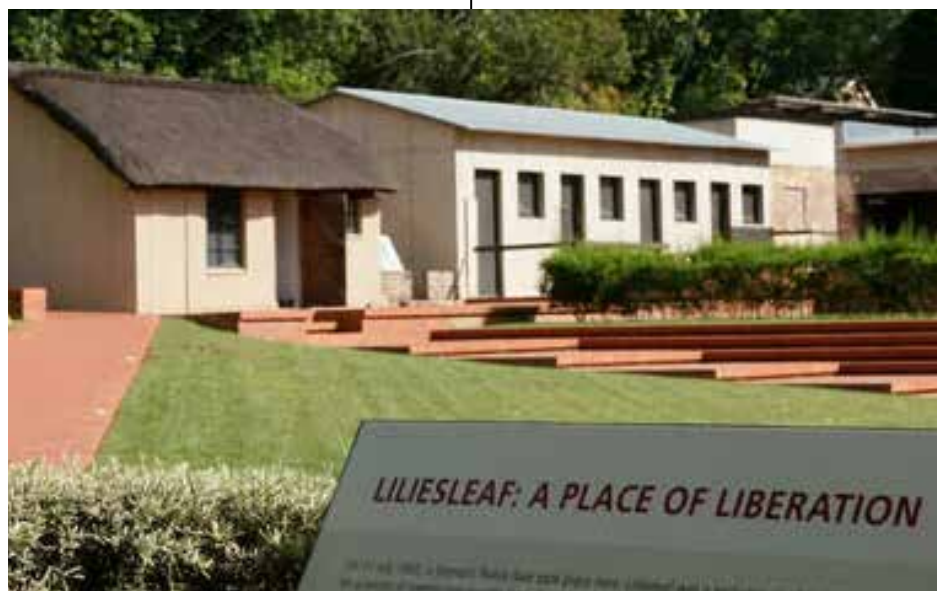
This threw the newly independent Congo into chaos, leading to a UN peacekeeping intervention. The crisis is further exacerbated by the assassination of Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba and the death of UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld.

11 July 1963

Umkhonto High Command arrested at Liliesleaf farm

South African police raided the African National Congress (ANC) underground headquarters, the Liliesleaf Farm in Rivonia, just outside Johannesburg. Virtually the entire leadership of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the armed wing of the ANC, were arrested on this day. This moment came as a terrible titanic dream in the history of the ANC. Amongst those arrested were the following: Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki,

Raymond Mhlaba, Ahmed Kathrada, Lionel Bernstein and Bob Hepple. Nelson Mandela, the commander-in-chief of MK, was not arrested at the time as he was serving a five-year prison sentence for leaving the country illegally in 1962. The farm was privately owned by Arthur Goldreich, but bought with funds from the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA). At the farm police found documents relating to the manufacture of explosives, Mandela's diary of his African tour and copies of a draft memorandum, 'Operation Mayibuye'. It outlined a possible strategy of guerrilla warfare. The six men had been studying the document when police arrived. More arrests followed shortly after this incident, including Arthur Goldreich, Andrew Mlangeni, James Kantor, Dennis Goldberg, Harold Wolpe and Elias Motsoaledi. Goldreich



THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

and Wolpe later managed to escape from prison. Mandela and his co-accused were sentenced to life imprisonment in the Rivonia trial that ended in June 1964.

11 July 2000

Trans-African Highways Network Agreement signed

An Agreement to cooperate on a network of highways is signed by the Summit of Heads of States and Governments of the African Union. This was an idea already touted as early as 1971 by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), spanning roads of over 60,000 km. Some of the TAH roads include a connection of highways from Tripoli, Libya to Windhoek, Namibia (9,610km), Cairo, Egypt to Dakar, Senegal (8,636km), Algiers, Algeria to Lagos, Nigeria (4,505 km), Cairo, Egypt to Gaborone, Botswana. The project is also referred to as transport corridors, since some aspect of rail is being incorporated. It is a joint project of the AU, UNECA and the African Development Bank.

12 July 1912

First Malian MP, Aoua Kéita born



Aoua Kéita, Malian writer, midwife and activist was born in Bamako. She was educated on her dad's in-

sistence, despite objections from her mother. She was Active in the independence movement, a leader of the African Democratic Rally (RDA) and also set up a women's trade union in Mali in 1956. After Mali independence in 1960, Kéita was elected as the first woman member of the National Assembly. She was also one of the founders of the Pan African Women's Organisation (PAWO). Her autobiography was published in 1975, and she passed on in 1980.

12 July 1929

Sudan author Tayeb Salih born

Writer and cultural expert Tayeb Salih was born in Karmakol, Sudan on this day. He popularized Sudanese, African and Arabic culture in broadcasts, working for UNESCO, and in newspaper columns and novels. His most famous work is *Season of Migration to the North* (1966).

12 July 1941

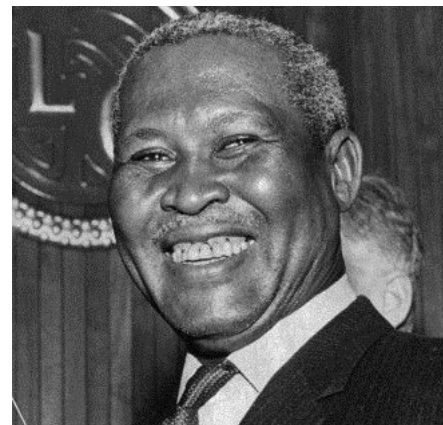
Children's writer Affaf Tobbala born

Egyptian children's book writer Affaf Tobbala was born in Cairo. After a successful career as a TV documentary director, at 64 she started writing award-winning children's stories, translated into several languages.

12 July 1954

Nkosi Albert Luthuli banned

Chief Albert Luthuli was elected as ANC President in 1952. In 1954 the Minister of Justice C.R. Swart issued the ANC President with two banning orders. One prohibited him from attending public gatherings and another confined him to the magisterial district of Lower Tugela, Natal. He was to



report frequently to the SA Police in the area. After his part in leading the 1952 Defiance Campaign, a non-violent, national, anti-pass protest, the apartheid government summoned him to Pretoria. Here he was challenged to denounce the ANC or be removed for his chieftainship, involving a loss of power and salary. He chose the latter. On 12 July 1954 Luthuli was scheduled to address a group protesting against forced removals of Black people in Johannesburg and the Minister served him with the banning notices under the 1950 Suppression of Communism Act.

12 July 1975

São Tomé and Príncipe national independence

São Tomé and Príncipe formally achieved its independence from Portugal on July 12, 1975, and Manuel Pinto da Costa of the Movement for the Liberation of São Tomé and Príncipe (Movimento Libertacao de São Tomé e Príncipe – MLSTP) assumed the presidency.

12 July 2002

Oldest person to run 200m in under 20 seconds

Namibian sprinter Frankie Fredericks becomes the oldest person to run 200 meters in under 20 seconds when at age 34 years and 283 days he runs the 200 meters in Rome at 19:99.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

13 July 1916

**Linguist and educationist
Sedumedi Moloto is born**



Ernest Sedumedi Moloto, linguist, educationist and teacher who served as chairman of both the Tswana Language Committee of South Africa and the Botswana National Language Committee was born in Moruleng, Rustenburg district. During his long career as an educationist and linguist, he taught Setswana, Northern and Southern Sotho at Turfloop (University of the North), and later as Professor and Head of African Languages at the Botswana University in Gaborone, and later the same position at Vista University in Mamelodi. He was an excellent linguist and spoke Setswana, his mother tongue, English, Afrikaans and Dutch equally fluently. Moloto was once married to the South African struggle hero Ellen Khuzwayo.

13 July 1934

**Playwright and Author
Wole Soyinka born**

The Nigerian, novelist, playwright and poet, Wole Soyinka, (Akinwande Oluwole Soyinka) was born at Abeokuta, near Ibadan in western Nigeria. Soyinka became the first African to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature from the Nobel Prize Committee in 1986.

13 July 1963

India intensifies anti-apartheid struggle

The government of India announced that it was cutting India's last remaining link with South Africa by refusing landing and passage facilities to South African aircraft. India was one of the first states in the global struggle against apartheid in Namibia and South Africa.

14 July 1948

King Goodwill Zwelethini born

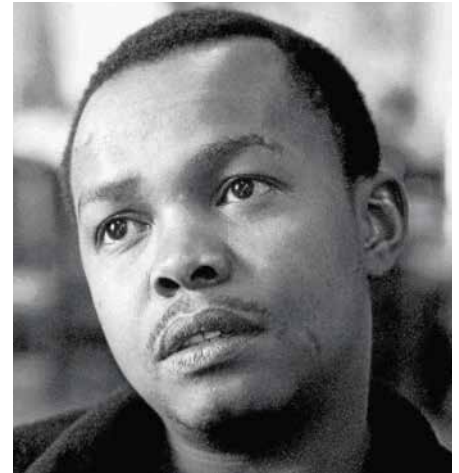


Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini kaBhekuzulu, eldest son of King Cyprian Bhekuzulu kaSolomon and his second wife, Queen Thomo was born in Nongoma, Zululand (now KwaZulu-Natal). He received formal instruction in traditional Zulu customs while he was at his father's residence of Khethomtan-dayo. Zwelithini was installed as the eighth monarch of the Zulus at a traditional ceremony attended by 20 000 people in Nongoma on the 3rd of December 1971. His reign lasted until his passing on 12 March 2021.

14 July 1965

Nat Nakasa passed on in exile

Ndazana Nathaniel Nat Nakasa was awarded the The Niemann Fellowship to study journalism at Harvard University in the US



but the government rejected his application for a passport. This forced him to leave the country on an exit permit and never be allowed to return to South Africa. Nakasa was part of a group of journalists, many working for **Drum** Magazine, associated with the vibrant, violent and somewhat romantic culture that characterised Sophiatown in the 1950s. While Nakasa worked for the **Rand Daily Mail**, he was associated with legends like Can Themba, Arthur Maimane and Bloke Modisane. Nakasa was also the first black columnist at The Rand Daily Mail. While in America Nakasa became lonely and home sick. Knowing that he could never return home, it is alleged that he committed suicide by jumping from a high-rise building in New York on 14 July 1965, in the prime of his life. An annual award for courageous journalism has been named after him.

15 July 1916

Battle of Dellville Wood starts

South Africa entered WWI on 8 September 1914, on the side of the Allied Forces. On 15 July 1916, the S.A. Infantry Brigade under Major-General H.T. Lukin was ordered to clear the forest at d'Elville, France of enemy soldiers, thereby covering the flanks

of the British Brigade. The South Africans occupied the wood on that day, but the problem was not so much to take the wood, than to hold it. Despite fierce counterattacks and artillery bombardments from German divisions, the SA brigade refused to surrender. The brigade was relieved on 20 July after six days and five nights of ferocious fighting. Only 750 soldiers remained of the Brigade's 3 433 soldiers, the rest had either been killed or wounded. Black people were also involved in this battle as unarmed combatants and non-military personnel. The Battle of Delville Wood went down in the history of WWI as an example of supreme sacrifice and heroism and remained the most costly action the South African Brigade fought on the Western Front. A memorial site was erected in remembrance of those who died in the Battle in 1926. 146 000 Whites volunteered for service in WW1, while altogether 83 000 Blacks and 2 000 Coloureds did service in non-combatant capacity.

15 July 1953

Walter Sisulu and Duma Nokwe leave SA

African National Congress (ANC) members, Walter Sisulu and Duma Nokwe, went overseas under false names and without

passports. The two arrived in London, England and from there they went to Bucharest, Romania, where they attended the communist *"World Festival of Youth and Students for Peace and Friendship"*. After this, they embarked on an extensive tour to Czechoslovakia, Poland, Russia and China, to mobilise support for the struggle against apartheid. They returned to South Africa on December 1953 and attended the 41st annual conference of the ANC at Queenstown, where it was decided to begin The Defiance campaign.

15 July 1995

Mystery of the SS Waratah

The SS Waratah was a luxury steamer, en route from Cape Town to Durban, South Africa, on 26 July 1909. The ship, built in Scotland, was meant to serve as a passenger and cargo liner to Australia. After her second trip to Australia, the SS Waratah arrived in Durban on 1 July 1909. With 211 passengers and crew on board, she left for Cape Town, which she was expected to reach by 29 July. However, the Waratah did not reach its destination, and no trace of the wreckage was found. A number of wreckages, bearing similarities to the outline of the steamer, were spotted

along the coast of South Africa between 1925 and 1999. None of them, however, proved to be that of the Waratah. Several theories have developed as to what might have caused the disappearance of the SS Waratah. On 15 July 2009, the

most popular theory, supported by research on sonar imaging, revealed that a freak wave may have capsized the boat, causing its rudder to malfunction. Although maintained as the most likely explanation for the disappearance of the SS Waratah, the mystery of this luxury steamer remains unsolved.

15 July 1932

CJ Langenhoven passed on in Oudtshoorn

Cornelis Jacob Langenhoven, who penned the words of *Die Stem van Suid-Afrika*, died at his home in Oudtshoorn. *Die Stem* was the official national anthem of SA from 2 May 1957 to 20 April 1994, when it was combined with *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* and recognised as the national anthem. CJ Langenhoven was also a poet, wrote short stories and other works. He played a major role in the development of Afrikaans literature. As a Member of Parliament and Senator from 1914, he fought for the recognition of Afrikaans, and was one of the founders of the newspaper *Die Burger*, and was a SA Freemason. Till today he is one of the most prolific Afrikaans authors, with his *Collective Works* of sixteen volumes.

16 July 1901

Ladies Commission to investigate Concentration camps appointed

On 16 July 1901, the Ladies commission was appointed, including amongst its members Millicent G. Fawcett, Emily Hobhouse and Dr. Jane Watson. They were appointed by the British Office to investigate the concentration camps in South Africa during the Second Anglo Boer War. At least 25 000 children and women died from epidemics of dysentery,



THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

measles, and enteric fever. Emily Hobhouse, an English philanthropist and social worker visited the camps to raise awareness and tried to improve the life of the concentration camp prisoners.

16 July 1947

Community leader Horatio M'belle passed on



Horatio Isaiah Budlwana (Bud) M'belle, interpreter, insurance agent, community leader and politician, died in Pretoria. The first African to pass the Cape Civil Service Exam, he was widely regarded as the best court interpreter of his day and was a talented rugby and cricket player who took the lead in the local African community sports activities. He went to work in Kimberley, where he got involved in the founding of many schools for African people. He was also instrumental in the anti-pass campaign of 1919, under the banner of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC). He participated in the All African Convention of 1935 and founded the Pretoria Advisory Council for African affairs as well as Joint Council of Europeans and Bantu. M'belle wrote a Xhosa scholar's companion and was a contributor to *Abantu-Batho*, an organ of the SANNC that was founded by Pixley ka Isaka

Seme. He passed on 16 July 1947 at the age of 77.

(<http://www.thejournalist.org.za/pioneers/horatio-isaiah-budlwana-bud-mbelle>)

16 July 1966

Number of banned persons for anti-apartheid activities reached

In order to maintain the oppressive and brutal system of apartheid, all sorts of repressive laws were put in place to strangle opposition to apartheid. One such method was the banning of persons from participating in any political activities. By 1966, it was announced that 936 people in South Africa had been banned, with 467 listed as communists or under the Riotous Assembly Act. Between 1950 and 1990, more than 2000 people were banned in South Africa and labeled as terrorists, communists or perceived by the apartheid government as a threat to public security. The ban on anti-apartheid activists was finally lifted in 1990.

16 July 1990

ANC presents report on Police Violence to De Klerk

The African National Congress (ANC) sent a report on police violence to President F. W. de Klerk and demanded an end to "*the shocking inhumanity*" of police action in rural areas. The report was based on about 50 statements to lawyers by victims of police action in the farming towns of Ashton, Montague and Robertson. ANC leader Walter Sisulu had already accused the Government of failing to restrain the police after young activist Meshack Kunene was shot dead on 30 June in the Alexandra Township near Johannesburg.

16 July 2019

Johnny Clegg passed on



Johnny Clegg, at the age of 66 passed away at home in Johannesburg on 16 July 2019, after he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2015. He is known as a songwriter, a dancer and an anthropologist. Clegg's music touched many with its vibrant blend of Western pop and African Zulu rhythms. His unique music style embraced different cultures and enhanced the social cohesion of South Africans. During his music career, he produced so many hits, including *Impi*, *Great Heart* and *African Sky Blue*.

17 July 1950

First SABC news bulletin broadcast

Broadcasting in South Africa can be traced back to 1923, when the first wireless broadcast was made in Johannesburg. By April 1927, an hour of Afrikaans programming and one daily news bulletin in Afrikaans was broadcast. Insufficient funding began to hamper the progress of the broadcaster and an investigation into all aspects of broadcasting in South Africa was launched by the Prime Minister of South Africa, JBM Hertzog. This resulted in the establishment of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and by 17 July 1950 a commercial radio service was established, with daily

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

news bulletins in both English and Afrikaans – this radio service was popularly known as Springbok Radio. Broadcasts were initially limited to the Johannesburg area, but soon became available in most major centres in South Africa. The SABC grew in the 1960s and 1970s as more radio stations, broadcasting in selected African languages, were established.

17 July 1955

Jomo Sono, footballer, coach and club owner born



Ephraim Matsilela Sono was born on this day in Orlando East, Soweto. His father, Eric “Scara” Bamuza Sono, a midfielder play-



ing for Orlando Pirates, passed on when Jomo was still young, and he was brought up by his grandparents. Helping to support his family and pay school fees from a young age, he sold apples and peanuts at train stations and soccer games. During an Orlando Pirates game, a player was ill and he was asked to stand in and the rest is history. Jomo later went to North America where he played for teams New York

Cosmos, Colorado Caribous and Toronto Blizzard from 1978 and 1982. Upon his return to South Africa in 1982, he bought the Highlands Club which he renamed Jomo Cosmos, with the club winning a number of cups in various tournaments. Jomo Sono had two stints as Bafana Bafana coach, during the 1998 AFCON and 2002 FIFA World Cup. Sono is also a board member of the PSL and active in SAFA.



INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

11–17 July 2026

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



11 July

World Population Day

In 1950, the world population stood at 2.5 billion inhabitants, by 2026, this figure has climbed 8.3 billion people. World Population Day seeks to focus attention on the urgency and importance of population issues, particularly in the context of overall development plans and programmes, and the need to find solutions for these issues. A world of over 8 billion humans is both a challenge and an opportunity with implications on urbanisation, access to health services, access to water, energy, food and for youth empowerment. It is also a challenge for other species – animal and plant – which have to share the planet with us. This year's World Population Day theme is ***“Realizing the hopes and aspirations of young people – today and for the future.”*** The theme draws on a new report based on one of the largest global surveys of its kind, capturing the views of more than 108,000 internet-connected young adults aged 18 to 39 across 73 countries. Titled *Lives, Choices and Futures: What young people want and what shapes their decisions about relationships and parenthood*, the report offers a global snapshot of what young adults today want from relationships, family life and the future — and what they feel is standing in their way.

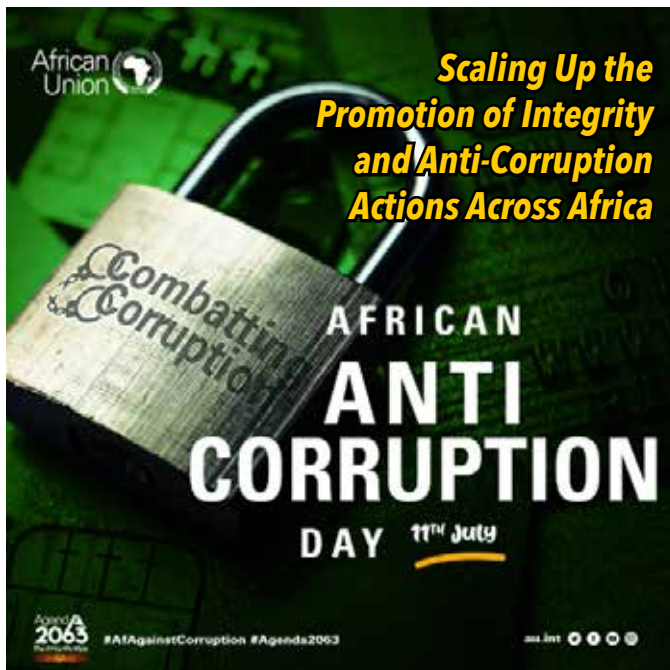
11 July

African Anti-Corruption Day

The African Union adopted 11th July as the African Anti-Corruption Day to commemorate the adoption of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUCPCC) or the Convention. To date, Forty-Nine (49) Member States of the African Union have ratified the Convention and have proceeded to put in place measures to tackle corruption such as criminalizing corruption through various legislation, establishing institutions as well as engaging in corruption prevention initiatives. The annual commemorations of African Anti-Corruption Day have served as strategic platforms for reflection, advocacy, and action. The theme for 2026, ***“Scaling Up the Promotion of Integrity and Anti-Corruption Actions Across Africa,”*** calls on all Member States, anti-corruption agencies, civil society, media, academia, faith-based leaders and organizations, traditional leaders and authorities, political actors, the private sector, families, and citizens to dramatically expand the scope, depth, and impact of integrity-building measures on the continent. The celebration of African Anti-Corruption Day 2026 under this theme aims to:

- i. Recognize the importance of integrity as a cornerstone for corruption prevention.

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- ii. Encourage Member States to adopt and implement national integrity strategies aligned with the AUCPCC and the African Union's Agenda 2063 aspirations for good governance and shared values.
- iii. Encourage all anti-corruption stakeholders to pause, reflect, identify and deploy more effective strategies to scale up their actions in the fight against corruption.
- iv. Raise awareness among citizens about the importance of exhibiting or practicing and demanding integrity in public and private life.
- v. Strengthen the protection and support systems for integrity champions, whistleblowers, and anti-corruption activists, recognizing their key role in defending Africa's ethical future.

13 July

International Rock Day

We take them for granted, but rocks make up a large part of our planet. According to National Geographic, a rock is a *"natural substance composed of solid crystals of different minerals that have been fused together into a solid lump."* There are three basic types of rock – igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic. The study of rocks is not geology, which is the study of the earth, but is called petrology!

14 July

World Sharks Day

Sharks date back 420 million years, nearly 200 million years before the dinosaurs roamed the earth. Sharks have the reputation of being dangerous, but in fact human beings kill more sharks, about

100 million of all sizes each year. There are more than 500 different known species of sharks in our oceans, the smallest is as big as a human hand (the dwarf lantern shark) and the largest over 12 metres long (the whale shark). Sharks have excellent night eye-sight and can also see colours. Human pollution, especially plastics, and global warming also impact on the survival of sharks.

15 July

World Youth Skills Day

The day is commemorated to focus on the importance of equipping young people with skills for citizen participation, employment, decent work and entrepreneurship. The day pays special attention to technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and the role to be played by TVET institutions, business, government, civil society and trade unions in equipping young people with appropriate skills. In South Africa there were at last count, 50 registered TVET colleges, across 364 campuses across the country, with over 700,000 students enrolled.

17 July

International Justice Day

International Justice Day (IJD) commemorates the historic adoption of the Rome Statute on 17 July 1998, and marks the importance of continuing the fight against impunity and bringing justice for the victims of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. IJD is a reminder for all states committed to fair and impartial justice for victims of the worst crimes around the world: to urgently ensure continued support for the international justice system. IJD is also a reminder for the Court's strongest advocates, civil society: to stand firm in their original commitment in getting the ICC established, now to advance a Rome Statute system of international justice that works for all.

17 July

World Emoji Day

An emoji is a pictogram, logogram, ideogram or smiley embedded in text, used in electronic messages and web pages. The word emoji comes from Japanese, originating in their cell phones in 1997. A grassroots organisation of women programmers, Emojination, has been working to make emoji's more inclusive and diverse, with only half of global users feeling that their identities are represented in current emoji options. A young Ivorian student created over 360 emojis featuring African themed topics, through his Zouzoukwa mobile app.

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