



ANC TODAY

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Conversations *with the* **President**



Building on Madiba's legacy by expanding access to water

■ By **PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

THIS past weekend we celebrated the birthday of our nation's founding father, President Nelson Mandela. Celebrating Madiba's birthday through good works is significant because it turns our remembrance of this global icon into action. It reflects the belief that the most meaningful way to honour him is not merely to praise what he achieved, but to continue the work to which he devoted his life. For Madiba, the freedom he fought for was not merely the right to vote. It was the freedom to live with dignity, to live in decent conditions and to enjoy the basic necessities of life.

In honour of Madiba's legacy, we are responding to the need to expand access to safe and reliable water to underserved com-

munities across South Africa. We launched the National Water Access Acceleration Programme through the decentralised water supply schemes.

This is part of one of the priorities identified in this year's State of the Nation Address, to address the water crisis that is causing immense hardship for households, communities and businesses across the country.

The programme was launched in Hammanskraal in Gauteng, a community that has had longstanding challenges with water access, and where lives were tragically lost three years ago due to a cholera outbreak.

As part of the programme, boreholes were handed over to the

Hammanskraal community, and the Klipdrift Package Water Treatment Plant was officially commissioned. Similar interventions were rolled out in other parts of Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape. These include borehole drilling and groundwater development, rainwater harvesting and rehabilitating existing water supply schemes.

The programme is intended to shorten the time between identifying a community's need and delivering a working water supply. It will use solutions suited to local conditions rather than waiting in every instance for large, complex infrastructure projects.

Expanding water access has been one of the most important achievements of our democracy.

According to the 2022 Census, over 82% of households in the country had access to piped water either inside their dwelling or inside their yard. The proportion of households with no access to piped water more than halved between 1996 and 2022.

We must acknowledge that in too many municipalities, government has not succeeded with the maintenance of infrastructure, to manage water services properly and to respond with sufficient urgency. Parts of our country are experiencing worsening water shortages and deteriorating water quality. In some places, ageing water infrastructure has collapsed.

Earlier this year, we established the National Water Crisis Committee to coordinate interventions across government. The committee is focused on strengthening municipal water and sanitation services, increasing water infrastructure investment, reforming water sector institutions, improving the legal and regulatory framework, and addressing corruption and criminality in the sector.

As we learned during the energy crisis, sustainable solutions require putting the necessary building blocks in place rather than relying on quick fixes. Our response to the water crisis focuses on sustainable, long-term reform.

The National Water Action Plan brings together national, provincial and local government, water boards, regulators and water service authorities around a single programme of action, with clear responsibilities and timelines.

A number of immediate interventions are already being implemented, including rolling out



emergency infrastructure projects such as the boreholes in Hammanskraal. These will continue to be expanded to reach more communities.

Legislative and regulatory reform is also continuing. A National Water Resources Infrastructure Agency has been established to coordinate investment in bulk water infrastructure. Public hearings will soon begin on the Water Services Amendment Bill, which will strengthen enforcement and enable municipal managers who fail to manage water infrastructure to be held personally liable.

Over the next three years, government has allocated R156 billion to water and sanitation infrastructure as part of its broader public infrastructure investment programme.

Municipalities are the frontline of service delivery and must be supported to deliver on this critical mandate. The National Treasury is supporting municipalities towards financial sustainability, including ensuring that revenue from water goes to the water entities so that it can be reinvested in infrastructure.

Where municipalities or officials fail to comply with environmental

and water-services legislation, government will use the enforcement mechanisms available to it, including directives, criminal proceedings and, where the law permits, personal liability.

Water security is among government's most urgent priorities. Households and businesses experiencing shortages and outages have had enough, and underserved communities across the country still waiting for taps to be installed 32 years into democracy are justifiably tired of waiting.

We remain committed to overcoming this crisis. As the progress in reducing load shedding has shown, coordinated action and structural reform can produce results by matching emergency and short-term interventions with lasting changes to the entire water sector, including institutional, legislative and governance reform.

Our ultimate goal is not merely to get over the current crisis, but to fulfil Madiba's vision of all South Africans enjoying their constitutionally enshrined right to access to water and of this right being secured for generations to come.

Water is dignity and therefore central to Mandela's legacy. ■

The African National Congress notes the **decision** to keep the **INTEREST RATE UNCHANGED**

■ By **ANC SECRETARY GENERAL FIKILE MBALULA**

THE African National Congress (ANC) notes the decision of the Monetary Policy Committee of the South African Reserve Bank (SARB) to keep the interest rate unchanged. The decision leaves the repo rate 7.00% and the prime rate at 10.50%. This offers consumers much needed relief at a time when inflation rose to 5% from 4.5%.

This development comes at a time when inflation remains at a staggering 5%, affecting households and contributing to the high cost of living and the US-Iran conflict which fuel global inflation, high food and fuel prices which impact on the economies of the world.

The decision of the SARB cushions consumers from these developments, insulating consumers from the high cost of living in line with the key priority of the ANC on protecting the poor and working class from the high cost of living.

Over the past months the President of the ANC has been engaging with businesses and other countries forging partnerships, investment and bi-lateral



relations to stimulate the economy to create much need jobs.

The ANC will continue to invest in programmes and efforts to stimulate the economy, growth and poverty eradication.

We remain optimistic of a future rate cut, a drop in inflation and an immediate cessation of hostilities between the warring countries to curtail global inflation.

On the SARB's caution on the state of municipalities the ANC

welcomes the launch of the R156 billion National Water Access Acceleration Programme to fast-track practical, sustainable and fit-for-purpose water solutions, investment in water management, infrastructure and the capacity of municipalities to discharge of their legislative service delivery mandate.

This commitment is **aligned to the priorities of the ANC to fix local government, to address service delivery challenges and to advance the vision of a better life for all.** ■

VETERANS' *Voices*

The Last Push: Register Today, Strengthen Our Democracy Tomorrow

■ By **DR SNUKI ZIKALALA, ANCVL PRESIDENT**

SOUTH AFRICA'S democracy was not handed to us on a silver platter. It was won through decades of sacrifice, struggle and the unwavering determination of millions who believed that every citizen should have the right to choose those who govern them. Today, that hard-won right carries with it a profound responsibility: to register and to vote.

As we approach the 2026 Local Government Elections, the call to action could not be more urgent. The voters' roll will soon close. Once it closes, there will be no second chance. Those who fail to register or update their voting details will simply forfeit their constitutional right to participate in deciding who governs their municipality for the next five years.

This is the final push.

In the 2021 Local Government Elections, there were 26,2 million registered voters, and the voter turnout was only 45.86% – over 14 million registered voters did not vote. 27,7 million voters were registered for the 2024 National and Provincial elections, and turnout improved to 58.64%, but

more than 11 million registered voters did not vote.

During the first voter registration weekend, 518 000 new voters registered, and the numbers, as a percentage of the total, in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal, the two most populous provinces, are alarmingly low. The StatsSA

mid-2025 population estimate for citizens aged 18 and older is approximately 39.2 million.

A conservative estimate is that more than 10 million qualifying voters are not registered, and many of these will be young people whose futures will be shaped by decisions taken in municipal



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VOTER REGISTRATION
WEEKEND**

1-2 AUGUST 2026

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councils on issues such as water, sanitation, roads, housing, libraries, sports facilities, and local economic development.

Equally concerning is voter apathy. A vibrant democracy reflecting the will of the people requires everyone who qualifies to register and to vote.

Every election reminds us that democracy is not weakened only when people cannot vote – it is weakened when they decide not to.

The **task** before every ANC branch, region, province and volunteer is therefore **clear**.

- Reach every household.
- Encourage every eligible citizen to register.
- Help first-time voters understand the importance of their voice.
- Assist those who have relocated to update their addresses.
- Where wards have been demarcated, make sure voters check where they are registered to vote.

This is the foundation upon which election day success is built.

Young people, in particular, should recognise the immense power they possess. South Africa is a youthful nation. Their numbers have the potential to shape municipal priorities for years to come. If they remain absent from the voters' roll, others will make those decisions on their behalf.

The IEC has made registration easier than ever before through online registration platforms, local IEC offices and designated registration opportunities. There has never been a more convenient time to register or verify your details.

I call on Veterans League members to be at the forefront of deepening democracy by:

- Speaking to your children and neighbours.
- Work to ensure that every ANC member in every branch visits places where potential voters congregate, particularly young people, to inform and assist them to register and to vote on 4 November 2026.
- Check the correctness of your own registration status as all voters must vote in the voting

station where they are registered.

Do not assume someone else will do it.

So when election day arrives, let every eligible South African honour those who fought for our democracy by exercising the most powerful right we possess – the right to vote.

The future of our communities, and indeed the strength of our democracy, depends on it. ■





Remembering Lieutenant General Sindile Pitso Mfazi

on the fifth anniversary
of his passing

■ By **MIKKI XAYIYA**

After five years of relentless pressure by his wife, Lt-Gen Sindile Mfazi's death in July 2021 by suspected poisoning is being investigated by a special police team. At the time of his death, Mfazi was investigating graft in the procurement of personal protective equipment involving R1.6bn, and the SAPS said that his death was as a result of Covid-19. Here is an edited speech given by Mikki Xayiya, a childhood friend, comrade, and ANC VL member, at an event commemorating the fifth anniversary of his passing.

PITSO and I first met at school in 1974, when we were in Std 4 at Gcobani Primary School. Mdantsane was a dumping ground for families forcefully removed from their original homes in line with the apartheid policy of populating the Ciskei bantustan so as to give it a semblance of a state. It was precisely the anger and frustration arising from this forced settlement that planted the seeds of resistance there; it was inevitable.

Worse, East London's economy didn't have the capacity to absorb Mdantsane's growing population. As if that was not enough, the apartheid government banished newly released Robben Island political prisoners there. What a combustible mixture: an angry, forcefully resettled populace uprooted from their homes and farms!

Soon released political prisoners and the burgeoning black consciousness presence in the form of its youth, students and community organisations and with Steve Biko literally on our doorstep in King Williamstown, heralded the call to confront apartheid rule. Under these conditions, political ferment took root, followed by battles against the apartheid establishment, Ciskei bantustan collaborators and the bosses!

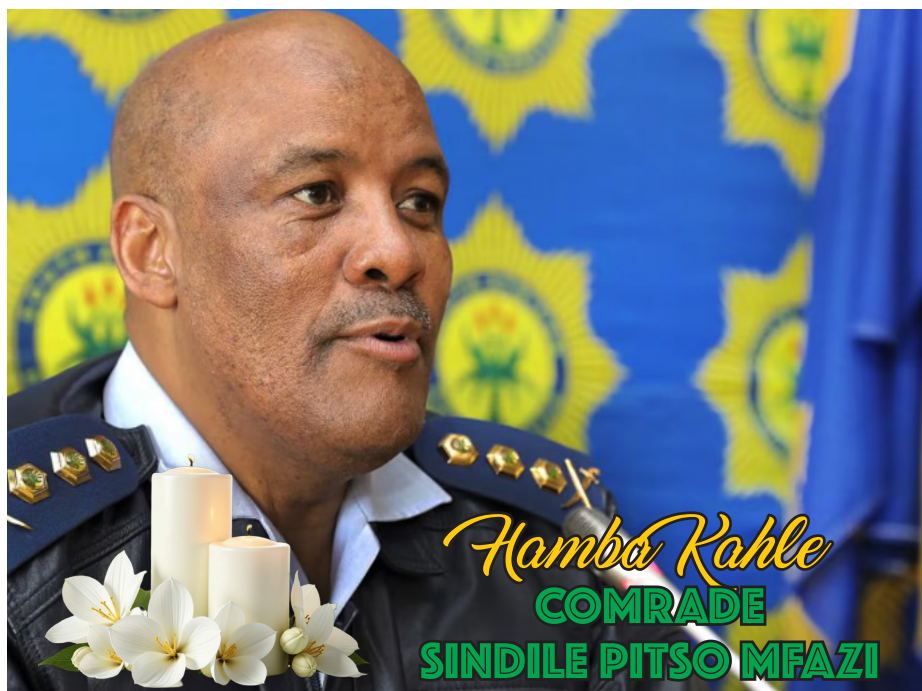
This is the environment that shaped us as youngsters, and we were naturally drawn into political activism.

The Southern African region too was being reshaped, as witnessed by the 1974 collapse of the Portuguese colonial empire, with Angola and Mozambique poised for liberation. Further afield, in April 1975, the Vietnam-

ese fought their way to freedom, toppling the US-sponsored government of South Vietnam following a grueling guerilla warfare.

All these events served as inspiration and gave hope that liberation was not far off. Suddenly, at school during breaks, talk was awash with Samora Machel, Agostino Neto, Joshua Nkomo, General Giap, military training and guerrilla warfare.

It was during this cauldron that June 16 1976 exploded, falling on fertile ground. That historic event, whose 50th anniversary we observed recently, became a defining moment for our generation – we lost our innocence and youth by throwing ourselves into the struggle for freedom. There was no turning back, nor any substitute for, enlisting in the national liberation movement.



As high school students, we were exposed to banned political literature and broadcasts by Radio Moscow, the Voice of Zimbabwe by ZAPU, the external radio services of independent Africa, and later Radio Freedom, the revolutionary voice of the African National Congress and Umkhonto we Sizwe. We began to identify with the ANC's call to set up underground units and to urge youth to leave the country for military training to swell the ranks of its fighting arm, Umkhonto we Sizwe.

By the time Pitso became active in the students' movement through COSAS, I'd already left the country for MK. Newly arrived comrades in our camps in Angola shared with us news of the struggles at home, and the name of Pitso, a committed comrade, was often mentioned.

I reunited with Pitso at the ANC 48th Conference in Durban, July 1991. It had been a full 12 years since we last met in Mdantsane. He was one of the leaders of the MK delegation from Tanzania.

Pitso was a very principled and ethical comrade, stubborn in his commitment to integrity and honour. He was forthright in the articulation of his views. He was not afraid to tell it as it is, right in your face.

He had an impeccable moral grounding, consistent and courageous. In this regard, he was not one to bow to authority, especially when he was convinced that such authority was insincere and potentially damaging to his honour.

The ANC invested heavily in him. In anticipation of the inevitability of our freedom and the attendant requirement to set up new defence and security structures in the wake of the looming demise of apartheid rule in our country, he joined a group of comrades sent to India for an advanced officers' training course in which he excelled.

With the dawn of freedom, he integrated as a Major in the Protection Services of the new SAPS. Not resting on his laurels, he

soon registered for advanced graduate studies in the Western Cape. Thus, his meteoric rise in the ranks of the SAPS was not a handout but the result of sheer hard work.

It bears repeating that it was, as a consequence of his rock-solid discipline and advanced learning, that he would rise in the ranks until his appointment as a Lt-Gen in charge of crime detection and a deputy national commissioner of SAPS.

He operated in a tough environment, sometimes with impossible demands and expectations placed on comrades, often with accountability lines blurred, as some politicians sought to perpetuate narrow, corrupt politics, treating SAPS as their private purse and militia to pursue factional agendas.

Not to Pitso, many a time he had to stand up to all machinations targeted at him, solely for his principled refusal to bend the rules in a way that would compromise the integrity of the vital institution he headed.

Pitso was above all a deeply committed family man and doting father. He loved and honoured his mother, siblings and their children. His marriage with Malindi was lovely and a solid partnership. Together, they built a home and a sanctuary for their family. Malindi's resourcefulness ensured the family led a good, decent life.

There must be justice and closure about the circumstances of his death of suspected murder. We shall remain unconsoled for as long as there are lingering perceptions that his life was terminated deliberately. ■

Beyond the Repo Rate: The July MPC Decision and the Urgent Task of Fixing Local Government

■ By **JR SEBASTIAN and ANDILE NTULI**

THE Monetary Policy Committee's decision on 23 July 2026 to keep the repo rate unchanged at 7 percent provides temporary relief for South African households, workers and businesses. Four committee members supported keeping rates unchanged, while two preferred another increase of 25 basis points. The decision followed a slight improvement in the inflation outlook, although the Reserve Bank remains concerned about fuel prices, services inflation, rising inflation expectations and continuing uncertainty in the Middle East.

The decision means that repayments on variable-rate home loans, vehicle finance and other forms of credit should not increase because of another interest-rate hike. However, interest rates remain relatively high, meaning that indebted households will not immediately experience meaningful relief. The Reserve Bank expects headline inflation to remain above 4% until early 2027, largely because of fuel-price pressures, even though food inflation has recently slowed because of improved harvests.

The Reserve Bank's updated forecasts nevertheless show some improvement, it now expects average inflation of 4 per-



cent during 2026, compared with its previous forecast of 4.4 percent. Food inflation is expected to average 2.9%, while economic growth has been revised upwards from 1.2% to 1.4%. These improvements are welcome, but projected growth remains far too weak to address unemployment, poverty and inequality on the scale required.

The Bigger Economic Story

Perhaps the most important observation in the MPC statement extends beyond interest rate. The Reserve Bank states that municipal dysfunction has become a *"binding constraint"* on economic growth. It further concludes that South Africa's future growth will depend mainly upon domestic re-

forms, particularly fixing local government and improving productivity in transport and energy.

This assessment helps clarify South Africa's economic challenge, monetary policy can contain inflation expectations and provide greater price stability, but it cannot repair burst water pipes, stabilise municipal electricity networks, maintain roads, remove refuse or process development applications. It cannot improve port operations, restore freight rail capacity, strengthen municipal finances or recruit qualified engineers into local government.

Why Functioning Municipalities Matter

These failures impose direct costs upon households and

businesses, when water systems collapse, factories reduce production and communities must purchase expensive alternative supplies. When electricity distribution networks fail, enterprises lose trading hours and spend scarce resources on generators. When roads deteriorate, vehicle maintenance and transport costs increase. Ultimately when planning approvals are delayed, investment projects remain unfinished and employment opportunities disappear.

Functioning municipalities therefore determine whether taps run, streets remain clean, businesses invest and local economies develop. These conditions influence prices, productivity, investment and employment more fundamentally than another movement of 25 basis points in the repo rate. Interest rates remain important, but they cannot substitute for a capable developmental state that plans, coordinates and delivers effectively.

The ANC Local Government Action Plan

This is precisely why the African National Congress adopted the Local Government Action Plan following the Special NEC meeting and the Councillor Roll Call during September 2025. The plan recognises that South Africa has expanded access to electricity, water, sanitation and formal housing since 1994, while also acknowledging that municipal weaknesses have prevented these gains from consistently producing reliable services within communities.

The Local Government Action Plan is organised around six interconnected pillars; that cover immediate service-delivery

commitments, sustainable infrastructure, capable municipal institutions, renewed community accountability, inclusive local economic development and strategic developmental communication. The plan addresses water, sanitation, refuse removal, electricity, potholes, housing, infrastructure maintenance, municipal revenue, corruption, community participation and local industrialisation.

Importantly, the plan extends beyond the level of general political commitments, it requires local turnaround plans, clear response times for service failures, infrastructure maintenance budgets, improved billing systems, funded municipal budgets and revenue-collection plans. It also requires municipalities to fill critical

vacancies, recruit technical professionals, reduce excessive dependence upon consultants and implement the professionalisation framework for senior management.

These interventions respond directly to the constraints identified by the Reserve Bank, it must be emphasized that professional administration improves the quality and speed of municipal decisions. Stronger financial management protects infrastructure budgets and allows municipalities to maintain essential services; whilst better accountability reduces corruption, waste and project delays. Reliable infrastructure lowers business costs, improves productivity and creates conditions for investment, industrialisation and employment.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTION PLAN (LGAP)

PILLAR 1: Act on core service delivery commitments to citizens: water, sanitation, refuse removal, potholes, water leaks, electricity, indigent registers, housing and title deeds and so forth.

PILLAR 2: Effective and sustainable infrastructure which is fit for purpose: planning, effective maintenance incl. budget allocated and spent, prevent vandalism and theft, employ and develop adequate skills, new infrastructure development, water and energy storage capacity, climate-smart infrastructure.

PILLAR 3: Capable local government and institutional capacity: financial management and viability, revenue collection, debt relief, funded budgets, billing systems, bylaw enforcement, governance and leadership issues, incentivize innovation, employ capable people and fill critical vacancies, wage war on corruption.

PILLAR 4: Reconnect with the people and restore trust: Ward Councillor and branch community and public meetings, active and inclusive Ward Committees, door to door work to report on responses to service delivery issues. Problem solving and community campaigns (incl. ANC Day of Community Service), work with community-based formations, two-way communication, engagement, feedback.

PILLAR 5: Inclusive local economic development, job creation and industrialisation: Strengthen investment in local industries, industrial parks, agro-processing hubs for job creation; support SMMEs, township, village enterprises and informal traders, including women and youth-owned; expand public and private employment etc.

PILLAR 6: Communications and Developmental Battle of ideas: regular media briefings and podcasts on progress in implementing Action Plan and challenges, action taken against corruption and money recovered, status of local government and interventions, policy and research and policy briefs and infographics, etc.



BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

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Transforming the Wider Economy

The ANC's Economic Ten Point Action Plan, adopted later during 2025, deepens this programme beyond municipal administration. Its five broader transformation pillars cover energy security, industrialisation, infrastructure and logistics, developmental finance, and land, agriculture and food security. The programme recognises that energy security is a precondition for industrialisation and that infrastructure forms the backbone of productive growth.

The ten interventions include electricity transmission, freight and logistics recovery, mineral beneficiation, professional project management, municipal economic development, public employment, SMME financing, industrial parks, trade protection and improved macroeconomic coordination. The local government intervention specifically proposes local economic-development technical units, stronger integration through the District Development Model and closer alignment between local infrastructure spending and industrial policy.

The interventions are already underway at government level. Transnet has granted licenses to private rail operators aimed at easing bottlenecks and boosting growth. The operators will have access to 41 routes and six corridors. This intervention will assist Transnet in reaching its goal of moving 250 tons of goods by 2030 and address the rail backlog concerns raised by the Monetary Policy Committee.

The MPC statement therefore reinforces the correctness and urgency of the ANC's programme, the decision to declare 2026 the

"Year of Decisive Action to Fix Local Government and Transform the Economy" reflected a sober assessment that economic transformation and local government recovery have become inseparable national tasks.

The Economic Meaning of the 2026 Local Government Elections

The 2026 local government elections must consequently be understood as an economic turning point, rather than merely a contest over councillor positions. Voters will be deciding who should manage the institutions responsible for water, electricity, sanitation, roads, spatial planning, infrastructure and local economic development.

South Africa requires councillors who understand that every unresolved water leak, delayed licence, broken substation and unfinished road project carries an economic cost. It requires candidates supported by a political organisation possessing a clear programme for rebuilding municipal institutions while transforming the wider economy.

The ANC enters these elections with an integrated and sober programme that connects capable local government with industrialisation, investment, employment and a lower cost of living. Supporting ANC candidates must therefore mean supporting measurable turnaround plans, professional administration, stronger accountability, reliable infrastructure and inclusive local development.

Conclusion

Monetary policy can create stability, but it cannot rebuild dysfunctional municipalities. Sustainable growth, employment creation and lasting reductions in household costs ultimately require capable local institutions that place the interests of the people first. That is why fixing local government represents both an economic imperative and the central political task of the 2026 local government elections.

Comrades JR Sebastian and Andile Ntuli are members of the ANC Department of Policy, Monitoring, Evaluation and Research (PMER).



NELSON MANDELA MEMORIAL LECTURE

Delivered by the Premier of the Eastern Cape,
LUBABALO OSCAR MABUYANE,

at the Winnie Madikizela-Mandela Civic Centre,
Alfred Nzo District,
18 July 2026



LET me begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to the collective leadership of the Alfred Nzo Region for inviting me to deliver this Nelson Mandela Memorial Lecture and to witness the unveiling of the volunteers who will assist the African National Congress in maintaining and consolidating its electoral hegemony and governance across the entire Alfred Nzo District.

It is indeed a singular honour and privilege to stand before all of you this afternoon. We gather here today not merely to commemorate the birth of President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela.

We gather here to reflect upon the enduring legacy of one of Africa's greatest sons, whose life continues to inspire humanity's pursuit of justice, peace, equality and freedom across the globe. President Mandela belongs not only to South Africa or the African continent, but to the collective conscience of the world.

His extraordinary journey from humble beginning to a political prisoner, ultimately to the first democratically elected President

of a free South Africa remains one of history's greatest testimonies to the triumph of hope over despair, reconciliation over revenge, and unity over division.

Nelson Mandela occupies a unique place in our national history because he taught us that true leadership is measured not by the ability to divide people but by the capacity to unite them around a common purpose.

After twenty-seven years of imprisonment, he emerged without bitterness or hatred. Instead, he extended an olive branch, a hand of reconciliation to those who had imprisoned him and called upon South Africans to build a rainbow nation, a democratic nation founded upon justice, equality, and mutual respect.

At a time when many predicted that South Africa would descend into racial conflict, Mandela chose dialogue instead of confrontation, peace instead of vengeance, and nation-building instead of political triumphalism.

He understood that while political parties may compete for electoral support, the people of South Africa

must never become enemies. Democracy demands vigorous debate, but it also demands mutual respect, tolerance, and a shared commitment to the national interest.

This message remains profoundly relevant as our country prepares for another democratic election. Political contestation is both inevitable and desirable within a constitutional democracy. However, Mandela reminds us that our political differences should never undermine social cohesion or the unity of our nation.

Elections come and go, governments change, but South Africa remains our common home. We owe it to future generations to protect the peace and democratic stability for which so many sacrificed their lives.

As we gather here in Alfred Nzo at Mbizana, home of Comrade Winnie Madikizela Mandela, Comrade Alfred Nzo, President Oliver Tambo and many more comrades, we carry a special responsibility.

Our province produced many other architects of our liberation



struggle, among them, Comrades Walter Sisulu, Raymond Mhlaba, Govan Mbeki, Chris Hani, and many other patriots whose contributions shaped modern South Africa.

Their lives remind us that leadership is not about personal advancement but about service, sacrifice, and an unwavering commitment to the people. Mandela's greatest contribution did not end with the achievement of political freedom in 1994. He understood that strong institutions, ethical leadership, and respect for the Constitution sustain democracy.

More than three decades into

our democratic journey, Nelson Mandela's greatest legacy is not found in the offices he occupied, the honours he received, or the monuments erected in his name. His greatest legacy lives in the democratic values he bequeathed to our nation and in the enduring hope that every South African, regardless of race, gender, language or social standing, should enjoy a better life in a free and democratic society.

That vision remains the moral compass of our constitutional democracy and the unfinished mission of our generation. Mandela believed that leadership derives its legitimacy from service to the people.

He understood that the true measure of leadership is not the accumulation of power, but the improvement of the human condition. It is for this reason that the democratic State embraced the ethos of Batho Pele, People First, as a guiding principle for public administration. At its heart, Batho Pele is more than a policy framework; it is a moral philosophy of governance.

It reminds every public representative and every public servant that government exists to serve the people with humility, dignity, integrity, and excellence. Citizens are not recipients of favours from the State.

They are the rightful beneficiaries of democratic governance and the reason our institutions exist.

The aspiration of a better life for all, which became the defining promise of our democratic transition, remains as relevant today as it was in 1994.

It is a vision that calls upon us to eradicate poverty, reduce inequality, create meaningful employment, improve the quality of education, strengthen our health-care system, and build communities that are safe, inclusive, and prosperous.

These are not merely policy objectives. They constitute the practical expression of Mandela's lifelong struggle for justice, equality, and human dignity. As leaders entrusted with the responsibility of serving the people of the Eastern Cape, we must constantly measure ourselves against the example Mandela left behind.

He bequeathed to us humility, integrity, compassion, discipline, and unwavering commitment to

public service that should remain the benchmark by which our own leadership is judged.

The people of this province rightly expect leaders who listen before they speak, who serve before they seek recognition, and who place the collective interests of society above personal ambition. In honouring Mandela, we are called not simply to celebrate his memory, but to emulate his character and translate his values into tangible improvements in the lives of our people.

There could be no more fitting tribute to Madiba than for this generation of leaders, across government, municipalities, traditional leadership, civil society and the African National Congress, to recommit itself to ethical leadership, accountable governance and selfless service.

If we succeed in placing our people at the centre of every decision we make, if we govern with integrity and compassion, and if we remain faithful to the ideals for which Mandela dedicated his life, then his legacy will not simply be remembered. It will continue to live through our actions and through the better future we build for generations yet to come.

This remains one of Mandela's greatest challenges to our generation. South Africans expect ethical leadership, capable institutions, and governments that deliver quality services.

They expect leaders who are accountable, transparent, and committed to improving the lives of ordinary people. These expectations are not unreasonable; they reflect the democratic values for which Mandela and countless others sacrificed so much.



For us in the African National Congress, Mandela's legacy imposes a permanent obligation of renewal. Renewal is not merely an organisational programme. It is a moral commitment to restore public confidence through ethical leadership, disciplined organisational culture and visible service to our communities.

The ANC was established to serve the people of South Africa, not to serve itself. While Mandela will forever be remembered as the father of democratic South Africa, he never believed that political freedom alone would complete the liberation struggle.

He understood that political democracy must ultimately improve the material conditions of the people. The Freedom Charter declared that **"The People Shall Share in the Country's Wealth,"** that **"The Land Shall be Shared Among Those Who Work It,"** and that **"There Shall be Work and Security."**

These aspirations remain central to our national democratic project. Mandela often reminded us that overcoming poverty is not an act of charity but an act of justice. Poverty, unemployment, and in-

equality continue to confront millions of South Africans.

These challenges deny our people the dignity and opportunities they deserve. The Eastern Cape understands these realities all too well.

Ours is a province rich in history, culture, natural beauty, agricultural potential, and human talent. Yet too many of our young people remain unemployed. Too many communities continue to struggle with poverty and underdevelopment.

This contradiction demands bold leadership, innovative governance, and stronger partnerships between government, business, labour and communities.

Local government occupies a central place in this effort because municipalities are the sphere of government closest to the people. It is through municipalities that citizens experience democracy in practical ways through access to water, sanitation, electricity, roads, housing, libraries, sports facilities, and other essential services.

When municipalities perform well, confidence in democracy

grows. When they fail, communities lose confidence not only in government but in democratic institutions themselves.

As we prepare for the forthcoming Local Government Elections, Mandela's legacy reminds us that leadership must always be measured by service to the people. Communities deserve councillors who are ethical, accessible, competent and accountable.

They deserve municipalities that spend public resources wisely, maintain infrastructure effectively, and place the needs of citizens above narrow political interests.

Today's launch of volunteers is therefore deeply significant. Throughout its history, the African National Congress has relied upon ordinary women and men who dedicated themselves to serving their communities without expectation of personal reward.

Volunteers built branches, mobilised communities, educated citizens and defended democracy during our darkest years.

Today, they remain the living heartbeat of our Movement. Our volunteers must continue to embody Mandela's values of humility, compassion, discipline, and service. They must become ambassadors of hope, unity, and ethical leadership.

They must reject division, intolerance and factionalism, and instead strengthen the bonds that unite our communities.

Perhaps Mandela's greatest lesson was that leadership begins with service. It begins by listening to the people, understanding their struggles, and placing their interests above one's own.

It requires courage to confront injustice, humility to admit mistakes, and wisdom to unite rather than divide. As we commemorate Mandela today, let us remember that the greatest monument we can build in his honour is not made of stone or bronze.

It is a society characterised by justice, equality, ethical leadership, social cohesion and shared prosperity. The future of South Africa will not be determined by Mandela's generation alone. It will be determined by what our generation chooses to do with the democratic inheritance they entrusted to us.

The responsibility now rests with each one of us to protect our Constitution, strengthen our democratic institutions, build an inclusive economy, and preserve the unity of our nation. Let us honour Mandela by rejecting corruption wherever it appears. Let us honour Mandela by strengthening ethical leadership.

Let us honour Mandela by creating opportunities for our young people. Let us honour Mandela by building municipalities that serve with excellence. Let us honour Mandela by protecting

the peace, unity and democratic values that define our Republic. As we leave this gathering today, may we recommit ourselves to the ideals for which Nelson Mandela dedicated his life.

Let us become builders of bridges rather than walls, servants rather than masters, and custodians rather than beneficiaries of our democracy. Madiba never believed leadership was about titles or positions.

He believed leadership was about service. He taught us that every person has something to contribute, whether it is through government, business, schools, churches or simply helping a neighbour. In the timeless words of Madiba:

"It always seems impossible until it is done."

May his courage continue to inspire us. May his humility continue to guide us.

May his vision continue to unite us. And may we never cease striving to build the South Africa of justice, dignity, equality and shared prosperity for which he devoted his life. ■



Dr Esther Mahlangu, The Woman Who Prints Rainbows From Her Mind

■ By **SELLO SHAI-MORULE**

LET us honour Dr Esther Mahlangu while she is still with us. Let us honour Gogo Esther while she is still alive. Let us not wait. In Africa we lay wreaths on graves and pour libations for ancestors. We praise in past tense. But today, our ancestor is walking. Today, our library of Ndebele art is breathing. Today, Gogo Dr Esther Mahlangu can still hear the ululation.

So, South Africa, Africa, name the highways after her. Start with Moloto Road. Let every traveller drive on a road that says; “A daughter of this soil painted the world.” Let’s honour her now. While she is still with us. In Africa we have a tendency of giving flowers to the dead. We slaughter cows in honour of those who have passed. We narrate how good they were, only when they are gone. Gogo Esther’s work must be hailed while she is still this side with us. While she can still see us. While she can still hear us. Let the living legend receive her flowers now.

Seven decades later, we honour the women who refused to be forgotten. The commemoration of seventy years since the women’s march to the Union Buildings in 1956 is on our doorstep. This anniversary demands more than ceremony. It demands recognition. The time to honour women of resilience is now or never. And among them, one name rises with a unique clarity, Gogo



Dr Esther Mahlangu. She did not march with 20,000 women in Pretoria, but she has marched for 70 years in her own way. Gogo Esther, with brush (intshwele) in her hand, with color, with geometry, she has carried the soul of a nation onto walls, canvases, and into the world.

This day I have elected to honour a woman who prints rainbows from her mind. Because in the quiet of her hands lives a universe of color. Dr Esther Mahlangu does not simply paint, she remembers. She remembers the teachings of her mother, the patterns of her ancestors, and the language of a people told in triangles, circles, and lines. From her mind comes a printed rainbow, not loud, but steady, not new but

eternal. With every brushstroke, Gogo Esther stitches time together, past to present, village to the world, so that culture does not disappear, but continues, bright and unbroken.

As we remember the courage of 1956, we must also celebrate the quiet, daily courage of women like Gogo Esther, women who preserved culture when it was under threat, and who printed rainbows from their minds so that future generations would know who they are. This day we dedicate this jamboree to a grandmother of the Nation. She teaches us that resilience is not only protest. Resilience is also preservation. At least for 70 years women fought for freedom in the streets. Again for 70 years



Gogo Esther fought for memory with her brush. Today we are not forgotten as a nation because of women who turned inheritance into legacy, like Gogo Esther. Let us honour her. Let us become her. For decades she has turned Ndebele tradition into global art, proving that resilience lives not only in marches, but in memory, in color, in creation. *“When a woman remembers, a nation remembers too.”*

There are elders who carry history in their voices and then there is Gogo Dr Esther Nikwambi Mahlangu, who carries history in her hands. Dr Mahlangu was born on 11 November 1935 in Middelburg, now Steve Tshwete, Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. Gogo Esther learned the sacred art of Ndebele house painting from her mother and grandmother. It was never meant to be art for galleries. It was meant for walls, for homes and for identity. But Gogo Esther had a different calling. She had a mind that saw color as a language, and geometry as memory. So she began to print rainbows from that mind. With bold lines, perfect symmetry, and colors that sing, she took a tradition that belonged to wom-

en and placed it before the world. In 1991 she painted the BMW Art Car, the first woman and the first African to do so. Her work has since lived in the British Museum, the Pompidou, and galleries across the globe yet she never left her village. She never left her people. Dr Esther Mahlangu is a grandmother of the Nation not because of her age, but because of what she chose to protect. While trends faded, she stayed faithful to pattern. While others forgot, she remembered. While the world asked African women to be quiet,

she answered in color. At 90, her brush has not slowed. Her rainbow has not faded. Because culture is not something we keep in a museum. Culture is something we print. Every day, onto walls, onto canvas, onto the next generation. That is why it is befitting to name this seventieth women commemoration after her. That we too will print rainbows from our minds. That we too will turn inheritance into legacy.

In 2017, Destiny magazine put Gogo Esther on its cover for the first time. They called it the #Heritagelssue. They said: *“Few embody Africa’s now and future better than Mama Esther Mahlangu.”* And they were right. Because heritage is not behind us. With Gogo Esther, heritage walks with us. Heritage paints with us. That cover was a big deal because Destiny broke the mould, celebrating an 81-year-old Ndebele artist as the face of power, business, and culture in South Africa.

It was in the same month, in her hometown of Siyabuswa under the Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality, that Gogo Dr Esther Mahlangu was seated as the Special Guest during the national





Heritage Day event. That event placed a Ndebele artist and cultural custodian at the very center of the country's Heritage Day commemorations. As if that was not enough, in 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa dedicated Heritage Month to Gogo Esther, together with Mama Madosini and Mama Katrina Esau, the three living legends and keepers of our indigenous knowledge.

There are artists who paint with color, and then there is Dr Esther Mahlangu, who prints rainbows from her mind. With a brush in her hand and generations in her memory, she turns geometry into language, and walls into scripture. Each line is inheritance. Each color is prayer. For decades, Gogo Esther has carried the Ndebele tradition out of rural homesteads and into the world, not by leaving it behind, but by insisting that the world come to meet it. In her work, the past does not fade, it is printed, bold and bright, for the future to see.

The woman who prints rainbows from her mind. This is the woman who turned a home into a gallery and a tradition into a movement.

She took the sacred geometry of Ndebele women and placed it on canvases, on cars, on museum walls and the world stopped to look. At 90, her colors have not dimmed. Her mind has not rested. Because legacy is not inherited, it is printed and Gogo Esther is still printing it, for us, for our daughters, for the future of art. She grew up learning the traditional Ndebele art of geometric mural painting from her mother and grandmother. The bold patterns, bright colors, and symmetry are passed down by women in Ndebele culture.

Taking it Global, in the 1980s and 1990s she took Ndebele art off the walls and onto canvas, cars, and international stages. Gogo our Cultural Ambassador, she's exhibited at the British Museum, Pompidou Centre in Paris, and

countless galleries worldwide. She keeps Ndebele culture alive while making it contemporary. She received many honours, honorary doctorates, and in 2024 she became the oldest artist to have a major solo exhibition at the Iziko South African National Gallery at age 88.

Why must she be honoured whilst still alive? Because Gogo Esther represents women, art, heritage, and resilience. She turned a tradition that was only done on rural homes into global fine art, and she did it as a woman in a male-dominated art world.

Uyapenda imibala, uyapenda inkumbulo. She paints color, she paints memory. Gogo Esther siyabonga for printing rainbows when the world was grey. Siyabonga for showing our daughters that a woman's hands can build museums. Siyabonga for proving that culture is not kept in a glass case. Culture is lived; culture is printed every day. To every young woman in Africa and globally, Bhekani kuGogo – look to Gogo and see what happens when you refuse to shrink.

May we print rainbows from our minds. May we honour the past by building the future. Gogo Dr Esther Mahlangu, Grandmother of the Nation. Siyakuqhakamisa, siyakuhlonipha.

We celebrate you; we honour you. Please receive your flowers now because you are the only one who prints rainbow colours from the mind. You are an institution. ■

Comrade Sello Shai-Morule is Chairperson of the ANC W17 Branch, Mbombela Sub-Region in Mpumalanga Province. He writes in his personal capacity.



A Sober Nation Must Learn from the **Enyobeni Tragedy**

■ By **FAIEZ JACOBS**

TWENTY-ONE young people entered Enyobeni Tavern in Scenery Park in June 2022, to celebrate end of school party and never returned home. They were twelve boys and nine girls, aged between thirteen and twenty-one. This month, the Mdantsane Regional Court found prima facie evidence that acts or omissions by the tavern owners, a liquor-board inspector, a police officer and a former bouncer contributed to their deaths. This is not yet a criminal conviction. It is a summons to the nation: could the state and society have acted before children died?

The answer is yes. Complaints had reached the police. Under-age drinking, overcrowding and other breaches were visible. Yet warning dissolved into dia-

logue, delay and divided responsibility. Enyobeni was not only one tavern's failure. It exposed a broken chain from parents, traders and community reporting to license conditions, municipal safety, liquor inspection, policing and child protection.

We must not demonise every tavern. Taverns are township livelihoods, employers and social spaces. Responsible traders deserve respect and support. Nor should we condemn adults who drink. But liquor is no ordinary product. Alcohol is toxic, psychoactive, dependence-producing and carcinogenic. A license to trade cannot become a license to transfer private profit into public pain.

Our relationship with alcohol is

ancient and complicated. Traditional beer has accompanied hospitality, ceremony, remembrance and communal life. It was governed by custom and shared responsibility, not merely intoxication. The word "alcohol," from Arabic al-kuhl, travelled from a refined essence to the "spirit" distilled from wine. Culture is not the cause of harm; it teaches that powerful substances require boundaries.

South Africa bears history's scars. Alcohol was woven into Cape slavery and later the dop system, through which farm workers were partly paid and controlled with wine. Exploitation cultivated dependence, family harm and intergenerational trauma. Today advertising and cheap supply too often harvest that pain for profit.

We therefore need a sober society, not a prohibitionist society: one in which abstinence is respected, moderation is normal, dependence is treated without shame, and celebration does not require intoxication. Sobriety means clear judgment, productive lives and communities able to protect their children.

The scale demands urgency. South Africa has among the world's highest levels of heavy episodic drinking. Alcohol contributes 7% of our disease burden. DG Murray Trust research records that about one in three South Africans drank in 2015, while one in seven reported binge drinking on an average drinking day. Older estimates placed the economic and social cost at 10% to 12% of GDP far more than excise revenue can repay.

The drinker is not the only person harmed. Alcohol is present in road deaths, assaults, gender-based violence, unsafe sex, cancer, liver disease, tuberculosis and HIV vulnerability. It empties food budgets, steals working days, exposes children to neglect, and fills trauma wards. Foetal alcohol spectrum disorder

can shape an unborn child's entire life. Harm radiates through every household, workplace and neighbourhood.

Enyobeni is not alone. In December 2025, twelve people including children aged three, twelve and sixteen were killed at an unlicensed Saulsville shebeen. Days later, ten died after gunmen attacked a Bekkersdal tavern whose owner was later charged with operating illegally. Firearms caused those killings, but unsafe drinking venues concentrated vulnerability. Illegal outlets return when enforcement is episodic and livelihoods remain desperate. Our law must operate as one system. The Liquor Act 59 of 2003 regulates large manufacturers and distributors nationally and created a council to coordinate the Minister and provincial MECs. Provinces license retailers, inspect premises and may fine, suspend or cancel. Municipalities control zoning, safety and many trading-hour by-laws. SAPS enforces offences and public order. Health records trauma; Social Development leads prevention and treatment. Different mandates cannot excuse fragmentation.

Selling liquor to anyone under eighteen is illegal. Yet that means little without identification, trained servers, delivery checks, mystery-shopper testing and immediate sanctions. Sweet alcopops deserve attention. Packaged like cooldrinks, "alcopops" can disguise strength and condition young palates for alcohol. Government should prohibit child-appealing names, imagery and packaging, mandate warnings and control flavours, container sizes and placement near soft drinks.

Provincial liquor boards must be public-safety regulators, not cash offices issuing paper. A national digital register should show every outlet, owner, condition, capacity, approved hours, inspection, complaint and sanction. Renewal must be earned annually. High-risk outlets require frequent inspection. Repeated under-age sales, overcrowding, violence or after-hours trading must trigger shorter hours, suspension or cancellation. The Western Cape showed that coverage is possible when it reported more than 13,000 inspections across roughly 9,100 licensed premises in one year. Every province should meet one national standard.



Municipal approval and liquor licensing must become one process. No outlet should trade without verified zoning, fire compliance, exits, occupancy limits and community notice. National minimum norms should guide outlet density, distances from schools and clinics, and closing times. Every complaint needs one reference number, a lead official and deadline. Inspectors, municipal officers and SAPS must share information and conduct joint operations.

Marketing is the other battlefield. The Liquor Amendment Bill B21-2025 would prohibit advertising across media, paid product placement, brand promotion and sponsorship of organised activities. Parliament should pass effective controls urgently. South African research found that each additional advertising channel reaching adolescents increased the odds of recent alcohol use by 13%. Industry cannot claim to target adults while its brands occupy sport, music, influencers and young people's phones.

Implementation must cover television, radio, billboards, stadiums, streaming, social media, influencers and surrogate branding. An independent regulator needs takedown powers, published decisions and meaningful penalties. Industry self-regulation is not public protection.

DGMT's message is clear: price, availability and marketing must be addressed together. Its modelling suggests a minimum price of R6 per standard drink could reduce consumption by 6.2% among binge drinkers and 15.5% among other heavy drinkers. Bulk products have sold for around R35 per five litres. Cheap alcohol is never cheap when families, hospitals and communities



pay the balance. WHO evidence supports higher taxes, minimum pricing, fewer outlets, shorter hours, annual license renewal and strong marketing restrictions. Lithuania used a combined package; Scotland targets cheap high-strength liquor; Brazil's Diadema restricted late-night sales and reduced violence.

The ANC must now lead a national compact for sobriety and safety. We should demand one license-and-harm database; national minimum licensing standards; annual risk-based renewal; firm trading-hour and density rules; alcopop and container controls; statutory marketing regulation; minimum pricing and stronger excise; routine trauma surveillance; and treatment in every district.

Each action needs a lead department, budget, deadline and public indicator. Within twelve months government should map hotspots and audit every high-risk outlet. Parliament, legislatures and councils must review results quarterly. Manufacturers must disclose sales and mar-

keting data and never supply unlicensed traders. Responsible tavern owners should receive compliance training and formalisation support.

Law alone is not enough. OUR Branches, schools, faith communities, parents, youth organisations and traders must build alcohol-free sport, arts, night-time recreation, safe transport and pathways to work. Our youth need places to belong, opportunities to build and reasons to hope.

A sober, productive generation is not created by lectures; it is created by purpose.

Justice for Enyobeni means prosecution where evidence supports it. It also means refusing to let warnings circulate until responsibility disappears. Let us honour those twenty-one lives by building a state that sees risk, joins the information and acts in time and a society that never again sends its children to celebrate and receives them home in coffins. We are creating safe sober spaces for youth relaxation and recreation. ■

Whose Interests Does South Africa's Media Serve?

A Reflection on the Political Economy of the Press

■ By **SASABONA MANGANYE**

A democratic society depends on a free, independent and fearless media. The South African Constitution rightly protects media freedom because a democracy cannot flourish where journalists are intimidated or censored. Yet constitutional freedom also carries a profound responsibility. The question confronting South Africa today is not whether the media should hold power accountable, it absolutely must but whether it should also recognise its role in advancing the country's long-term developmental interests.

Karl Marx observed that “the ruling ideas of every epoch are the ideas of the ruling class.” More than a century later, nowhere is this proposition more visible than in modern media. Newspapers, television, digital platforms and commercial broadcasters are often presented as neutral observers of society. Yet they are not produced in a social vacuum. They exist within an economic system in which ownership, advertising revenue, financial markets and corporate interests profoundly shape what is considered newsworthy and what is excluded from public discourse.

South Africa's media occupies a contradictory position within our democracy. On the one hand, it has performed an indispensable



constitutional function by exposing corruption, state capture and abuses of public power. This contribution must be defended without qualification. On the other hand, the dominant media landscape remains deeply embedded within the logic of capitalist accumulation, where market interests frequently determine editorial priorities.

Day after day, international investors, tourists and potential trading partners consume headlines portraying South Africa almost exclusively through crime, corruption, political instability and governance failures. While these issues deserve robust reporting, they rarely appear alongside sto-

ries of innovation, infrastructure development, scientific breakthroughs, entrepreneurial success, expanding industries or resilient communities that continue to build the country.

The cumulative effect is the creation of a national brand that is overwhelmingly negative.

The result is a media discourse that often reproduces the ideological assumptions of neoliberal capitalism while presenting them as objective economic common sense.

When investment is discussed, it is almost exclusively through the expectations of financial markets.

When labour demands higher wages, the discussion quickly turns to investor confidence. When the democratic state expands social spending, the dominant concern becomes fiscal consolidation rather than the historical necessity of redistribution. Public ownership is routinely portrayed as inefficient, while privatisation is frequently presented as the inevitable solution.

This is not accidental.

Marx understood that the economic base shapes the ideological superstructure. Media institutions operating within capitalist markets inevitably experience pressures that reinforce the interests of capital. Editorial independence does not eliminate structural economic incentives. It simply means that ideological influence operates through ownership patterns, commercial imperatives, advertising dependence and elite networks rather than direct political instruction.

South Africa continues to experience one of the highest levels of inequality in the world. Wealth remains highly concentrated while millions remain excluded from meaningful economic participation. Yet public debate often focuses disproportionately on the state's shortcomings without giving equal attention to structural features of the economy inherited from colonialism and apartheid: concentrated ownership, financialisation, monopoly capital and unequal patterns of land and productive asset ownership.

This imbalance narrows democratic debate.

The media has every right to investigate government failures. Indeed, this responsibility is essential to constitutional democracy. But democracy also requires rigorous scrutiny of concentrated economic power. Monopoly capital, multinational corporations, financial institutions and dominant industries should receive

the same intensity of investigation that government institutions experience.

Economic transformation cannot succeed if the public conversation consistently privileges the interests of established capital over those of workers, emerging entrepreneurs, township economies, cooperatives and productive industrial development.

South Africa requires a developmental media that understands the central contradiction confronting our society: the coexistence of advanced capitalism alongside mass unemployment, poverty and inequality.

A developmental media is not state propaganda.

It is journalism that examines how economic structures produce social outcomes. It asks why ownership remains concentrated.

It interrogates monopoly pricing,



illicit financial flows, tax avoidance, anti-competitive behaviour and corporate concentration with the same energy devoted to exposing failures in government. It recognises that exploitation may occur through markets as well as through political institutions.

Transformation of the media therefore extends beyond demographic representation in newsrooms. It requires transformation of ownership patterns, diversification of editorial perspectives and the strengthening of community, cooperative and public-interest media capable of representing working-class communities whose voices remain marginal within mainstream discourse.

Media concentration itself becomes a democratic question.

When a relatively small number of commercial institutions shape national consciousness, the diversity of ideas inevitably narrows. Marxists have long argued that ideological power is inseparable from economic power. Democratising media ownership therefore becomes part of the broader project of democratising the economy.

South Africa's developmental challenges cannot be understood solely through the lens of governance. Slow industrialisation, deindustrialisation, youth unemployment, energy insecurity and persistent inequality are rooted in the structure of the political economy itself. Journalism that ignores these structural realities risks reducing systemic contradictions to individual political failures.



The struggle for economic transformation requires an equally transformative public discourse.

Our media should continue exposing corruption wherever it exists. Corruption diverts public resources from the poor and undermines democratic legitimacy. But corruption should not become the only explanation for underdevelopment. Structural inequality, historical dispossession, monopoly capital, uneven development and global financial power remain fundamental obstacles to inclusive growth.

A patriotic media, from a developmental and Marxist perspective, is therefore not one that protects government from criticism. Nor is it one that uncritically celebrates markets.

Rather, it is one that consistently places the material interests of the people, the workers, the poor, the unemployed, small producers and historically disadvantaged communities, at the centre of national discourse. It measures economic success not merely by stock market performance or investor sentiment, but by employment creation, industri-

al expansion, reduced inequality, universal access to quality public services and the expansion of democratic control over economic resources.

The struggle for media transformation is inseparable from the broader struggle for economic transformation.

Both seek to democratise power. Both seek to broaden participation. Both seek to ensure that South Africa's immense wealth serves the many rather than the few.

As Marx reminded us, philosophers have interpreted the world in different ways; the point, however, is to change it.

A transformed media should not merely describe South Africa's socioeconomic contradictions – it should illuminate their structural causes and enrich democratic debate on how they may be overcome in the interests of the majority. ■

Comrade Sasabona Manganye,
is ANC Greater Joburg Regional Secretary.



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THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

25–31 July 2026

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

25 July 1913

ANC meeting to discuss Land Act

A meeting in Johannesburg, called by the South African Native National Congress, now ANC, was attended by a large number of men and women from South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland. The meeting was convened to discuss the conditions caused by the Native Land Act of 1913 and to chart a way forward. The meeting heard a report from a delegation, sent to Cape Town to present African objections against the act. Dr Walter Rubusana, presenter of the report, informed the public that the government would not delay the passage of the act. The meeting decided to send a dep-

utation to London and meet with Her Majesty's Imperial Government. The delegation included Solomon Tshekisho Plaatje, Dr Walter Rubusana, and Pixley Ka Seme.

25 July 1990

Operation Vula operatives arrested

Senior ANC members, Mac Maharaj, Pravin Gordhan, Sphiwe Nyanda, Billy Nair and over forty other members of the ANC and the SACP, are detained for allegedly attempting to overthrow the government, known as Operation Vula. Operation Vula aimed to get larger numbers of MK soldiers into South Africa and to ensure closer communication links



amongst ANC Leaders in exile, at home and in prison. With the unbanning of the ANC in 1990, Operation Vula continued, because there were no guarantees that the government would negotiate in good faith with the liberation movement.



26 July 1847

Establishment of Liberia

The republic of Liberia was formed by slaves and descendants from the Transatlantic slave trade freed, and who repatriated back to the continent. The American Decolonization Society founded Liberia in 1822, helping to settle those who chose to return. On this day, the Liberian Declaration of Independence was signed. The repatriated returnees made up 5% of the Liberian population, and dominated the first republic, until an uprising by indigenous Liberians led by Samuel Doe in 1980. The country went through two civil wars (1989–1996 and 1997–2003). Liberian women through the Women

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

in Peacebuilding Network and the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace, and the continental organisations (ECOWAS and the OAU/AU), played an important role in ending more than two decades of civil war. Liberia elected Africa's first female President, Dr Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, serving two terms from 2005-2018. In 2018, former footballer George Weah was elected as Liberia's 25th President.

26 July 1939

Poet and artist Wopko Jensma born



South African poet and graphic designer Wopko Jensma was born in Middelburg, Eastern Province. Highly talented but suffering from schizophrenia, he studied at various tertiary institutions and majored in sculpture at the University of Pretoria. After having lived in Mozambique, Botswana and Swaziland for some time, Jensma returned to South Africa where he disappeared in 1993 without a trace from a Salvation Army Men's Home, a shelter that accommodates homeless people.

26 July 2004.

Music legend Spho Gumede passed on

Born in Cato Manor near Durban, Spho Gumede started playing music on a homemade guitar. He joined his first band at the



age of 16 and soon became a sought-after bass player. Over the course of his career he recorded 18 albums under his own name and four with his band Sakhile, formed together with Khaya Mhlangu and Mabi Gabriel Thobejane. He recorded and performed with Timmy Thomas, Kippie Moeketsi, Stimela, Margaret Singane, Abdullah Ibrahim, Winston Mankunku Ngozi, Hugh Masekela, Brenda Fassie, Cai-phus Semenya and Letta Mbulu.

27 July 1999

Law Society apologises to Mahatma Gandhi, 105 years later

The Natal Law Society, 105 years later, apologized to Mahatma Gandhi. In a statement issued in 1999, Law Society President David Randles said: *"The society apologises unconditionally, albeit posthumously, to the late Mahatma Gandhi for having attempted to restrict his rights to practice as an advocate in Natal."*

27 July 1970

Establishment of Uranium Enrichment Council

Government release Uranium Enrichment Bill, to cater for the establishment of the national Uranium Enrichment Council, and South Africa's plans to become a

nuclear power. Already in 1948, an Atomic Energy Board (now the Atomic Energy Corporation) was established, and the country became a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1957; two years later in 1959 government announced the creation of a domestic nuclear industry. Although the then Prime Minister, John Vorster proclaimed the sole objective is *"to promote the peaceful application of nuclear energy"*, the country went on to build nuclear weapons. Two nuclear power stations, Pelindaba and Koeberg were built, both still in existence today. In 1991, South Africa signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), voluntarily dismantled its nuclear weapons programme in 1993, and in 1996, South Africa signed the African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty – also called the Pelindaba Treaty. (www.nnr.co.za/history)

28 July 2008

South Africa gets new R5 coin

In response to the wide circulation of a counterfeit version of the old R5 coin around 2003/2004, the Reserve Bank redesigned the R5 coin, to make it more difficult to copy. The new thicker and heavier bi-metal coin has a silver coloured border and a bronze coloured center.



28 July 1945

Father of isiXhosa poetry, Samuel Mqhayi passes on



Samuel Edward Krune Mqhayi, author, educator, linguist, poet, translator and composer, grew up in rural Transkei, and was a teacher who also edited a number of isiXhosa-language journals, served on the board of the isiXhosa Bible Revision committee, and helped to standardize isiXhosa orthograph and codify isiXhosa. His published works include his first *U-Samson, Ityala lamawele* (1914, “*The Lawsuit of the Twins*”) and *Imihobe Nemibongo* (1927; “*Songs of Joy and Lullabies*”) which included original stanzas from Enoch Sontonga’s *Nkosi sikelel’ iAfrica*, to which Mqhayi added seven additional stanzas. He also wrote *U-Don Jadu* (1929), describes a futuristic non-racial state that combines elements of Xhosa society and Western culture. Mqhayi’s autobiography, *U-Mqhayi wase Ntab’ozuko* (“*Mqhayi of the Mountain of Beauty*”), was published in 1939; and two other of his works, “*The Death of Hintsa*” and “*The Dismissal of Sir Benjamin D’Urban*,” were published posthumously in Mqhayi in Translation in 1976.

28 July 1961

James La Guma passes on
James La Guma, born in 1894 in Cape Town was a trade unionist, political activist and a member of



the ANC and Communist Party of South Africa. Orphaned at age 5, he started work in a bakery in Parow at the age of eight. Having left school early, he was largely self-educated, buying books at second hand stalls on the Grand Parade. Reading exposed La Guma to radical ideas and in 1906 he participated in his first strike, organizing workers on the diamond fields. He was escorted by police from the mines and shortly thereafter left for Namibia (then South West Africa) with a friend to work. Upon his return in 1921, he joined the Industrial Commercial Union (ICU), with the first task to revive the defunct Port Elizabeth ICU. In 1923, La Guma married Wilhelmina (Minnie) Alexander, the daughter of a carpenter who was active in the African Political Organisation (APO). In Minnie, La Guma found a lifelong companion and fellow activist. Of their marriage a son, Alexander, the celebrated novelist, and a daughter, Joan, were born. La Guma joined the Communist Party in 1925 and was elected to its Central Committee in 1926. He devoted his energies to the CPSA and the African National Congress (ANC). In 1927, he was elected secretary of the Cape Town branch of the ANC and the following year became the organisation’s secretary for the Western Cape. In February

1927, he travelled to Brussels, Belgium, as SACP delegate to the first international conference; also visiting Germany to give lectures; and visiting the Soviet Union with ANC president, JT Gumede. Although a committed communist, La Guma displeased the largely white CPSA hierarchy because of his Africanist militancy. In 1929, La Guma was expelled from the CPSA for breach of discipline. He rejoined the CPSA in 1947, was elected to its Central Committee and served until the party’s dissolution after the passage of the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950. La Guma re-entered protest politics in 1957 when his son, Alex La Guma, was arrested on a charge of high treason in December 1956 for his role in the Congress of the People. La Guma’s health failed rapidly after his release from prison, and died on 28 July of a fatal heart attack at Groote Schuur Hospital in 1961. La Guma received the Order of Luthuli, Silver posthumously. (<http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/national-orders/recipient/james-arnold-jimmy-la-guma-1894-1961>)

29 July 1921

The Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) founded



At a public meeting held in Cape Town, attended by thousands of mainly Coloured workers, Bill

Andrews announced the establishment of the CPSA, and its aims and objectives. Its founding congress followed shortly, from 30 July – 1 August 1921. The CPSA was formed mainly by radical white worker leaders and socialists, inspired by similar communist and Marxist parties in Europe. The first CPSA executive included as CP Tyler as Party chairperson, Bill Andrews as general secretary and SP Bunting as treasurer. By 1928, the CPSA and ANC started overtures to work together. The SACP was relaunched as a legal organisation on the same day in 1990, at a rally of over 45,000 people in Soweto. An interim leadership core, the SACP named a 22-member interim leadership core to work on recruitment and building legal SACP structures, after decades of illegality. Members of the ILC included Joe Slovo, Dan Tloome, Chris Hani, Ronnie Kasrils, Sydney Mufamadi, Chris Dlamini, and Moses Mayekiso.

29 July 1931

Botanist George Clerck born

The pioneer of botanical science in West Africa, George Clerck is born in Accra, Ghana. Clerck published over 250 papers particularly in plant pathology, influencing agricultural, forestry and conservation policies in the region. His study of fungi that attack cocoa beans helped West African cocoa farmers.

29 July 1960

Prof Salim Karim born

South African scientist and public health specialist, Dr Salim Abdool Karim is born in Durban, on this day. Dr Karim has had a profound impact through his HIV scientific



discoveries and his leadership in both AIDS and Covid-19 in South Africa, Africa and globally. In South Africa, he has received the MRC's "Platinum Medal Lifetime Achievement Award", "Gold Medal Award for Fellowship in the Art & Science of Medicine" from the South African Medical Association, the "John F. W. Herschel Medal" from the Royal Society of South Africa and the "Science for Society Gold Medal Award" from the Academy of Science in South Africa. He has been ranked as being among the 50 all-time "Legends of South African Science" by the Academy of Science of South Africa. He is one of the nine members of the World Health Organization's Science Council. He has been actively contributing

to the mitigation of the COVID-19 epidemic in Africa, serving as a Member of the Africa Task Force for Coronavirus. He served as the Chair of the South African Ministerial Advisory Committee on COVID-19 for the first year of the epidemic.

29 July 1990

Monrovia Church Massacre prompts ECOWAS intervention

In the single worst atrocity during the Liberian Civil War, 600 people are killed in a church in the capital Monrovia by soldiers loyal to President Samuel Doe. Only a few children survived hiding under the bodies of slain adults. The massacre pushed the Economic Community of West African States to send an intervention force to Liberia.

30-31 July 1967

Luthuli Combat Detachment and start of Wankie campaign

The '*Luthuli Detachment*', made up of units of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) operatives, and the Zimbabwean African People's Union (ZAPU) guerrillas, crossed the Zambezi River from the Zambian banks of the river into



Rhodesia (now known as Zimbabwe) on 30 and 31 July 1967, at the start of the Wankie and Sipolilo battles which continued until late 1968. Fearing possible leakage of information to the Rhodesian and South African Forces, the area where the crossing was to take place was kept secret until the day of the event. The primary objective of this operation was to march across Rhodesia to South Africa to set up underground operations to politically mobilise South Africans in different sections of the country. The other mission was to set up military bases, together with ZAPU forces, in north-eastern Rhodesia. The operation became known as the Wankie campaign, after the Wankie Game Reserve, where the ANC and ZAPU guerrillas infiltrated into Rhodesia.

30 July 1947

Passing of ANC Youth League first President, Anton Lembede



Teacher, lawyer, activist and the founder thinker of Pan Africanism, Lembede suddenly died at the age of 33 in Johannesburg. At the time of his death, Lembede was doing his doctoral thesis through UNISA. Anton Muziwakhe Lembede was born on 21 March 1914 at Eston in the former Natal. Lembede started in formal schooling at the age

of 13 at the Catholic Inkanyezi School. He secured a scholarship to train as a teacher at Adams College Durban, from 1933 to 1935. Through private studies two years later, he passed the matriculation equivalence exams with a distinction in Latin. He taught in Natal and the Orange Free State during which time he obtained BA AND LLB degrees over a six-year period from the University of South Africa (UNISA). In 1943, he moved to Johannesburg to serve legal articles under Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme, the veteran African National Congress (ANC) leader. He qualified as an attorney in 1946 and became Pixley Seme's law partner. Two former acquaintances, Jordan Ngubane and AP Mda, initiated Lembede into the ANC in 1943. Together with other intellectuals, the three worked to form the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) on 10 September 1944. Lembede was elected the League's first President. He was central in the drafting of the ANCYL's March 1944 Congress Youth League Manifesto. Lembede, a profound intellectual, was a leading advocate of more militant strategies and tactics in the ANC, and was later considered an architect of the 1949 programme of Action, even though he died before its adoption.

30 July 1976

Solly Sachs, socialist passed on

South African trade unionist and anti-apartheid activist Solly Sachs was born in Lithuania in 1900 and the family moved to Johannesburg in 1914. Sachs became active in trade unions, and joined the Communist Party of South Africa and the Communist Youth League, rising in the ranks and elected onto the CPSA Central Committee in 1930. Although Sachs left South Africa in

1953 and settled in England, he continued his opposition to the South African government. He is the father of former Constitutional Court Judge Albie Sachs.

31 July 1969

Albertina Sisulu banning orders renewed



On 31 July 1969 Albertina Sisulu, had her banning order renewed for another five years after the expiry of a previous one. Reasons for the renewal included her activism in the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) and the then banned ANC. As part of her banning orders, she was also placed under house arrest. Ma Albertina Sisulu became the South African person longest under banning orders.

31 July 2007

Joint AU-UN Darfur Mission

To prevent genocide in the war-torn Darfur region of the Sudan, the African Union and United Nations partner in a joint peacekeeping mission, the UNAU Mission in Darfur (UNAUMID). It is the first joint peacekeeping mission, and largest, at one point comprising close to 2000 military personnel, 3 772 police, and a further 3000 other personnel. The mission finally withdrew from Sudan in 2021.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

25–31 July 2026

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



25 July

African Day of Oceans and Seas

Over 80% of today's international goods are transported in sea vessels and over 90% of Africa's imports and exports are conducted by sea. Over the past four decades, the volume of global sea borne trade has more than quadrupled. 90% of world trade and two-thirds of energy supplies are carried by sea. The world's oceans and seas are inter-linked, and action in one sea or one policy area with impact on the sea may have positive or negative effects on other seas and policy areas. Fish and

seafood make a vital contribution to the food and nutritional security of over 200 million Africans and provides income for over 10 million. The coastal and marine ecosystems also play a significant role in mitigating the impacts of climate change as they serve as carbon sinks. The paradox is that the marine and coastal areas in Africa are among the most vulnerable areas to the impacts of climate change in the world, mainly attributed to the low adaptive capacity in the continent. These negative effects are compounded by human pollution, especially the dumping of plastic, with devastating consequences on marine life.



28 July

International day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem

Mangroves are rare, spectacular and prolific ecosystems on the boundary between land and sea. These extra ordinary ecosystems contribute to the wellbeing, food security, and protection of coastal communities worldwide. They support a rich biodiversity and provide a valuable nursery habitat for fish and crustaceans. Mangroves also act as a form of natural coastal defense against storm surges, tsunamis, rising sea levels and erosion. Their soils are highly effective carbon sinks, sequestering vast



Mangroves

amounts of carbon. Yet mangroves are disappearing three to five times faster than overall global forest losses, with serious ecological and socio-economic impacts. Current estimates indicate that mangrove coverage has been divided by two in the past 40 years. South Africa has about 9000 ha of mangroves, mainly on the KZN east coast from Khosi Bay to the Nahoon estuary, with the largest mangrove forests in St Lucia and Richard's Bay.

28 July

World Hepatitis Day

Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver, most commonly caused by a viral infection that causes severe liver disease and hepatocellular cancer. There are five main hepatitis viruses, referred to as types A, B, C, D and E. These five types are of greatest concern because of the burden of illness and death they cause and the potential for outbreaks and epidemic spread. Hepatitis is spread through contact with the blood or body fluids of an infected person. Viral hepatitis B and C affect 325 million people

worldwide causing 1.4 million deaths a year. It is the second major killer infectious disease after tuberculosis, and 9 times more people are infected with hepatitis than HIV. Hepatitis is preventable, treatable, and in the case of hepatitis C, curable. However, over 80% of people living with hepatitis are lacking prevention, testing and treatment services. The World Hepatitis Day 2026 theme, **"Hepatitis: Let's break it down,"** is a call to remove the barriers that stand between people and the services that can save their lives. The 2026 campaign calls for turning proven science into action through stronger political commitment, sustained investment, and efforts to expand equitable access to prevention, testing, treatment, and care..

30 July

International Day of Friendship



Our world faces many challenges, crises and forces of division – such as poverty, violence, and human rights abuses, among many others – that undermine peace, security, development and social harmony among the world's peoples. To confront those crises and challenges, their root causes must be addressed by promoting and defending a shared spirit of human solidarity that takes many forms – the simplest of which is friendship. Through friendship – by accumulating bonds of camaraderie and developing strong ties of trust – we can contribute to the fundamental shifts that are urgently needed to achieve lasting stability, weave a safety net that will protect us all, and generate passion for a better world where all are united for the greater good.

WORLD HEPATITIS DAY | JULY 28th 

KNOW HEPATITIS ACT NOW

WHAT IS HEPATITIS ?

Hepatitis virus causes infection and inflammation of the liver

 Hep B & C can lead to severe disease and possibly death

 Hep B & C is spread by blood, semen and other body fluids

 **400 million** people live with Hepatitis

6-10 million people are newly infected annually



30 July

World Day against Trafficking in Persons

Human trafficking, also called 'modern slave trade' is a crime that exploits women, children and men for numerous purposes including forced labour and sex. The 2026 World Day Against Trafficking in Persons theme, *"Trapped Behind the Scam,"* draws attention to a rapidly expanding form of human trafficking in which transnational organized crime groups exploit people to carry out industrial-scale financial fraud. Victims are trafficked for forced criminality and compelled to participate in online scam operations. This form of exploitation is closely linked to cybercrime, financial fraud, money laundering, and corruption, demonstrating the increasingly interconnected nature of organized crime.

How victims become trapped

Traffickers often recruit victims through fake job advertisements that promise legitimate employment opportunities abroad. Believing they are accepting genuine work, victims travel to another country only to find themselves confined in illegal scam compounds. Within these compounds, victims are forced to conduct cyber-enabled fraud, including romance scams, cryptocurrency fraud, and other online schemes targeting people around the world. They are kept under constant surveillance and subjected to violence, threats, debt bondage, and demanding work quotas, leaving them trapped in conditions of fear with little opportunity to escape. The UN Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is supporting countries across the globe to improve victim identification, investigations and prosecutions related to trafficking for forced criminality, cyber-enabled fraud and money laundering. This includes advanced training, support for specialized taskforces and stronger cross-border cooperation.

If you suspect human trafficking or need to report suspicious activity in South Africa, you can utilize the following resources:

- National Human Trafficking Hotline: Contact the toll-free line at **0800 222 777**.
- SAPS: Contact the South African Police Service (SAPS) directly at **10111** or report it at your nearest police station.

31 July

African Women's Day

The Day of the African Woman celebrates the first Pan African women's gathering, when women from all parts of the continent gathered in Dar es Salaam on 31 July 1962 to form what was then known as the *"Conference of African Women"*, which later transformed into the Pan African Women's Organisation (PAWO). The main aim of the founding mothers was to establish an organisation which will ensure full and effective participation of women in political, economic and social development in their countries, continent and the world. The day is used to reflect on how far the continent has progressed in meeting this objective.



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