



Conversations *with the* **President**



We are proud to stand on the shoulders of giants, the izimbokodo of 1956

TODAY is no ordinary commemoration. It is one of the most important days on our national calendar.

National Women's Day is a day on which we honour the women of South Africa. But it is also a day of profound significance for our entire country.

This is because the Women's March of 1956 was not a footnote in our struggle for freedom. It helped to change the course, the character and the leadership of that struggle.

It demonstrated that women were

NATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

**ADDRESS BY
PRESIDENT**

CYRIL RAMAPHOSA

9 August 2026,
Union Buildings, Tshwane

not merely supporters of the struggle.

They were its leaders, its organisers and its authors.

Seventy years ago today, at

least 20,000 women from across South Africa gathered here at the Union Buildings.

They came to the very seat of apartheid power.

Prime Minister JG Strijdom chose not to receive them. He ran away.

But his absence did not diminish their presence.

The women left at his door petitions bearing more than 100,000 signatures.

They then stood in disciplined silence for thirty minutes.



It was a silence more powerful than any speech the apartheid government could have made.

But theirs was not the silence of fear.

It was not the silence of submission.

It was the silence of courage gathering its strength.

It was the silence of women who knew that they carried the justice of their cause within them.

For thirty minutes, there was no chant, no speech and no cry. Yet their silence said everything that needed to be said.

That silence held the pain of every woman humiliated by the pass laws.

It held the anger of every mother whose family had been torn apart.

It held the hopes of every daughter who dreamed of growing up free.

It held all the words that apart-

heid refused to hear.

The Union Buildings may have been quiet, but the conscience of a nation was being awakened.

Their silence was not empty. It was filled with dignity, discipline and determination. It was louder than any command issued by the apartheid state. It was a silence that unsettled the powerful, inspired the oppressed and echoed across generations.

Today, as we stand where they stood, let us remember those thirty minutes.

Let us hear, within that silence, the footsteps of 20,000 courageous women.

In remembrance of those brave women, I ask that we stand and be silent in their honour for a while.

After they stood silent, then their voices rang out:

***Wathint' abafazi, Strijdom!
Wathint' imbokodo, uza kufa!
You have touched the women.
You have struck a rock. You
will be crushed.***

On that day, the Prime Minister may have occupied the highest office in the land, but the true power was gathered on the lawns of the Union Buildings.

We salute the four women who led the march: Mama Lilian Ngoyi, Mama Helen Joseph, Mama Rahima Moosa and Mama Sophie Williams-de Bruyn.

Mama Sophie, who was only eighteen years old at the time, we are deeply honoured by your presence today.

We thank you for your courage, your lifetime of service and your continuing witness to our history.

We honour every woman who marched with you.

We know the names of some, but not yet the names of all.

We therefore welcome the work of the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation and the Sophia and Henry De Bruyn Legacy Foundation through the "Write Her into History" campaign.

This campaign is restoring the names and stories of the women of 1956 to our national memory.

I call on every family and every community that knows the name of a woman who took part in the march to come forward.

Let us complete this roll call of honour.

Let us ensure that history remembers not only the leaders at the front, but the thousands who gave the march its strength.

The women of 1956 were protesting against passes, but their message reached far beyond the pass laws.

They challenged the idea that women should be confined to the home, silent in public affairs and subordinate to men.

They challenged discrimination based on both race and gender.

They made clear that no nation can be free while its women are not free.

The march did not emerge from nowhere.

It was part of a long tradition of women's resistance.

In 1913, women led by Charlotte Maxeke rose in Bloemfontein against the imposition of passes.

In the decades that followed, women organised in communities, churches, factories, farms and trade unions. They resisted municipal beer halls, low wages, forced removals and racial oppression.

In 1954, the Federation of South African Women adopted the Women's Charter. In 1955, women carried their demands into the Congress of the People at Kliptown.

They demanded the vote. They demanded equal pay for equal work and equal opportunity in employment.

They demanded equal rights in marriage, property and the guardianship of children.

They demanded education, childcare, housing, land, water, healthcare and social security.

They understood that freedom is not an abstract idea.

Freedom must be present in the home, in the workplace, in the



classroom, in the clinic, in the law and in the economy.

The petition presented here in 1956 declared:

"We shall not rest until we have won for our children their fundamental rights of freedom, justice and security."

Seventy years later, that pledge still speaks directly to us.

We have made undeniable progress.

Thirty years ago, we adopted a Constitution that recognises non-sexism as a founding value of our democracy and guarantees every woman the rights to equality, dignity, freedom and bodily integrity.

Women have the right to vote, to hold public office, to own property and land, to inherit, to choose whom to marry and to participate fully in every sphere of society.

Women lead institutions that are vital to our democracy.

Today, women serve as Chief Justice, Speaker of the National

Assembly, Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Public Protector and Auditor-General.

Women are ministers, mayors, judges, traditional leaders, diplomats, police officers, soldiers, entrepreneurs, farmers, scientists, engineers, academics, artists and athletes.

Women have made significant gains in higher education and continue to break barriers in fields once closed to them.

These gains matter. They were fought for. They must be defended.

South Africa ranks highly on global indices for women's empowerment, including for gender parity, educational outcomes, financial inclusion, and political representation and decision-making.

We are proud of how far we have come.

We are proud to stand on the shoulders of giants, the izimbokodo of 1956.

As a country we have been consistent that there can be no

CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PRESIDENT

human rights without women's rights.

There can be no progress in society without the empowerment of women.

We cannot achieve social justice without gender equality.

This conviction is rooted in our commitment to building a South Africa that is united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic, prosperous and free.

These achievements were not freely given.

And having attained our own freedom, it is our duty to stand in solidarity with the victims of sexism and gender apartheid, wherever they are.

We are honoured to have with us here today Ms Malala Yousafzai, who paid a heavy price for her activism.

A cruel ideology tried to silence you, but you rose to become one of the most strident voices for the emancipation of women in our world today.

Malala, thank you for being here today. We welcome you.

The struggles of women for equality and emancipation do not know boundaries of geography, language, religion, race, colour or class. And the struggles of women are far from over.

This year's theme is **Empowered women empower nations**. We know that empowered women and girls empower South Africa.

That means that we must work as a society to remove every obstacle that stands between a woman



and her ambition.

Women are more than half of our population, but they do not yet hold an equal share of our country's wealth, its land or its enterprises.

Too many women are without work. Too many earn less than men for doing the same work.

Too many carry the burden of caring for families and households, labour that goes unrecognised and uncounted.

This must change. As a government we are working to change this.

We are opening public procurement to women-owned businesses, so that what government spends helps to build women entrepreneurs.

Through the Women Economic Assembly we have been drawing women-owned enterprises into the value chains of our major industries.

We are widening access to finance, to credit and to markets.

And we are ensuring that women hold title to the land they work.

There can be no empowerment without education. Today, more women than men are enrolled in our universities and colleges. They excel in school.

But too few of them enter engineering, science, technology and the artisanal trades, where so many of the opportunities of tomorrow will lie. We must work to change that.

We are bringing care closer to the women in rural areas, farms and villages.

A woman who is skilled, who earns her own income and who enjoys good health is a woman able to determine the course of her own life.

That is the freedom we are working towards.

We know too well that the women of our country will not be truly free until we rid our society of the violence that men perpetrate against women.

In 1956, women lived in fear of being arrested for not having a pass.

Today, women live in fear of the gender-based violence that

stalks them in the streets, even in their homes.

Violence against women and children is not confined to any one particular community.

It affects rich and poor, young and old, black and white.

That is why we classified gender-based violence and femicide as a national disaster.

We did so, so that we could harness all the resources and capabilities of the state to end these crimes.

We have established the National Gender-Based and Femicide Council because gender-based violence and femicide is not a women's problem. It is a problem of society. It is a problem of violent men.

Overcoming this scourge therefore demands that men and boys step forward and say: **Not in My Name.**

It demands that men and boys be part of the solution.

We must prevent this violence, as we are doing, by working with

young men, with the support of traditional, community and religious leaders.

We need to steer men away from behaviours and mindsets that breed violence against women.

We need to break the silence that renders us complicit in this crime.

It is not only the perpetrators of such acts that are guilty. It is also those who choose to look away, to say it's not their problem.

The guilty include those who seek to condone or justify gender-based violence on the grounds of culture, religion or patriarchal social norms.

There is no justification whatsoever for sexual harassment, for physical or mental abuse, for rape or for murder.

Not how women dress or how they behave. Not because some favour is given.

Not because they leave a relationship. Not because they are a junior employee.

Not because they believe themselves equal to men.

Violence against women and children is not a personal matter. It is a crime.

And we can no longer remain silent.

Today we call on all of society to join hands to combat this scourge. So that South Africa's women enjoy the most fundamental freedom of all, freedom from fear.

Even in the midst of hardship and devastation, women rise.

This year's commemoration places particular emphasis on improving women's access to quality healthcare.

This is fundamental to equality, dignity and freedom.

Quality healthcare for women means that every woman must receive care regardless of her income, where she lives or whether she has a disability.

It means safe pregnancy and childbirth, dignified reproductive healthcare and access to family planning.

It means that girls and young



women have the knowledge and services they need to prevent HIV infection.

It means expanding vaccination and screening to prevent cervical cancer, and ensuring timely treatment when illness is detected.

It means that survivors of sexual and domestic violence are treated with compassion, privacy and respect.

It means bringing care closer to women in rural communities, on farms and in informal settlements.

By investing in women's health, we invest in the health, productivity and future of our nation.

The freedom of women is indivisible.

An injustice to women anywhere diminishes the freedom of people everywhere.

On 9 August 1956, the women did not come here to ask the state to praise them.

They came to demand that the state end its injustice against them.

Seventy years later, women do not ask to be applauded for surviving inequality.

They demand that equality be made real.

We as the government will continue to do everything in our power to ensure that we make equality between women and men real in all aspects of our national life.

The measure of this anniversary will not be the speeches we deliver or the ceremonies we hold.

It will be whether a girl can grow up safe, healthy and confident in her future.

It will be whether a young woman can study, find work and be paid fairly.

It will be whether a woman entrepreneur can obtain finance and gain access to markets.

It will be whether a woman farmer can own the land she works.

It will be whether a mother can receive quality healthcare close to where she lives.

It will be whether a survivor of violence receives protection and justice.

It will be whether every woman is treated as a full and equal citizen of this country.

Each generation must answer the question posed by the women of 1956:

Will we fear the power of women, or will we build our nation with it?

en, or will we build our nation with it?

We will ensure that the answer is found in our laws, in our budgets, in our institutions, in our homes and in our conduct towards one another.

Let us honour the women of 1956 by delivering the future for which they marched.

We commit to build a South Africa in which no woman's potential is limited by poverty, prejudice, violence or discrimination.

We will build a nation in which women are equal in law, equal in opportunity, equal in safety and equal in power.

Wathint' abafazi, wathint' imbokodo.

The women of South Africa have shaped our freedom and we thank them.

Together, they will shape our future.



ANC STATEMENT ON THE 2021 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS MANIFESTO REVIEW: **LOCAL GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS**

Building Better Communities Together: **A People's Plan for a Better Life for All**

THE African National Congress today presents the local government interventions component of its review of the 2021 Local Government Elections Manifesto. This forms part of a wider assessment of commitments made under the theme, ***“Building Better Communities Together: A People's Plan for a Better Life for All.”*** We approach this review with a simple obligation. To tell South Africans what has been done, what has improved, what has not worked at the required scale, and the corrective measures pursued.

The review is an exercise in responsible leadership and democratic accountability. It begins with a record of changing the material conditions of millions of South Africans through expanded access to electricity, water, sanitation, housing and secure tenure. It also listens carefully to communities where the reliability and quality of services do not yet reflect the full promise of developmental local government. The ANC believes that confidence is strengthened when progress is recognised, challenges are honestly explained and practical measures are put in place to sustain improvement.

The 2021 Manifesto committed the ANC to improving municipal

functionality and financial viability; deploying skilled leadership and capable management; strengthening community participation; maintaining and expanding infrastructure; improving oversight and accountability; and acting against corruption, tender-rigging, nepotism and maladministration. These were not peripheral undertakings. They went to the heart of whether democratic local government could translate national transformation into reliable services, dignified settlements and functioning local economies.

The ANC has implemented significant parts of the programme entrusted to it, even as municipalities operate under pressure from rapid urbanisation, population growth, constrained revenues, ageing infrastructure and rising service demand. Where progress has been slower than intended, the ANC is applying lessons from implementation to strengthen delivery. This is the purpose of accountability, not to diminish what has been achieved, but to protect those gains and improve the pace, quality and reliability of future delivery.

ANC 2021 LGE MANIFESTO REVIEW



A RECORD OF PROGRESS. A PROGRAMME TO DO BETTER.

The ANC enters the 2026 Local Government Elections with a record of real advances and a commitment to learn from uneven implementation.

The task ahead is to consolidate progress, correct weaknesses and accelerate visible improvements in communities.

EDITORIAL

The review confirms substantial expansion in basic services and human settlements during the democratic era. It also identifies areas where reliability, maintenance, financial governance and institutional capability require further attention. Importantly, it records encouraging municipal turnarounds, where focused political leadership, professional administration, stronger revenue management and community partnership have produced measurable results. These examples provide a practical foundation for extending improvements across the local-government system.

► THE 2021 MANDATE AND A RECORD OF CONTINUED DELIVERY

The ANC's 2021 Manifesto promised: "We will do better to serve our people in every municipality, deliver better services and build thriving communities." That promise recognised that local government is where the democratic state's legitimacy is tested most directly. People encounter the municipality through water, sanitation, electricity, roads, refuse removal, public spaces, planning approvals, rates accounts and the conduct of councillors and officials. A municipality may have an adopted plan and a balanced budget, but if services are unreliable and residents are unheard, government is not fulfilling its constitutional purpose.

The Manifesto also recognised that municipalities do not operate in isolation. Delivery requires municipalities to work with national and provincial government, communities, civil society and business. The constitutional system is interdependent: bulk water, housing grants, electricity supply, transport investment,



ANC 2021 LGE MANIFESTO REVIEW

**MILLIONS OF LIVES IMPROVED.
EXPANDED ACCESS MUST NOW BE MATCHED BY
RELIABLE SERVICES.**

-  Electricity access increased from 76.7% of households in 2002 to above 90% by 2025.
-  Access to improved sanitation increased from 61.7% to about 84%.
-  More than 84% of households were living in formal dwellings by 2025.

The next task is to strengthen maintenance, reliability and implementation so that every community experiences the benefits of this progress consistently.

Protecting Progress | Improving Delivery

land release and fiscal transfers require coordination across the three spheres. The District Development Model and the One Plan approach were intended to improve this alignment. Progress has been made in establishing common planning platforms, but the review is clear that coordination must be measured by planning, allocation of resources completed projects and improved services, not by the number of meetings held.

The ANC's policy approach since 1994 has combined public investment in new infrastructure, particularly in historically underserved communities, with responsibility for operating and maintaining services sustainably. Because poverty and unemployment prevent many households from paying the full cost of services, the ANC introduced a minimum basket of Free Basic Services covering water, electricity, sanitation and refuse removal. That intervention

remains an essential expression of the developmental state and social solidarity. Yet it can only endure if indigent registers are accurate, equitable share funding reaches its intended purpose, municipalities collect revenue from those able to pay, and losses, illegal connections and billing failures are addressed.

Over the democratic period, access has expanded on a scale that must not be forgotten. Official statistics show that:

- Access to electricity rose from 76.7% of households in 2002 to above 90% by 2025.
- Access to improved sanitation rose from 61.7% in 2002 to about 84% in 2025.
- The proportion of households living in formal dwellings rose from 65.1% in 1996 to more than 84% by 2025.

These changes represent millions of lives improved through public investment, subsidised

housing and the extension of municipal networks.

The review also documents uneven performance across parts of the system during the 2021–2026 term. Population growth, urbanisation and migration have increased demand, while ageing infrastructure and constrained municipal finances have put pressure on maintenance and expansion.

In some municipalities, instability, weak contract management and governance deficiencies have compounded these structural pressures. The ANC's response is to build on historical progress while improving current performance, as each democratic gain creates a responsibility to sustain and deepen it. The next Manifesto will therefore be more focused in its commitments, clearer in its measurable outcomes and stronger in its implementation oversight. Each commitment will be linked to a responsible sphere, a funding route, delivery milestones and a public mechanism for reporting progress. This will make the contract with communities more credible and enable successful interventions to be replicated more rapidly.

► INTERVENTION AND TURNAROUND: STRENGTHENING SUPPORT AND ACCELERATING RECOVERY

Section 139 of the Constitution provides an indispensable safeguard when a municipality is unable to fulfil an executive obligation. In 2025, 39 municipalities were receiving some form of Section 139 intervention, including four subject to national intervention under section 139(7), of these are at various level of

progress. Experience across these municipalities has yielded important lessons on how support can be activated earlier, recovery plans strengthened, and improvements sustained beyond the formal intervention period.

The Intergovernmental Monitoring, Support and Interventions Bill which was recently introduced to parliament in 2025 aims to establish clearer criteria, procedures and timelines. This reform must also strengthen preventive support under section 154 of the Constitution, ensuring municipalities receive targeted assistance before failure necessitates administration. Support must be differentiated: a municipality with a technical capacity gap requires a different intervention from one captured by corruption or paralysed by political conflict.

Evidence of turnaround shows what can be achieved.

- Bela-Bela achieved the first

clean audit in its history.

- Mamusa moved from seven consecutive disclaimers to an unqualified audit under intervention, while improving revenue collection and Municipal Infrastructure Grant expenditure.
- Mbombela sustained consecutive unqualified outcomes.
- Enoch Mgijima fully utilised its infrastructure grant allocation in 2024/25, installed thousands of smart meters and recorded a positive revenue impact.
- The Mquma and Senqu Local Municipalities continue their positive governance and service delivery trajectory, underpinning the governance and audit improvements unfolding in the Eastern Cape, which saw eight municipalities achieve clean audits.
- The improvements trend in local clean and unqualified audits extends to other provinces, a case in point is

ANC 2021 LGE MANIFESTO REVIEW

RECOVERY IS POSSIBLE: MUNICIPAL TURNAROUNDS ARE SHOWING RESULTS

 Focused political leadership, professional administration, stronger revenue management and effective intervention can produce measurable results.  Bela-Bela achieved the first clean audit in its history.  Mamusa moved from seven consecutive disclaimers to an unqualified audit.  Mbombela sustained consecutive unqualified audit outcomes.	 Enoch Mgijima fully utilised its infrastructure grant allocation in 2024/25, installed thousands of smart meters and recorded a positive revenue impact.  Mquma and Senqu continue their positive governance and service delivery trajectory, contributing to an Eastern Cape improvement in which eight municipalities achieved clean audits.  uMhlathuze achieved a clean audit alongside improved service delivery.  Capricorn and Waterberg District Municipalities continue their track records of sustained good governance and audit outcomes.
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Municipal Turnaround | Building Better Communities Together

the Umhlathuze municipality which not only achieved a clean audit, coupled with improved service delivery.

- In Limpopo the Capricorn and Waterberg district councils continued with their track records of sustained good governance and audit outcomes.

A concerted effort to stabilise and improve metropolitan performance is evidenced by the positive results and outcomes achieved in Ethekwini as part of the Presidential Working Group, including the 2025 tourism spend being the highest on record, a 93% cumulative revenue collection rate and all its beaches now being operational. A basket of governance, financial and service delivery improvement measures has been introduced in Buffalo City, and reductions in UIF non-payment and non-revenue water are being evidenced. The city of Johannesburg, as a strategic economic center continues to receive dedicated attention.

These improvements demonstrate that recovery is possible and that the ANC's interventions are yielding valuable lessons for the wider system. The objective is to translate these results into a common institutional model underpinned by stable political leadership, competent management, adequately funded budgets, protected revenue, credible data, maintained infrastructure and transparent engagement with communities.

Across water, sanitation, waste management, human settlements and land administration, the review confirms that the democratic state has made substantial and enduring progress while identifying areas in which reliability, maintenance and implemen-

tation must improve.

These achievements have expanded dignity, security of tenure and access to essential services, but growing demand, ageing infrastructure, water losses, service interruptions, wastewater failures, inconsistent refuse collection, informal-settlement growth and the continuing housing backlog require more focused action.

The ANC notes that the government is strengthening the Blue Drop, No Drop and Green Drop oversight systems; prioritising the rehabilitation and maintenance of water and wastewater infrastructure; improving municipal waste-management capacity; accelerating informal-settlement upgrading, title-deed restoration and the release of well-located land; and aligning spatial plans with funded infrastructure programmes.

The ANC's next phase will build on the progress already achieved by placing reliable services, preventive maintenance, professional municipal capacity, integrated human settlements and transparent community-level accountability at the centre of implementation, ensuring that expanded access is matched by consistent quality and that every intervention produces a visible improvement in the daily lives of communities.

► **GOVERNANCE AND CLEAN ADMINISTRATION: BUILDING ON PROGRESS, DEEPENING ACCOUNTABILITY**

The 2021 Manifesto set out clear commitments to honest and competent leadership, professional administration, open communi-

cation, community partnership, and decisive action against corruption and nepotism. On these commitments, the review demands the greatest candour. The Auditor-General as a credible performance assessment body for local government, continues to give transparent feedback on the overall performance of the system, on the basis of which we commit to action to ensure improvements in the system.

The Auditor-General's recommendations indicate where political and administrative leadership must intensify its efforts. The reduction in disclaimers and the improvement in financial-statement submissions demonstrate that intervention can restore core disciplines. The next step is to reduce dependence on consultants by strengthening municipal finance units, records management and the accountability of municipal managers and councils. The ANC's renewal programme reinforces competence, integrity and performance as essential requirements for public responsibility.

The Municipal Staff Regulations introduced uniform standards for recruitment, appointment, performance management and discipline. Their purpose includes preventing the movement of officials dismissed for misconduct from one municipality to another. Professional leadership development, stronger appointment rules and consideration of a statutory professional mechanism for municipal managers are important reforms. Their value will be measured by the quality and stability of appointments, not by the mere existence of regulations.

We also recognise that in addition to clean audits, review of perfor-

mance must also focus on service delivery and spatial transformation. A municipality may produce compliant statements yet still fail to maintain roads or collect refuse or entrench spatial inequalities. Financial governance and service performance and transformation must therefore be considered together. The real objective is an ethical municipality that plans honestly, spends lawfully, maintains its assets, collects revenue fairly and delivers services reliably.

The ANC's position on wrongdoing is principled and consistent: corruption has no place in an administration entrusted with improving the lives of communities. Renewal in local government is becoming evident through stronger appointment standards, improved financial discipline, action on irregularities, and a sharper focus on residents' lived experience. This work must continue with resolve.

► STRENGTHENING THE TRANSFORMATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT THROUGH WHITE PAPER REVIEW

The Manifesto review confirms substantial progress and that the foundations for further improvement are firmly in place. Democratic government has expanded the social and physical infrastructure available to millions of households. The review also identifies where maintenance, governance, financial sustainability and institutional capability must be strengthened so that the benefits of this transformation are experienced more consistently across all communities.

The comprehensive policy proposals to reform local govern-



ment governance, institutional, financial and service delivery systems, as contained in the 2026 White Paper on Local Government, due for approval and publication in September 2026 addresses the systemic challenges that affect local government, after the first thirty years.

It aligns with the ANC review focused on restoring the law and enforcing accountability, one local government system with differentiated powers and functions, professional administration, rebuilding community relationships, including a structured role of Traditional and Khoisan Leadership based on an agreed compact, the reset of finance and service provision and spatial transformation, growth and resilience.

The ANC believes that credibility is strengthened by a record of delivery, an honest assessment of evidence, and the capacity to improve.

We will enter the 2026 Local Government Elections with a record of real advances and a disciplined programme to consolidate them. Where implementation has been uneven, we will demonstrate how

the lessons of the current term are already shaping a more focused and effective programme for the next term.

We call on ANC structures, incoming councillors and public representatives to treat this review as a living mandate for renewal and implementation. Lessons identified must be incorporated into action programmes, examples of turnaround must be studied and adapted, and integrity and performance standards must be applied consistently. In this way, the movement will translate reflection into visible improvement and strengthen the effectiveness of the democratic state.

To the people of South Africa, our undertaking is clear. The ANC will account honestly, implement purposefully and improve continuously. We will defend the progress achieved, measure the work still underway, report openly on implementation and act where additional support or correction is required. This is responsible leadership in practice. It is the basis on which we will build better communities together and deepen confidence in democratic local government.



Water Projects Bring Dignity, Reliability and Hope to Communities

THE measure of government's response to South Africa's water and sanitation challenges is ultimately not found in policy documents, plans or announcements, but in what happens in communities. What is important is whether a family has a safe and dignified toilet, whether a child can access water at school, whether a community can rely on its water supply, and whether infrastructure continues to function long after it has been handed over. This practical test is increasingly shaping the work of the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), as government moves from policy commitments to implementation on the ground.

Recent interventions in Gauteng and Mpumalanga demonstrate this approach, from the handover of sanitation and decentralised water infrastructure in Rand West

City and Victor Khanye Local Municipality to the refurbishment of a critical wastewater treatment works in Mogale City.

Together, they demonstrate that addressing South Africa's water crisis requires more than building infrastructure. It requires restoring ageing systems, extending services to underserved communities, protecting public investments and ensuring that municipalities have the capacity to operate and maintain infrastructure over the long term.

This is the practical meaning of the National Water Action Plan released by President Cyril Ramaphosa on 23 July 2026. The Plan provides a framework for immediate, medium- and long-term interventions to restore the functionality, reliability and sustainability of water services, with an emphasis on strengthening

municipalities, accelerating investment, reducing water losses and improving technical capacity.

Minister of Water and Sanitation Penny Majodina has emphasised that the success of the plan must ultimately be measured by what people experience: *"water flowing from taps, toilets that are safe and functional, wastewater that is properly treated and infrastructure that communities can depend upon."*

Delivery that people can see

On Monday, government brought this principle to life in Rand West City. In Zenzele Township, Randfontein, 150 completed dignified low-flush ablution facilities were handed over, benefiting approximately 2,000 households.

In nearby Mohlakeng, a Decentralised Water Supply Scheme

was handed over at Lukhanyo High School, benefiting approximately 1,400 learners, while surrounding communities were connected to communal taps. For residents, the significance is immediate. A proper toilet means dignity, safety and improved living conditions. Reliable water at school supports hygiene and creates a healthier learning environment. Communal taps bring water closer to communities that have experienced inadequate access.

These are functioning facilities that change daily life.

Victor Khanye: dignity and water closer to communities

The same practical approach was evident on Tuesday, 11 August, in Victor Khanye Local Municipality in Mpumalanga, where the Minister and Deputy Minister Mahlobo handed over water and sanitation interventions implemented through the Rand Water Foundation in partnership with DWS and the municipality.

The intervention focused on Mimososa Township, an underserved community of approximately 2,100 people in 600 households, where many families had historically relied on dilapidated, self-constructed pit latrines. The project delivered 100 low-flush household sanitation systems, benefiting approximately 500 people. Importantly, 140 women-headed households benefited, while implementation created 140 temporary jobs for local community members and supported four SMMEs.

The intervention forms part of a broader programme that has delivered 270 low-flush sanitation systems in Victor Khanye

since 2023/24, including 70 in 2023/24, 100 in 2024/25 and 100 in 2025/26. Two decentralised water systems were also handed over in Brakfontein and Savannah Ward 7, providing treated water through boreholes, storage tanks and communal taps. The Brakfontein system produces approximately 2.4 litres per second and benefits about 200 people, while the Savannah Ward 7 system produces approximately 5 litres per second and benefits about 250 people.

These interventions target communities that have experienced intermittent supply, water rationing and reliance on water tankers. Implementation also created employment for 50 local community members. The Victor Khanye WASH projects received total funding of R5.4 million during 2025/26.

Protecting the investment

But delivering infrastructure is only half the task. On Saturday, 8 August, Minister Majodina, accompanied by Deputy Minis-

ter David Mahlobo and Acting Mogale City Local Municipality Mayor Councillor Lwando Resha, inspected the newly refurbished Percy Stewart Wastewater Treatment Works in Mogale City, Gauteng.

Funded through the Water Services Infrastructure Grant, the refurbishment included upgrades to the inlet works, humus system, sludge management facilities and chemical dosing systems, as well as construction of a new treatment module. The upgraded facility is expected to provide more reliable wastewater treatment services to approximately 33,000 households, while improving sanitation and protecting local water resources.

Minister Majodina welcomed the quality of the refurbishment but stressed the importance of ensuring that the investment is sustained through proper operation and maintenance.

“Because often, when we leave site, our investment collapses due to no follow-up and no plan



on how the plant will remain in mint condition,” she said, adding that DWS would monitor the municipality and provide support where necessary.

The plant had deteriorated because of ageing infrastructure, growing population demands and inadequate maintenance funding. Its declining condition affected treated effluent and contributed to pollution of local watercourses, including the Hartbeespoort Dam.

Majodina therefore also called for stronger consequence management. “Polluters must pay for their indiscretions. We must ensure that there are consequences for those who disregard environmental and water quality standards,” she said. The lesson is clear: infrastructure investment must be accompanied by operational discipline, environmental compliance and accountability.

From projects to lasting services

The experiences of Rand West City, Victor Khanye and Mogale City demonstrate three interconnected dimensions of South Africa’s water challenge. In Rand West City, government is extending sanitation and decentralised water services directly into communities and schools. In Victor Khanye, targeted interventions are reaching households and communities outside adequate conventional service networks while creating local employment. In Mogale City, government is restoring a major wastewater treatment asset while placing renewed emphasis on maintenance and environmental protection.

This is why water security cannot be reduced simply to whether South Africa has sufficient



water resources. Water must be abstracted, treated, transported and distributed reliably, while wastewater must be collected and treated before being safely returned to the environment. Every weakness in that chain affects communities.

South Africa continues to confront ageing infrastructure, water losses, illegal connections, inadequate maintenance, municipal financial pressures and limited technical capacity. High levels of non-revenue water also deprive municipalities of resources that could be invested in infrastructure.

Municipal sustainability is therefore central to the National Water Action Plan. Municipalities must have the institutional, financial and technical capacity to operate what government builds. Water revenues must be protected and reinvested, infrastructure maintained and communities encouraged to protect public assets.

The interventions also carry particular significance during Women’s Month. Women and girls often bear a disproportionate burden when water is unavailable or unreliable. Dignified sanitation improves safety, health and dig-

nity, while reliable water can free time for education, employment and community participation. The fact that women-headed households benefited significantly from the Victor Khanye sanitation programme reinforces this broader social dimension of water delivery.

Ultimately, the credibility of South Africa’s water response will depend not only on what government builds, but on whether those investments continue delivering services. The projects in Rand West City and Victor Khanye show how targeted infrastructure can immediately improve lives. The Percy Stewart refurbishment demonstrates why those investments must be protected after construction teams leave.

A project is successful when the toilet remains functional, the borehole continues supplying safe water, the wastewater treatment plant consistently performs to the required standards and the municipality has the capacity to maintain the infrastructure.

That is how policy becomes implementation, infrastructure becomes service delivery and public investment becomes a better life for all.

TRIPLE OPPRESSION: Race, Class and Gender in the Lives of Young Women

■ By **SASABONA MANGANYE**

THE emancipation of women in South Africa cannot be reduced to the number of women occupying positions of political or corporate leadership. Nor can the condition of young women be understood through gender alone.

Young women live at the intersection of **race, class and gender**. These are not three separate experiences that occasionally overlap. In South Africa, they are historically interconnected through colonialism, apartheid, capitalism and patriarchy. This is why the struggle for women's emancipation must be understood as part of the broader struggle for **social and economic transformation**.

A young woman born into a wealthy family in Sandton does not enter society with the same material conditions as a young working-class woman born in Soweto, Alexandra, Orange Farm, Diepsloot or a rural village in Limpopo or the Eastern Cape. Both may experience patriarchy, sexism and sexual harassment. But their capacity to resist, escape and overcome these conditions is profoundly shaped by class.

This distinction is fundamental.

Not all women experience oppression in the same way because class fundamentally shapes the opportunities available to women.



A deeper question that must be asked is: who owns wealth, who controls productive resources, who performs unpaid labour, who has access to education and technology, who owns land and housing, and who is compelled to sell their labour simply to survive?

Apartheid did not simply discriminate; it organised society along racial and class lines. Apartheid was not merely a political system of racial prejudice. It was a system for organising land, labour, wealth and economic power in the interests of a white minority. Its spatial legacy remains deeply embedded in South African society.

The location of one's home continues to influence access to quality schools, transport, employment opportunities, health-care, digital infrastructure and

economic networks. For many young black women, especially those from working-class communities, the journey to economic independence begins with structural disadvantages they did not create.

A young woman living far from economic centres may spend hours travelling to work or university. A young woman in a township may attend a school with fewer resources than a child growing up in an affluent suburb. A young woman in a rural area may face an economy where formal employment opportunities are extremely limited. These are not simply individual failures. They are the consequences of a historical political economy. The apartheid economy systematically dispossessed the black majority of land, capital and productive resources. The democratic state

inherited a profoundly unequal society.

The consequences therefore extend across generations. A family that was denied land, quality education, home ownership and access to capital under apartheid cannot be expected to compete on equal terms with families that accumulated assets and wealth over generations. This is particularly important when examining young women. The daughter of a wealthy family may inherit a house, receive private education, access technology, attend university without crippling financial pressure and receive financial support while establishing a business.



A working-class young woman may inherit none of these assets. She may instead inherit debt, unemployment, overcrowding and economic insecurity.

The two women may have the same ambition. They do not have the same starting point.

Race remains materially significant

South Africa's racial question cannot be dismissed as a problem of the past.

Race continues to have material consequences because the economic structures created through colonialism and apartheid have not been completely transformed.

The majority of black South Africans remain concentrated in working-class communities, while wealth and productive assets remain highly concentrated. For young black women, there-

fore, racial inequality and class inequality frequently reinforce each other.

This is why a serious programme of women's emancipation must also be a programme of economic transformation. Political democracy without economic transformation cannot completely dismantle the material foundations of racial inequality. The vote gave black women political citizenship. But political citizenship must ultimately be accompanied by economic citizenship. A young woman must have the material means to participate meaningfully in society: decent education, employment, housing, healthcare, transport, digital access, social security and opportunities to accumulate productive assets.

Class determines the meaning of opportunity

One of the weaknesses of liberal approaches to women's emanci-

pation is that they can treat "women" as a single social category. But women are not a class.

There are women who own corporations and women who work in those corporations. There are women who employ domestic workers and women who work as domestic workers. There are women who own multiple properties and women who cannot afford rent. There are women who have access to private healthcare and women who depend entirely on an overstretched public health system.

Their interests are therefore not always identical. This does not mean that gender oppression is unimportant.

It means that gender oppression is experienced through class relations. The wealthy woman may confront sexism in the boardroom.

The working-class woman may confront sexism while simultaneously confronting unemployment, hunger, insecure housing and dependence on an inadequate income.

The former may be able to hire childcare, use private transport, employ legal assistance and leave an abusive relationship because she has independent financial resources.

The latter may remain economically dependent on an abusive partner because leaving could mean homelessness, hunger or the loss of financial support for her children. This is where the question of women's dependence on men becomes central to understanding patriarchy.

Patriarchy is also a material relationship

Patriarchy is not simply a collection of bad attitudes held by individual men. It is a social system that assigns unequal power, authority and responsibilities to women and men. But patriarchy also has an economic dimension. Where women lack independent income, property, employment or access to capital, economic dependence can reinforce dependence on men. A woman who has no income may be compelled to depend on a husband, boyfriend, father or male relative for basic necessities.

This dependence can weaken her bargaining power within the household.

- It can make it harder to leave an abusive relationship.
- It can make women vulnerable to economic exploitation.
- It can reproduce the idea that men are providers and women are dependants.

The struggle against patriarchy therefore cannot be separated from the struggle for economic independence. Women's emancipation requires women to have the material capacity to determine their own lives.

A woman who owns productive property, earns an independent income, has access to education and possesses economic security is better positioned to exercise genuine freedom than a woman whose survival depends entirely upon another person. This is why the struggle for women's economic empowerment is not an optional addition to gender equality.

It is one of its material foundations.

The working-class woman carries a disproportionate burden

Capitalism has historically benefited from the division between productive and reproductive labour. Women perform enormous amounts of unpaid or underpaid care work: raising children, caring for elderly relatives, maintaining households and providing emotional and social support. Much of this labour is invisible in conventional measures of economic productivity. Yet society cannot reproduce itself without it. The contradiction is profound.

Women are expected to participate in the labour market as workers while continuing to carry disproportionate responsibility for the household. The working-class woman experiences this contradiction most sharply. She may leave home before sunrise to travel long distances to work, return late in the evening and still be expected to cook, clean, care for children and manage the household.

The professional woman may face the same patriarchal expectations, but her class position

may allow her to purchase services that reduce the burden. The working-class woman often cannot. This is why the struggle for women's emancipation must include public childcare, affordable transport, decent housing, social protection, accessible healthcare and the expansion of quality public services.

These are not merely welfare questions. They are questions of women's freedom.

Unemployment is a form of economic oppression

For young women, unemployment is particularly devastating because it delays economic independence. Without employment, it becomes difficult to secure housing, access credit, build savings, acquire assets or establish an independent household. Youth unemployment can therefore prolong economic dependence on parents or partners.

This creates fertile ground for exploitation. Precarious employment can be equally damaging. Temporary contracts, casual work, low wages and insecure



employment make workers vulnerable because they fear losing their income if they challenge discrimination, harassment or exploitation.

A young woman who depends on her salary to feed her family may be less able to confront a powerful employer who sexually harasses her. Economic insecurity therefore strengthens the bargaining power of capital over labour. This is why the struggle against gender discrimination must also be connected to the struggle for decent work.

Capital and technology are also class questions

The modern economy increasingly rewards access to capital, technology, information and networks. But access to these resources remains profoundly unequal.

A young woman with family capital can establish a business, access financing, acquire technology and survive the initial years of entrepreneurship. A young working-class woman may have an excellent business idea but lack collateral, credit history, equipment, premises or reliable internet.

We must therefore be careful when telling young women simply to “be entrepreneurs.” Entrepreneurship cannot substitute for structural economic transformation. The state must create conditions in which women can move from survivalist economic activity into productive ownership. This means expanding access to finance, procurement, industrial opportunities, technology, skills, land and markets.

The objective should not merely be to create more women who survive within capitalism. It

should be to expand the number of women who control productive resources and participate meaningfully in ownership and production.

Gender-based violence is also rooted in power

Gender-based violence is one of the most brutal expressions of patriarchy. Women and girls continue to face sexual violence, domestic violence, harassment and other forms of abuse. But even here, class matters.

Economic dependence can trap women in violent households. Poor women may have fewer options to relocate. A woman living in overcrowded housing may have limited privacy and security. A woman without independent income may be forced to choose between leaving an abusive relationship and ensuring that her children have food and shelter.

The criminal justice system must therefore respond decisively to gender Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF), but law enforcement alone cannot eliminate the social conditions that reproduce women’s vulnerability. The struggle against GBVF must be accompanied by the struggle for economic independence, decent housing, accessible justice, education, social protection and the transformation of patriarchal social relations.

The workplace remains a site of struggle

Women entering the labour market do not automatically enter an emancipated environment. They may encounter wage discrimination, sexual harassment, discriminatory recruitment practices, exclusion from leadership,

occupational segregation and retaliation for speaking out. Young women are particularly vulnerable because they often enter workplaces with limited experience and insecure employment.

A class-conscious women’s movement like ANC Women’s League, COSATU Affiliates Gender Structures, Unions, Young Women’s Desk and other women formations must therefore stand firmly with women workers. It must defend trade union rights, collective bargaining, decent wages, workplace safety and protection against harassment. Women’s emancipation cannot be achieved while millions of women remain economically exploited as workers.

Representation matters, but representation is not transformation

It is an achievement when women enter Parliament, municipal councils, boardrooms, universities and senior management. Representation matters. But representation must not become the final measure of emancipation. A handful of women reaching elite positions does not mean that millions of working-class women have been liberated.

The central question must be: Has the social and economic position of the majority of women changed? If a woman becomes a CEO while thousands of women workers in her company remain poorly paid and insecure, we should celebrate her achievement while still asking whether the underlying relations of production have changed. If a woman becomes a political leader while poor women continue to live without decent housing, employment and economic security,

representation alone cannot constitute emancipation.

The objective is not simply to replace men at the top of existing institutions. The objective is to transform the institutions themselves.

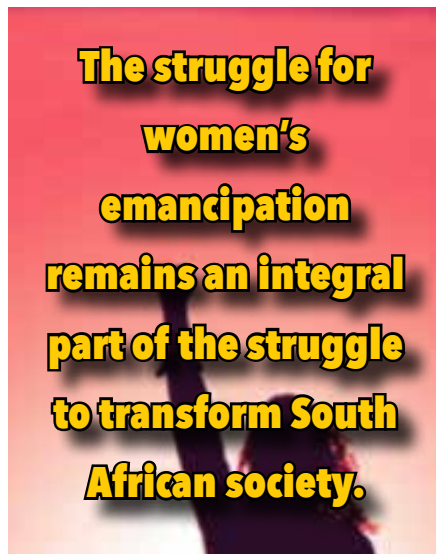
Toward class-conscious women's emancipation

The approach should not reject the struggle for gender equality.

- We must deepen it.
- We must ask why inequality persists.
- We must ask who benefits from existing economic relations.
- We must ask how race, class and patriarchy reproduce one another.
- And we must ask what social forces can transform these conditions.

For South Africa, this means connecting the struggle for women's emancipation to the broader project of transforming the political economy inherited from colonialism and apartheid.

- It means confronting concentrated ownership.
- It means expanding access to land, capital and productive resources.
- It means creating decent work.
- It means strengthening public education and healthcare.
- It means expanding affordable housing and public transport.
- It means building comprehensive childcare and social protection systems.
- It means fighting GBVF and dismantling patriarchal social norms.
- It means ensuring that women workers are organised and protected.



- It means developing young women not merely as consumers of the economy, but as producers, entrepreneurs, professionals, workers, scientists, farmers, engineers, political leaders and owners of productive assets.

Most importantly, it means recognising that women's emancipation cannot be achieved through individual advancement alone.

The unfinished struggle

The liberation of women is inseparable from the liberation of society. South Africa's democratic revolution made enormous advances in the legal and political status of women. But political equality has not automatically produced social and economic equality. The unfinished task is therefore to transform the material foundations upon which inequality continues to reproduce itself.

The young woman in the township. The young woman in the village. The domestic worker. The factory worker. The unemployed graduate. The informal trader. The farm worker. The student. The young professional. The en-

trepreneur. They do not all occupy the same class position, and therefore they do not experience oppression in precisely the same way. But they share an interest in defeating patriarchy and expanding women's freedom.

The challenge is to build a women's movement capable of recognising these differences without allowing them to divide the broader struggle. The struggle for women's emancipation must therefore become simultaneously a struggle against racial inequality, economic exploitation and patriarchy. Because a society in which women can vote but cannot access economic opportunity is incomplete.

A society in which women can occupy boardrooms while millions remain trapped in poverty is unequal. A society in which women are represented politically but remain economically dependent is not fully emancipated. And a society in which young women inherit the poverty, spatial inequality and economic exclusion produced by apartheid cannot claim to have completed its democratic transformation.

The emancipation of women requires more than equality before the law. It requires equality in the material conditions of life.

That is the deeper meaning of the struggle. And that is why the struggle for women's emancipation remains an integral part of the struggle to transform South African society.

Comrade Sasabona Manganye is the Regional Secretary of the ANC Joburg Region and a final year DBL Candidate at UNISA Business School of Leadership.

The DA's Constitutional Delinquency Cannot Be Left Untouched

■ By **JERIMIA THUYSNMA**

2026 is the year of local government elections. The message from the African National Congress (ANC) in the Western Cape is that this is the year where we need to dislodge the DA from governing our Municipalities and increase the voter base for the ANC.

One only needs to look at what the DA has been doing for the 20 years that they've been in power in just the City of Cape Town.

We need to carefully see whether the DA has upheld the constitutional responsibility of the municipality. Has the DA delivered the services to the communities as the Constitution and the municipal system Act requires of the municipality?

What has the DA run City of Cape Town done to promote community involvement in the governance of the municipality?

When we take into account that the DA-run City of Cape Town has been found wanting by the Western Cape High Court in relation to the tariffs that it has illegally charged communities. Take into account also that the City of Cape Town has been found wanting by the Public Protector with regards to skewed service delivery to the communities of Khayelitsha, Langa and the Cape Flats. This then brings the question of whether the DA is really serious about upholding the Constitution which

they claim to protect?

The Constitutional Court as the apex court in the country has had a damning ruling with regards to the sale of the Tafelberg site. In a landmark July 2026 ruling, the Constitutional Court declared the 2015 sale of the Tafelberg property in Sea Point unlawful. The apex court found that the Western Cape government and the City of Cape Town failed in their constitutional duties to address spatial apartheid by providing well-located affordable housing.

Just a few years ago, the City hoodwinked our people with the fabricated DAY ZERO wherein panic was deliberately manufactured in an action that resulted in all kinds of unchecked expenditure and unconsulted tariffs such as the Pipe levy.

Another question is, can we

continue with a DA government that has basically turned their backs on the middle class it had claimed to represent and the poor it did not care for from the onset? They continue charging us tariffs based on property values instead of usage rate. This means high users will pay same rate

with conservative users. That results in the working class and the poor communities suddenly paying more for services.

It's a simple logic that If I use water a lot, I must pay more for water. If I use the sewerage system a lot, I must pay more for the sewerage. But if I am charged in terms of my property value it basically means at some stage, I am going to subsidise a rich person instead of the other way around.

The middle class as usual take the bigger brunt simply because



their property values would be slightly higher than the poor person. This is one of the challenges that clearly cannot be equitable and therefore we need to have an understanding as to what is behind this decision that the DA is making.

So what do we do? What then is the next step?

Clearly the communities of Cape Town been disadvantaged by actions of the DA run City. This is something that we as communities will rise to enforce the City to “Pay back the Money” and this will be done in various ways, starting with the Public Protector that needs to enforce remedial actions of the Western Cape High Court. This will be coupled by rolling mass mobilisation, starting with the 1 million signature campaign to be launched on the 20th of August 2026, we will be conducting door to door campaign in our communities and deliver the million signatures to the City!

Secondly, now that the Public Protector has found that services rendered by the DA Run City of Cape Town are illegal and unconstitutional. We will push for the remedial actions to be implemented in the immediate, once again, our communities in Khayelitsha have already visited the City through mass action just last week, however that was only the beginning, we will push for the full implementation of the remedial actions so as to ensure that the City delivers on its obligations to the Citizens of Cape Town.

The way that the service are rendered, gives life to what the ANC has consistently maintained, that we have a tale of two cities.

The affluent receive services



and of course, the poor areas like Mitchell's Plain, Bontuhuvel, Bishop Lavis, Athlone, Khayelitsha, Gugulethu, Langa and everywhere else in the Cape Flats get a lower level of services. This has now been confirmed by the Courts of Law and by the Public Protector.

It is now time that the DA is held accountable for its actions in the City of Cape Town. Should the City officials not respond positively to our campaigns to deliver services for everyone and pay back the stolen tariffs moneys, we will go and give notice of class action to get the money back because our people cannot continue being disadvantaged forever.

Gone are the days where the poor and the middle class end up with bills into the thousands of rands which is followed by the poor people's water being put on a trickle system because they can't pay their bills.

Residents are penalised when they go and buy electricity. They now find themselves buying electricity of a hundred rand and only get ten rands worth of electricity because the 90 rand is taken to cover the debt that has been found to be illegally accumulated.

The ANC will stand up for the poor and middle class.

We believe that the DA has run the city for only the rich (who themselves are now losing confidence in the ability of the DA) and not for the middle class and the poor, these court case outcomes cannot be left as is.

We also call for the DA to be held to the same accountability standards as the ANC in other parts of the country. For too long, the DA has parroted a myth of a City that is “well run”, so much so that it has even gone to great lengths to hide its shameful service delivery records, one needs to look at their attempts at erecting a wall between poor communities and the N2 route into the City.

The DA has now been left naked by our Courts and the Chapter 9 institutions, which have now made it abundantly clear that here we have a Party hellbent to see our people in squalor, the ANC can no longer sit back and watch.

Comrade Jerimia Thuynsma
is the Convenor of the African National Congress (ANC) in the Western Cape.

PART THREE

The National Question in Contemporary South Africa: Learning from the Past to Understand the Present

■ By DENIS MATWA

THIS is the third and final part of our three part series on the National Question.

Understanding the National Question within the ANC

Throughout the decades of the existence of the ANC, the movement has articulated the importance and interpretation of the National Question. Throughout the ANC's history, the organisation has demonstrated its views and beliefs about the South African situation. We are going to make an example of how the ANC, has understood the National Question in all the different phases of its existence. The ANC has been accused by our enemies from the ultra-right and from the ultra- left of being controlled by 'communists', this is from the right wing, and of being a puppet of whites as well. We note that the ANC is neither a socialist organisation, nor even a capitalist organisation. This has been articulated many times throughout our existence. As Meli points out, "there are important reasons for dealing with this question of the genesis of the relationship between African nationalism and socialism in South Africa. First, our enemy – whatever form or



colour it takes – has always deliberately distorted the relationship between the ANC and the SACP. The ANC is portrayed as a brainless organisation, without independent thought or initiative, "controlled" by communists who are white. The reasoning behind this distortion is clear: they are trying to tell our people that whether you are inside or outside the ANC it is the same – "white control" is everywhere. They are trying to demoralize our people, disarm them and instil a sense of

hopelessness preventing them from joining the ranks of the freedom fighters" (Meli: 1988: 79).

Even though Francis Meli wrote about this in 1988, his prophetic argument is starkly clear in contemporary South Africa. The ANC is demonized as a communist controlled organisation by both parties from the ultra-right (e.g. Freedom Front Plus; the Democratic Alliance and fellow-travellers) and in the ultra-left (Economic Freedom Fighters and

the amalgamation of thieves in the MK Party). It is our duty as members of this glorious movement to defend and advance the national democratic revolution at all fronts.

The ANC, as we are going to demonstrate below, has, throughout its existence articulated its interpretation of the National Question. It is important to note that as early as the 1940s, during the presidency of AB Xuma, the ANC embarked on a radical interpretation of the National Question. Beginning with studying the implications of the Atlantic Charter, and how it applied in South Africa, President AB Xuma put together a committee that was designated to study the Atlantic Charter and how it relates to Africa in general, and to South Africa in particular. This, we further argue, resulted in the African Claims in South Africa document. If we look backwards to the 1940s South Africa, the African Claims document was a very radical document indeed. As van Niekerk correctly points out, *"African Claims and the Freedom Charter were the most significant ANC policy documents before the unbanning of the ANC in 1990. Their formulations reflected a gathering pro-independence nationalism in Africa that was inspired by the war against Nazism and fascism and the call in the 1941 Allied Atlantic Charter for post-war democratisation for societies under Nazi and fascist occupation and the global extension of welfare"* (van Niekerk: 2017: 47).

The 1940s, we argue, was a period of revival and militant revitalisation of the ANC. We saw the role played by the ANC Youth League within the ANC; the rising worker consciousness in the labour front, and the activist leadership of President AB Xuma.

**Dr AB Xuma,
Dr Monty
Naicker and
Dr Yusuf
Dadoo
signing the
'Three
Doctors'
Pact"**



It was under AB Xuma that alliances with the other oppressed groups (Coloureds and Indians) were built. The ANC presidency of Xuma also saw the formation of the Xuma-Dadoo-Naicker pact of 1947, or the Three Doctors' Pact. We argue that it was this pact that laid the foundations of creating a non-racial alliance that was to survive for many years.

The Three Doctors Pact, for the first time, showed that it was very important to build alliances across racial lines. This Three Doctors Pact laid a strong foundation for the building of a solid relationship with the Indian Congresses and later on, with the Communist Party. However, this was not going to be welcomed unconditionally by the ANC members, especially the ANC Youth League. Callinicos notes that *"the signing of the Doctors Pact in 1947 between AB Xuma (ANC), Monty Naicker (Natal Indian Congress) and Yusuf Dadoo (Transvaal Indian Congress) was accepted with some reluctance by the Youth League, which continued to be suspicious of domination by any 'non-African' organisations. And when Sisulu began talking to black communists in 1948, both Tambo and Mandela were indignant that Sisulu had agreed to*

meet with them again without first consulting the Youth League's committee. They were also angry with Ismael Meer, an articulate member of the Indian Congress and a communist to boot, whom they accused of 'flattering' Sisulu" (Callinicos: 2017: 62).

It must be further noted that in their formative years in the ANC, both Mandela and Tambo were ultra-nationalists who were suspicious of foreign influences in the ANC. This was due, we believe, to the conditions of their lived experiences especially in the 1940s. The younger Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo in the Congress Youth League were militant nationalists who were not willing to dilute their nationalism with any foreign influences, especially communism. Later on in their experiences in the struggle, they came to realize that the communists, both black and white, were the true friends and compatriots in the struggle for freedom, social and political equality in South Africa of their time.

The influence of the Defiance Campaign

The Defiance Campaign of 1952 was, perhaps, the most successful act of defiance against the

unjust laws of the newly elected Nationalist Party. The white electorate had unanimously elected the Nationalists into power because of their policy of apartheid.

The policy of apartheid was lucrative for all white people, both the Afrikaans speaking and English speaking. This policy of apartheid was intended to put the black people in their place, that is, at the bottom of society. The newly formed ANC Youth League's response to the draconian laws of the apartheid government was to put pressure on the mother body, the ANC, to actively oppose the apartheid laws. To cite Meli, *"the Defiance Campaign represented a new phase in the South African liberation struggle. It established two principles. First there can be no liberation of the oppressed without sacrifice and readiness to face imprisonment. The political consciousness of the blacks, through the Defiance Campaign, was raised to understanding that imprisonment was part of the legitimate process towards liberation: in the context of political struggle imprisonment was one of the inevitable paths towards liberation. It had to be recognised that freedom could not be achieved if the leadership as well as the membership was not prepared to fight, go to jail and even die for the principles in which they believed"* (Meli: 1988: 121). We must add that the Defiance Campaign included all like-minded South Africans from across the races, Blacks, Coloureds, Indians and Whites. We are emphasizing this part of inclusivity to stress the importance of the National Question in South Africa during this period.

The Defiance Campaign resulted in the membership of the ANC growing tremendously. The

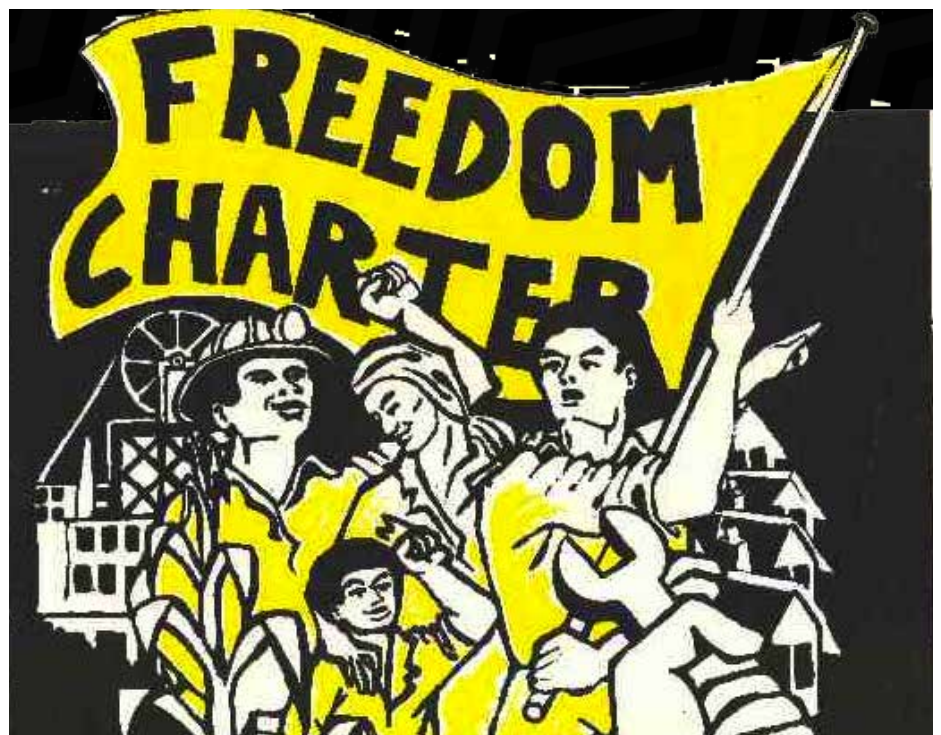
stigma of going to jail was undermined and imprisonment became a badge of honour. People were now willing to spend time in jail for their beliefs. Van Niekerk writes that, *"it was perhaps in the crucible of the mass politics of defiance during the 1950s that the dialectic of race and class became increasingly evident. The struggle to overcome national oppression had to confront the class relationships that reproduced inequality in South African society and was not reducible to a struggle against apartheid racism.... The ANC's campaigning around rights of political citizenship became a primary focus of its political activities in the 1950s, with the specific concerns of social policy gradually subsumed under this political objective"* (van Niekerk: 2017: 51).

Moreover, the ANC's membership grew as a result of the Defiance Campaign. The Defiance Campaign was appealing to the South Africans from all walks of life because it was peaceful and non-violent. According to Meli,

"it transformed the character of the ANC, strengthened the leadership and attracted many new recruits – the membership of the ANC rose from 4 000 to 100 000 with many times that number of politically conscious supporters" (Meli: 1988: 121). We must point out that because of the Defiance Campaign, the ANC ceased to be an organisation of the educated elite. Now the ANC became a mass-based organisation organizing and recruiting all sectors of South African society.

The Freedom Charter (June 1955)

It is difficult to write about the National Question in South Africa without mentioning the Freedom Charter. The Freedom Charter is the basic policy document of the ANC. We are members of the ANC because we adhere to the principles that are outlined in the Freedom Charter. For us to understand, and be members of the ANC, it is called upon us to adhere to these basic principles as they manifest themselves in the



Freedom Charter.

Again, Pallo Jordan argues that *“the ANC has always held that democracy, national liberation and non-racialism are inseparable. But, we have equally forcefully said that in order for democracy to advance national liberation, it must entail the empowerment of the oppressed and most exploited- the Africans, Coloureds and Indians. The institutional form this democracy assumes therefore is of crucial importance to us. The Freedom Charter remains the seminal statement of our movement’s vision. Empowerment as laid down in it envisages the radical restructuring of key aspects of the economy so as to destroy the material basis of the White racist power structure”* (Jordan: 1997). It is abundantly clear that for us to reach a prosperous and free society, the only possible route is through the Freedom Charter. This august document, adopted by thousands of our people in Kliptown in June 1955, remains the authentic document that truly expresses the wishes of our people.

The Freedom Charter, as we argue, is the authentic voice of the millions of our people. When our people gathered at Kliptown in June 1955, they vehemently distanced themselves from the unelected fascist regime of Vorster and Malan. They vociferously accepted the Freedom Charter as their preferred document for a free prosperous, democratic society. It is also true that for us to understand the National Question in Contemporary South Africa, we should be careful of what kind of nationalism do we follow and espouse. *“When examining nationalism, one has to look at the social forces of that nation which espouses that specific nationalism and pose the question:*



is it an oppressor nation or an oppressed nation? This question arises when national oppression exists in a country. If it is an oppressed nation, as in the case of the African in South Africa, that nationalism has a democratic content in the sense that it is directed against oppression and in favour of national self-determination. But, if it is a nationalism of an oppressor nations, that nationalism is reactionary and aimed at perpetuating the oppression” (Meli: 1988: 72).

The Freedom Charter, is not a document that wants to advocate the previous oppressive white regime with a black oppressive one. The aims of the Freedom Charter are to eradicate all forms of oppression and exploitative forms with a truly democratic and human rights discourse. We are very proud of this august document because it clearly elaborates our vision of a truly democratic South African society that is free of itself and free around the other peoples of the world community. Thus far, we have touched on some aspects of our ideological understanding of the

National Question before the liberation movement was banned in fascist and racist South Africa. The next few pages will focus on the years in exile, and how the liberation movement managed to survive the extremely volatile years of illegality.

The National Question during the years of exile

Like any liberation movement facing the challenges of exile, the ANC faced its own challenges. What kept the ANC together for three decades was its understanding and focus on the liberation of the masses of our people. The ANC faced challenges within its ranks because of its adherence to the principles of non-racialism and the Freedom Charter. We have stated above that the ANC is neither a socialist nor a capitalist organisation. What binds ANC together is that it is a liberation movement that fights for the eradication of racism and class exploitation. To borrow from Jordan (2019), *“the liberation movement had to address all the colonized, transcending ethnic, racial, linguistic and cultural*

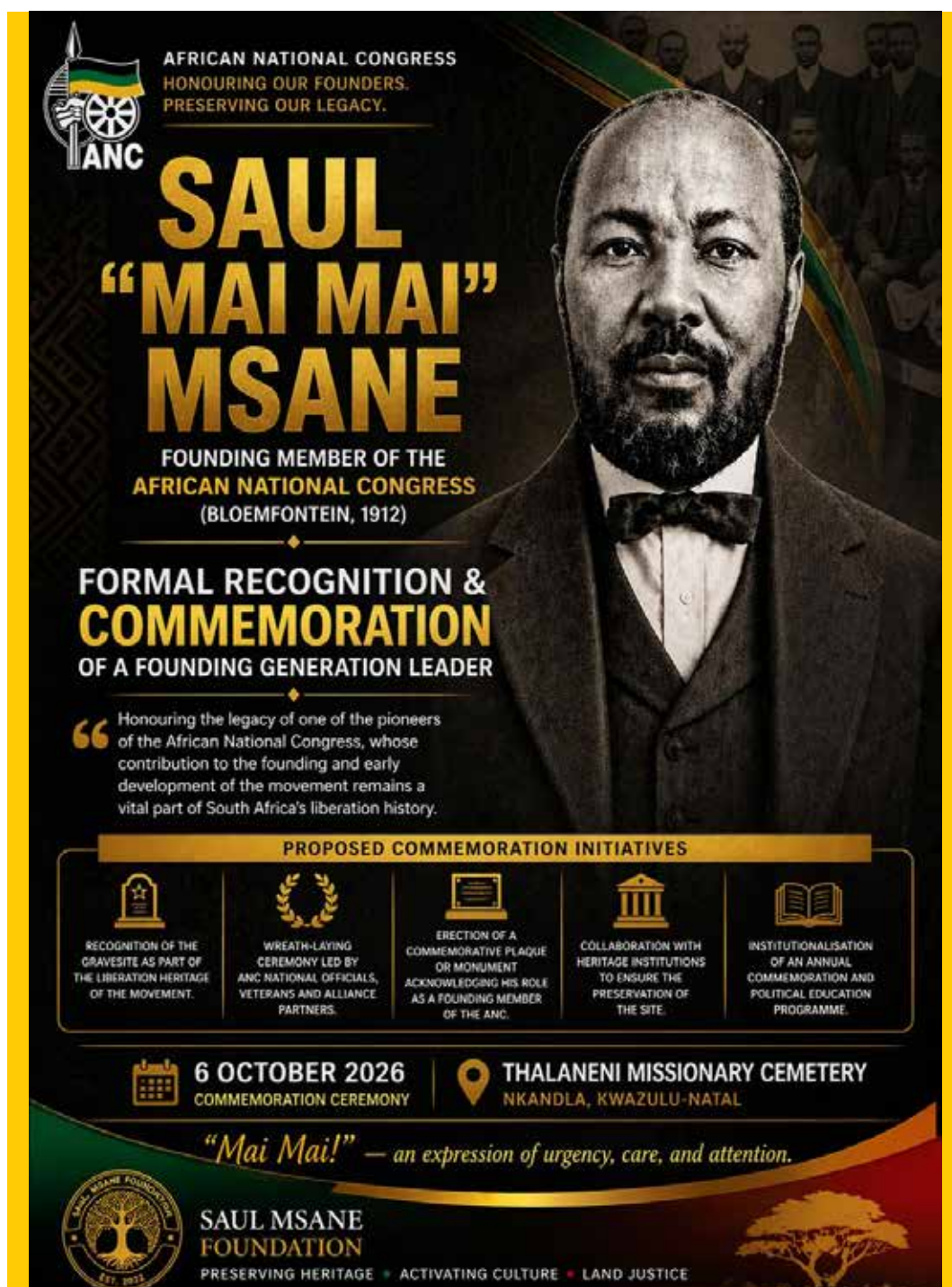
affiliations. Rather than bringing together the disparate elements of a potential nation into a homogeneous entity, our movement's approach is to embrace heterogeneity as a strength rather than as a source of tension".

The ultimate goal of the ANC was, and still is, the emancipation of the oppressed and exploited masses of our people. Furthermore, the ANC's response is to build a nation made up of diverse ethnic, racial, linguistic and cultural groups who share a common home and whose nationhood is determined territorially- the country they call home" (ibid). Even during the years of exile, there were some dissidents who wanted to distract the ANC from its goal of ameliorating the masses of our people from the yoke of segregation, and later on, apartheid colonialism. What comes to mind are the so-called Africanist who were infamously known as the Gang of Eight, and later on the ultra-left grouping that became known as the Gang of Four. Both these groupings wanted to hijack the ANC to serve their interests. We strongly argue that the ANC remained firm in the face of these challenges throughout these years.

This did not end up when the liberation movement was unbanned in 1990. There were sections within our movement who wanted

to control the ANC from within. Some were expelled because of their treasonous actions within the movement. Some of them are now staunch critics of the revolutionary project both in government and outside of the government. As we are approaching the local government elections, we need to ask ourselves very difficult questions. Are we very determined to fulfil the objectives of the Freedom

Charter? When we are wearing the colours of the ANC, do we understand what we are wearing? Lastly, are we upholding the revolutionary morality as it is expounded in the **"Through The Eye of the Needle"** document, the Freedom Charter and the Constitution of the ANC? We need to understand these policy documents of the ANC if we are to understand the National Question.



AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS
HONOURING OUR FOUNDERS.
PRESERVING OUR LEGACY.

SAUL
"MAI MAI"
MSANE

FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE
AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS
(BLOEMFONTEIN, 1912)

FORMAL RECOGNITION & COMMEMORATION
OF A FOUNDING GENERATION LEADER

“Honouring the legacy of one of the pioneers of the African National Congress, whose contribution to the founding and early development of the movement remains a vital part of South Africa's liberation history.”

PROPOSED COMMEMORATION INITIATIVES

 RECOGNITION OF THE GRAVESITE AS PART OF THE LIBERATION HERITAGE OF THE MOVEMENT.	 WREATH-LAYING CEREMONY LED BY ANC NATIONAL OFFICIALS, VETERANS AND ALLIANCE PARTNERS.	 ERECTION OF A COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE OR MONUMENT ACKNOWLEDGING HIS ROLE AS A FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE ANC.	 COLLABORATION WITH HERITAGE INSTITUTIONS TO ENSURE THE PRESERVATION OF THE SITE.	 INSTITUTIONALISATION OF AN ANNUAL COMMEMORATION AND POLITICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME.
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6 OCTOBER 2026
COMMEMORATION CEREMONY

THALANENI MISSIONARY CEMETERY
NKANDLA, KWAZULU-NATAL

"Mai Mai!" — an expression of urgency, care, and attention.

SAUL MSANE FOUNDATION
PRESERVING HERITAGE • ACTIVATING CULTURE • LAND JUSTICE

Queens of Resistance: From Aqualtune to the Women of Today – A Tribute to African Women, Liberation and Love

■ By **AMB PHATSE JUSTICE PIITSO**

CONVERSATIONS across ages, changing course of history of mankind, magnificent occasion celebrating national women's day, eventful moment in the calendar of history of our liberation struggles, womenfolk of our democratic republic, our democratic movement, women of the world working class formations, my dear beautiful wife, Delsey Madume Piitso, whom we emblazon her birthday today, I inscribe the historic day to all of you, enamoured by indispensable leadership role of women, the struggles for freedom and dignity, triumph of humanity against adversity.

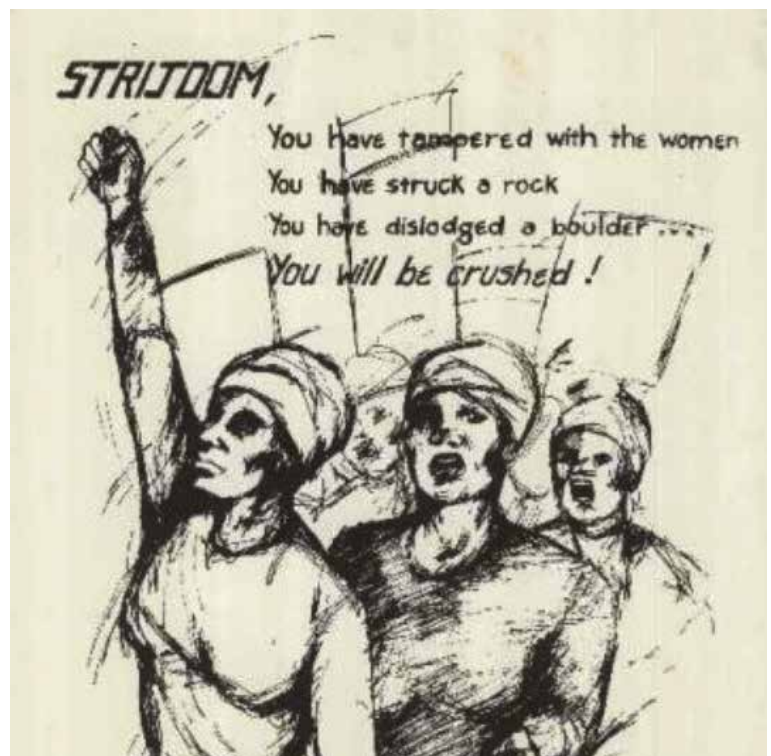
To you, heroic women of our democratic republic, to you our Queens, Princess, Roses of our revolution, on the occasion of the historic day, I dedicate the following poem by the renowned Algerian scholar and organic intellectual, author and poet, Dr Alaeddine Boutamine:

*From the land of freedom and martyrs
We come with pride and salute you
We African sons and daughters
We cherish this day, we celebrate it too.*

*Oh mother Africa, in the beauty that is you
We stand gloriously at the Mediterranean gates
Stretching from a sea which is sweat and blue
To vast plains and golden dunes and dates*

*Today our African identity we celebrate
Our homeland we remember with pride and glee
In a continent so mighty, so great
shining jewel for the whole world to see*

*With our arms open wide
We deliver a message of unity and love
Putting all of our difference aside
We come together and rise above*



On the occasion of your birthday, to you my love, my beautiful wife, there is no remedy for love but to love more!

*Butterfly of my dreams
One which instead of throwing bullets
But red roses to her foes
From the balcony of bowers of paradise
To you my beautiful wife*

*On the occasion of your birthday
Hanging garden of Babylon
Wonders of the ancient Mesopotamia
You are the tallest and most blossoming
Like the sun in the desert
Outshining them all*

*Even if I cannot give you my heart
For it belongs to the living God
You are not just a part
But you are the whole
May I sing a song for you
Sweet melodies forever*

*My sincere friend and Comrade,
Caring mother of my kids,
Flames of love between two people,
Gleaming warmth of love,
Beauty in the eyes of the beholder.*



I dedicate your birthday, unquenchable tales of heroism, what the future is yet to tell history, legendary warrior Princess of ancient Kingdom of Congo, Aqualtune Ezgondidu Mahamud da Silva Santos, mother continent Africa, galloping medieval path of supercontinent Gondwana, along the banks of Congo-Amazon paleodriver, not a dream but living reality, centuries becoming decades and decades becoming years, tectonic forces of our mother nature, towering continental ridge, Atlantic Ocean dividing the Congo river on the African plate, Amazon river on the South American plate.

Whispering into posterity, seeds we sow today, what our present is yet to do, declaring heroes of tomorrow, storms shaping tree roots deeper than our imaginations, modernity breaking chains of slavery, human folk episodes of heroism, deeper walk into heartland of our universe, assembly of beautiful garden of fauna and flora, sacred marks in our veins through eternity, our America, our Africa, swamps of future hope, our universe is one, motherland its beautiful creation.

Birth of an African daughter of royalty, 16th century kingdom of Congo, most powerful tribal kingdom, living ahead of itself, struggles against Portuguese colonial domination, struggles for territorial sovereignty and independence, against colonial conquest and dispossessions, Princess with a crown of gold over her head, defending her kingdom with untold bravery, Commander of the battalion of ten thousands warrior men and women, bloody historic battle of Mbwila, more than five thousands warriors killed, her father king Antonio I captured and decapitated, destiny to those enough to acclaim.

Captured and sold into slavery, what become to be with her three children, their hands chained and legs shackled, before thrown into the slave ship, introduced to Christianity by giving them new names,

descendants of African royal blood, kingdom crown shining brighter than stars into the land of the unknown, through strong waves and winds of the Atlantic, dungeons of the Antilles with lonely hearts, warmly hearts crying in silence, a poem from an unknown African Patriot, dedicated for her living memory:

Crown of an African Princess in the Antilles

*From green-crowned hills where Congo rivers run,
She marched ten thousand underneath the sun.
Shield of the kingdom, royal, fierce, and grand,
A sudden storm across the Angolan land.*

*When iron fell and shadows crossed the sea,
They bound the body, but not the majesty.
Through slave-ships dark and sugar-crushing mill,
The royal pulse of Africa beat still.*

*She broke the chains and walked the forest green,
To find Palmares, where a soul is queen.
Mother of kings who made the empire rise,
Freedom lives deeper than the tyrant's lies.*



Arriving at the shores of the Portuguese colonial Brazil, fatigued by long crossings through the Atlantic, in the land of magic and myth, rushing into the ocean to return home, cutting edge of African horizons, At Recife slave market, washed and anointed with lemon to look gorgeous, sold a breeding slave, raped to produce more workforce for colonial oligarchy, a revolution from the womb, wrapped in the spirit of resistance struggles, African princess in combat through ages, skies different from horizons of native Africa.

Whilst pregnant, organised more than two hundreds fellow slaves, escaping from the plantation, into the dark forests and mountain high of our America, joining her children in the slave republic of Palmares, leadership of her son Ganga Zumba, taking forward struggles for liberation, training thousands and thousands of slaves, war skills and techniques, turning them into courageous battalions, warrior men and women, waging guerrilla warfare against colonial authorities, building formidable African Kingdom, shores of our America, acts of incredible courage and audacity, universe peaceful garden to all humanity.

Brazilian historian, Decio Freitas, cognisant of the growing number of Maroon slaves, escaping from brutalities of colonial masters, seeking sanctuary into the mountains kingdom of the Maroons, the slave republic of Palmares:

From an initial stage of mere concern, the colonial authorities began to be startled by the growth of Palmares and the mass escapes. What was worse, this wasn't the only problem. What came to haunt plantation owners were the raids carried out by the people of Palmares on sugar mills, properties and local villages.

Large estates were looted, plantation storerooms and village warehouses were pillaged, cane fields were burned and enslaved people — mainly women — were kidnapped. Colonists who tried to resist were killed. At a time when there was a constant fear of foreign invasions by the French and the Dutch, fugitives grouped together in mocambos [communities of escaped slaves] were considered internal enemies.

The colony was on full alert. There was alarm among plantation owners and residents. The metropolis followed the events closely. Colonial authorities were watchful. Enslaved people in plantations were hopeful. The war was just beginning”.

The slave republic of Palmares existed for over hundred years, with the death of Princess Aqualtune, later her son, Ganga Zumba, her grandson continued with the reign, fierce battles against colonial settlers and their establishments, captured and mutilated, castrated and his penis put into the mouth, one of his eyes gouged, his legs and hands severed, his head perambulated at Recife slave market until it decomposed.

In the words of warrior Queen, Yaa Asantewaa of Ghana, anti colonial struggle heroine, refusing to be subjected to British colonial rule"

I shall call upon my fellow women, we will fight the white men, we shall fight until the last one of us fall in the battlefield".

In memory of Queen mother of the African continent, ancestor of the slave republic of Palmares, Aqualtune Ezgondidu Mahamud da Silva Santos, we owe to ourselves and coming generations, giving irrevocable wisdom for future to come, the true story of courageous bravery and heroism of African women, history to be told, where it began, undying spirit of our martyrdom, struggles freedom of humanity.

Tales of decorated acts of heroism, indomitable warrior Princess, ancient Kingdom of the Congo, our mother continent Africa, our mother continent our native Americas, transforming obstacles into stepping stones for progress, we are children from the womb of the universe, are not telling our story to the generation of today, but of the coming ages, inspiration of unwavering episodes of resilience and selflessness, our freedom, future humanity.

Ambassador Phatse Justice Piitso is a member of the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party. He writes in his personal capacity.



THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

14–21 August 2026

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

14 August 1944 Historian Charles van Onselen born

Charles van Onselen was born on 14 August 1944, in the South African town of Boksburg. Van Onselen has become one of the most widely respected South African historians, whose work is widely published, both nationally and internationally. He chose to centre his already well documented research on the social, economic and political foundations of southern African societies. Charles van Onselen has truly impacted the manner in which South African history is perceived, by choosing relatively unknown topics, and therefore revolutionising South African history. His published books include **Chibaro: African mine labour in Southern Rhodesia, 1900-1933**. [1976]; **Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand, 1886–1914: Volume I: New Babylon, Volume II: New Nineveh**. [1982]; **The Small Matter of a Horse: The Life of 'Nongoloza' Mathebula, 1867-1948** [1984]; **The Seed is Mine: The Life of Kas Maine, A South African Sharecropper, 1894-1985** [1996].

14–25 August 1978 First World Conference against Racism, Geneva

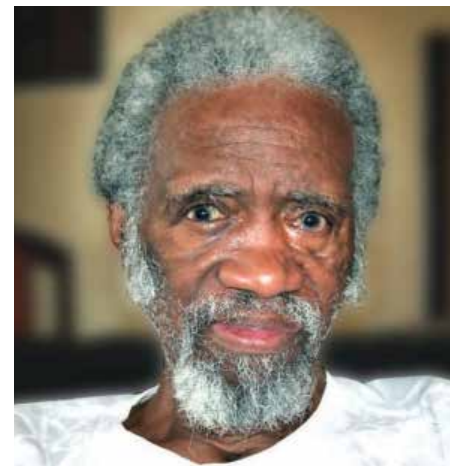
A World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, Geneva was held under the auspices of the United Nations. The UN resolution adopting this conference



read “As a major feature during the Decade, a world conference on combating racial discrimination should be convened by the General Assembly as soon as possible, but preferably not later than 1978. The Conference should have as its main theme the adoption of effective ways and means and concrete measures for securing the full and universal implementation of United Nations decisions and resolutions on racism, racial discrimination, apartheid, decolonization and self-determination, as well as the accession to and ratification and enforcement of the international instruments relating to human rights and the elimination of racism and racial discrimination.”

14 August 1968 Students protest banning of lecturer Archie Mafeje

Widespread student protests are held against government banning of the appointment of an



African lecturer, Archie Mafeje, to a post in the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Cape Town. Prime Minister Vorster threatens to take action against student protests if the University authorities do not do so in reasonable time. Over 1000 students and staff later joined this protest and demanded cessation of government intervention regarding university appointments. Students at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), Rhodes and Natal also joined the protests. Wits students took the matter further by marching to the Union Buildings to hand in their letter of protest. University of Pretoria students attacked Wits marchers, preventing them from reaching the Union Buildings.

14 August 1974 Defense budget increased to fund war in Frontline states

A sharp increase in defence expenditure is announced, following the White Paper tabled on 10

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

April 1973, by the Minister of Defence. This demand was deemed necessary for apartheid South Africa's war on its neighbours, and in this instance in the Caprivi Strip with Angola and Zambia.

15 August 1925

Mam Gertrude Shope born

Gertrude Shope was born in Johannesburg, but grew up in Zimbabwe. She was trained as a teacher and went on to teach in Natal and Soweto. At age 29, she joined the African National Congress (ANC) and soon afterwards left teaching as part of a campaign to boycott Bantu Education. She was active in FEDSAW, chaired its Jabavu branch and later became Transvaal FEDSAW secretary. Mam Gertrude Shope was one of the iconic women behind the 1956 women's march to the Union Building. In 1966, she joined her husband Mark Shope in exile where she joined Umkhonto we Sizwe. From 1970 to 1971, Shope was secretary to Florence Mophosho, head of the ANC's Women's Section, and together they started publishing *Voice of the Women*. Shope later became the ANC's chief representative in Lusaka and in 1981 was promoted to head of the Women's Section, which she led at the End of the Decade Conference in Nairobi in 1985. She

served as ANC Chief representative in Lusaka, after serving in ANC offices in Botswana, Tanzania, Czechoslovakia and Nigeria. In 1991 Shope was elected president of the ANC's Women's League, a position she held until 1993. She worked together with Albertina Sisulu in convening the ANC's Internal Leadership Corps Task Force from 1990-1991. In 1994 Shope became a member of parliament in the Government of National Unity. MaShope is a patron of the Women's Development Bank Trust. In 2014, along with Ruth Mompoti, Getrude Shope received the highest ANC honour, *Isithwalandwe/Seaparankwe*. MaShope passed away on 22 May 2025.

15 August 1964

Local Manufacturing of Aircraft announced for SA Air Force

Minister of Defense Foucht, announces that private enterprise will be responsible for the manufacture of aircraft for the South African Air Force. Jet trainers, to replace the SAAF's Harvards will be the first aircraft to be made locally. South Africa already in 1920s did local manufacturing of aircraft and other aviation equipment. Today, there are still over 100 local companies that manufacture

aircrafts (especially small). State owned entity Denel also manufactures aircraft, most notably the Rooivalk, a South African developed attack helicopter.

16-20 August 1976

Non Aligned Movement calls for Oil embargo against France and Israel

At the 5th Conference of Non-Aligned Nations in Colombo, Sri Lanka, a resolution is adopted calling for an oil embargo on France and Israel because of their arms sales to South Africa.

16 August 1976

Students in Cape Town join 1976 student revolts

Pupils at Alexander Sinton High and Belgravia High boycott classes. 500 UWC students marched to the Bellville Magistrate's Court where 15 students appeared on a number of charges arising from the recent events. There was a fire in Arcadia High and classes were boycotted at Somerset West after permission to hold prayer in solidarity with those killed in the 1976 uprising was refused.

16 August 2012

Police shot mineworkers at Marikana

Police opened fire killing 34 striking mine-workers at Marikana, North West Province. As a result, 78 people were left wounded while more than 250 people were arrested. The protesting miners were demanding a wage increase at the Lonmin platinum mine. A Commission of Inquiry, the Farlam Commission was appointed to investigate the events, including the deaths of at least 44 people from 11-16 August 2012. The Commission submitted its report on 31 March 2015.



Mam Gertrude Shope
1925–2025

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

17 August 1972

Ruth First assassination in Maputo



Ruth First, journalist, academic, author, anti-apartheid activist and member of the South African Communist Party, was brutally killed by a letter bomb in Maputo, Mozambique, sent by South African government agents. At the time of her death, First was a lecturer at the Eduardo Mondlane University. Her funeral in Maputo was attended by presidents, members of parliament and envoys from 34 countries. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) granted amnesty to Craig Williamson and Roger Raven, two men responsible for the death of Ruth First.

17 August 1996.

Ruth Perry, first African female head of state

History was made in Western Africa when, for the first time, a woman, Ms Ruth Sando Perry, was unanimously elected at a meeting of West African heads of state to become the third chair of Liberia's ruling council. Perry, victorious over two male contestants, became head of the transitional government, thereby making her Africa's first woman to act as head of state. Perry was mandated to execute the daunting task of lead-



ing her country from a devastating seven-year civil war, to peace under a sub-regional plan of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Although serving in a non-partisan capacity, Perry was a member of the National Democratic Party of Liberia. She was leader of Liberia from 3 September 1996 until 2 August 1997. Perry has since served on the board of a children's hospital, been instrumental in the development of infrastructure in Liberia and has received numerous awards for her efforts in the advancement of women and for her national development endeavours.

18 August 1972

First Bantu Affairs Administrative Boards Gazetted

The first four Bantu Affairs Administration Boards are gazette, intended to tighten influx and administrative control of black people in so-called 'white South Africa', especially to facilitate the mobility of cheap labour on farms and mines.

19 August 2002

Amina Lawal sentence upheld

On 19 August 2002, an Islamic high court in the Katsina state



of Nigeria, upheld a sentence of death by stoning for Amina Lawal. The 31 year old woman had been convicted of adultery by a village court for having a child more than nine months after her divorce. She was not represented by a lawyer at the hearing and the man who allegedly fathered her daughter denied the offence and was acquitted. Following the intervention of lawyers appointed by Amnesty International, Lawal was granted 30 days to appeal against the decision. Amina's lawyer filed another appeal to the Upper Sharia court of appeal in Katsina. Her sentence drew worldwide condemnation. Human rights campaigners branded the sentence inhumane and discriminative towards women. According to some interpretations of Sharia law, for a man to be convicted of adultery, he either has to confess to the crime or four men have to have witnessed the act. The law favours men. A man is allowed to beat his wife if she is disobedient, provided he does it within the guidelines prescribed by Islamic scholars. According to these guidelines, he must not break any bones or hit her in the face. In February 2004 the Sharia Court of Appeal ruled that Amina Lawal's conviction was invalid because she had been pregnant already when the harsh Islamic Shariah law was implemented in her home province.

19 August 2013**Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka takes helm of UN Women**

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka was sworn in as the Executive Director of UN Women during a ceremony on 19 August 2013 at United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York City, presided over by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Mlambo-Ngcuka was South Africa's first female Deputy President (2005-2008), led the UN's work on advancing gender equality and women empowerment. Ngcuka, a gender activist and educationist, was the first President of the Natal Organisation of Women (NOW), formed in 1983.

19-22 August 1963**Indonesia, Sudan, Mauritius tightens Apartheid sanctions**

Indonesia announces the severance of diplomatic and commercial relations with South Africa, and the closure of Indonesian ports to South African vessels. Sudan closes her sea and airports to South Africa and Portugal; and so does Mauritius on 20 August 1963. South African Airways (SAA) announced on 22 August 1963, that it will be re-routing its flights to Europe via Luanda (Angola), Brazzaville,

the Cape Verde Islands, and Las Palmas (all still Portuguese colonies).

20 August 1919**Author Noni Jabavu born**

Helen Nontando (Noni) Jabavu was born in 1919 in the Eastern Cape into a literary family. From the age of thirteen, she was schooled in England, and continued to live there for many years. She went on to become one of the first African female writers and journalists. *The Ochre People* is one of her two autobiographical works; the other is *Drawn in Colour* (1960). Both were written early in her literary career and have been hailed by critics as being brilliant and fascinating. The works indicate that she preferred positioning herself as being simultaneously an African and a European, tracing her origins in both England and South Africa. In her books she looked at the alienation she felt, issues of identity and the impact of the West on Africa. Jabavu died on 19 June 2008 at the age of 88.

20 August 1935**Dulcie September born in Cape Town**

Dulcie September was born on this day in Cape Town. She became



active in the student movement in Cape Town, linked to the Non European Unity Movement. She campaigned against Bantu Education, and as a teacher, joined the Teachers League of South Africa and the African Peoples Democratic Union of Southern Africa (APDUSA). After leaving the Unity Movement, September together with Neville Alexander, Marcus Solomon, Andreas Shapingo, Fikile Bam and Xenophon Pitt formed the anti-apartheid paramilitary Yu Chi Chan Club. She was arrested for her political activities and served five years, together with Doris van Heerden, Dorothy Alexander and Elizabeth van Heyden. September left the country after 1976, joining the ANC in the UK and becoming active in the ANC Women's League. She campaigned around children and women's issues, and worked at the ANC Lusaka headquarters from 1981, chairing its Regional Preparatory Committee. At the end of 1983, Dulcie September was appointed ANC Chief Representative in France, Switzerland and Luxembourg, and in this position, she was a leading organiser of the international campaign to isolate apartheid. On 29 March 1988, September was assassinated outside the ANC's Paris office.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

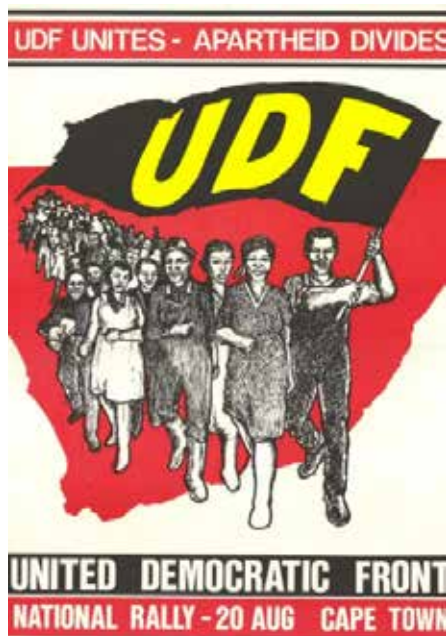
20 August 1976

Nordic countries call for arms embargo against South Africa

At a Nordic Council meeting in Copenhagen, the Foreign Ministers of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden recommend an international weapons embargo against South Africa.

20 August 1983

UDF launched in Mitchells Plain



The United Democratic Front (UDF), a front of over 400 civic, women's, youth, faith-based, rural and other organisations was launched, in opposition to the racist South African regime, under the slogan **UDF Unites. Apartheid Divides**. It campaigned against the tricameral parliament.

21 August 1927

4th Pan African Congress held in New York

The continental and diaspora movements against slavery and colonialism evolved as a global Pan African movement, with the holding of six Pan African Con-

gresses between 1900-1945. The fourth Congress was held in New York, USA sponsored by Addie W Hunton and the African-American women's organisation, Circle for Peace and Foreign Relations. The 4th Pan African Congress included delegates from the United States, the Caribbean and from Africa, on delegates from the Gold Coast (Ghana), Nigeria, Liberia and Sierra Leone, due to travel restrictions.

21 August 1929

Trade unionist Emma Mashinini born



Veteran trade unionist and political leader Emma Mashinini was born on this day in August 1929. Living in Johannesburg, her family was forcibly displaced several times during her childhood. She started working at age 14 and soon became a union organiser at her garment factory. She became active within the African National Congress (ANC) in 1956. Mashinini served for 12 years on the executive of the National Union of Clothing Workers (NUCW) and founded the South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU) in 1975. She was arrested and detained without charges for six months in 1981-82. Mashinini played several important roles in



the transition to ANC rule in the 1980s and 1990s. Mam Mashinini served on the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission and went on to become a Commissioner for Restitution of Land Rights. Her autobiography, titled **Strikes Have Followed Me All My Life**, was published in 1989 and republished in 2012. She received numerous awards and decorations, including the **Order of the Baobab** and the **Order of Luthuli**.

21 August 1998

PW Botha found guilty of contempt

George Magistrate Victor Lugaju found former President PW Botha guilty of contempt for repeatedly ignoring subpoenas to testify in public before the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the body responsible for investigating human rights abuses committed during the apartheid era. Botha was fined ten thousand rand and given a one-year prison sentence, suspended for five years, which could be brought into effect if he defied another TRC subpoena. The TRC wanted to question Botha about human rights abuses perpetrated by security forces during the apartheid era, as he chaired the State Security Council from 1978 to 1989.

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

14–21 August 2026

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



16 August Homeless Animal Day

Humans share the planet with many other living beings. Every day, animals are abandoned or placed into kennels, dependent on charities and goodwill. Some organisations are strained beyond coping and



are desperate to raise awareness of the plight of homeless and abandoned animals. Homeless Animals Day, celebrated every third Sunday of August aims to educate people about pet abandonment, feral animals and benefits of caring for domestic animals. Every year, South Africa euthanizes about 1 million cats and dogs, adopted from animal shelters help, as well as getting your pets sprayed and neutered. South Africa has a number of animal rescue organisations, most of them registered as not for profits. The largest of these is the National Society for the Protection and Care of Animals (NSPCA), which also runs shelters for homeless animals.

18 August Never Give Up Day

The day aims to cultivate a mindset of never giving up and supporting those who are still working hard to reach their goals. Its often easier said than done, but some of the tips to help master the art includes pausing, but not giving up; motivating yourself, surrounding yourself with people who are resilient and choosing to be positive.

19 August**World Humanitarian Day**

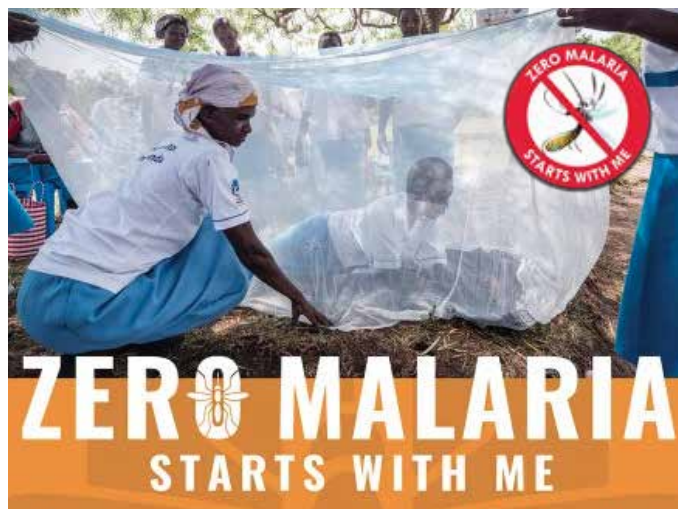
On 19 August 2003, a bomb attack on the Canal Hotel in Baghdad, Iraq, killed 22 humanitarian aid workers, including the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello. Five years later, the General Assembly adopted a resolution designating 19 August as World Humanitarian Day (WHD). Each year, WHD focuses on a theme, bringing together partners from across the humanitarian system to advocate for the survival, well-being and dignity of people affected by crises, and for the safety and security of aid workers. This year's theme is **"Strengthening Global Solidarity and Empowering Local Communities"**. As the world celebrates Humanitarian Day, it is faced with a grim reality of the situation in Gaza. The UN agency for Palestine refugees (UNRWA) has warned that the Gaza Strip faces a "catastrophic" humanitarian crisis, with no agency aid allowed in for more than five months and malnutrition deaths climbing sharply. Amidst this worsening humanitarian crisis, it is essential to work towards a lasting solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict as the international community addresses the reality of starvation on the ground in Gaza.

19 August**World Photography Day**

This is an annual, worldwide celebration of the art, craft, science and history of photography. Founded in 2009 by the Australian photographer Korske Ara, 19 August was chosen to celebrate World Photo Day, the day that the patent of the daguerreotype (an early method of photography) was purchased by the French government.

20 August**World Mosquito Day**

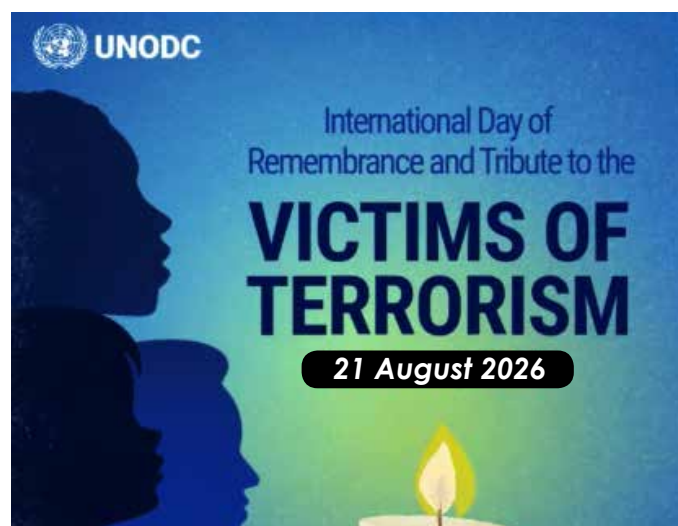
The day celebrates the occasion on 20 August 1897, when Sir Ronald Ross discovered the link between the mosquito and malaria. Mosquitoes



kill over 600 000 people every year, responsible for malaria, dengue fever, yellow fever and encephalitis. The African Union has a **'Zero Malaria Starts with Me'** campaign in member states. The mosquito is the most dangerous insects in the world (even more than humans and snakes, who respectively kill about 475,000 and 50,000 people a year). Mosquitoes kill 725,000 people a year. On this day we are reminded to continue the fight to ensure equitable access to malaria prevention, diagnosis, and treatment, especially in vulnerable, resource-limited communities.

21 August**International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism**

The General Assembly, in its resolution 72/165 (2017), established 21 August as the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism in order to honor and support the victims and survivors of terrorism and to promote and protect the full enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.



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municipality, or province.**



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Communications@anc1912.org.za
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