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Conversations *with the* President



Building a police service that keeps our people safe

■ By **PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

YESTERDAY, we held the South African Police Service National Commemoration Day, as we do every year, where we honour the police officers who were killed in the line of duty in the past year.

Over the twelve months to March this year, twelve police officers lost their lives in the line of duty. Although this is half as many deaths as the year before, even one death of a SAPS member is one too many.

Each of these officers was a colleague, a friend and a member of a family. Their deaths remind us of the risks that thousands of police officers take every day so that the rest of us may be safer.

We honour the bravery of these officers who put their lives on the line in the service of their country.

As we consider the challenges facing our police today, it is worth remembering just how far we have come.

For most people, the South African Police Service (SAPS) is the first they turn to when their safety is threatened, when there is an emergency or when they need to report a crime. When our people call the police, often at a moment of great distress or danger, they expect that someone will answer. They expect that help will come. They expect that the law will protect them. This is an expectation that every South African has, regardless of where they live.

The Constitution makes the SAPS responsible for law enforcement. Although the private security industry provides some complementary services, the responsibility for keeping the pub-

lic safe ultimately rests with the state. Private security may protect those who can afford it, but public safety must be available to all.

The SAPS remains at the fore of the work to keep our country safe. Beyond visible policing on our streets and in our communities, the SAPS conducts operations critical to our economy. This includes combating illegal mining through Operation Vala Umgodi and operations to dismantle syndicates involved in cable theft and infrastructure vandalism, smuggling and counterfeiting, human trafficking and other priority crimes.

Much of this work happens away from public view. Every day, police officers investigate crimes, track down suspects, gather evidence, patrol our communities and confront dangerous criminals.



Our men and women in uniform do so at a great cost to their personal safety.

We often take for granted just how far we have come when it comes to the transformation of law enforcement in this country. The old South African Police was about control and brute force. It was dedicated to maintaining the apartheid order while suppressing any resistance or protest.

For millions of South Africans, the police were not people to whom they could turn for protection. They were instruments of an oppressive state.

Following the democratic breakthrough, we began the hard task of building a new police service that was aligned with constitutional values and human rights, and that was accountable to the people it is mandated to serve. This required much more than changing the name of the police force. It required changing the very purpose of policing.

We had to build a police service

that no longer existed to protect the state from the people, but to protect the people and uphold their rights.

Today, the work of the SAPS is subject to the oversight of a parliamentary portfolio committee, and the Independent Police Investigative Directorate was established to look into allegations of police misconduct.

This accountability is an essential feature of democratic policing. Those who are entrusted with enforcing the law must themselves be subject to the law.

The re-orientation of the SAPS to service and accountability has been thrown into sharp relief as a number of apartheid-era crimes are under scrutiny, including Steve Biko's death in police custody in 1977 and the case of the Cradock Four, who were murdered in 1985.

Despite being offered amnesty by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in return for full disclosure, a number of apartheid-era police chose dishones-

ty and misrepresentation of the facts surrounding the deaths of the people they killed.

These memories are uncomfortable. Yet they remind us why it is so important to have a police service rooted in respect for human rights, that serves and protects instead of terrorising people.

They also remind us of the danger that arises when those entrusted with the power of the state believe that they are above the law. That is a lesson from our past that has particular relevance today.

It is a reminder of why the ongoing judicial commission of inquiry into criminality and political interference in the criminal justice system, headed by Judge Mbuyiseli Madlanga, matters so much.

The allegations that have been made about criminal infiltration, corruption and political interference in parts of our criminal justice system are deeply disturbing.

South Africans are entitled to know the truth. They are entitled

to know that those entrusted with fighting crime are not themselves working with criminals.

The Commission must therefore be allowed to do its work thoroughly and without fear, favour or interference. Where wrongdoing is established, there must be consequences. Where crimes have been committed, the law must take its course.

The alleged infiltration of the SAPS by criminals and vested interests, supported by corrupt members, must not be allowed to define the SAPS. Nor should the actions of a corrupt few be allowed to define the many thousands of police officers who serve our country with honesty and courage.

The SAPS has more than 180,000 members, alongside more than 3,000 police reservists. Every day these men and women go about their duties serving their communities.

They respond to calls for help. They attend scenes of terrible violence. They search for missing children. They investigate murders and robberies. They confront gangs and organised crime. And they often do this under difficult and dangerous circumstances.

For every incompetent or corrupt SAPS member, there are many thousands more who are not. Most SAPS members serve with honour and embody the values of the badge they wear.

We should never allow the wrongdoing of some to diminish the service of the many. At the same time, we owe it to every



honest police officer to root out those who dishonour the badge.

Even so, there is a challenge of confidence in the police. According to the 2025/2026 Governance, Public Safety and Justice Survey published by Statistics South Africa, victims often do not report certain crimes, citing the belief that “the police would not do anything about it”.

We cannot dismiss this sentiment as simply a perception. We must take it seriously.

Trust is one of the most important weapons we have in the fight against crime.

The police need communities to report crimes, identify suspects, provide information and come forward as witnesses. Communities, in turn, need to know that when they report a crime, they will be treated with respect and that their case will receive the attention it deserves.

An unreported crime cannot be investigated, and without investigation a perpetrator cannot face justice.

But we must also recognise that confidence cannot be demanded. It has to be earned. It is

earned when a telephone call is answered, when a police vehicle arrives, when a case is properly investigated and when a victim is treated with dignity. Above all, it is earned when criminals are arrested, prosecuted and brought to justice.

Our law enforcement apparatus faces a number of challenges. Apart from the revelations emerging from the Madlanga Commission, the SAPS is also under-resourced in some areas and lacks some of the skills needed to combat new forms of crime.

As government, we are determined to strengthen the SAPS. We are increasing the capacity of the service through the SAPS' Project 11,000. The next intake of 5,500 constables will soon be entering training academies.

But strengthening the police is not only about increasing numbers. It is about ensuring that we recruit the right people, give them the right training, equip them properly and place them where they are most needed.

We will continue to professionalise the SAPS so that policing

becomes a career of choice for our country's brightest. Of those who have applied for the most recent intake, a number hold qualifications in policing, law, forensic investigation and other subjects.

But as the testimony at the Madlanga Commission bears witness, it is not enough that police members have technical training and expertise. Policing requires something more. It requires character. It requires discipline. And, above all, it requires integrity.

Police officers are entrusted with extraordinary powers. They can arrest and detain people. They carry firearms. They have access to confidential information and evidence. The public must therefore be able to trust the people to whom we give these powers.

They must also have the highest levels of integrity. For this reason, psychometric and integrity testing now form part of the first phase of selection before any prospective recruit reaches fitness, vetting, medical or other stages.

Professionalisation must continue throughout a police officer's career. Recruitment, promotion and appointment to senior positions must be based on merit, competence and integrity.

There can be no place in the SAPS for criminals. There can be no place for corruption. And there can be no place for political interference in the work of the police.

At the same time, we must give



good police officers the support they need to do their jobs. We need stronger crime intelligence, better detective work, improved forensic capability and greater use of technology. We need police stations that work and police officers who are visible in the communities they serve.

Building an effective and accountable police service is a task that we should all share, whether it is by joining a community policing forum, becoming a reservist or reporting crime.

Government carries the primary responsibility for keeping people safe. But the police cannot defeat crime without the support and cooperation of communities.

We salute those businesses that have stepped forward with sponsorship and capacity building, including businesses that have donated to the SAPS Education Trust, which assists the children of members who have been killed on duty.

We also salute the community policing forums, neighbourhood organisations, traditional leaders, faith-based organisations

and ordinary citizens who work alongside the police to make our communities safer.

We still have much to do to build a society that is safe, secure and peaceful.

The task before us is clear. We must be relentless in pursuing criminals. And we must be equally relentless in

ensuring that criminality and corruption have no place within the institutions that are meant to protect us.

These two tasks go together. We cannot build public confidence in the police unless we root out corruption. And we cannot defeat crime unless the police have the confidence and cooperation of the public.

A capable and competent police service with dedicated men and women stands at the centre of that effort.

To the many thousands of police officers who get up each day, put on their uniforms and go out to serve our communities: we thank you.

We honour those who have fallen. We support those who continue to serve. And we will continue the work of building a police service that is professional, capable, honest and worthy of the trust of the South African people.

Let us give them the support and encouragement they need to serve, protect and keep us safe.

STATEMENT

BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS,
COMRADE FIKILE MBALULA,

ON THE LODGEMENT OF THE MOVEMENT'S CANDIDATES FOR THE 2026 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS AND THE APPLICATION NOW BEFORE THE ELECTORAL COURT



FOR ten days the African National Congress has been the subject of reporting about the lodgement of its candidates for the local government elections of 4 November. Some of that reporting has been accurate. Some of it has not. Much of it has been about people rather than about facts. The people of South Africa are entitled to a full account from the ANC itself, in its own voice, and that is what I have come to give this morning.

I must say one thing at the outset so that nobody is misled by what follows. On Friday 4 September the ANC filed an application in

the Electoral Court. The matter is therefore before a court. I am going to give you the facts, the sequence of events, and the position of the ANC. I am not going to argue the case from this podium. Where a question touches on the merits of what the Court has to decide, I will say so and I will stop there. That is not evasion. It is respect for the Court, and I ask you to hold me to it. The learned people say the matter is sub judice.

PART ONE: THE FACTS AS THEY STAND THIS MORNING

Let me begin with the figure that has appeared in no newspaper or television screen. The African

National Congress lodged nine thousand one hundred and twenty-eight candidates for this election, through all nine provinces. Of those, four thousand three hundred and sixty-six stand registered with the Electoral Commission on the ward ballot this morning, and four thousand five hundred and eighty-one on the proportional ballot. That is eight thousand nine hundred and forty-seven candidates. It is ninety-seven per cent of every ward seat in the Republic, and ninety per cent of every proportional seat. No other party in this country will come to you with that figure, and I give it to you first because it is the frame in which everything else must be read.

Now the other half, in the same breath. One hundred and eighty-one of our candidates were received by the Commission's system on 28 August and did not complete its final electronic step. One hundred and thirty of them on the proportional ballot and fifty-one on the ward ballot. Two in every hundred. They are in six councils out of the two hundred and fifty-seven in this country: Ngquza Hill and Port St Johns, Walter Sisulu and Sundays River Valley in the Eastern Cape; uMshwathi in KwaZulu-Natal; and Mangaung in the Free State.

I want to be exact about those six, because they have been reported as though the ANC had vanished from them. In Mangaung, in uMshwathi, in Walter Sisulu and in Sundays River Valley, the ANC's full slate of ward candidates are on the ballot today. In those four it is the proportional list that is in dispute. It is only in Ngquza Hill and Port St Johns that both ballots are affected. That is a serious loss and I will not minimise it. But it is not the loss that has been described.



And now the fact that matters most, which the Commission itself has placed on the record. On the Commission's own count, two thousand two hundred and seventy-four candidates, from forty-five political parties, stand in exactly the same position as ours. Forty-five parties. Forty-four of them are not the ANC. Nine of every ten candidates caught by this ruling belong to somebody else.

Every one of those two thousand two hundred and seventy-four candidates was lodged through the Commission's electronic system. Two hundred and twenty-four parties lodged their candidates by hand, at the Commission's offices, and the Commission has reported no comparable difficulty among any of them. Two hundred and ninety-nine parties used the electronic route, and forty-five of them could not complete it. I draw no conclusion from that this morning; the Court will. I simply ask that it be reported, because in ten days it has not been.

PART TWO: What the Movement Did, and When

There has been a great deal said about what the ANC did or did not do. Here is the sequence, and I give it to you with dates

because you are entitled to test it. From 13 July, on the instruction of my office, the movement's candidates were loaded onto the Commission's system, province by province, as the branches, the communities and the regions nominated them. The nomination process itself had gone on for months; the loading went on for six weeks. Our own Electoral Committee, chaired by Cde Kgalema Motlanthe, compiled the lists. Our Provincial List Committees verified them. Our provincial executives ratified them. The National Executive Committee approved the lists on 25 August and ratified them on 27 August, the day before the deadline.

Allow me to pause here so that we can appreciate the nature of the ANC's deep and complex democratic process of consent, which no other party in South Africa and I dare say on the continent can claim. The branch general meeting nominates four candidates for the ward. The branch then takes those four to a meeting of the whole community, people who are not members of the ANC, simply neighbours and the community questions them, expresses its preference, and may put forward a candidate of its own.

Only then does the branch make its nomination, from those the community has endorsed. For the proportional lists, the branches nominate and Regional Interview and Vetting Panels interview, order and balance the lists. From there every list goes to the Provincial List Committee for screening and vetting, to the extended Provincial Executive Committee for ratification, and to the extended National Executive Committee for approval over the same lists, at every stage. Under our Guidelines a name may not be removed at the provincial or national stage unless the vetting disqualifies it or ninety per cent of the meeting votes it out.

While all of that happens, our Leagues are engaged, and our Alliance partners and SANCO sit in every one of those structures, from the Electoral Committee to the extended National Executive Committee. It is a highly democratic process and it is deliberate. We hold to the policy that the community must have the say over who is put before it, and that the branch of the ANC, the basic unit of the movement, is the centre of people's power.

On 28 August, at the movement's Data Centre, in the presence of

the First Deputy Secretary General, the Chairperson of the Electoral Committee, the Provincial Secretaries and the Chairs of the Provincial List Committees, I as Secretary General approved every list for lodgement. I did so subject to four conditions, and I want the country to hear what they were. That the mayoral candidates chosen by the movement's national process be on the lists. That any person with a criminal record, or an adverse finding of fraud or unethical conduct, be removed. That any person under the step-aside rule be removed. And that any person having been served with charges facing a current disciplinary matter in the movement be removed.

That is what has been reported as a "reopening" of the lists. It was not. It was the movement applying its own integrity rules to lists the National Executive Committee had already ratified, in front of witnesses, on the last day. The ANC promised the people that it is serious about renewal. I would give the same instruction again tomorrow.

The capturing that followed was done by the movement's data capturers, supervised by the Provincial Secretaries and the Provincial List Committees, on names that had been on the Commission's system since July. The Chairperson of the Electoral Committee, former President Kgalema Motlanthe, the First Deputy Secretary General, Cde Nomvula Mokonyane, and I remained at the Data Centre while the Provincial Secretaries and the Chairs of the Provincial List Committees confirmed the validity of each final list, as our Guidelines require, and while the capturers completed the loading under their supervision.

In the final hour of 28 August, the operators working on the affected lists were logged out of the Commission's system and returned to its landing page. Confirmations stopped arriving. The difficulty was reported to the Commission's responsible official as it happened, and that record is before the Court. The candidate information itself was on the Commission's system before five o'clock. The Commission's own reports for each of the six councils, which it printed on 3 September, were printed from that information.

Let me repeat: there is not a single name the ANC wishes to enter into the Commission's system anew. All the names are inside the system as we speak. Whether that is submission in law is the question the Court will decide.

On 29 August I said that we had submitted all our candidates and paid for them in advance. That was true. It remains true. We also used the word "glitch", and a great deal has been read into that word. We experienced difficulties. I would like to leave it there

and let the record speak for itself – the Commission's own system records and our account of the afternoon – before the Court.

PART THREE: *The Commission, and the Electoral Court*

On 2 September the movement wrote to the Electoral Commission. We asked for one thing. We asked the Commission to process the candidate information that its own system had received and stored before the deadline. We asked to add no name. We asked to change no list. We asked for no late nomination and no extension of any deadline. And we asked that whatever the Commission did, it do for every one of the forty-five affected parties on identical terms.

On 4 September the Commission refused. It is entitled to its view and it has given it. I will not characterise its letter beyond that. We are proud of the institution the Commission is. We insist that our role must always be anchored in strengthening the institutions of the state, above all those that defend our democracy and the public



purse. The Electoral Commission is an exemplary institution by any global standard. There is no question about its integrity, or about its standing as a guardian of our democracy and of the right to vote, which was bled for.

On the same day, 4 September, the ANC filed an application in the Electoral Court in Bloemfontein, under section 20 of the Electoral Commission Act, for leave to appeal and to appeal against the Commission's decision. The application asks the Court to set the Commission's decision aside; to declare that the movement's lists in the six councils were submitted, timeously and validly, under sections 14 and 17 of the Municipal Electoral Act; and to direct the Commission to treat them as submitted for the election of 4 November. In doing so we speak, indirectly, for the forty-four other parties who, on the Commission's own count, stand where the ANC stands.

The question before the Court is short, and it is a question of law. When a political party has completed the Commission's prescribed forms and uploaded its lists onto the Commission's own system before the hour, has that party submitted its lists? The

movement says it has. The Commission says it has not. That is a disagreement between a political party and a public institution about what a statute means, and this country built a specialist court for precisely that. The Electoral Court will decide it. The ANC will abide by what the courts decide. I say that now, before judgment, so that nobody need ask afterwards.

I want to address the judgment the Electoral Court handed down on Friday in the matter of the UDF Party, because it has been reported as a blow to the ANC. The Court held that the Commission has no power to exempt one party from a deadline that binds all others. The African National Congress agrees with that. We have never asked for an exemption. We have never asked for an extension. We are not asking for one now. What the UDF asked for and what the ANC asks for are different things, and Friday's judgment is the clearest statement yet of that difference.

And to those who have warned the Commission against giving the ANC "preferential treatment", I say this plainly. The ANC wants none. Whatever relief the Court grants, the movement has asked that it apply to every affected party

on the same terms — to the forty-four other parties as much as to us. If the ANC succeeds, two thousand and ninety-three candidates who are not ours succeed with us. That is the only kind of relief this movement would accept.

PART FOUR: *The Institution*

Now let me speak about the Electoral Commission again. The Electoral Commission is a Chapter Nine institution of our Constitution. The African National Congress, more than any other organisation in this country, argued for it, negotiated it and built it. Through seven national elections and six local elections, the ANC has accepted every substantive result the Commission has declared, including the result of 2024, which took from this movement the majority it had held for thirty years. We accepted it on the night. We did not go to a stage and call the Commission a thief. That record is who we are, and it is not for sale in a dispute over six councils.

So let me be clear about what the ANC is doing and what it is not doing. The ANC is not attacking the Electoral Commission. The ANC disagrees with the Commission on a point of law, and it has taken that disagreement to the court that Parliament created to hear it. Disagreement in a court is how a democracy respects an institution. Disagreement on a stage, with slogans, is how a democracy weakens one. The movement has chosen the court, respectfully.

There are parties in this country who have used this matter to relitigate their own grievances against the Commission. The ANC will not join them, and it will not be used by them. Where the



Commission is attacked for doing its work, this movement will defend it, as it has always defended it. We have a responsibility to the institutions of this state that the Commission's other critics do not carry, and we will carry it even while we are in court against it.

And there is a responsibility on all of us that goes beyond this matter. Forty-five parties used one channel and had challenges. That is a fact about the channel, whatever the Court decides about the law. After this election the ANC will go to the Party Liaison Committee and propose, for every party, that the electronic route carry a receipt; that its final step be prescribed in regulation, published in the Gazette, where every party can read it, and not only in software; and that a party be able to see the record of what the Commission holds from it. Not so that the ANC is spared next time. So that no party, large or small, ever again stands where forty-five parties stand this morning. A stronger Commission is in the interest of every South African, and the ANC will work for one.

PART FIVE: *The Movement's Own House*

I turn now to the ANC itself, and I turn to it separately, because it is a separate matter. Nothing I say in this part is about the case before the Court. Our lists were settled, they were approved, they were ratified by the National Executive Committee, and they were on the Commission's system. What follows is about how the ANC does its own work.

On Monday the National Officials received my report on this matter. It goes now to the internal processes of the organization. It sets out a process with nine stages,



from the branch that writes down a comrade's identity number to the capturer who presses the last key. It finds that two hundred and fifty-two identity numbers on our own files were wrong before any of this began, written down at branch meetings and never verified. It finds that our own Electoral Committee warned us of that from June.

So when I am asked who is to blame, I give you the collective answer and I give it without hesitation. This was a process of nine stages and eight of them are collective structures, the National Executive Committee among them. I approved these lists for lodgement, in front of witnesses, with conditions, and I stand by that approval. There is no one person at the end of this story, and a movement that goes looking for one that has not held anybody accountable.

Accountability in the African National Congress follows a report through the structures. It does not follow a weekend news cycle.

The report is before the structures. They will take it, and they will decide, and the movement will tell you what they decided. I will not be drawn into pre-empting them from this podium, and I will not conduct the movement's business through unnamed comrades in the Sunday papers.

There have been suggestions from within the movement of deliberate wrongdoing. I say to every comrade, at every level: if you hold evidence, the movement's structures are open to receive it, and I will act on it. What the ANC will not do is try its own comrades in the press, and it will not name the staff members who did their work on 28 August under instruction, who have no platform and no spokesperson, and who cannot answer for themselves. That is not accountability. It is the movement using its own employees as cover, and I will not permit it.

What the movement is doing instead is fixing the process.

The report sets out twelve measures and the Officials have begun on them. A lock date on every list, seven days before the Commission's deadline, after which nothing moves. The upgrade of the ANC Membership System so that every member's identity number, and therefore every nominee's, is verified against the National Population Register – and the movement will seek an interface with the Department of Home Affairs and the Electoral Commission to make that verification automatic, so that the backlog of unverified identity numbers is eliminated before the next election rather than discovered in its last week. Four accredited users on the Commission's system instead of one. And a comrade whose only job, on lodgement day, is to confirm before the hour that every council is closed. That is what putting our house in order looks like, and we are doing it before we ask anything of anybody else.

On the issue of whether the eastern Cape List was substantially altered, that matter is under

forensic attention and it is best left at that for now. The Provincial Executive Committee has to account on the list and inform the structures what changed and who changed it for what reasons if indeed it is so. Again – the Secretary General's Office cannot get involved with lists in that fashion – that is why our own internal "IEC" if you will, led by umkhulu-wa Motlanthe is there – the process is conducted independent of the secretary General and his deputies so that it is safeguarded exactly from allegations of manipulation. The Election Committee has given the ANC a clean bill of health on the process and made findings on where we should improve our systems – the SGO has also looked at how the processes could be streamlined and made to move faster and efficiently.

PART SIX: To Our Candidates and Our Voters

To the people of Mangaung, of uMshwathi, of Walter Sisulu and of Sundays River Valley: your ANC ward candidates are on the ballot. Go and find them. They are campaigning this morning, and the movement is campaigning with them.

To the people of Ngquza Hill and Port St Johns, and to every voter in those six councils who wished to vote for the ANC on the proportional ballot: the movement has gone to court for you, and it has done so on the only ground it would ever go to court on — that your candidates were there, before the hour, on the

Commission's own system, and that you have the right to vote for them. The Court will decide. Whatever it decides, the ANC will be in your wards on 4 November, and it will be in them after.

To the two thousand and ninety-three candidates of forty-four other parties who stand this morning where our one hundred and eighty-one stand: the ANC is not in court for itself alone. Whatever we ask for you, we have asked for you too. We believe we must be judged through the ballot, alongside you, in a fair and open contest.

And to the whole country: an election is decided on the ballot. A vote is won on the ballot and it is lost on the ballot. It must not be lost in an administrative process, and it must not be lost at a confirmation step on a website. That is the principle the movement is defending, and it will defend it for everyone. This is what we should all be promoting. We must not allow a situation where a thinner and thinner turnout decides who governs. The legitimacy of a government is derived, above all, from the meaningful participation of the people who choose it.

CONCLUSION

I will close with a request of the media, and I make it respectfully. Report the forty-four other parties. Report the two hundred and

twenty-four that lodged by hand. Report on the communities – the South Africans whose right to vote should be sacrosanct and protected. Ask the question the country has not yet been asked: who is harmed if names already on the Commission's system are counted? Report the question that the Court has to answer. The ANC will answer for its own failures and challenges. But this is not an ANC story, and the country is not well served by being told that it is. This must not be a single-story narrative. We rob the public of valuable information if we think that demonising the ANC, rather than looking at the tragic issue of a vote denied, is the better angle. It is not.

The ANC is ready for 4 November. Our candidates are ready – nine thousand one hundred and twenty-eight candidates from the ANC alone. Our campaign is in the wards. And our confidence in the Electoral Commission's duty to deliver a free, fair and credible election is unchanged.

The ANC is inviting South African's to once again join in the building of South African communities better, together.



The ANC Will Oppose the DA's Application to intervene in the Electoral Court:

THE RIGHT TO VOTE IS NOT THE DA'S TO NARROW

THE African National Congress has instructed its legal representatives to oppose the Democratic Alliance's application for leave to intervene in the ANC's application before the Electoral Court concerning the lodgement of the movement's candidates in six municipalities for the local government elections of 4 November 2026.

The ANC's application is directed at a decision of the Electoral Commission. The Commission is the respondent, it is defending its decision, and it is fully able to do so. The DA is not a party to that decision, and its statement of this morning misstates both what the ANC has asked for and who is affected.

"The DA has no quarrel with the Commission and no quarrel with the law," said the Secretary General, Cde Fikile Mbalula. "Its quarrel is with the voters of six municipalities who might choose somebody other than the DA. Nothing the ANC asks for takes a single DA candidate off any ballot. What the DA asks for takes two thousand two hundred and seventy-four candidates off the ballot, and forty-four of the forty-five parties they belong to are not the ANC."

The ANC will oppose the intervention on the following grounds:

The DA has no interest the Court needs to protect, and

nothing to add. The question before the Court is whether the ANC's lists were submitted before the deadline under the Municipal Electoral Act. That is a question between the ANC and the Commission, and the Commission is answering it. The DA's only interest is electoral: it contests the six municipalities concerned, among them the Mangaung metro, and it would prefer to contest them with fewer opponents on the ballot. A wish to see a competitor kept off a ballot is not an interest a court exists to protect. Should the Court nonetheless admit the DA, the ANC will ask that its participation be confined to argument, that it be permitted to cause no delay, and that no extension of the

Commission's timetable follows from its admission.

No harm to the DA, or to anyone. If the ANC succeeds, not a single DA candidate is affected. The DA remains on the ballot in every municipality in which it lodged. No party is removed, no list is reordered and no deadline is moved. The only effect of the relief the ANC seeks is that candidates whose details were on the Commission's own system before 17h00 on 28 August are counted, for all 45 affected parties on identical terms. A party that complied loses nothing when another party's timeously lodged



candidates are counted. The only prejudice the DA can point to is that it would have to win votes in Mangaung rather than inherit them.

The DA's case rests on a false premise. The DA says the final electronic step was "a process all parties clearly understood and successfully followed". On the Commission's own count, 45 parties did not complete it, and every one of them lodged through the Commission's electronic system. The DA's intervention therefore asks the Court to keep 2274 candidates from 45 parties off the ballot. Forty-four of those parties are not the ANC.

Delay prejudices the voter. The Commission's own timetable has the final list of candidates compiled on 16 September and the ballot paper draw on 23 September. A further set of papers from a party with no stake in the outcome beyond its own advantage puts that timetable at risk, and the people who pay for it are the candidates of 45 parties and the voters of the municipalities concerned.

The Commission's own practice. The Commission's timetable itself provides for parties to cure defects after the deadline: notices for missing identity documents and acceptance forms were sent on 4 September with parties given until 7 September to respond, and substitution of candidates appearing on more than one list is permitted until 11 September. In 2021 the Commission amended the election timetable and re-opened candidate nomination for every party when circumstances required it. Where a systemic difficulty arises on the Commission's own system, affecting 45 parties through a single channel,

On the Commission's own count, **45 parties did not complete it**, and every one of them lodged through the Commission's electronic system. The DA's intervention therefore asks the Court to **keep 2274 candidates from 45 parties off the ballot.**

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the practice of this democracy has been to protect participation, not to defeat it.

The ANC's case asks for no re-opening; it asks that what was lodged in time be counted. In the alternative, and only for every affected party on identical terms, it asks the Commission to use the power the Act already gives it.

The DA cannot pretend that curing a systemic problem is foreign to our electoral system.

The right to vote is sacrosanct. The Constitution guarantees every adult citizen the right to vote and the right to stand for public office, and our courts have repeatedly held that electoral law must be interpreted to promote participation. The DA asks the Court to do the opposite: to narrow the choice before the voters of six municipalities for the advantage of one party. "Deadlines are deadlines" is not an answer to that. The ANC agrees that deadlines bind every party equally. The question before the Court is what was submitted before the

deadline, and that question belongs to the Court, to the Commission and to the parties whose candidates are affected, not to a party that stands to profit from their exclusion.

The DA sits with the ANC in the Government of National Unity. In this matter it has chosen to act as what it is in local government: the ANC's principal opponent. The ANC will meet it as such in court. The country should read the DA's intervention for what it is — an act of the campaign, not of the Constitution — and should note the company the DA has chosen to keep in making it.

The Secretary General set out the ANC's position on 8 September, and it has not changed: "*The ANC wants no favours. Whatever the Court grants, we have asked that it apply to every affected party on the same terms.*" And: "*Disagreement in a court is how a democracy respects an institution. Disagreement on a stage, with slogans, is how a democracy weakens one. The ANC has chosen the court.*"

"A vote is won on the ballot and it is lost on the ballot," the Secretary General said. "It must not be lost at a confirmation step on a website, and it must not be lost because a rival party found it convenient. The Court will decide, and the ANC will abide by what the courts decide."

The ANC lodged 9128 candidates, and 8947 of them were accepted by the Commission at lodgement: candidates in 97 per cent of the wards in the Republic, and proportional lists covering 90 per cent of the proportional seats.

Our campaign continues in every one of them.



*Electoral administration must be a bridge,
not a barrier*

An ANC perspective on the Electoral Court case

■ By **MADIEPETSANE CHARLOTTE LOBE**

SOUTH AFRICA'S democracy rests on a principle that must never be treated as a technicality: the people must be free to choose who represents them.

That principle is now at the centre of the dispute between the African National Congress (ANC) and the Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) over candidate nominations for the 2026 Local Government Elections.

This is not simply a disagreement about an online form, a deadline or an administrative status dis-

played on a computer screen. It is a constitutional question about whether technology should determine the exercise of a democratic right – and whether voters should bear the consequences of a technical failure in an electoral system.

It is important to state clearly what this case is not.

The ANC is not asking the Electoral Court for permission to submit candidates after the statutory deadline. It is not asking for a political favour or a special extension. Nor, according to the party, is it seeking to introduce new

names into the IEC's system.

The ANC's case is narrower, more precise and fundamentally legal.

The question before the Court is whether candidate information that had already been completed and uploaded onto the IEC's electronic system before the 28 August deadline constitutes a valid submission, even where final electronic confirmation could not be completed because of problems encountered on the system.

That distinction is decisive.

The ANC is not asking the Court to change the rules. It is asking the Court to determine whether the rules were already complied with.

The dispute is about more than 181 candidates

The ANC says 181 of its candidates are affected: 130 proportional-representation candidates and 51 ward candidates across six municipalities. At the same time, the party has registered thousands of candidates nationally and says the affected candidates' information was already captured within the IEC system. (Polity□)

From the ANC's perspective, this is therefore not an attempt to circumvent the electoral timetable.

It is an attempt to establish what the law means when a political party has completed the substantive nomination process, entered the required information into the electoral authority's own system before the deadline, and then encountered a technological barrier at the final stage of electronic confirmation.

That is the question the Electoral Court must answer.

It is also a question that reaches beyond the ANC.

If an electoral system can recognise that information has been captured, processed and made available before the deadline, but a technical failure prevents the final confirmation, then the law must determine whether the failure lies with the party or with the system through which compliance was required.

A democracy cannot be reduced

to the success or failure of a digital button.

Can technology determine whether a democratic right has been exercised?

This is the most important dimension of the case.

Modern electoral administration depends heavily on technology. Political parties submit information electronically. Electoral authorities process information electronically. Candidates are verified through digital systems. Results are increasingly supported by sophisticated technological infrastructure.

But technology must remain the servant of electoral law. It must never become an unintended gatekeeper of democratic participation.

The ANC's argument is that the substance of the nomination process should not be reduced to whether an electronic system successfully generated a particular final-status indicator before the clock reached 17:00.

If the prescribed information was completed and captured within the IEC's system before the deadline, the legal question is whether that constitutes submission.

That is not a question the ANC can decide for itself. It is precisely why the matter belongs before the Electoral Court.

The principle at stake is simple: a technical system must not be allowed to erase substantive compliance.

If the law requires information to be submitted through a system, then the system must be capable of recognising and recording compliance fairly, reliably and transparently. Where it fails, the consequences cannot automatically be imposed on the political party or, worse, on the voters.

Electoral administration must be a bridge, not a barrier

Electoral administration must serve as a bridge to democratic participation, not a barrier against it.



The IEC has a constitutional responsibility to protect the integrity of elections. That responsibility includes enforcing deadlines and ensuring that all political parties are treated fairly. But it also includes ensuring that the systems used to administer elections are accessible, reliable and capable of supporting genuine participation.

A technically sophisticated system is not necessarily a democratic system if it is difficult to access, poorly explained, vulnerable to failure or incapable of distinguishing between non-compliance and system failure.

Facilitating political parties

Political parties must comply with electoral rules. There can be no credible election without clear deadlines, transparent procedures and enforceable requirements.

But those rules must be administered in a manner that is reasonable, non-discriminatory and consistent with the constitutional purpose of elections.

Administrative processes should not become unnecessarily burdensome.

Political parties, candidates and independent participants must be given clear information about what is required, how compliance is recorded and what remedies are available when the system fails.

A level playing field also requires equitable access to the administrative infrastructure of elections. No party should be disadvantaged because of a technical failure that it could not reasonably prevent or correct.



Empowering citizens

The same principle applies to voters.

Accessible voter registration, effective voter education and inclusive voting mechanisms are essential to preventing disenfranchisement. Citizens must know where, when and how to vote, particularly when electoral boundaries, procedures or voting arrangements change.

Candidate nominations are part of that same democratic chain.

Political parties are not merely administrative applicants. They are vehicles through which citizens exercise political choice. When a candidate is excluded from the ballot because of a technical failure rather than a substantive failure to comply, the consequences extend beyond the party and candidate.

They reach the voters who intended to support that candidate.

The question is therefore not only whether a form was finally confirmed. The question is whether the electoral process, taken as a whole, preserved the voter's right

to meaningful choice.

The danger of administrative disenfranchisement

When administrative rules become overly restrictive, or when digital systems are faulty, inaccessible or insufficiently supported, they can produce a form of indirect voter suppression.

Such barriers can frustrate political parties, discourage candidates, narrow voter choice and undermine public confidence in election outcomes.

This does not mean that every administrative error should be excused. Electoral deadlines matter. Rules matter. Certainty matters. Without them, elections cannot be properly administered.

But rules must serve the democratic purpose for which they exist.

The mechanics of an election must never overshadow the will of the people. Administrative certainty cannot become a justification for ignoring substantive compliance. Nor should a technical failure be allowed to determine

the political choices available to citizens.

The integrity of an election is not protected merely by excluding candidates. It is protected by ensuring that the process is fair, transparent, reliable and faithful to the constitutional right to participate.

This is not an argument for special treatment

One of the easiest ways to misrepresent the ANC's position is to portray the application as a request for preferential treatment.

The ANC has rejected that interpretation.

The party says it is not asking the IEC to reopen the nomination process or to permit it to submit candidates after the deadline. It wants the Court to determine whether the nominations were already submitted within the prescribed period.

There is a fundamental difference between asking for an extension and asking whether an action already undertaken constituted compliance with the law.

The former changes the rules.

The latter interprets the rules.

The ANC is asking the Court to examine the facts, the system and the legal meaning of submission. That is not an attempt to evade the electoral framework. It is an attempt to ensure that the framework is applied fairly and constitutionally.

The broader democratic question

There is another reason this case deserves serious consideration.

The ANC says the difficulties experienced through the electronic nomination system were not unique to it. According to the party, information relating to 2,274 candidates from 45 political parties had been captured on the system but not finally submitted.

The ANC has therefore argued that any relief granted should not be confined to ANC candidates but should apply equally to other parties affected by the same circumstances. (IOL)

This is significant.

An electoral system must be impartial. But impartiality does not mean applying rules mechanically without regard to context. It means applying the law consistently, fairly and without political favour.

If the Court finds that a particular category of electronically captured nominations legally constituted submissions, then that principle should apply to every political party in the same position.

That is why the ANC's argument, as presented by the party, is broader than the interests of the organisation itself.

It concerns the integrity of the electoral process and the protection of voters across the political spectrum.

The ANC is not asking for an ANC exception. It is asking for a legal principle that can be applied equally.

Respect for the IEC and respect for the courts

All political actors have a responsibility to protect public confidence in South Africa's electoral institutions.

The IEC has played an indispensable role in sustaining the country's democratic order. Its credibility is a national asset and must be protected.

But protecting the IEC does not mean placing it beyond scrutiny. Strong institutions are not weakened when their decisions are



tested in court. They are strengthened when disputes are resolved through lawful, transparent and accountable processes.

The ANC's decision to approach the Electoral Court should therefore not automatically be interpreted as an attack on the Commission's institutional legitimacy.

There is nothing undemocratic about a political party challenging an administrative or legal decision through the courts. The right to do so is itself an expression of constitutional democracy.

The proper question is not whether the ANC has challenged the IEC.

The proper question is whether it has done so through the appropriate constitutional and legal mechanisms.

It has.

The ANC has placed its case before the Electoral Court and has stated that it will abide by the Court's decision. (*Jacaranda FM*)

That is precisely how democratic institutions are supposed to function.

Political parties must be held accountable. Electoral bodies must be held accountable. Courts must be respected. And voters must not be forgotten in the process.

The UDF judgment does not necessarily answer the ANC's question

The recent Electoral Court judgment concerning the United Democratic Front's attempt to obtain an extension of the candidate nomination deadline has inevitably entered the public de-



bate.

But the ANC argues that the two matters should not be conflated.

The UDF case concerned relief relating to a missed statutory deadline. The ANC maintains that its application asks a different question: whether information already captured on the IEC's system before the deadline amounted to a legally valid submission. (*IOL*)

The distinction is important.

A political party cannot simply ask a court to rewrite an electoral timetable because it failed to comply with it.

But neither should the existence of a statutory deadline automatically resolve the separate question of whether a party complied with that deadline where its nomination information was already captured on the electoral authority's system before the deadline.

The Court must determine

whether the final electronic confirmation was a substantive legal requirement or merely the final administrative step in a process that had already been completed in substance.

That is the legal issue requiring judicial determination.

Democracy is not only about counting votes

There is a deeper principle at stake.

Elections are not merely administrative exercises. They are the means through which citizens exercise political power.

When a candidate is excluded from a ballot, the impact does not stop with the candidate or political party. It potentially affects every voter who intended to choose that candidate.

This does not mean that every administrative mistake should be condoned. It means that the consequences of exclusion must

be assessed against the constitutional purpose of the electoral system.

Electoral rules exist to protect the credibility of elections, but they also exist to facilitate political participation.

The challenge is to uphold both principles: certainty in the electoral process and fairness in the exercise of political rights.

The ANC's position is that fairness cannot be achieved by treating a technical failure as though it were deliberate non-compliance.

The Electoral Court must determine where the balance lies.

Let the Court decide – but let the political principle be clear

For the ANC, this case should not be reduced to a political contest between the governing party and the electoral commission.

It is a test of whether South Africa's electoral framework can respond fairly when democratic participation intersects with technology.

The ANC believes that it complied with the substantive requirements of the nomination process and that the affected candidate information was already within the IEC's system before the statutory deadline. The IEC takes a different view of what constitutes a completed electronic submission.

Both positions cannot ultimately prevail.

The courts must decide.

And that is exactly what a consti-

tutional democracy provides for.

The ANC has chosen the legal route. It has placed its argument before the Electoral Court. It must now allow the Court to interrogate the facts, interpret the law and determine the appropriate remedy.

But while the Court decides the legal question, the political principle should be clear: democracy must not be narrowed by administrative failure.

South Africa should emerge from this episode with a stronger electoral system – one in which deadlines are respected, political parties are held to account, technology is reliable, administrative processes are accessible and no voter is unnecessarily deprived of meaningful political choice.

Because ultimately, this is bigger than 181 candidates.

It is about whether the machinery

of democracy serves the people or whether the people are forced to serve the machinery.

It is about whether a technical system designed to facilitate participation can instead determine who appears on the ballot.

And it is about whether the constitutional promise of political choice remains real when the process moves from the polling station to the digital platform.

That is a principle worth defending – through the law, through the courts and through respect for the institutions that sustain our constitutional order.

The ANC's position is not that rules do not matter.

It is that rules must serve democracy.

And democracy must, above all, serve the people.



82 YEARS OF THE ANCYL:

The Young Lions and the Unfinished Class Struggle

■ By **SASABONA MANGANYE**

SOUTH AFRICA's youth have been told for generations that they are the leaders of tomorrow. But tomorrow has become an increasingly expensive promise.

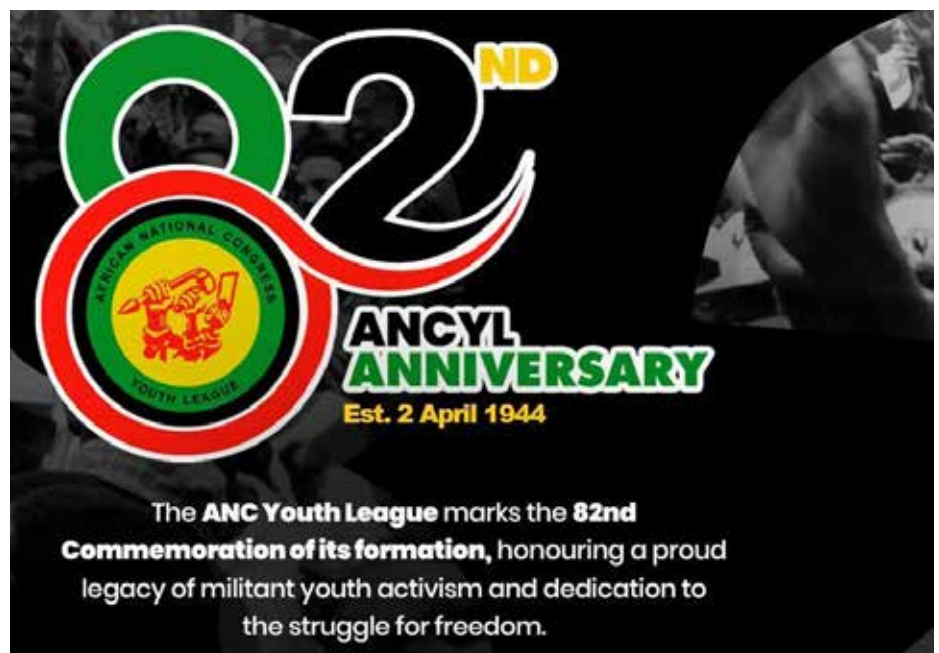
For millions of young South Africans, the present is defined by unemployment, precarious work, indebtedness, unaffordable education if not qualifying for funding, spatial exclusion and an economy in which ownership remains concentrated in relatively few hands. Statistics South Africa's latest Quarterly Labour Force Survey shows that youth unemployment among people aged 15–34 rose to 47.4% in the second quarter of 2026. Five million young people were unemployed, while youth employment declined by 40,000 during the quarter.

The question confronting the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL), as it marks its 82nd anniversary, is therefore not simply whether it can celebrate its illustrious history.

It is whether it can once again understand the material conditions of its generation and organise young people to transform them.

That is fundamentally question.

It requires us to move beyond the language of individual opportuni-



ty and ask a more uncomfortable question: who owns the productive wealth of South Africa, who controls it, who benefits from it, and who is condemned to sell their labour in order to survive?

The answers reveal the unfinished character of South Africa's democratic revolution.

The Youth League was born out of a struggle over power

The ANCYL was founded in 1944 by young activists including Anton Lembede, Mxolisi Majombozi, William Nkomo, Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo and A.P. Mda.

Its emergence reflected dissatisfaction with the pace and character of the ANC's political struggle. The young generation wanted a more militant, disciplined and mass-based movement capable of confronting the apartheid system.

The significance of the Youth League's intervention was therefore not merely generational.

It was political and class based.

Apartheid was not simply a system of racial prejudice. It was a political-economic system that organised racial domination alongside the exploitation of black labour and the exclusion of the

majority from meaningful ownership of land, capital and productive assets. Race and class were therefore deeply interconnected.

The struggle against apartheid was simultaneously a struggle against racial domination and against the economic structures that reproduced that domination. The young leaders of the 1940s understood that political organisation had to confront the material foundations of oppression. That is why the Youth League became a catalyst for the ANC's 1949 Programme of Action.

The lesson for 2026 is clear: a revolutionary youth movement cannot limit itself to changing political representation while leaving the underlying distribution of economic power substantially intact.

From racial capitalism to the democratic transition

The end of apartheid fundamentally transformed South Africa's political order.

Universal suffrage dismantled white minority rule. The democratic Constitution established political equality and a framework for socioeconomic transformation. But political democracy did not automatically abolish the economic relations inherited from apartheid.

This is the central contradiction confronting the post-1994 generation.

The democratic state inherited an economy characterised by highly concentrated ownership, unequal access to productive assets, spatial segregation and profound disparities in wealth. The majority acquired political



citizenship while remaining economically marginalised.

This is why the concept of class remains indispensable. It allows us to understand that poverty is not simply an individual failure; unemployment is not simply a consequence of inadequate effort; and inequality is not merely an unfortunate difference in income.

These conditions are connected to how the economy is organised.

A young person who owns productive assets occupies a fundamentally different economic position from a young person who owns nothing but their capacity to work.

The distinction between labour and capital therefore remains central to understanding youth inequality.

Youth unemployment is a class question

The figure of 47.4% youth unemployment should not be treated as merely a labour-market statistic. It represents a structural crisis.

Capitalism requires labour power to be available for production, but it does not guarantee employ-

ment to every person who needs to sell their labour.

South Africa's young people are consequently confronted by a profound contradiction: they are educated and increasingly connected to the global economy, yet many cannot find a stable place within productive economic activity.

The result is what Marx described as a reserve army of labour: a pool of people who are available for work but remain unemployed, underemployed or precariously employed.

This has political consequences.

When labour is abundant and secure employment is scarce, workers' bargaining power is weakened.

Young people become vulnerable to low wages, temporary contracts, platform work and informal employment.

The answer cannot therefore be reduced to teaching every young person how to write a better CV.

The problem is not simply that young people lack employability. The deeper problem is that the economy does not generate sufficient productive employment.

That is a political-economic problem. And political-economic problems require structural solutions.

The unfinished National Democratic Revolution

The ANC's historical project has never been confined to the attainment of political office.

The National Democratic Revolution (NDR) seeks to dismantle apartheid colonialism and create a democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous society. The transition to democracy therefore cannot be understood as the end of the struggle.

It is a change in the terrain of struggle.

The democratic state provides political instruments that did not exist under apartheid. But political power must be used to transform the socioeconomic relations inherited from colonialism and apartheid.

The Youth League must therefore ask whether the economic transformation achieved since 1994 has gone far enough.

The answer must be honest. It has not.

South Africa has made important advances in access to education, housing, social protection and basic services. Yet ownership and wealth remain highly concentrated, while unemployment and inequality continue to reproduce class divisions.

This is why the language of economic freedom must become more concrete. Economic freedom cannot mean simply having the right to seek employment. It must involve access to land, cap-

ital, skills, technology, markets and productive assets.

From consumers to owners

The greatest weakness of contemporary youth politics is its tendency to define young people primarily as consumers.

Young people are targeted as voters, consumers of technology, users of financial products and participants in the gig economy.

The ANCYL must advance a different conception.

Young South Africans must become producers and owners.

The question should not merely be how many young people can be employed by existing corporations.

It should also be how many young people can own enterprises, participate in cooperatives, acquire productive land, develop intellectual property, enter industrial supply chains and own shares in productive enterprises.

This requires confronting the concentration of capital.

A genuine youth economic programme cannot be built entirely around entrepreneurship workshops and small-business grants while leaving the commanding heights of the economy untouched.

Young entrepreneurs need access to markets, procurement, finance, infrastructure and technology.

Otherwise entrepreneurship becomes another euphemism for survival.

A Youth Agenda for 2026–2030

The ANCYL should use its 82nd anniversary to focus on a concrete five-year programme grounded in the material interests of working-class and unemployed youth.

1. Youth industrialisation

The state must use procurement, infrastructure investment, industrial policy and development finance to expand productive sectors.

Priority must be given to manufacturing, agro-processing, mining beneficiation, renewable



energy, construction, logistics, digital industries and the creative economy.

The objective must be to move young people from precarious consumption into productive employment and ownership.

2. A Youth Development Bank

Access to finance remains one of the greatest barriers facing young entrepreneurs.

The state should strengthen development-finance mechanisms specifically designed to support youth-owned productive enterprises, cooperatives and industrial ventures.

Finance should be linked to production, employment creation and measurable developmental outcomes, not speculation.

3. Public procurement as a transformation instrument

Government is one of the largest purchasers of goods and services in the economy. Yet procurement can become another barrier when young enterprises lack the scale and networks required to enter supply chains.

The ANCYL should demand de-

liberate procurement targets for credible youth-owned enterprises and cooperatives, accompanied by mechanisms that prevent fronting and elite capture.

4. A revolutionary skills compact

Education must be connected to the productive economy.

The ANCYL should advocate a national apprenticeship and technical-skills programme focused on engineering, manufacturing, construction, agriculture, energy, artificial intelligence, software, cybersecurity and other strategic capabilities.

The objective should be to create a generation capable of producing technology rather than merely consuming it.

5. Youth ownership of the digital economy

Artificial intelligence and digital platforms are creating a new frontier of economic power.

South Africa cannot afford to reproduce the old pattern in which young Africans provide labour and consume technology while ownership of platforms, data and intellectual property remains elsewhere.

The ANCYL should make digital sovereignty a youth priority.

Young people must be trained not only as users but as developers, entrepreneurs, researchers and owners of intellectual property.

The revolutionary meaning of 1976

The generation of 1976 provides perhaps the most powerful historical lesson. Those young people did not ask merely for better treatment within an unjust system. They challenged the system itself. They understood that the classroom was connected to the political economy of apartheid.

The lesson for today's generation is not to reproduce the tactics of 1976 mechanically. It is to reproduce its political courage.

Today's young people must identify the structures that prevent them from participating fully in economic life and organise around transforming those structures.

The battlefield has changed. The necessity for struggle has not.

The Youth League must become a school of political economy

If the ANCYL is to reclaim its historical role, political education must return to the centre of its work.

A cadre must understand more than ANC slogans.

Young activists should be able to explain capitalism, imperialism, monopoly capital, racial capitalism, class formation, surplus value, the political economy of minerals, financialisation, digital



capitalism and the relationship between the state and capital.

- They must understand why unemployment persists.
- They must understand why townships remain economically marginal.
- They must understand why land ownership matters.
- They must understand why industrialisation is necessary.
- And they must understand why economic transformation cannot be separated from political power.

This is not academic Marxism.

It is Marxism as a method of understanding the material world in order to change it.

The Young Lions must transform the ANC again

The historical significance of the ANCYL lies in its willingness to tell the ANC that the existing strategy was inadequate.

That is the role it must recover.

The Youth League should not become an echo chamber for the mother body.

Nor should it become a factional battleground.

It must become a strategic intellectual and organisational force within the ANC.

It must challenge the movement where necessary, develop policy alternatives and organise young people around a programme capable of changing their material

conditions.

Loyalty must mean more than defending the organisation. Loyalty must mean making the organisation better equipped to fulfil its historic mission.

From political freedom to economic emancipation

The 82nd anniversary of the ANCYL should therefore be a moment of political reckoning.

The generation of Lembede challenged the ANC because they believed it could do more.



The generation of 1976 challenged apartheid because they believed South Africa could be free.

The generation of 2026 must confront the economic structures that continue to limit the meaning of that freedom.

Its task is not to romanticise the past. It is to learn from it.

The young people of today must build a movement capable of connecting political democracy to material transformation; education to production; employment to ownership; and national liberation to economic emancipation. The question before the Young Lions is ultimately a class question:

Will young South Africans remain predominantly consumers and sellers of labour in an economy whose productive wealth remains concentrated, or will they become an organised force for changing the ownership and control of that wealth?

That is the strategic choice.

The ANCYL was born in 1944 to transform the liberation movement.

In 2026, it must transform itself into an instrument capable of transforming the economic conditions of the generation it represents.

The next four years must therefore be about more than electoral mobilisation.

They must be about ideological renewal, organisational rebuilding, industrialisation, youth employment, economic ownership and the re-

construction of working-class political power.

The Young Lions must not inherit the future.

They must organise it, produce it and own it.

That is the unfinished class struggle.

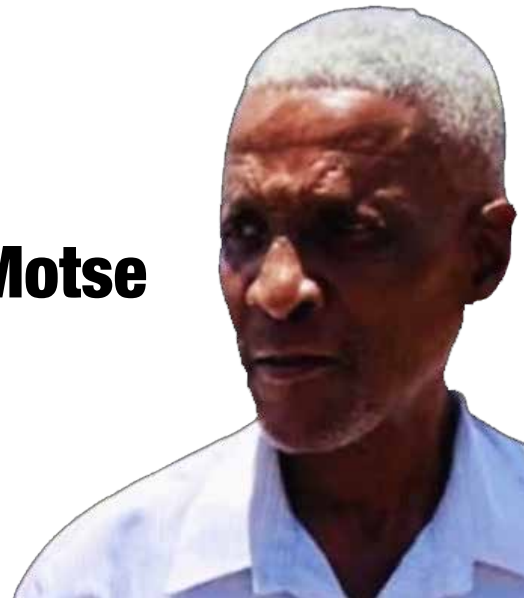
And that is the revolutionary mission of the ANCYL for the next generation.

Sasabona Manganye is the ANC Greater Johannesburg Regional Secretary. He is a UNISA SBL DBL Candidate. He writes in his personal capacity.

Building a Strong, Ethical and People-Centred ANC:

A tribute to the late Comrade Motse “Geneva Ntlangano” Morake

■ By **SEISO MOHAI**



WITH the recent passing of Motse “Geneva Ntlangano” Morake, we have lost one of the finest sons of our movement: an unassuming, disciplined and loyal soldier of our struggle and our country. We raise our fists in revolutionary gratitude for the courage he displayed throughout his life, and the humility in which he served the people. His example must live in the conduct of every cadre who carries the proud name of the African National Congress (ANC).

I had the privilege of working with Comrade Geneva in both the ANC and in government. Comrade Geneva belonged to a generation that understood that freedom was not inevitable nor was it free. He understood that freedom had to be fought for, organised for, and defended through courage, discipline, and sacrifice.

As a student and youth activist, an underground operative, a combatant of uMkhonto we Sizwe in the Madinoga Detachment, and later a political prisoner under the apartheid regime’s repressive Terrorism Act, he ac-

cepted danger and personal sacrifice because he believed that our people had a right to freedom and dignity. The apartheid state could imprison the revolutionary, but it could not imprison the idea of freedom, and the collective determination of an oppressed people to be free.

Comrade Geneva made a significant contribution after the unbanning of the ANC, when our movement faced the enormous task of rebuilding itself as a legal mass organisation. Following the unbanning of the movement, there were no ready-made branches waiting for us. We had to establish structures, recruit and educate members, unite activists from different traditions, and earn the confidence of communities. It was in this difficult work that Comrade Geneva distinguished himself as an organiser and political educator.

He understood that the ANC does not belong in offices, it belongs among the people. He worked in branches, communities and youth structures, taking the movement to the people, where the people lived.

In places such as Boshof and Petrusburg, where many residents spoke Afrikaans, Comrade Geneva would simply speak Afrikaans and engage communities in the language they understood. He taught us that an organiser must listen before speaking; must understand the culture and circumstances of the people; and must make their aspirations the programme of the movement.

To those who were younger, Comrade Geneva also taught political economy – not as an academic exercise, but as a means of understanding why political freedom must ultimately be accompanied by economic emancipation.

Comrade Geneva connected our daily struggles to the vision of the Freedom Charter – that the people shall share in the country’s wealth, and that there must be work, security, learning, and dignity for all.

When Comrade Geneva entered government, he did not regard public office as reward for his contribution to the struggle. He accepted the difficult responsibility of working in the Free State

Provincial Department of Transport, including the complex challenges involving the taxi industry, associations and operators, and the regulation of routes and operational licenses. He served with patience, firmness, political understanding and respect for working people until his retirement.

The example set by Comrade Geneva in public office reminds us that deployment into government is an instruction to serve, not an invitation to privilege. Public resources belong to the people. Public office must therefore be exercised with humility, integrity and accountability.

The greatest tribute we can pay to Comrade Geneva is to ask what his life demands of us today. South Africa needs a strong, united, ethical and people-centred ANC. The ANC has carried the hopes of our people through the darkest periods of oppression. It mobilised workers, women, young people, students, traditional leaders, faith communities and progressive formations into a mighty force for liberation.

Yet, we must be honest with ourselves: the strength of the ANC cannot be assumed merely because of its history. A movement is not strong only because it once led courageously. It remains strong when it continues to earn the confidence of the people through its conduct, discipline, and ability to respond to their needs.

Therefore, we must confront organisational weakness whenever it exists. We must rebuild branches that have become disconnected to communities. We must reject factionalism, the manipulation of organisational processes, the buying of influence, and the



use of positions for personal benefit.

Our branches must once again be centres of political education, community activism, and democratic participation.

They must know why water is not flowing, why roads are deteriorating, why young people cannot find work, why small businesses are struggling, and why communities are losing confidence in public institutions.

A strong ANC must be able to listen, organise, and act.

Renewal must also restore the values that Comrade Geneva embodied – humility, honesty, discipline, sacrifice, accountability, and collective leadership.

Corruption is not just a moral failing – it takes resources away from people. It means fewer houses, poorer roads, inadequate services, and fewer opportunities for our young people. To fight corruption and the abuse of power is therefore not just an administrative responsibility – it is a revolutionary duty.

We must also develop a new generation of cadres who possess

political understanding, ethical grounding and the technical competence to lead society. Young people must not merely be treated as campaign volunteers. Women must not be mobilised only during elections. Veterans must not be remembered only at funerals. Every generation must have a meaningful and substantive role in rebuilding our movement.

Comrade Geneva understood that the strength of the ANC is connected to the strength of the Alliance and broader democratic movement. We must rebuild the Alliance as a living force among workers and communities – united around the practical challenges of unemployment, poverty, inequality, the cost of living, economic transformation, and quality public services.

Unity does not mean avoiding difficult conversations. It means engaging honestly, respectfully, and with a common commitment to the people.

As we approach the Local Government Elections, we must remember that electoral victory cannot be sustained by posters and rallies alone. It must be earned through credible candidates, functioning municipalities, accountable councillors, and visible service to communities.

Let us go to every ward, township, farm, informal settlement and small town – not with arrogance, but with humility, not merely to ask for votes, but to listen, account, correct, and organise.

Let us work for victory – not for positions, tenders or prestige, but to restore local government as an effective instrument in the hands of the people.

Remembering Bavelile Hlongwa: A Nokuthula Simelane Volunteer in the Year of Decisive Action to Fix Local Government and Transform the Economy

■ By **PRECIOUS BANDA**

SEPTEMBER is the birth month of Nokuthula Simelane, a young woman whose sacrifice for liberation continues to challenge South Africa's conscience. It is also the month in which we lost Bavelile Gloria Hlongwa.

These are not two separate histories to young women of the Congress movement. Somewhere along the journey of organising young women, their stories became intertwined. Bavelile was an outstanding activist we worked with to mobilise and organise young women. She believed deeply in the work we did as Nokuthula Simelane Volunteers.

In 2018, under my leadership of the ANC Women's League Young Women's Desk, we approached the family of Nokuthula Simelane and asked for permission to use their daughter's name for a volunteer corps we wanted to set up. We chose Nokuthula deliberately. We were searching for young women in our liberation history who had sacrificed enormously but whose stories had not received the recognition they deserved. We wanted a young woman from whom another generation could learn. Someone whose story could inspire young women to understand that history was not only made by famous people occupying grand stages.



Nokuthula was that person.

We also wanted to organise differently. We wanted to raise the issues affecting young women sharply and unapologetically. We wanted young women to feel that political organisation belonged to them too. We wanted to make the ANC Women's League attractive to a generation that was increasingly asking tough questions about politics, patriarchy, unemployment, violence, and its own place within the movement.

Young women responded and Nokuthula's name became a living movement. Across the country, the Nokuthula Simelane Volunteers became an energetic

organising force. We saw young women joining both the ANC and the ANC Women's League in significant numbers. The once frowned upon green blouse by young people became a symbol of pride and socially a fashion statement. We bloused in thousands and started claiming our space in the ANCWL without fear.

Bavelile was among the front runners. She carried the Nokuthula Simelane Volunteers into communities and helped mobilise young women across South Africa. By the 2019 elections, there was a strong sentiment within the movement and society in general that these young women had become an important force in the

ANC's campaign and life. For us, however, something larger than electoral mobilisation was taking place.

Every time a young woman called herself a Nokuthula Simelane Volunteer, we were refusing to allow Nokuthula to be erased. We were cementing her into existence. In the years that followed, Nokuthula received increasing recognition from institutions and organisations. Among the recognitions that remain closest to my heart is the Order of Luthuli, for which I had the honour of nominating her.



Since Bavelile's passing, I have consistently gone with her family through a justice process that is stretching from 2019 until today. These experiences have made me question what state capacity means to a grieving family waiting years for justice like BV's family, carrying grief into a courtroom and return home still waiting. Behind every delayed case is a human being, every backlog is somebody waiting and every file is a family in need of justice. This is why I continue to ask about the experience of an ordinary South African who has no visibility or access? The answer is not preferential justice for the powerful but effective justice for everyone.

A democratic state earns legitimacy when citizens believe that its institutions will work for them regardless of their name, colour, economic status, political connections, or geography. That is why to fix local government, we must invest more in institutional capacity, administrative efficiency, accountability, public trust, and state legitimacy. Bavelile's family deserves finality and so does every family that looks for answers from the justice system.

Institutions are judged by how people experience them in their everyday lives not what they promise on paper. That is why remembering Bavelile in the Year of Decisive Action to Fix Local Government and Transform the Economy cannot be an exercise in nostalgia. It must become a conversation about the kind of state we are building, the kind of movement we are rebuilding, and the kind of society we owe to the generations of women who sacrificed before us.

Local government is where the state gets a human face. We often discuss municipalities through audits, infrastructure backlogs, revenue collection, and performance indicators. These are important measures of governance. But they can also make us forget the human being standing behind the numbers.

What does institutional effectiveness mean to a woman walking through an unlit street because her municipality has failed to repair the lights? What does economic transformation mean to an unemployed young person who has heard the language of

opportunity but has never experienced it? A broken streetlight is not just a maintenance backlog. It is a woman walking home in darkness. A dry tap is a grandmother carrying buckets. Uncollected refuse is not a municipal performance problem only; it is a child growing up beside rubbish. A stagnant local economy is not simply a disappointing growth figure. It is a young graduate waking every morning without work and slowly wondering whether education was worth the sacrifice. This is why the Year of Decisive Action to Fix Local Government and Transform the Economy must be about restoring dignity and hope.

Nokuthula's greatest recognition is her courage which continues to produce courage in others. Bavelile was one of those young women. On 13 September 2019, the day Bavelile died, we were marching to the Johannesburg Stock Exchange to demand that capital contribute resources towards combating gender-based violence and femicide. The march was a civil society initiative principally organised by the Black Women's Caucus. The ANCWL Young Women's Desk joined it

and mobilised strongly.

Bavelile was in Limpopo. But she kept calling wanting to know how things were going. At the time, these were ordinary telephone calls between activists. Then came the news that Bavelile had died. And suddenly those ordinary calls became memories I would carry for the rest of my life. There is something profoundly moving about knowing that, on the last day of her life, Bavelile was still concerned about a struggle bigger than herself.

The defining opportunity for the ANC this local government election in 2026 is to intensify on sectoral outreach, coordination, and mobilisation. This is also an opportunity for ANC structures and leagues to rethink the purpose of sectoral organisation. Sectors are not mobilisation machinery activated when an election approaches. They must be the ears, eyes, and problem-solving networks of the movement.

Women, young people, workers, professionals, students, persons with disabilities, traditional lead-

ers, faith communities, farmers, businesspeople, artists, taxi operators, sex workers, professionals, civil society, traditional health practitioners, LGBTQIA+ communities, informal traders among many experience the state differently. A movement looking to continue to govern effectively must understand these different experiences.

Imagine engineers within our professional sectors helping municipalities diagnose infrastructure failures. Imagine lawyers aiding communities struggling to navigate administrative and justice systems. Imagine young technology professionals helping municipalities create simple platforms through which residents report problems and track whether they have been resolved. Imagine women's organisations interrogating every municipal budget and asking: Where are women in this budget? Imagine informal traders sitting with municipalities not when officials arrive to remove them from pavements, but when economic development plans are being designed. These scenarios are to prove that if

we master sectoral work, sectors can become the permanent bridge between lived experience, the ANC and government. That is what meaningful sectoral mobilisation should achieve.

Nokuthula could never have known all the young women who would one day organise in her name. Yet her courage reached across generations and gave another group of young women hope to believe that their activism mattered. Bavelile took that inheritance and carried it forward. And now it is up-to all of us. As September brings Nokuthula's birth month and the anniversary of Bavelile's passing together once more, I return to those telephone calls of 13 September 2019. In retrospect, those simple calls hold an entire philosophy of leadership.

The ANC owes South Africans institutions that respect their time, pain, and dignity. We owe communities municipalities that work, young people an economy in which hope can become livelihood, young women political organisations that do not simply mobilise them but trust them to lead. And we owe Nokuthula Simelane and Bavelile Hlongwa something greater than remembrance, we owe them decisive action that will restore the confidence of the people in the ANC towards victory come November 2016.



Precious Banda is a Master of Public Administration student and holds a Bachelor of Accounting Sciences. She is the Continental President of the Young Women of Africa and the longest serving National Convener of the ANC Women's League Young Women's Desk.



Remembering Andile Matshoba on the day that also marks the Anniversary of the Bhisho Massacre

■ By **THABANG MASEKO**

7 September stands as a historic milestone in the politics of the Border region. It marks 41 years since Congress of South African Students (COSAS) activist and leader Andile Matshoba was killed in 1985.

The date of Matshoba's death also coincides with the Bisho massacre of 1992, seven years later, when the Ciskei homeland government unleashed its Defence Force on a mass protest march, killing about 28 protesters supporting an African National Congress (ANC) organised march.

Matshoba is also believed to have been killed by the former Ciskei homeland police in Mdantsane. According to his comrade Madi Ziwele, who was very close to

him, Matshoba was a brave young student leader who studied at Ngcelwane High School in Mdantsane, NU 9.

Upon his arrival there was political turmoil. He immediately joined the youth organisations of the time, the East London Youth Congress (ELYCO) and the East London Youth Organisation (ELYO).

He played a tremendous role in recruiting for COSAS at schools and among out-of-school youth so that they could become part of the struggle.

While he was a student, he worked with the Committee of Ten led by Mzwandile Mampunye and Priscilla Maxongo. Priscilla Maxongo is the mother of Buffalo City Metro Councillor Noma-Afrika Maxongo.

Her activism landed her in and out of jail cells while Noma-Afrika was still a toddler. While her mother was in and out of prison, Mdantsane activists looked after her daughter, with financial help from township workers who used trains and buses to get to work. Activists used to ask for donations on those mass transport services to buy food and nappies for Noma-Afrika's survival.

As we celebrate the life of Matshoba, our movement has repeatedly been entrusted by our people with the task of governing our country and implementing a programme of social and economic transformation. In the last 32 years of our democracy,

Matshoba would say that at least we have accumulated experience in governing.



We have embarked on a journey never travelled by anyone in this country, registering many achievements as we strive to change the lives of our people for the better.

As we move towards the 2026 local government elections, our electoral mandate has been popularly and democratically renewed.

We must thank our people and are deeply humbled by their ongoing confidence in our movement, except for those members who left the ANC and joined other political parties out of self-interest after losing in public meetings, as stipulated in the ANC guidelines.

Matshoba would also have been cognisant of the challenges we face. We are determined to forge ahead with the task of reconstructing and developing our country by creating more jobs, decent work opportunities and sustainable livelihoods; quality education and health for all our people; transforming the country-

side; and combating corruption.

Furthermore, Andile Matshoba would tell every ANC member that we are a movement that

constantly seeks to connect with people. We have improved the practice of listening to the people, understanding their concerns, and practically taking up the issues they have raised.

We refuse to act merely as a conventional political party whose interest is to win votes during elections. We aim to work together with our people and ensure that our actions are not only people-centred but also people-driven.

We are also proud of the progressive role played by Andile Matshoba. It is now left to us to improve the gains of our democracy as we approach the 2026 local government elections.

Let the people know: the ANC is the only movement that has the people's interests at heart. Those who are corrupt will be removed like debris washed from the sea.



THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

12–18 September 2026

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

12 September 1977 Steve Bantu Biko dies in police detention

Steven Bantu Biko, leader of the South African Student Organisation (SASO) and pioneer of the Black Consciousness philosophy, died in police custody at the age of thirty (30). Biko was arrested in Grahamstown on 18 August 1977. During his detention in a Port Elizabeth police cell he was chained to a grill at night, left to lie naked in urine-soaked blankets, and kept in leg-irons for 48 hours

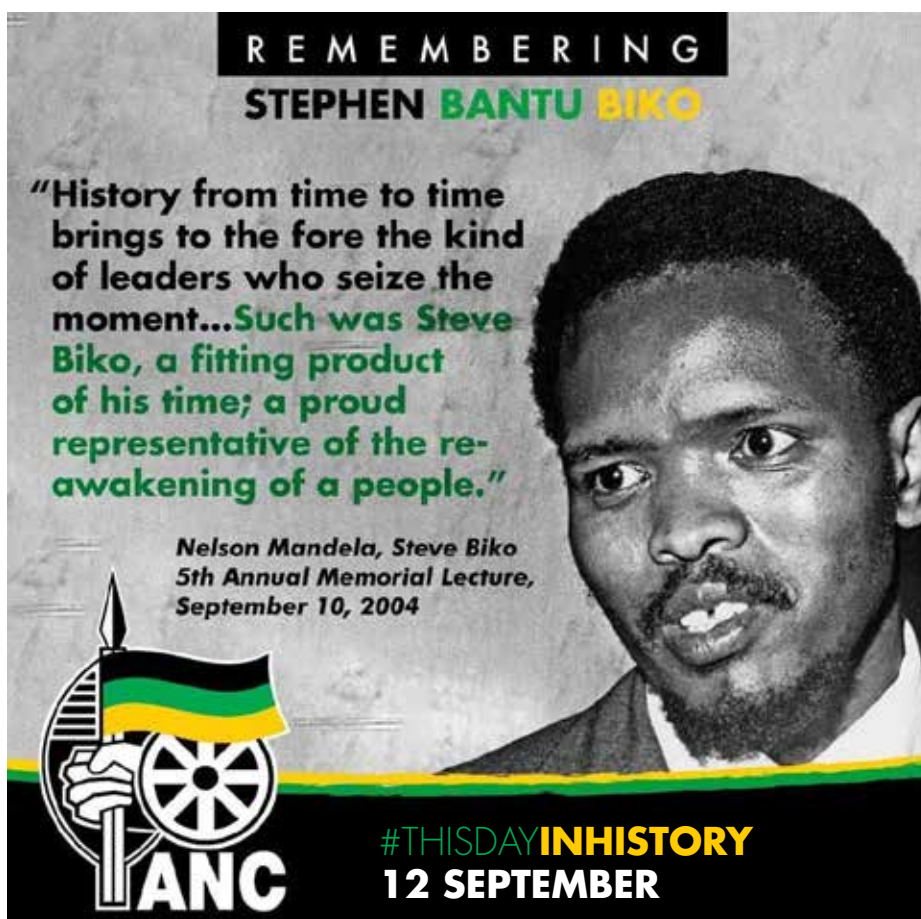
in his cell. A blow in a scuffle with security police led to him suffering brain damage. The police transferred him, chained and untreated, at the back of a police van to a prison hospital in Pretoria, 1,133 km away. Biko died shortly after his arrival there. Peter Gabriel's song Biko commemorate this act of brutality. When asked for a comment, the then Minister of Justice and Police Jimmy Kruger lied about the cause death, saying about Biko's death: *"Dit laat my koud/I don't care."*

12 September 1989 SWAPO Secretary General assassinated

Advocate Anton Lubowski (37), secretary-general of the South West African People's Organisation (Swapo), was shot dead at close range with an AK47 rifle outside his home in Windhoek, Namibia. The Civil Co-Operation Bureau (CCB) of South Africa was held responsible for the assassination of Lubowski. Judge Harold Levy of the Namibian Supreme Court, concluded that the CCB conspired to murder Lubowski, with responsible CCB members Joe Verster, Staal Burger, Abraham 'Slang' van Zyl, Calla Botha, Leon 'Chappie' Maree, Johan Niemoller junior, Captain Wouter Basson (aka Christo Britz), Ferdi Barnard and Charles Wildschudt (formerly Neelse) named. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) confirmed Judge Levy's report.

12 September 2004 Veteran Trade unionist Ray Alexander passes on

Rachel Alexander (Ray) Simons, legendary communist and trade unionist born in Latvia in 1914, died in Cape Town at the age of 91. Simons was instrumental in the formation of the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) and the drafting of the Women's Charter. A unionist throughout her life, she helped formed and lead the Food and Canning Workers Union and was named honorary life President of the Food and



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Allied Workers Union (FAWU). Ray married Professor Jack Simons in 1941, and together they were some of the first non-Africans to join the ANC. On 6 May 1965, Ray and Jack left South Africa for Zambia, and they were to remain in exile for 25 years until 2 March 1990. Jack and Ray Simons together wrote the classic labour history ***Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950***, a pioneering analysis of the relationship between class and race, and how these have shaped the South African political and social landscape. In 1978, Ray joined MK as part of the Women's Battalion, and continued to write articles for the African Communist under various pseudonyms. Ray advised various trade unions, as well as the ANC and SACP, and worked on a book on her involvement in the FCWU. Ray Alexander, along with Lillian Ngoyi and Helen Joseph were the first three women to receive the ANC's highest order ***Isithwalandwe/Seaparankwe*** in 2004. On 12 September 2004, Ray Alexander died at the age of 91.

13 September 1984 UDF leaders seek refuge in British Consulate

Six activists – Archie Gumede, Mewa Ramgobin, MJ Naidoo, Billy Nair, George Sewpersad and Paul David – hunted by police in a security clampdown on this day

entered the British Consulate in Durban. Police had been trying to rearrest the six, leaders of the United Democratic Front and the Natal Indian Congress, following their release from detention last Friday on the orders of a judge.

13 September 1985 WHO declares AIDS a global pandemic

It is unknown when AIDS emerged. However, the first reported cases were in the early eighties and its now believed that the disease first emerged as far back as the 1960's. On 13 September 1985, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the disease a worldwide epidemic. South Africa has amongst the highest infection rate in the continent, and has the largest ARV treatment programme for people living with HIV/AIDS.

13 September 1995 Bev Palesa Ditsie, first Lesbian woman to address UN

Beverly Palesa Ditsie made a statement at the historic Beijing Women's Conference in 1995 about including lesbian rights in discussions about the empowerment of women. She was the first openly lesbian woman to do so and it was the first time that the United Nations was addressed about LGBT people in the protection of human rights. In her address, Ditsie argued that a focus



on women's rights should include the struggles of lesbian women, saying that *"if the world conference on women is to address the concerns of all women, it must similarly recognise that discrimination based on sexual orientation is a violation of basic human rights"*. Born in Soweto in 1971, Ditsie was an anti-Apartheid and LGBT rights activist. She was one of the founding members of Gay and Lesbian Organisation of the Witwatersrand (GLOW), South Africa's first multiracial and political lesbian and gay rights group. During the drafting of South Africa's constitution, Ditsie was at the forefront of arguing for protecting people from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation - the first constitution in the world to do so. Her participation at the conference was a first for the United Nations and was an opportunity for Ditsie to represent and speak to the intersectionality of race, gender and sexual orientation.



"If the world conference on women is to address the concerns of all women, it must similarly recognize that discrimination based on sexual orientation is a violation of basic human rights."

Beverly Palesa Ditsie, South Africa

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Despite GLOW's mandate of non-sexism, Ditsie's participation at the conference was not welcomed by GLOW, who felt that spotlighting women was a 'distraction' from GLOW's focus on LGBT issues. Ditsie went to the conference despite this, saying that *"lesbians are women. Lesbian rights are women's rights"*.

13 September 1988 Three UDF leaders escaped from prison, seek refuge in US Consulate



Three leading anti-apartheid activists, Mohammed Valhi Moosa, Murphy Moroke, and Vusi Khanyile, escaped from detention and sought refuge in the American Consulate in Johannesburg.

13 September 2024 ANC and SACP stalwart Pravin Gordhan passes on



Pravin Gordhan was born on 12 April 1949 and grew up in Durban,

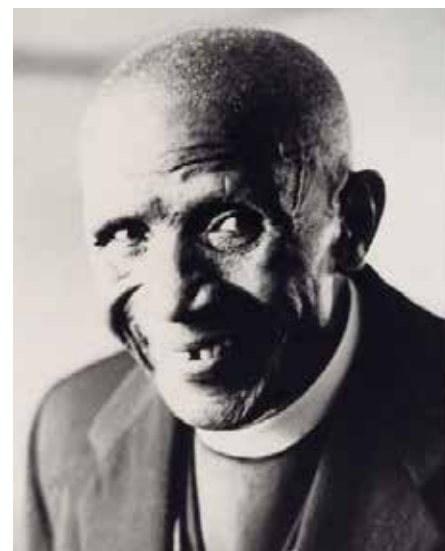
Kwazulu-Natal. After attending Sastri College he obtained a Bachelor of Pharmacy from the University of Durban-Westville and completed his postgraduate studies in Human Resource Development. He also completed a postgraduate diploma in Economics at the London School of Economics. During the apartheid years Pravin Gordhan played a prominent role as an anti-apartheid activist. He was an executive member of the Natal Indian Congress between 1974 and 1990, secretary and later chair of the Durban Housing Committee. Between 1977 and 1990, he was an active member of the ANC/SACP underground. Involved in uMkhonto weSizwe's Operation Vula, he was tortured and detained for four months. He chaired Codesa in 1992, and the following year he co-chaired the Transitional Executive Council as well as the Multi-Party Negotiation Process. He became a member of the first democratic Parliament in 1994 and kept the position until 1998. He was appointed Deputy Commissioner of the South African Revenue Service (SARS) in Pretoria in March 1998 after being deployed from parliament as part of government's drive to transform the public service. In November 1999, he became Commissioner of SARS. His foremost task was to transform South Africa's customs and revenue administration. He brought about significant improvements in the performance of the organisation, such as a marked improvement in revenue collections, radical tax policy changes, a visible enhancement of the tax and customs compliance culture, enhanced status and capacity of the customs component of SARS. Cde Pravin served in various ministerial positions: Minister of Finance (2009), Minister of Co-operative Governance and Tradi-

tional Affairs (2014); re-appointed to the Finance portfolio in December 2015. He served as Minister of Public Enterprises from May 2019 until 19 June 2024.

14 September 1918 Spanish Flu hits South Africa

The first cases of an unusually severe and deadly strain of influenza, popularly called Spanish Flu or 'Great Flu', were diagnosed on this date in Durban. This started the worst pandemic ever in South Africa. Of a total population of just over 6 million at the time, nearly half contracted the disease, while close to 140,000 died within a few weeks. The disease spread throughout the entire country and often whole families were ill or dying, with nobody left to care for them. Doctors and nurses did their best, but were too few to treat the ill. The Black and Coloured sections of the population were most severely affected, especially the mineworkers, who suffered dreadfully. The epidemic peaked in October. The virus caused the death of 25 to 40 million people throughout the world.

15 September 1901 Educationist George Molefe born



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Mbanga James George Benjamin Molefe, clergyman and headmaster, was born in Mbulwana, Ladysmith, Natal. Molefe was one of the first black Presbyterian ministers to graduate at Fort Hare College in 1932. He was ordained in the same year in the Bantu Presbyterian Church and inducted to the Spookmill Church, Newcastle. After obtaining an MA degree at Columbia University in New York, Molefe accepted an appointment as minister of religion in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth in 1939. As a result of his tireless efforts to improve the quality of schooling and general living conditions, he received the 'Freedom of Port Elizabeth's African Townships' in 1973 in recognition of his efforts to better the position of its residents. Molefe received many accolades during his lifetime that were firsts for Black South Africans. He died in 1986 and is survived by his wife and two children.

15 September 1977 Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie born



The renowned African writer and feminist was born in Enugu state, Nigeria. Her second book, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) telling the story of the Biafra War, catapulted her to fame. Adichie has become one of the voices of a new generation of African authors, a feminist and known for her TED talk on *The Danger of the Single Story*.

15 September 1985 Machel hosts Frontline states against apartheid



As resistance to apartheid became more militant in South Africa, Mozambique President Samora Machel hosted a summit of Frontline state leaders in Maputo, to discuss the situation in South Africa. Present at the summit were Presidents Masire (Botswana), Kaunda (Zambia), Dos Santos (Angola), Nyerere (Tanzania) and Mugabe (Zimbabwe). Also present was Sam Nujoma, President of the exiled SWAPO.

16-18 September 1983 Venezuela hosts conference against Apartheid



Latin American Regional Conference for Action against Apartheid, Caracas, was organised by the Special Committee against Apartheid in cooperation with the Government of Venezuela.

16 September 1985 South Africa Defense raids into Angola with Namibia

South Africa and Namibian Se-

curity Forces crossed into Angola in pursuit of SWAPO forces. The 'border war' against Angola continued until the peace process in 1991, with South Africa exercising trusteeship over South West Africa (now Namibia) and SWAPO leading the fight for national liberation from apartheid.

16 September 1986 Kinross Mine Disaster kills 177

On this day in 1986, 177 miners lost their lives and another 235 were injured in what would be remembered as one of South Africa's worst mining disasters, when a lethal fire in a goldmine caused this disaster. The tragic incident forced greater focus on health safety in the South African mining sector.

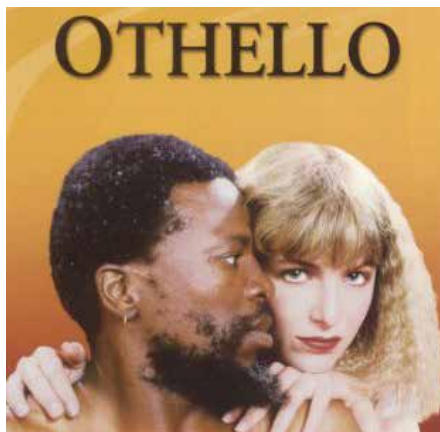


16 September 1986 Europe finally imposed sanctions against South Africa

The European Economic Community (EEC) imposes sanctions against South Africa, coal being the exception.

16 September 1987 First Black Othello on SA stage

A production of Shakespeare's *Othello* in which the Moor is played by legendary actor, John



Kani, was staged at the Market Theatre on 16 September 1987. The play was produced by actress Janet Suzman, who is also the co-founder of the Market Theatre.

17 September 1919

German South West Africa becomes SA protectorate

The World War I Treaty of Versailles, German South West Africa was declared a mandate of the League of Nations and put under South African administration. Since the late 1940s the South West Africa (SWA) issue was debated year after year with increasing animosity at the United Nations (UN), successor to the League of Nations. On 18 July 1966, the judges in the International Court of Justice gave verdict in favour of South Africa in a case brought before them by Ethiopia and Liberia. In 1960, the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) was formed to fight for the independence of the country from South African apartheid rule, and in 1990, Namibia gained independence.

17 September 1922

Agostinho Neto born

Agostinho Neto was born on September 17th 1922, in Kaxikane, Angola. Early anti-colonialist, he participated in the Empire's Student House, in the Youth MUD and in the creation of the African Studies Centre, with Amílcar Cabral, Mário Pinto de



Andrade, Marcelino dos Santos and Francisco José Tenreiro. He founded the Anti-colonial Movement, took over the leadership of the Movimento de Libertação Popular de Angola (MPLA), was arrested several times. He was released in 1962, the same year in which he clandestinely left Portugal, with his wife and young children, arriving in Léopoldville (Kinshasa), where MPLA had its headquarters. He was the first president of independent Angola, after years of civil war. On 27 April 2014 Neto was awarded the Order of the Companions of O.R. Tambo in Gold by the South African government. Neto passed away on 10 September 1979.

17 September 1983

Methane gas explosion in Vryheid mine

Sixty-eight mine workers were killed after an underground methane gas explosion at the Hlobane coal mine near Vryheid, KZN. The gas explosion was caused by poor safety standards. A week before the explosion a miner who also died in the explosion discovered methane underground. The mine captain scratched out his report about underground methane to give the mine a good safety record. The mine owners were fined R400 for contravening the Mines and Works Act.

17 September 1992

SADC formed



Ten Southern African countries met in a summit in Windhoek to form the Southern African Development Community (SADC), replacing the Southern African Development Coordination Conference set up in 1980 to reduce Southern African countries' dependence on apartheid South Africa.

17 September 1995

Pope John Paul II Papal mass in SA



On 17 September 1995, the Roman Catholic's Pope John Paul II celebrated a papal mass in South Africa as he began his six day tour of Africa. His visit to the country came seven years after the cleric angered the apartheid government when he refused to kiss the ground in 1988 when the papal plane he was travelling in was forced to land in the country because of bad weather conditions. During his visit in 1995, the Pope said: "Today my journey brings me to a new South Africa, a 'rainbow nation,' indicating the

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diversity of races, ethnic groups, languages and culture which characterize it."

17 September 2009 University of Seychelles established

The first national university on the island state (UniSey) is established, small with only 300 students and 50 professors, it is considered essential for development and identity of Seychelles.

18 September 1873 Slaves start constructing Capitol Hill

Work started by enslaved Africans in the USA on the construction of the Capitol Hill building that will house the US legislature. The slaves are loaned to the US government by slave owners. The building took seven years.

18 September 1961 Dag Hammarskjöld killed in plane crash



United Nations (UN) Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld was killed with twelve other people when their plane crashed at Ndola airport, Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). Hammarskjöld was on his way to meet with President Moise Tshombe of Katanga Province in Congo in an attempt to end the fighting in Katanga. UN officials in Elisabethville were

stunned when they received reports that Hammarskjöld had not arrived in Ndola. Associated Press reported that the lone survivor, Harold M. Julian, a United Nations security guard, said that a series of explosions had preceded the crash. He also said that the plane had turned away from landing, apparently on Mr Hammarskjöld's orders. His death was a terrible blow to hopes for peace in Katanga.

18 September 1971 World Council of Churches barred from South Africa

During a meeting with representatives of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in South Africa, Prime Minister John Vorster reaffirmed that he would not consider allowing a WCC delegation to come to South Africa under any conditions.

18 September 1992 Sarafina! Released

The movie *Sarafina!* is released on this day. The movie is based by the award-winning musical by Mbongeni Ngema by the same name, about South African students involved in the 1976 uprisings. The movie stars actresses Leleti Khumalo and Whoopi Goldberg.



18 September 1983 Zozibini Tunzi born



South African model and first black African to be crowned Miss Universe in 1999, was born in Tsolo, Eastern Cape. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 contest was cancelled, so she became the longest reigning Miss Universe, until May 2021.

18 September 2017 Lesotho legalises the herb



Lesotho becomes the first African country to legalise marijuana, when government grants a license for the cultivation of marijuana for medicinal use. The company that received the license, Medigrow Lesotho, paved the way for the country to be a pioneer in Africa's legal cannabis production. It's important to note that marijuana is not legal for recreational use; this license only covers the cultivation and production of cannabis for medical purposes.

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

12–18 September 2026

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



12 September

South-South Cooperation Day

We refer to developing countries, many of whom have been colonized at some point, as countries of the global South (also formerly known as the so-called Third World). As a result of colonialism and the Cold War that spurred global inequality, economic development, power and trade are highly un-



equal; and tended to take the form of raw materials from the “periphery” (global South) to the “centre” (global North). South-South Cooperation was and is about solidarity and common action amongst development, to work with each other to develop their countries and peoples, and to fight for a more just global world order. Today, the global dominance of the North is not as absolute as before, with ‘emerging’ economies, especially China, but also India and Brazil accounting for a greater share of global economic activity. South-South Cooperation takes place through various international forums, such as the Non-Aligned Movement, BRICS, the G77 and a range of other forums.

13 September

Grandparents Day

Grandparents Day, takes place on the second Sunday of September each year, to honour the relationship between grandchildren and grandparents. It's

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a day to share stories, have fun, and give thanks to our grandparents for everything that they bring to our lives. It is about spending quality time with grandparents, and learning from one another.

14-18 September National Wills Week

If you die without leaving a valid will, your assets will be distributed according to the provisions of the Intestate Succession Act. The provisions are generally fair and ensure that your possessions are transferred to your spouse and children, and where applicable, to siblings, parents. If required, then to the extended family in terms of degrees of relationships and those that were dependent on you for financial support. BUT, the problems may arise if you die without leaving a will: your assets may not be left to the person of your choice; it can take a long time to have an executor appointed and may be somebody you may not have chosen yourself, there can be extra and unnecessary costs; and there can be unhappiness and conflict among members of your family because there are no clear instructions on how to distribute your assets. During this National Wills Week, various law firms, legal practitioners and related entities will be on hand to provide **free legal advice** and **free drafting of wills**.



Democracy is not just a system of government; it is a way of life that respects the dignity and worth of every individual. It is a way of life that promotes tolerance, understanding, and cooperation. It is a way of life that recognizes the inherent value of every human being.



15 September International Day of Democracy

In its resolution A/RES/62/7 establishing the day, the United Nations noted that *“while democracies share common features, there is no single model of democracy”* and that *“democracy does not belong to any country or region”*. The International Day of Democracy is meant both to celebrate democracy and to serve as a reminder that the need to promote and protect democracy is as urgent now as ever. The lead organisation for this day is the International Parliamentary Union, with its national parliament members celebrating the day and reviewing the state of democracy.

15 September Greenpeace Day

Greenpeace Day is observed on September 15th and commemorates the movement that began on this day. This day highlights activism in the name of the environment. The day recognizes peaceful protest for change to improve air quality, reduce reliance on fossil fuels, use of plastics and water quality.

16 September International Day for Interventional Cardiology

Cardiovascular diseases are a group of disorders of the heart and blood vessels. An estimated 17.9 million people died from it in 2019, representing 32 percent of all global deaths. Of these deaths, 85 percent were due to heart attack and stroke. The key to cardiovascular disease reduction lies in the inclusion of cardiovascular disease management interventions in universal health coverage packages.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

16 September

International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer

The ozone layer, a fragile shield of gas, protects the Earth from the harmful portion of the rays of the sun, thus helping preserve life on the planet. In the late 1970s, scientists discovered that humanity was creating a hole in this protective shield, they raised the alarm. The hole – caused by ozone-depleting gases (ODSs) used in aerosols and cooling, such as refrigerators and air-conditioners – was threatening to increase cases of skin cancer and cataracts, and damage plants, crops, and ecosystems. The global response was decisive. In 1985, the world's governments adopted the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, to cut out 99 per cent of all ozone-depleting substances. This is an example of impactful global action, the ozone layer is healing and expected to return to pre-1980 values by mid-century. The Kigali Amendment (2019) will work towards reducing hydrofluorocarbon (HFCs), greenhouse gases with powerful climate warming potential and damaging to the environment.



16 September

International Day of Science, Technology and Innovation for the South

Science, Technology, and Innovation are important in all spheres of human life. As science and technology rapidly advance, some developing nations are seizing the opportunity to leapfrog stages of development. Yet, for many others, this swiftly changing landscape presents significant challenges, particularly in the Global South, with the Global North dominating and protecting their innovations, even where it originates in the South. This created a persistent gap in technology access between industri-

alized and developing countries. The International Day of Science, Technology, and Innovation for the South represents an important step in reaffirming our commitment of leaving no one behind. It underscores that advancing science, technology, and innovation is essential not only for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) but also creating a fairer, more participatory, and inclusive world.

17 September

World Patient Safety Day



The Day brings together patients, families, caregivers, communities, health workers, health care leaders and policy-makers to show their commitment to patient safety. The resolution WHA 72.6 '**Global action on patient safety**' recognizes patient safety as a global health priority and endorses the establishment of World Patient Safety Day to be observed annually on 17 September.

18 September

International Equal Pay Day

International Equal Pay Day, celebrated for the first time in 2023, represents the longstanding efforts towards equal pay for work of equal value. Across all regions, women are paid less than men, with the gender pay gap estimated at 23 per cent globally. This is but one way in which patriarchy disadvantages women, along with unpaid labour and other forms of discriminatory practices, that continue to undermine women's economic emancipation.



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