



ANC TODAY

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Conversations with the
President



Agriculture in South Africa has immense potential for further growth

■ By **PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

LAST week I visited Redlands Farm, a commercial dairy farm in Stutterheim in the Eastern Cape owned and run by young black farmers. The farm has been able to expand its operations with the support of the Land Bank.

Redlands Farm is a beneficiary of the Land Bank's Blended Finance Scheme, which combines government grant funding with loan finance. In many parts of the country, blended finance schemes are enabling farmers to build commercially successful businesses.

Far too often, emerging farmers are kept trapped at subsistence level because they cannot get the financing they need for farming inputs, infrastructure and additional land.

Redlands' success shows that

with effective partnerships, a transformed agricultural and agribusiness sector can boost the rural economy and create jobs.

A 2025 study by the University of Pretoria found a strong correlation between investment in agriculture and poverty reduction. The farming sector in South Africa employs around 944 000 people. An additional 200,000 workers are employed across the broader value chain.

South Africa's innovative and resilient agricultural sector has more than doubled since the dawn of democracy in 1994. South Africa is the world's 32nd largest agricultural exporter, with record exports of R270 billion in 2025.

We export a diverse basket of products including table grapes, maize, beef, wine, citrus, sugar

and wool, among others. The African continent accounts for nearly half of our farm product exports. The rest is exported to the European Union and various countries in Asia, the Middle East and the Americas.

Innovation in seed breeding, animal genetics and farm inputs has improved productivity and efficiency across our farmlands. Although our farming sector has flourished, many communities have remained on the periphery.

We still have what has been called 'two agricultures'. Predominantly white-owned commercial farms account for the bulk of the country's commercial farming output, while black farmers only account for around 10%.

We must therefore focus on the transformation of our agricultural

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sector. This is both necessary for the broader transformation of our economy and critical to food security.

Being reliant on the productive capacity of a relatively small segment of the population to meet our country's food needs is unsustainable. Our population is growing and with it the demand for food.

We need to cultivate a new generation of farmers not only to address the inequalities of the past but to meet the needs of the future. The productive agricultural base has to be expanded. We have to build a pipeline of skilled and productive commercial farmers who can sustain the sector. We must equip aspiring farmers with the skills, mentorship, training, technologies and other resources to farm successfully commercially.

The first step in building a new generation of South African farmers is providing them with titled access to land.

Through the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy, we are releasing approximately 2.5 million hectares of state-owned land in various parts of the country to black farmers and providing them



with title deeds.

But land is only one ingredient. Knowledge of crops, weather, animal disease and the like is gained from practical experience and learning from established farmers. We are greatly encouraged by the programmes being run by commodity associations like the Citrus Growers' Association, Grain South Africa, National Wool Growers' Association, Potatoes South Africa, Red Meat Industry Services, Milk Producers' Organisation and Fruit South Africa, which do admirable work in building an inclusive farming economy.

Another important ingredient for a successful farming enterprise is affordable, patient capital for new-era commercial farmers. The Land Bank, together with

the Department of Agriculture, started the blended finance instrument to address this funding aspect.

Over the years, commercial banks have also joined the programme. We want to encourage other agribusinesses and commercial banks to join the blended finance programme and to develop more funding instruments to support agriculture.

As government, we are on a concerted drive to expand and diversify export markets for our agricultural products. We are engaging with agribusinesses and farmers around issues such as new breeding techniques and advances in agricultural biotechnology.

Agriculture is a sector that holds immense potential for growth and jobs. Through strong partnerships between government, farmers, business, lenders, traditional leaders and communities, we can build on the strong progress it has made over recent years.

We can bring more land under cultivation, create a new generation of black commercial farmers and ensure that we grow enough not only to feed all our people, but to sell to markets across the world.





THE ANC WELCOMES CONSTITUTIONAL COURT JUDGMENT AFFIRMING ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION

■ By **ANC SECRETARY GENERAL FIKILE MBALULA**

The African National Congress (ANC) welcomes the judgment of the Constitutional Court in its favour concerning the submission of candidate lists for the forthcoming Local Government Elections. The judgment represents an important development in the interpretation of electoral legislation and the protection of constitutional rights within South Africa's democratic electoral framework.

The ANC's decision to approach the courts was informed by the fundamental principle that electoral processes must give meaningful expression to the democratic rights of citizens, while

remaining firmly anchored in the law. Our recourse to the judiciary was never an attempt to undermine the Electoral Commission, but an exercise of the constitutional mechanisms available to resolve legitimate legal disputes within our democracy.

The ANC reaffirms its confidence in the independence of the judiciary and the Electoral Commission, whose constitutional responsibilities remain central to the integrity and credibility of our elections. We will cooperate fully with the Commission in implementing the judgment and ensuring an orderly electoral process consistent with the Court's directions.

As the country approaches the Local Government Elections, the ANC remains firmly focused on engaging communities, accounting for progress made, confronting service delivery challenges and advancing its programme of building responsive, accountable and developmental local government.

Our democracy is strengthened when constitutional questions are resolved through the institutions established to safeguard the rights and aspirations of all South Africans.

The ANC remains committed to this constitutional tradition and to the democratic will of the people.

THE ANC SALUTES COSATU ON THE OUTCOMES OF ITS 15TH NATIONAL CONGRESS

■ By **ANC SECRETARY GENERAL FIKILE MBALULA**

THE Congress of the South African Trade Unions (COSATU) convened its 15th National Congress from the 12-14th October 2026. This most important Congress convened against the onslaught of the working class by slave wages, retrenchments, wider inequalities, a protectionist global order, higher tariffs, the raging conflict in the Middle East that account for global inflation against a changing world of inclusive multilateralism, progressive internationalism, peace, solidarity and the unity of the workers.

Its theme of ***“Building a militant, revolutionary labour movement and strengthening anti-imperialist working-class unity to defend jobs and advance socialism”*** is not contradictory to what the African National Congress represents but complementary to the advancement of the National Democratic Revolution and the vision of a better life for all.

Working class unity is important to address the challenges facing the world, challenges of a skewed economy, inequality, trade wars, higher tariffs and trade wars, poverty, retrenchments and climate change. It is the working class

power and consciousness that it is necessary to deliver the ANC victory in the forthcoming local government elections to change the face of society for the better, enhance the capacity of local government to discharge its service

delivery mandate and to create jobs by fixing local government an transforming the economy. This can be achieved through the unity of the workers and broader struggles beyond narrow workerism.

The ANC congratulates COSATU on its Congress outcomes and the resolutions adopted after a focused and intense debates, and its adopted Programme of Action shaped by its theme. We further congratulate the newly elected leadership entrusted with the responsibilities to advance the interests of the workers, socioeconomic transformation, equity and diversity within the workplace, to strive for



a decent living wage and to stem the job bloodbath.

COSATU remains a historical ally whose relationship is founded in the congress movement, spanning many years in the fight for liberation and workers struggles. This unity is an important ingredient and a glue that had united the trade union movement and the ANC since its formation and many years later, culminating in the attainment of democracy in 1994.

The 15th Congress has confirmed the centrality and leadership of women amongst its ranks and in society by electing women to its helm, ensuring equal representation in its ranks. This milestone should be extended to the workplace and other sections of society, and the economy. The struggle for women emancipation is on the right course, advancing the vision of Comrade Violet Seboni, Connie September, Emma Mashinini and the founding members of the labour federation.

COSATU's voice and the declaration on ending the scourge of Gender Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) is the amplification of the shrieking voices of women who perish at the hands of men, suffering abuse at home, in society and the workplace on the basis of class, race and gender as tenets of triple oppression of women. Its bold stance on the GBVF epidemic will enhance the 4-Point Plan unveiled by President Cyril Ramphosa, including the Strategic Plan on GBVF to end the scourge.

The ANC will work with the new leadership to strengthen our relationship with COSATU to advance the vision of a better life for all and the working class and international solidarity struggles

against exploitation, inequality in society, the workplace, the economy and meagre wages as guided by the slogan ***"An injury to one is an injury to all."***

With a successful Congress outcome, and the unity of the work-

ers, the ANC is poised for an overwhelming victory in the forthcoming local government elections. The strength of the workers united under COSATU is the strength of the ANC and a catalytic vehicle for socioeconomic transformation.

ANC Statement Condemning the Killing of our Members in Katlehong, Ekurhuleni

THE nation and the ANC woke up to the shocking and heart breaking news of the coldblooded killing and wounding of its members in Katlehong, Ekurhuleni.

These killings take place at the time of the local government elections, and a critical moment in the life of a nation exploring solutions towards curbing the rampant and violent crime that has become an ugly feature of our society. The African National Congress (ANC) views these killings in a very serious light and condemns them in the strongest terms. These deaths are against the grain of a society committed towards peace and building safer and secure communities.

As an organisation, we welcome the deployment of the Political Killings Task Team (PKTT) to investigate the motive behind the killings and other killings engulfing the country. We reiterate our unwavering stance that South Africa has no place for criminals and that all efforts will be strengthened to curb crime in all its manifestation.

The ANC has noted the research by the South African Police Services (SAPS) on the prevalence of gun violence in the country, a call for stricter control and Gun Free South Africa's call for a gun free society to curb violent deaths resulting from guns and the proliferation of unlicensed firearms. Society needs a discussion on these findings and suggestions in a bid to end violent crime. Undoubtedly, most deaths in the country arise from gun violence which need a serious reflection by the country on control as a contribution to the debate on gun ownership.

In the face of these violent killings, the ANC will, working with interest organisations and the broader society, initiate this debate as a contribution towards the creation of a society free from crime.

The ANC extends its condolences to the community and the families of the deceased. The ANC will ensure that the deceased's deaths are not in vain by working together with the law enforcement agencies to ensure that justice is done.

THE ANC WISHES THE CLASS OF 2026 WELL AS THEY COMMENCE THEIR MATRIC EXAMINATIONS

■ By **ANC SECRETARY GENERAL FIKILE MBALULA**

WHEN the 2026 school year began, the African National Congress (ANC) welcomed learners and educators to the new academic year. The school year presented an opportunity to build towards the 2026 matric examinations through intensive preparations, earnest learning and the involvement of all stakeholders in shaping the future of our children and building an education system that is responsive to the needs of the country and aligned with its developmental priorities.

These collective efforts have borne fruit, with nearly one million candidates registered to sit for the 2026 National Senior Certificate examinations, that commenced on 13 October 2026. This follows the confirmation by Umalusi, the country's education quality assurance body, that the examination system is broadly ready to conduct and administer the 2026 year-end examinations. This important milestone reflects the collective commitment of learners, educators, parents, School Governing Bodies and education authorities to safeguarding the future of our children.

The ANC wishes the Class of 2026 well in their examinations. Through thorough and intensive preparations, the commitment

of educators, the collective efforts of communities, the involvement of School Governing Bodies (SGBs), and the creation of a conducive environment for teaching and learning, we are confident that the 2026 examination results will surpass the achievements of 2025. This will serve as a growing indicator of the progress, resilience and continued improvement of our education system, as well as our collective investment in the future of our children. The Class of 2026 represents the collective

efforts and commitment of all stakeholders.

The Class of 2026 should approach these examinations with confidence, excitement and a sense of purpose, looking towards a brighter future filled with opportunities for further education and hope. As the ANC, we reaffirm our historic commitment to *"Opening the Doors of Learning"* and investing in the future of our children, recognising that education remains central to building a better life for all.



Best Wishes

CLASS OF 2026

The ANC wishes all matriculants the best in their examinations.

Thanks to the sterling work of educators, school governing bodies and the custodianship of our parents.

Investing in education is an investment in our children.

LET'S CONTINUE BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES, TOGETHER

A BETTER LIFE FOR ALL **VOTE ANC**  



Sol Plaatje at 150: His Legacy, Our Inheritance

■ By **DR. ZAMANI SAUL**

ANC Northern Cape Provincial Chairperson

SOLOMON Tshekisho Plaatje (Sol Plaatje) remains an eminent figure in South African history. He stood as a pillar of resistance against the colonial injustice that pervaded the economic, social and political landscape of his time. He was born 09 October 1876 in the small village of Boshof, in what is now the Free State province, later in his life he moved to the North West, from there he moved to Kimberley, Northern Cape.

Understanding the context during the time Sol Plaatje is important. Armed with this understanding we can easily appreciate the celebration of his life 150 years after his birth and 94 years after his death. His context, which is his material existence structured by how society was organised,

shaped his consciousness, and, in turn, triggered him into action.

The Context: Confluence of Colonialism and Imperialism

Karl Marx wrote this about consciousness in his 1859 work, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*: *"It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness."* This means that our material existence directly shapes our consciousness.

The important question, then, is: how was society organised during the period of Sol Plaatje's birth and upbringing? Answering this question will help us under-

stand and account for Sol Plaatje's basic revolutionary instinct.

The period in which Sol Plaatje was born and raised by his parents, Johannes Mogodi and Martha Seetsane, was marked by the catastrophic destruction of African life. The drivers of catastrophic destruction were twin brothers; colonialism and imperialism. To this day, that catastrophic destruction still shapes the lives of the former colonised black majority.

What propelled these twin brothers was the advent of the Second Industrial Revolution, which began around 1870, about six years before Sol Plaatje's birth. This was an era characterised by the use of electric power and oil for mass production, which led to the

establishment of giant corporations. Mass production fuelled an insatiable European demand for raw materials such as rubber, oil, cotton, and minerals. To secure these economic pipelines, European powers shifted from informal economic influence in Africa, South America and Asia to direct territorial annexation. This shift merged territorial expansion with resource extraction.

This geopolitical evolution culminated in the scramble for Africa and the convening of the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, when Sol Plaatje was just eight years old. By the time of the Berlin Conference, 10% of African territory was under direct colonial rule, although colonial powers had already set their sights on about 70% of African territory, mainly along the coast.

By 1914, when Sol Plaatje was 38 years old, about 90% of the African continent was under colonial rule, excluding Liberia and Ethiopia. This means that, in just one generation, almost the entire African continent was colonised. Without the Second Industrial Revolution, there would have been no Berlin Conference, and colonialism would have occurred on a much smaller scale in Africa.

To justify the colonial onslaught and aggressive economic expansion, the colonising powers weaponised pseudo-scientific theories of Social Darwinism. Social Darwinism was propagated to advance a deeply paternalistic “civilising mission”. Darwin argued that, “*in nature, species evolve through natural selection*”, or the survival of the fittest.

European Social Darwinists twisted and distorted Darwin’s argument by applying it to hu-

man races and cultures. This underpinned the Social Darwinist assertion that “*human races and cultures also evolve through natural selection, and some human races and cultures are more superior than the others*”. This gave rise to notions of a “*superior race*”, “*superior culture*”, and “*superior languages*”, as Europeans saw themselves at the top of the evolutionary ladder.

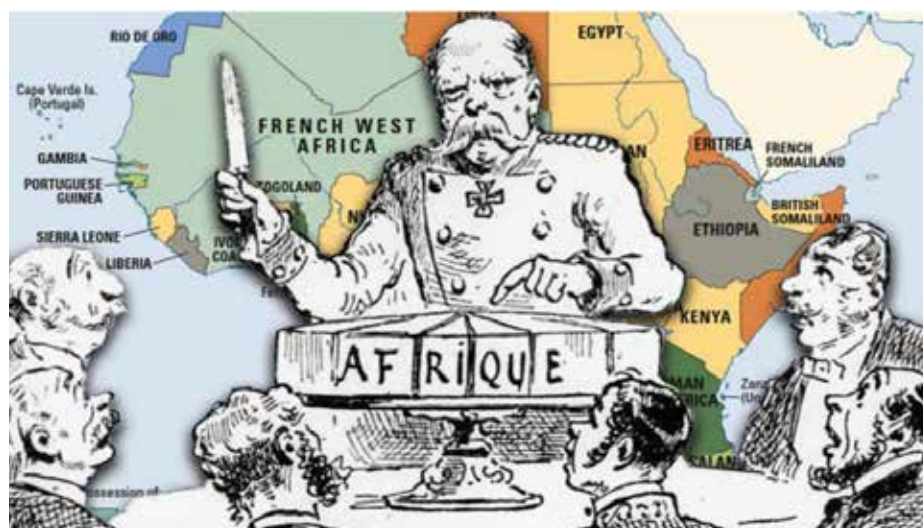
It was then assumed that Europeans were a “*superior race*” and, as a result, had a duty to bring civilisation to backward people. Consequently, this gave Europeans the supposed right to rule backward people until they caught up. The Social Darwinist pseudo-theory of the “*evolution of races through natural selection*” provided the “science” used to justify colonialism and make it appear legitimate, while the “*civilising mission*” provided its moral basis.

This is precisely why colonialism in the 19th and early 20th centuries was framed not as conquest, but as assistance to the so-called lower races. Europeans claimed that they were bringing Christianity to ungodly people, Western education to an unwashed lower race, Western laws and government to

savages, Western medicine and technology to barbaric people, and an end to tribal wars among what they described as “*bloodthirsty and untamed baboons*”.

In so doing, they took our land, gold, diamonds, rubber and other resources. Indigenous people were subjected to slave-like forced labour, their cultures were destroyed and borders were drawn without their consent. Africans were viewed as wild animals. In 1568, the influential English trader John Hawkins said this about Africans: “*they are brutish, beastly, living like animals, without reason, history, or civilisation and strong as labour mules*”. This marked the emergence of the ape comparison of Africans, which, to this day, remains a cognitive frame for many Europeans.

Towards the end of the 19th century, when Sol Plaatje was a young man, colonialism and imperialism had become firmly entrenched, with catastrophic consequences for Africa. This consolidation established an oppressive global hierarchy that reshaped Africa’s geographic, political, social and economic landscape, as well as that of the wider Global South, for generations to come.



Sol Plaatje's Struggle Against Colonial Injustice

Sol Plaatje's contribution as a co-founder and the first Secretary General of the African National Congress (ANC) in 1912, at the age of 36, demonstrated his commitment to end this humiliation by fighting for the rights of colonised. He viewed colonial land dispossession as a fundamental injustice that stripped people of their identity and dignity. In shaping a future for his people, Plaatje recognised that the struggle against racial oppression and colonialism was intrinsically linked to the struggle for land rights.

During Plaatje's lifetime, South Africa witnessed profound social and political upheaval. The enactment of the Natives Land Act of 1913 represented a watershed moment, formalising land dispossession. The Act allocated only 7% of arable land to black South Africans, undermining their agricultural potential and economic independence. Such policies strengthened Plaatje's resolve and deepened his commitment to the struggle.

He believed that "*land is life*", a sentiment echoed in his notable works, including *Native Life in South Africa*, in which he meticulously chronicled the impact of land dispossession on his people. This assertion not only reflected Plaatje's view of land as essential to identity, but also highlighted the socio-economic struggles that accompanied its loss, thereby establishing him as a foundational figure in the history of South African resistance.

Plaatje's activism extended beyond rhetoric. He was also a prolific journalist and translator who used his eloquence and communication skills to mobilise support



for the rights of the oppressed black majority. His writings revealed the painful realities of black life under colonial oppression, educating both national and international audiences about the injustices perpetrated against black South Africans.

Given his dedication to social justice, Plaatje stands as both a pathfinder and a torchbearer for present-day leaders. His insistence on the importance of land and its connection to dignity resonates in current debates on land reform and racial equity, underscoring the continued relevance of his vision.

His resolve also found expression within the broader socio-political climate of early 20th-century South Africa, where the interplay of colonialism, economic exploitation and racial discrimination prompted resistance among black communities. Alongside other early African leaders, Plaatje sought to provide a collective voice that challenged the status quo and called for the reimag-

ining of South African society, rooted in equality and dignity. His commitment to these ideals influenced contemporary struggles for democracy in South Africa.

The Power of the Pen: Journalism and Literary Resistance

Sol Plaatje recognised the power of the written word to challenge dominant narratives and provide a platform for marginalised voices. This reflected a deep understanding of the media's role in shaping public consciousness. Plaatje established several African newspapers, most notably *Koranta ea Becoana* (The Newspaper of the Tswana) and *Tsala ea Becoana* (The Friend of the Tswana, later *Tsala ea Batho*), which became crucial platforms for articulating the concerns and aspirations of the black population.

These publications were instrumental not only in reporting on issues affecting African communities, but also in fostering identity and unity among the oppressed.

Through journalism, Plaatje championed the cause of black South Africans and offered a counter-narrative to the prevailing discourse of racism and colonialism. His writings addressed the socio-political conditions of the time, exposing the injustices of land dispossession and the oppressive laws enacted by the colonial government.

For instance, his extensive documentation of the damaging effects of the Natives Land Act of 1913 highlighted the systematic stripping of land ownership from black South Africans and revealed how such policies perpetuated poverty and disenfranchisement. Through these journalistic efforts, Plaatje not only informed his readership, but also fostered critical awareness of the injustices they faced.

The significance of Plaatje's work extended beyond mere documentation. It actively shaped political discourse in South Africa. His writings often merged literary artistry with political agitation, producing narratives that captured the emotional and psychological toll of oppression. His seminal work, *Native Life in South Africa*, serves as both a historical account and a critique of South Africa's social fabric.

In vivid prose, Plaatje relayed the lived experiences of black South Africans, famously beginning his book with the harrowing observation: *"Awaking on Friday morning, June 20, 1913, the South African native found himself, not actually a slave, but a pariah in the land of his birth."*

The eloquence and poignancy of his writing resonated with his contemporaries and inspired future generations in the continuing



struggle for land. Plaatje's creation of platforms for African voices was groundbreaking at a time when colonial interests largely dominated the press. His dedication to journalism stemmed from a desire to empower the black population by equipping people with the knowledge needed to advocate for their rights and challenge the status quo.

His work fostered a sense of agency among black South Africans, urging them to participate actively in their country's political discourse. By giving a voice to the silenced, Plaatje's contributions became a rallying point for activism and resistance, mobilising communities in their struggle against colonial oppression.

Plaatje's dual role as a journalist and literary figure also blurred the lines between advocacy and artistry, strengthening his impact on South Africa's socio-political landscape. His writings combined journalistic integrity with literary flair, appealing to a broader audience and significantly influencing public opinion. In this way, Plaatje not only documented the historical injustices faced by the black population but also helped shape the political ideas of his time.

Through these endeavours, Plaatje established a legacy that underscores the importance of journalism and literature as instruments of resistance. His

sacrifices and commitment to empowering marginalised communities contributed not only to the immediate discourse on justice and land rights, but also to the foundation upon which democracy in South Africa was eventually attained. His work continues to influence today's struggles for social justice and equality, reflecting his enduring legacy.

Sol Plaatje at 150 and the Democratic South Africa at 32

Sol Plaatje's enduring legacy is deeply intertwined with contemporary South Africa's struggles for justice, equality and land rights, extending far beyond his lifetime into the fabric of the nation's post-apartheid democracy. His articulate condemnation of injustice and land dispossession helped establish the foundations for the principles of equality and freedom that modern democratic South Africa aspires to uphold.

As South Africa marks 32 years of democracy, coinciding with the 150th anniversary of Plaatje's birth, the historical trajectory from his death in 1932 to the present day offers a sobering lesson. When Plaatje died in 1932, the white minority government was systematically tightening its grip on the country, expanding the scope of the 1913 Land Act and laying the legislative foundations for what would later become formal apartheid. Plaatje died in relative poverty, having witnessed what appeared to be the temporary defeat of his life's work.

The significance of Plaatje's sacrifices becomes especially evident when we consider the persistent socio-economic disparities that define contemporary South Africa.

Thirty-two years after the transition to democracy, the country continues to grapple with the structural legacies of apartheid and colonialism, most notably the enduring crises of land distribution and economic inequality.

Plaatje's historical struggle against the Natives Land Act of 1913 is not merely a chapter in a textbook. It remains a living reality for millions of South Africans who remain landless or spatially marginalised. His core philosophy that "*land is life*" serves as an ongoing critique of the slow pace of post-apartheid land reform, reminding the nation that political freedom without economic emancipation and spatial justice remains incomplete.

Plaatje's early vision also laid a solid foundation for the Bill of Rights enshrined in South Africa's modern Constitution. Long before the international community formalised modern human rights frameworks, Plaatje and his generation in the early years of the ANC advocated for a non-racial, democratic society founded on human dignity and equal protection under the law.

His intellectual contributions as a polyglot, translator and journalist demonstrated that the struggle against colonial oppression required both political mobilisation and intellectual resistance. By translating Shakespeare into Setswana and documenting his people's oral histories, he sought to preserve the cultural identity and dignity that colonial laws aimed to erase.

The Unfinished Business of Justice and Spatial Equity

The modern critique of South



Africa's 32-year-old democracy draws heavily on the standards set by Plaatje's generation. While the post-1994 government succeeded in establishing a sophisticated legal system, the physical reality of South African cities, towns and rural areas still reflects the colonial geographic landscape engineered in the early 20th century. Urban centres remain economically segregated, while rural communities frequently find themselves trapped within former homeland boundaries where tenure security remains tenuous.

Plaatje's generation did not simply demand the right to vote. They demanded the right to exist freely on their own terms, sustained by the soil beneath their feet. When evaluating the contemporary state of land restitution, the slow pace of the willing-buyer, willing-seller model and the protracted debates surrounding expropriation without compensation highlight a profound historical gap. The sacrifices of the 1912 founders challenge modern policymakers to treat land reform as restorative justice that promotes human dignity.

Plaatje's dedication to intellectualism also stands in sharp contrast to contemporary political leaders who believe that loud populist rhetoric offers solutions to our current complex challenges. At a time when corruption

and factionalism frequently undermine public institutions, the selflessness of early leaders who exhausted their personal wealth and health in service of the collective struggle serves as an ethical compass.

Plaatje did not seek personal enrichment. His cross-continental travels to Great Britain and the United States to petition against the Land Act were funded through community donations and his own meagre income as a journalist.

Today, as South Africa reflects on more than three decades of democratic governance, the inheritance left by Plaatje's generation acts as both a shield and a mirror. It is a shield because it provides the historical legitimacy and moral authority for continued demands for social and economic equity. It is a mirror because it compels the current political establishment to evaluate whether it has remained true to the selfless, principled struggle that characterised its founding fathers.

The sacrifices of Plaatje, who died in 1932 amid hardship and expanding systemic oppression, demonstrate that true leadership requires an unwavering commitment to the collective good over personal advancement.

Ultimately, Sol Plaatje's legacy reminds us that democracy is an ongoing project, not an event. Democratic South Africa today owes its existence to the intellectual clarity, resilience and sacrifices of our forebears. Their early resistance created the blueprint for a free society, which subsequent generations inherited to complete the unfinished business of economic justice, land restitution and human dignity for all.

BREAKING THE USA BLOCKADE OF CUBA

■ By **RONNIE KASRILS**

SO punitive and inhumane has the decades-old US blockade of Cuba become that it warrants an annual debate at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). This 34th such event will take place in New York on 27-28 October 2026. It has never been a mere ritual, and is now more essential given the extreme danger to Cuba's very survival.

The onerous blockade has been imposed since 1962, following the failure of the US-backed Bay of Pigs invasion by mercenaries in 1961 to overthrow Fidel Castro's revolutionary government, which had ended the US-backed tyranny of the Batista regime. That blockade has operated alongside CIA-orchestrated terrorist attacks on the indefatigable revolutionary

island and its interests.

Cuba faces a ruthless economic war based on the USA's power to inflict collective punishment, and its determination to bring about a humanitarian crisis and provoke regime change short of a military invasion. In the perilous global situation, and given the frustrations and dilemmas faced by US President Trump, even that cannot be ruled out.

The UNGA resolution tabled by Cuba speaks to the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the USA. With the US offensive to throttle the island ominously growing, the coming event carries important weight.

UNGA resolutions are non-bind-

ing since the five permanent members of the Security Council – Britain, China, France, Russia and the USA – can veto motions. Nevertheless, an UNGA vote is significant for the influence, solidarity and pressure it carries across the world. UNGA voting patterns through the years have been virtually unanimous against the US. That majority has grown and, since 2000, has consistently been around 180 in favour, with only the US and Israel against. Under Trump, US lobbying pressure and bribery have increased, but it was still a resounding 165 in favour, 7 against and 12 abstentions of right-wing regimes in 2025.

This is a world of heightened conflict. The US-Israel axis has failed to achieve its ultimate goals in



Iran, Lebanon, Palestine, Yemen and Iraq, and together with the war in Ukraine this adds to the growing volatility, linked to the USA's objective of maintaining its disappearing world domination. Trump getting his way in Greenland and Venezuela raises his ambitions to deal with Cuba – once and for all.

The total losses suffered by Cuba as a result of the blockade from 1 March 2025 to 28 February 2026 stand at a record \$8.083 billion (Cuba's own estimate). That is an increase of 7% over the previous year, when \$7.566 billion was reported (March 2024-February 2025). Cuba's Foreign Minister, Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, explains that the increase results from Trump's administration adding:

- A stringent energy blockade, threatening sanctions on any tanker or shipping company delivering oil to Cuba;
- Secondary sanctions on any third-country company doing business with Cuba; and
- Keeping Cuba on the US State Sponsors of Terrorism list.

Rodríguez Parrilla reported that Cuba was surviving on 2-3 hours of electricity a day; only one tanker had arrived from Russia and over 7,000 containers of medicine were stuck as shipping lines won't dock. Key oil supplies from Mexico and Venezuela have ceased.

Cuba's crime in US eyes: the 1960 revolution which overthrew tyranny, broke free of US domination, established national sovereignty and chose the socialist path of development and international solidarity with people struggling against colonialism and imperialist domination. That last point is what the US regards



as Cuba's terrorism. It is such examples as assisting the peoples of Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe – among others in Africa, Asia and Latin America – against colonial racism; and its outstanding contribution to the training, education, health and developmental aid of people in the global south.

The punitive scale of damage to Cuba and its people comes as no surprise, given that Trump stated on 8 January 2026, referring to his government's policy towards Cuba: *"I don't think you can put much more pressure on them, except to go in and tear the place apart"*.

The US Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, bears primary responsibility for this macabre assault against Cuba and its devastating humanitarian and economic consequences. He has publicly admitted as much by asserting that his government's policy is aimed at closing off every way out that Cuba might find from this situation. History will remember him as the genocidal figure who sought to starve the Cuban people, apply collective punishment and exact revenge.

On 29 January 2026 the energy blockade against Cuba was im-

posed under the absurd pretext of regarding the country as an 'unusual and extraordinary threat' to US national security. On that date the US President signed an executive order (EO 14380) authorising additional tariffs on imports from any country that sold or supplied oil to Cuba, directly or indirectly.

Several special procedures of the Human Rights Council, as well as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, have expressed concern that these restrictions are jeopardising essential services at national level – health-care, food and water systems – because of the heavy reliance on imported fuel.

The immense suffering of Cuban families is borne out by examples and statistics:

- Deaths caused by a lack of medicines which, for decades, the country produced and supplied free of charge or at subsidised prices, but which it is now unable to guarantee;
- More than 100,000 surgical procedures that cannot be planned or carried out, because hospitals cannot be protected from unexpected power cuts during the already frequent outages in the Na-

tional Electricity System, and because of a lack of fuel for backup generators;

- More than 118,000 cancer patients, including 1,200 children, who are unable to receive first-line treatments and are forced to resort to second- and third-line alternatives;
- The infant mortality rate has risen to 9.3 per 1,000 live births, compared with the 4 or 5 recorded in previous years. This means the preventable deaths of 1,780 newborns, had suitable equipment, devices and treatments been available.

On 1 May 2026 the US government stepped up its pressure on Cuba further by issuing another Executive Order (EO 14404), again under the pretext of the threat posed by Cuba to US national security. It exacerbates the extraterritorial nature of the blockade by imposing 'secondary' sanctions: it allows the freezing of assets and the restriction of operations of any foreign person or entity operating in sectors considered strategic to the Cuban economy – energy, mining, finance, security and defence – and authorises sanctions against those who have provided financial, material, technological or logistical support to the Cuban government or State.

In practical terms, the US government uses the fear of losing access to the US market and financial system as a key tool of subjugation, pressuring third countries, companies and financial institutions that have links with Cuba – and, above all, those that might potentially have such links.

Under the guise of this Executive Order, the US State Department

and Treasury Department have launched a veritable witch-hunt against anyone who has business dealings or links with Cuba. A second objective of this strategy has begun to emerge: in addition to bringing about the collapse of Cuba's economic, political and social system, the US seeks to drive away any potential commercial rival in pursuit of its goal of taking total control of the island.

Cuba's feat of withstanding such a ruthless siege inspires admiration across the globe. The people of Cuba will prevail, for their resilience, creativity and determination cannot be stifled in any way. Supporting Cuba today is an act of courage, justice and historical responsibility, and one that upholds the principles of international law.

It is imperative that the South African Government and civil society continue our unstinting and principled solidarity, mobilising fraternal support in Africa and globally, to ensure a resounding rebuff of the US blockade of Cuba at the

UNGA meeting of 27 and 28 October 2026. This is part of the international solidarity campaign to provide material and diplomatic aid to Cuba – a people and a country that have given so much assistance and solidarity since the victory of the revolution led by Fidel Castro over 66 years ago.

That Cuba does not threaten the US is reflected in the attempts at normalisation by Democratic Party administrations, beginning under President Kennedy after the CIA-backed invasion of 1961 – half-hearted as these were. Former President Jimmy Carter visited Cuba in 2002; President Obama shook hands with President Raúl Castro at Nelson Mandela's memorial service in 2013; and President Biden, in a last gasp and hypocritical gesture, removed Cuba from the US terrorism list days before leaving office. This was immediately overturned following Trump's inauguration in January 2025. Cuba has been a victim of the power games and shifts between the US two-party system.



Cuba favours dialogue as a means of resolving differences with other governments, always in accordance with the principles of sovereign equality, mutual respect, mutual benefit and non-interference, reaffirming its commitment to international peace and security. As President Miguel Díaz-Canel has declared: *“Cuba is a peaceful country. We have no desire for war, and we have demonstrated our solidarity with many peoples around the world. We are not a nation at war; we are not a colony; and we will not give up our sovereignty or our independence.”*

The threat of military aggression by the US against Cuba has escalated over the course of the year to extremely dangerous levels. Influential politicians, who do not represent the interests of the majority of the American people, are calling for military aggression against Cuba in order to pressure the president into taking that decision. What is important – and rarely asked – is what the pretext would be for launching a military attack.

We must question and denounce the ease with which US politicians and even the media refer lightly to war as if it were something normal. Attempts are being made to normalise aggression and make it acceptable to US public opinion and the international community.

US military aggression against Cuba would generate a true humanitarian catastrophe, a bloodbath. Both Cuban and US citizens would lose their lives, something which only the US politicians who do not send their children to war are betting on.

There are neither foreign bases nor troops operating against the US from Cuban territory. The only



foreign base is in Guantánamo, against the will of the Cuban people, and is illegally occupied by the US.

Cuba has been forced to prepare itself, in the exercise of its right to self-defence, and this involves the entire Cuban people. It has had to reorganise the running of the country to adapt the economy to these extremely difficult circumstances, whilst transforming the economic system. This takes into account that the country has changed and the world around it has changed too. Cuba draws on its human resources, its scientific and technological talent, and the strength of social justice structures and programmes built over many years.

The solidarity shown by people and solidarity organisations in the

US is a demonstration of the legitimate aspiration to achieve a constructive relationship with Cuba.

South Africa remains a central part of the international solidarity effort. At the UN General Assembly, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Ronald Lamola said South Africa is deeply concerned at *“the wielding of economic weapons to coerce countries into abandoning their chosen development trajectories. The suffering of the Cuban people should command our deepest solidarity. We reiterate our call for an end to the blockade on the Cuban people.”*

South Africa's Cuba Solidarity Now (CSN) is a national “people to people” solidarity movement. It funded the installation of photovoltaic systems for two polyclinics in Villa Clara province – in San-

ta Clara and in the Escambray Mountains. The Havana Neuroscience Centre has been allocated resources to buy two electric vehicles to transport its engineering teams, who provide services to 25 laboratories in Havana, benefiting approximately 10,000 patients a month; resources have also been allocated to install photovoltaic systems at the Centre.

In August 2026, 20 tons of foodstuff were delivered to three hospitals in Havana, and Cuba Solidarity Now is running campaigns to send a further 30 tons of food to Cuba in December 2026. The National Union of Mineworkers has also contributed foodstuff and toiletries, and members of the Friends of Cuba Society (FOCUS) have travelled to Cuba with consignments of medicines. The government has sought ways of circumventing the blockade. Hopefully, efforts from South Africa will be intensified.

Cuba has withstood previous difficult periods, particularly following the collapse of its long-standing Soviet ally. Cuban ingenuity and determination are making the difference in replacing oil-driven energy with solar power and new methods of agricultural production, and China and Vietnam are making a huge difference in both areas. The year 2026 has seen a sharp upturn in solidarity aid from many countries.

Cuba stood with Africa when our freedom hung in the balance. Now Africa must stand with Cuba – end the blockade, hands off Cuba, and let the island that taught the world solidarity live free.

*Struggle veteran and author **Ronnie Kasrils** is a former South African government minister of Intelligence Services.*

SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF THE GROWING SOLIDARITY EFFORTS:

■ During 2026 China donated 60,000 tonnes of rice, and installed 10,000 photovoltaic systems to provide solar electricity to isolated rural homes and health centres, nurseries, homes for children without parental care and bank branches across the 169 municipalities.

■ Russia delivered 100,000 metric tonnes of donated Ural crude oil (approximately 730,000 barrels). A delegation from the Russian Civic Chamber donated food, sweets, portable torches, USB sticks and first-aid kits, handed over as part of the centenary celebrations for Fidel Castro, and the Russian city of St Petersburg donated three ambulances for maternity and children's hospitals in Havana, Matanzas and Santiago de Cuba.

■ Two Mexican Navy vessels delivered 814 tonnes of humanitarian aid (liquid and powdered milk, meat products, beans, rice, tuna, sardines, biscuits, vegetable oil and hygiene products). Mexico and Uruguay sent powdered milk under the Cooperation Agreement and the Fund established in 2023, and Mexico and Belize sent 1,700 tons of food and basic necessities.

■ The thirteenth consignment of humanitarian aid from Mexico and Caribbean states brought powdered milk, infant formula, beans, flour, rice, tinned food, medical supplies, solar panels, batteries and water tanks. Mexico provided free shipping from its terminals.

■ The Vietnam Red Cross Society donated 100 billion VND (approximately 3.82 million USD) to the Cuban people as part of the "Humanitarian Month 2026" campaign. Cuba received 10,000 tons of rice from Vietnam, in addition to 1,500 tons on behalf of Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister Ho Duc Phoc.

■ Japan donated USD 6.5 million to install solar power systems in 10 hospitals in Cuba (4 in Havana and 6 in the provinces), benefiting 2.6million patients and 27,500 healthcare workers.

■ UNICEF and South Korea donated 213,000 bottles of prenatal supplements for 30,430 pregnant and breastfeeding women in Cuba.

■ The UN allocated 4 million USD to Cuba from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), as part of a 160 million USD package.





Counting Every Person: The Foundation of a Stronger Democracy

■ By **NONCEBA MHLAULI**

THIRTY YEARS of democratic census-taking in South Africa represent more than a statistical milestone. They reflect our country's journey towards building an inclusive democracy in which every person matters, and every community deserves to be seen, heard and counted.

As we commemorate 30 years since Census Night 1996, we must recognise that behind every statistic is a human story. Census data tells us who we are, where we live, the conditions in which we live and the challenges our communities face. Most importantly, it provides the evidence needed to plan for a better future.

The establishment of a democratic census system was a significant undertaking. In 1996, South Africa inherited a fragmented statistical institution shaped by apartheid, which had systematically excluded many communities from accurate representation. Building a credible national census required dedicated public servants, trained fieldworkers and the trust of ordinary South Africans.

Across subsequent censuses, this commitment endured. From advances in geographical mapping in 2011 to the unprecedented challenges of conducting Census 2022 during a global pandemic, Statistics South Africa has continued to strengthen the country's capacity to understand its population.

This work is fundamental to democracy in practice. Reliable statistics inform decisions about where schools and clinics





are needed, how infrastructure should be extended and how public resources should be distributed among municipalities. Without accurate information, government risks planning for communities it does not fully understand while overlooking those most in need.

The census, therefore, must never be viewed merely as an administrative exercise or a cost to the public purse. It is an investment in effective governance, equitable resource allocation and improved service delivery. The cost of collecting reliable data must be weighed against the far greater consequences of making decisions based on inaccurate population estimates.

However, Statistics South Africa cannot fulfil this responsibility alone. Every successful census depends on public participation. When households welcome enumerators and provide accurate information, they contribute directly to shaping the development priorities of their communities.

We recognise that concerns

about privacy, accessibility and whether participation makes a meaningful difference can undermine public confidence. These concerns must be addressed through transparent communication, engagement in all official languages and partnerships with community leaders, civil society and local structures.

Government must also demonstrate how information collected translates into better planning and decisions.



As we look towards the 2031 census, innovation and regional cooperation will be essential. South Africa and its Southern African Development Community partners must share knowledge, strengthen statistical systems and explore more efficient methods of reaching every person, including those in mobile populations and hard-to-reach communities.

Equally important is safeguarding the independence and credibility of official statistics. Census data must remain an impartial foundation for public planning, accountability and informed citizenship.

Thirty years after our first democratic census, our responsibility remains clear: leave no person invisible and no community uncounted.

When the next census invitation arrives, participate. Your answers are more than numbers; they are a contribution to the future of your community and our country.

Counting every person is how we build a South Africa that works for all.

The Gains of Democracy: The ANC Record in Shaping the middle class in South Africa

■ By **SIFISO SONJICA**

WE wish to argue very strongly that the African National Congress (ANC)-led government has been fair to the black middle class particularly through its relentless support for the working class to transform their socio-economic conditions in the country. Nonetheless, it is worthwhile to acknowledge right at the beginning that there have been serious shortcomings in main implementation of good policies and capable individuals who could interpret to express recognition of the contribution of the African National Congress (ANC)-led government. Most poignantly, efforts to acknowledge initiatives aimed at restoring the legacy, dignity, and socio-economic standing of Black communities may sometimes attract negative responses from malcontents who characterise such advocacy as an attempt to manipulate or blackmail voters. Such criticism, however, should not obscure the responsibility of fellow compatriots to recognise and communicate developmental achievements that contribute to addressing historically entrenched inequalities. In this regard, supporting and publicising the ANC's positive policies and interventions can be understood as part of the broader effort to consolidate, defend, and advance the gains of democratic transformation.

Fundamentally, the African Na-



tional Congress (ANC)-led government inherited an economy characterised by racial inequality, concentrated ownership of productive assets, unequal access to education and skills, segregated residential patterns and a labour market in which racial identity strongly influenced occupational and income opportunities. Despite all these logjams, the ANC managed to address the historical exclusion of the Black majority and to create conditions under which previously disadvantaged citizens could become economically independent and take part in the emerging democratic economy. Black workers in general suffered a great deal for ages prior to 1994, with their challenges only beginning to be

redressed after 1994 through ANC transformation policies such as B-BBEE, RDP, GEAR, the Employment Equity Act, and the National Credit Act, among others.

Considering this, as indicated in the introduction would like to share some thoughts on why South Africa's Black middle class has legitimate reasons to recognise the opportunities created by the ANC democratic government. Such recognition, however, should not mean uncritical political loyalty. Rather, it should mean acknowledging the historical significance of policies that dismantled legally sanctioned racial exclusion and created opportunities for millions of Black

South Africans to take part more fully in the economy.

Of significant importance, the professional opportunities enjoyed by many Black South Africans today cannot be separated from employment equity and affirmative action. The ability of Black businesses to compete for state and corporate contracts cannot be separated from B-BBEE and procurement transformation. The ability of many households to own formal homes cannot be separated from post-apartheid housing interventions. Access to regulated consumer credit cannot be separated from the National Credit Act. Similarly, the expansion of educational and professional opportunities cannot be separated from the transformation of the democratic state and its institutions. In this regard, the right response from the middle class should therefore be recognition and gratification combined with responsibility. The middle class should recognise the policies that opened doors for its emergence while demanding that government improve the quality of governance, strengthen institutions, expand employment, fight corruption, improve public ser-

vices and broaden wealth ownership. In other words, recognition should not become complacency, and criticism should not become historical amnesia. It is now that I need to explore the policy interventions and highlight their significance to the middle class.

To begin with, the **Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR)** strategy was adopted in 1996. GEAR sought to create macroeconomic stability, stimulate investment, increase economic growth, improve international competitiveness, encourage employment creation, and strengthen the capacity of the state to redistribute resources. The strategy combined fiscal discipline, monetary stability, trade liberalisation, investment promotion, and reforms to the relationship between the public and private sectors. Government's stated goals included achieving stronger economic growth, increasing investment and employment, and creating the resources necessary for redistribution. In this respect, GEAR can be understood as part of the broader economic architecture within which Black middle-class formation established the macroeconom-

ic conditions necessary for sustained economic participation.

Another major intervention was the **Employment Equity Act of 1998**, which sought to promote employment equity and address unfair discrimination in the workplace. This legislation, together with affirmative-action measures in the public service and other institutions, contributed significantly to opening occupational opportunities that had historically been restricted to white South Africans. The transformation of the public service, universities, state-owned enterprises, professional institutions, and private corporations provided opportunities for Black South Africans, especially professionals, to enter occupations and organisational positions previously dominated by whites. The importance of these interventions extends beyond employment itself. A stable professional salary provides households with the capacity to purchase homes, finance children's education, obtain vehicles, contribute to retirement schemes, invest in businesses, and participate in the formal financial system. The well-being of professionals such as Black doctors, lawyers, academics, engineers, managers, entrepreneurs, public servants, and corporate executives is partly a product of the post-apartheid transformation of labour-market opportunities.

Further, the most direct intervention aimed at transforming economic participation has been **Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE)**. The Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act 53 of 2003 established a legislative framework for promoting Black economic empowerment and empowered government to develop codes of



good practice and transformation charters. B-BBEE is important because it goes beyond the idea that economic transformation should occur solely through employment. It addresses dimensions such as ownership, management control, skills development, enterprise and supplier development and socio-economic development. Through these mechanisms, Black South Africans have gained greater opportunities to participate as business owners, shareholders, managers, suppliers, and professionals. Government procurement has also been used as an instrument for encouraging transformation within the private sector.

The **National Credit Act 34 of 2005** represents another important intervention for the middle class. The Act established a regulatory framework intended to promote fair and non-discriminatory access to consumer credit, protect consumers against unfair credit practices, regulate credit providers, and prevent reckless

lending. It also established the National Credit Regulator and the National Consumer Tribunal and introduced mechanisms for debt reorganisation and debt counselling. Access to credit is particularly significant for the middle class because modern households frequently depend on financial institutions to acquire houses, vehicles, education, and other durable assets. The regulation of credit therefore helped create a more formal and accountable credit environment. Importantly, the National Credit Act sought to balance access to finance with protection against over-indebtedness. This is particularly relevant to a middle class whose economic position depends on mortgages, vehicle finance, personal loans, and other financial instruments.

Tax policy is another area in which ANC-led governments have affected middle-class households. South Africa operates a progressive personal income-tax system, with different tax brackets,

rebates, and thresholds. Over the post-1994 period, government has periodically provided tax relief and adjusted tax brackets to address inflation and fiscal drag. SARS records substantial personal income-tax relief since 1994, while current tax policy continues to use thresholds and rebates to structure the tax burden. The contribution of taxation to middle-class welfare should, however, be understood more broadly than simply the amount of tax paid by individuals. Middle-class households also benefit from publicly financed infrastructure, universities, roads, hospitals, policing, electricity systems, water infrastructure, and other public services. Consequently, the democratic state's redistributive capacity has helped create an environment in which households can preserve and improve their living standards. Similarly, a middle-class household with access to public infrastructure and services retains a greater proportion of its disposable income for housing, investment, education,



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savings, and consumption. Thus, the benefits of government policy cannot be measured only through direct transfers; they must also be assessed through the value of public goods and services.

Conclusion

The ANC-led government has played a significant role in expanding opportunities for millions of Black South Africans through policies that widened access to employment, education, housing, finance, and economic participation. While many challenges remain, including unemployment, inequality, and poverty, it is important not to overlook the progress achieved since 1994.

As South Africans look to the future, the focus must be on building a capable state, growing the economy, creating jobs, and expanding opportunity for all. Guided by a vision of inclusive growth, infrastructure development, innovation and empowerment, the next phase of transformation must deepen the gains of democracy and extend them to future generations.

Recognising the achievements of the past is not about complacency. It is about understanding the foundation on which a brighter future can be built. The journey of transformation continues, and the promise of a more prosperous, inclusive, and equitable South Africa remains within reach.

Lastly asking every sector of the society to vote for the ANC is not arrogance it merely putting our case before all segments of society.

Sifiso Sonjica is ANC Spokesperson in Kwazulu Natal



THE DA'S DOUBLE STANDARDS: Hijacked Buildings, Human Rights and Election Stunts

■ By **RAVIN SINGH**

CILLIERS Brink is in Pretoria, but let us start with Wards 68 and 118 in Johannesburg, both represented by DA councillors.

I suspect there are many other communities across the country where residents have been complaining about hijacked properties for years, with little to show for their efforts.

In these two wards, residents have repeatedly raised concerns about hijacked buildings and the problems associated with them. Eventually, communities took it upon themselves to escalate matters directly to the City. Through sustained engagement, they have begun to achieve some results.

So where has the DA been? Where is the sustained organising, the community meetings, the engagement with municipal departments and the follow-through that residents should expect from elected representatives?

Or is community organising now something the DA only discovers when there is an election to contest?

Now we have Cilliers Brink arriving at an allegedly hijacked property in Pretoria, accompanied by armed private security personnel, wearing a bulletproof vest, while occupants are questioned about their citizenship and whether they speak Afrikaans. The footage ends with an appeal to vote DA.

And when questioned, out comes the usual DA spin.

Brink delivers a lengthy sermon about crime, frightened residents, drug dealing, ineffective policing and the need to take back the streets. He tells us about children attending nearby schools and residents who are afraid to walk through their neighbourhoods.

All legitimate concerns. But none of this answers the questions about his own conduct. Who authorised entry into the property? What legal powers were being exercised? What was Brink's role in questioning occupants about their nationality? And since when has speaking Afrikaans become a test of citizenship?

Brink seems to think that describing the seriousness of a problem is sufficient justification for whatever he chooses to do about it.

It is not.

And then there is the rather inconvenient matter of his own record.

Cilliers Brink was the Executive Mayor of Tshwane for approximately 18 months, from March 2023 to September 2024.

According to Brink himself, Mabena House was hijacked during the Covid-19 lockdown. That means the problem already existed when he occupied the Mayor's Office, with the municipal administration, metro police and the machinery of local government at his disposal.

So what did he do about it? Where are the investigations, the inspections, the enforcement notices, the legal proceedings and the coordinated interventions undertaken during his mayoralty? What programme did his administration



implement to address hijacked properties across Tshwane?

These are questions of accountability, not an invitation to another lecture about crime. Brink has told us what is wrong with Mabena House. What he has not told us is what his administration did about it when he had the authority to govern. And perhaps he can also explain this sudden burst of enthusiasm weeks before an election.

Brink makes one particularly revealing admission in his statement: "Our presence at Mabena House did not solve the problem."

Quite.

The property remains a problem. The residents still require a lasting solution. The alleged criminal activity still requires investigation and lawful enforcement. But Brink has an election advertisement.

This is the distinction between governing and campaigning, between organising communities and exploiting their frustrations.

Community organising requires years of patient work. It means meeting residents, mapping problems, identifying responsible authorities, building relationships, coordinating municipal departments, following up on commitments and holding officials accountable.

It is not particularly glamorous. There are no bulletproof vests required for most of it, no armed entourages and very few opportunities for dramatic campaign footage. And that is precisely the work that communities in Johannesburg's Wards 68 and 118 have had to undertake themselves.

Instead, the DA appears increasingly comfortable substituting political spectacle for an organised presence in communities, and mobilising around white fears about crime, immigration and neighbourhood decline rather than demonstrating how these problems can be resolved.

The flippancy and fearmongering do the rest. Complex problems of housing, crime, immigration and urban decay are reduced to a few inflammatory questions, some armed security personnel and a camera.

There is something depressingly familiar about all of this. The DA is not the National Party, but the technique echoes the swart gevaar messaging of the apartheid years, when black people were presented as a threat to frighten white voters into political submission, a tactic certain quarters have kept alive since.

And the historical connection is not entirely abstract. The DA's mayoral candidate in Durban, Haniff Hoosen, was a paid organiser for the National Party, the party responsible for perpetuating apartheid, a crime against humanity.

Today, similar anxieties about crime, immigration and neighbourhood decline are packaged for a modern election campaign. What once came from the extremists of the past now arrives with

polished messaging and tight-fitting blue suits.

It is easier to frighten people than to organise them. Easier to manufacture outrage than to build solutions. And apparently easier to arrive at a troubled property with a camera crew than to account for what happened when you actually had the authority to govern.

But the most disturbing aspect of this episode is what it raises about the DA's commitment to human rights and constitutionalism.

Brink declares that the law must protect everyone's rights, then complains that the law is being used to protect criminals.

This is a well-worn political manoeuvre. Present constitutional protections as obstacles to fighting crime, then suggest that anyone questioning the methods must somehow be defending criminals.

It is a false choice.

The Constitution does not protect people because they are popular, respectable, South African, Afrikaans-speaking or approved by a politician. It protects people precisely because the exercise of power must be subject to law.

A suspected criminal remains entitled to due process. An undocumented migrant retains fundamental constitutional protections. And the suspicion that a property has been hijacked does not automatically authorise politicians or private security personnel to enter premises, conduct searches or interrogate occupants.

If the property is being used for criminal activity, investigate it. If people are dealing drugs, gather evidence and prosecute them.



If the building is unsafe, invoke the applicable legislation. If an eviction is required, approach the courts.

That is lawful enforcement.

And if the DA believes these processes are inadequate, it should explain which laws it proposes to change, rather than implying that constitutional safeguards are responsible for criminality.

Nobody is defending property hijacking. Nobody is defending drug dealing. Nobody is suggesting that residents should surrender their neighbourhoods to criminals. But neither should anyone be expected to surrender constitutional principles because a politician has discovered that fear makes effective campaign material.

The DA cannot proclaim its devotion to the Constitution when challenging its political opponents and then treat constitutional rights as an inconvenience when they interfere with its own campaign messaging.

That is the double standard.

And it brings us back to Johannesburg, where communities have spent years raising concerns

about hijacked buildings, organising themselves and engaging the City to secure action.

Residents do not need politicians who periodically arrive to tell them how terrible their circumstances are. They know. They live with those circumstances every day. They need elected representatives who organise, engage, follow through and deliver.

Brink had 18 months as mayor to demonstrate that kind of leadership. His record during that period deserves scrutiny, particularly now that he is presenting himself as the person who will restore law and order to Tshwane. The property was allegedly hijacked before he became mayor. It remained a problem after he left office. And by his own admission, his latest intervention has not solved it.

And perhaps that captures the politics of the whole exercise: when the hard work of governing fails to produce results, arrive with armed security, stir up some fear, film the performance, cut it into a few dramatic TikTok videos and ask people to vote for you.

The residents still have their problem. The politician has his content.

FEMICIDE, GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND BAIL IN SOUTH AFRICA

A Constitutional, Jurisprudential and Public-Health Imperative for Criminal Justice Reform

■ By **GREGORY NYONGANE**

GENDER-BASED violence and femicide (GBVF) constitute a profound public-health, constitutional and criminal-justice challenge in South Africa. Violence against women is not confined to the moment of physical injury or death. It may develop through repeated assault, threats, coercive control, stalking, strangulation, sexual violence and other forms of abuse that bring victims into contact with healthcare, policing, protection-order and judicial institutions before a fatal event occurs.



This article examines whether South Africa's constitutional and criminal-procedure framework sufficiently connects these points of intervention. It places the analysis within the jurisprudence of the Constitutional Court, particularly *S v Baloyi*, *Carmichele v Minister of Safety and Security*, and *S v Dlamini*, *S v Dladla*, *S v Joubert* and *S v Schietekat*. It also engages with South African scholarship on feminist jurisprudence, domestic violence, gender inequality and institutional accountability.

The article argues that the Constitution establishes a positive obligation on the state to take reason-

able measures to protect persons from violence, including violence originating from private sources. At the same time, the Constitution protects accused persons through the presumption of innocence, fair-trial rights and the constitutional framework governing release from detention. The challenge is therefore not to place victim rights and accused rights in opposition, but to construct a proportionate, evidence-based system in which victim safety forms a meaningful part of the interests-of-justice enquiry.

The article proposes an integrated medical-legal model linking healthcare risk identification,

police investigation, protection orders, prosecution, bail, victim protection and post-bail monitoring. It further proposes targeted legislative review concerning aggravated domestic violence, attempted femicide and domestic homicide.

1. Introduction

Femicide should not be examined solely as an isolated homicide.

From a public-health perspective, it may represent the final manifestation of an escalating history of violence. From a constitutional perspective, it engages the rights to equality, dignity, life

and freedom and security of the person. From a criminal-justice perspective, it raises questions concerning investigation, protection orders, bail, prosecution and institutional accountability.

The central question is therefore: When the state has information indicating serious and continuing violence, what constitutional and legal duties arise before that violence becomes fatal?

This question is particularly important because South African constitutional jurisprudence has already rejected the proposition that the state's responsibility ends when violence originates in a private relationship.

In *S v Baloyi*, the Constitutional Court recognised the constitutional significance of domestic violence and the state's duty to protect individuals from violence originating in private sources.

In *Carmichele v Minister of Safety and Security*, the Constitutional Court developed this principle further by recognising that constitutional rights can impose positive obligations on state organs to provide appropriate protection through laws and institutional structures.

The jurisprudential foundation for a preventive approach therefore already exists.

The challenge is implementation.

2. Constitutional jurisprudence: from negative protection to positive obligation

The South African Constitution is not merely a charter restraining government action.

Section 7(2) requires the state to



respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights in the Bill of Rights.

This is particularly significant for GBV.

2.1 *S v Baloyi*: domestic violence is a constitutional concern

In *S v Baloyi and Others* 2000 (2) SA 425 (CC), the Constitutional Court considered domestic violence within the framework of the constitutional rights to freedom and security of the person.

The Court recognised that section 12(1)(c), which protects everyone against violence from public or private sources, places a positive responsibility on the state to protect individuals from private and domestic violence.

The judgment is important because it rejects the historical tendency to regard domestic violence as a purely private matter.

The constitutional state cannot simply say: *"The violence occurred inside a private household; therefore the state has no responsibility."*

The constitutional position is the opposite.

Where private violence threatens constitutionally protected rights,

the state has protective responsibilities.

3. Carmichele: reasonable protective measures and institutional responsibility

The jurisprudence was developed further in *Carmichele v Minister of Safety and Security and Another* 2001 (4) SA 938 (CC).

Carmichele is particularly significant because it recognised that constitutional rights may impose positive obligations upon state institutions to provide appropriate protection through laws and structures designed to protect individuals.

The judgment therefore moves the constitutional analysis beyond: *"Did the state itself commit the violence?"* towards: *"Did the state have a constitutional obligation to take reasonable protective measures against foreseeable private violence?"*

This distinction is fundamental to GBV prevention.

The significance of *Carmichele* is not that the state becomes an insurer against every criminal act. Rather, constitutional rights influence the development and application of the law concerning reasonable state protection.

The principle has subsequently informed South African jurisprudence concerning police responsibility and gender-based violence.

4. Van Eeden and the development of state accountability

The approach in Carmichele was subsequently considered in *Van Eeden v Minister of Safety and Security* 2003 (1) SA 389 (SCA).

The jurisprudence demonstrates that the constitutionalisation of South African law requires courts to interpret common-law principles concerning state liability in light of constitutional values.

This is particularly relevant to GBV because institutional failure may arise through omissions as well as direct conduct.

The question is not simply whether an institution acted unlawfully in a conventional sense.

It may also be whether the legal system adequately recognises the constitutional significance of a failure to provide reasonable protection where the circum-

stances required it.

5. K v Minister of Safety and Security: constitutional development of private-law principles

In *K v Minister of Safety and Security* 2005 (6) SA 419 (CC), the Constitutional Court again demonstrated the importance of constitutional norms in developing South African law concerning violence against women.

The significance of these cases is cumulative.

Taken together, Baloyi, Carmichele, Van Eeden and *K* establish an important jurisprudential trajectory:

violence against women → constitutional rights → positive state obligations → institutional responsibility → development of the law.

This trajectory provides a principled basis for examining whether current criminal-procedure and victim-protection mechanisms sufficiently respond to serious GBV.

6. Bail jurisprudence:

S v Dlamini

Any proposal for stronger bail intervention must engage seriously with *S v Dlamini*, *S v Dladla and Others*, *S v Joubert* and *S v Schietekat* 1999 (4) SA 623 (CC).

This is the leading Constitutional Court authority concerning the constitutional structure of bail.

The Court explained that bail proceedings are fundamentally different from the criminal trial. The trial determines guilt; the bail enquiry determines whether release pending trial is consistent with the interests of justice.

The Court further emphasised that bail is a judicial function and that the court must undertake a reasoned evaluation of the competing interests involved.

This jurisprudence is crucial to the proposed reform.

It means that the solution to femicide cannot be: "The allegation is serious; therefore bail must automatically be refused."

Instead, the correct constitutional question is: What do the evidence and the statutory criteria demonstrate about the interests of justice, including the safety of the victim, the public and the integrity of the criminal process?

7. Section 60 and the protection of a particular person

Section 60 of the Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977 expressly incorporates safety considerations into the bail enquiry.

The statutory framework requires consideration of whether release would endanger the safety of the public or a particular person.



This provision is particularly important in GBV matters.

A complainant is not an abstract member of the public.

Where there is evidence of previous violence, threats, stalking, protection-order breaches or escalating conduct, the safety of the particular person may become central to the interests-of-justice enquiry.

The constitutional and statutory principles therefore converge:

section 12 of the Constitution → section 60 of the CPA → victim safety → judicial risk assessment.

8. Schedule 5 and Schedule 6: proportionality and seriousness

The distinction between Schedule 5 and Schedule 6 must remain legally precise.

Schedule 5 establishes a heightened bail regime for specified serious offences.

Schedule 6 establishes a substantially more stringent regime requiring an accused to demonstrate exceptional circumstances before release.

The Constitutional Court in Dlamini recognised the more restrictive character of the Schedule 6 framework and considered its relationship with the constitutional right to release from detention.

This is important for femicide.

Where a killing constitutes planned or premeditated murder, the Schedule 6 regime may apply.

But femicide is not automatically



Schedule 6 merely because the victim is a woman.

A legally credible reform proposal must therefore focus on the nature and circumstances of the offence, rather than create an automatic rule based solely on the victim's sex.

9. Feminist jurisprudence and structural inequality

Constitutional analysis should not be separated from the social conditions in which GBV occurs.

Professor Elsje Bonthuys has examined the relationship between domestic violence, gender inequality and socio-economic rights, noting that although South Africa's Domestic Violence Act represents significant legal progress, implementation has been problematic.

Professor Cathi Albertyn's scholarship similarly demonstrates the importance of understanding gender equality not merely as formal equality but in relation to social subordination, structural inequality and the transformative potential of law.

This scholarship is important because a formally gender-neutral

criminal-justice system may nevertheless operate within a society in which women experience particular forms of violence and vulnerability.

The constitutional principle of equality therefore requires more than identical treatment in the abstract.

It requires attention to the social conditions in which violence occurs.

10. Deane and the South African GBVF framework

Tameshnie Deane's recent scholarship places GBVF within a broader South African legal and social framework, examining the relationship between violence against women, gender relations, hegemonic masculinity, patriarchy and institutional responses.

This supports an important proposition: GBVF cannot be addressed solely by increasing punishment after the offence; it requires transformation of the institutional and social conditions that permit violence to persist.

Criminal law is therefore one component of a wider prevention framework.

11. The implementation problem identified by scholarship

Bonthuys' analysis is particularly relevant to implementation.

The existence of progressive legislation does not guarantee effective protection if institutions fail to implement it.

This produces an important distinction: law on the books ≠ law in action.

South Africa has constitutional rights, domestic-violence legislation, protection orders, criminal offences and bail mechanisms.

The continuing prevalence of GBV therefore requires attention to:

- institutional capacity;
- training;
- information flow;
- enforcement;
- accountability;
- interdepartmental coordination; and
- access to effective remedies.

Recent scholarship by John Mubangizi similarly identifies persistent implementation and enforcement challenges despite South Africa's extensive constitutional and legislative framework.

12. Medical jurisprudence and institutional responsibility

The medical dimension adds another layer to this jurisprudential framework.

Healthcare professionals may encounter evidence of violence before criminal proceedings commence.

Repeated injuries, strangulation, psychological trauma and escalating violence can become clinically



significant indicators requiring appropriate safeguarding.

The medical profession should not determine criminal liability.

However, medicine and law should not operate in separate institutional compartments.

The medical record can provide objective evidence of injuries and treatment, while the patient's reported history may identify concerns requiring appropriate referral.

The principle should be: Clinical evidence informs risk; it does not determine guilt.

This distinction protects both the patient and the integrity of the criminal process.

13. From jurisprudence to a prevention model

The jurisprudence suggests a coherent constitutional model.

Principle 1: Life must be protected

Section 11 protects the right to

life.

Principle 2: Violence from private sources engages constitutional protection

Baloyi establishes the constitutional significance of private and domestic violence.

Principle 3: The state may have positive protective obligations

Carmichele demonstrates that constitutional rights can require reasonable protective measures.

Principle 4: Bail remains constitutionally protected

Section 35 and Dlamini require judicial consideration of the interests of justice and accused persons' liberty.

Principle 5: Victim safety is part of the statutory bail enquiry

Section 60 expressly identifies danger to the public or a particular person as relevant.

Principle 6: Serious offences can justify heightened bail thresholds

Schedule 5 and Schedule 6 recognise gradations of seriousness.

Principle 7: *Reform must remain proportionate*

Section 36 requires justification for limitations on constitutional rights.

Together, these principles provide a constitutional foundation for stronger GBV prevention without abandoning due process.

14. Proposed jurisprudential test for reform

The following formulation is proposed for further academic and legislative consideration:

Where credible evidence demonstrates a serious and continuing risk of violence against a particular person, the interests-of-justice enquiry should require meaningful consideration of that risk alongside the accused's constitutional rights, the integrity of the criminal process and all other statutory factors.

This is not a proposal for automatic detention.

It is a proposal for evidence-based constitutional risk assessment.

15. Proposed implementation model

The jurisprudential principles should translate into an institutional pathway:

IDENTIFY → DOCUMENT → ASSESS → REFER → PROTECT → INFORM → ADJUDICATE → MONITOR → REVIEW → ACCOUNT

Healthcare

Identify and document serious GBV indicators.

Police

Investigate, protect and record

relevant incidents.

Protection-order system

Provide accessible and enforceable protective remedies.

Prosecution

Ensure relevant and admissible information is placed before the court.

Bail court

Apply section 60, the relevant Schedule and constitutional standards.

Victim-support services

Provide safety planning, shelter, psychosocial support and legal information.

Oversight institutions

Review serious failures and near-fatal cases.

16. Femicide and the doctrine of prevention

The jurisprudence supports a shift from a purely reactive model to a preventive model.

A purely reactive system asks: What happened?

A preventive constitutional system also asks: What was known beforehand?

Who knew?

What legal duty existed?

What reasonable protective measures were available?

Were those measures implemented?

If not, why not?



STOP GBVF
Gender-Based Violence and Femicide

Silence protects violence,

REPORT GBVF

Report any form of GBVF to your nearest **police station** or call **toll-free Crime Stop** number: **086 00 1011**

Victims and survivors are encouraged to use the **24-Hour Gender-Based Violence Command Centre** hotline **0800 428 428**

This does not mean that every tragedy establishes state liability.

It means that constitutional democracy requires institutions to learn from foreseeable and preventable risks.

17. Recommendations for legislative reform

Parliament should consider reviewing the Criminal Procedure Act and related GBV legislation to determine whether the existing framework sufficiently addresses:

1. Domestic homicide;
2. Attempted femicide;
3. Serious violence following separation;
4. Strangulation and attempted strangulation;
5. Repeated serious assaults;
6. Credible threats to kill;
7. Serious breaches of protection orders; and
8. Violence committed while an accused is already subject to bail or another legal restriction.

Any amendment should be subjected to constitutional scrutiny and should preserve:

- the presumption of innocence;
- judicial independence;
- fair-trial rights;

- proportionality;
- privacy;
- evidentiary safeguards; and
- the constitutional interests-of-justice standard.

18. Conclusion: from constitutional promise to institutional action

South Africa's constitutional jurisprudence has already established the foundation for a stronger response to violence against women.

Baloyi rejects the treatment of domestic violence as merely private.

Carmichele establishes that constitutional rights can impose positive protective obligations on the state.

Van Eeden and K demonstrate the continuing development of state responsibility in the context of violence against women.

Dlamini provides the constitutional framework within which bail must be understood: bail is a judicial, interlocutory process concerned with the interests of justice rather than guilt.

The academic literature reinforces

the same lesson from another direction. Bonthuys demonstrates the implementation gap in domestic-violence law; Albertyn highlights the transformative and structural dimensions of gender equality; Deane situates GBVF within broader gendered social and institutional structures; and contemporary scholarship continues to identify enforcement and accountability as central problems.

The resulting proposition is therefore not that constitutional rights obstruct GBV prevention.

It is the opposite:

The Constitution provides the legal foundation for preventing violence, protecting victims and requiring accountable state action, while simultaneously requiring that restrictions on accused persons remain lawful, proportionate and consistent with due process.

The task is to connect that jurisprudence to implementation.

The health system must identify.

The police must investigate and protect.

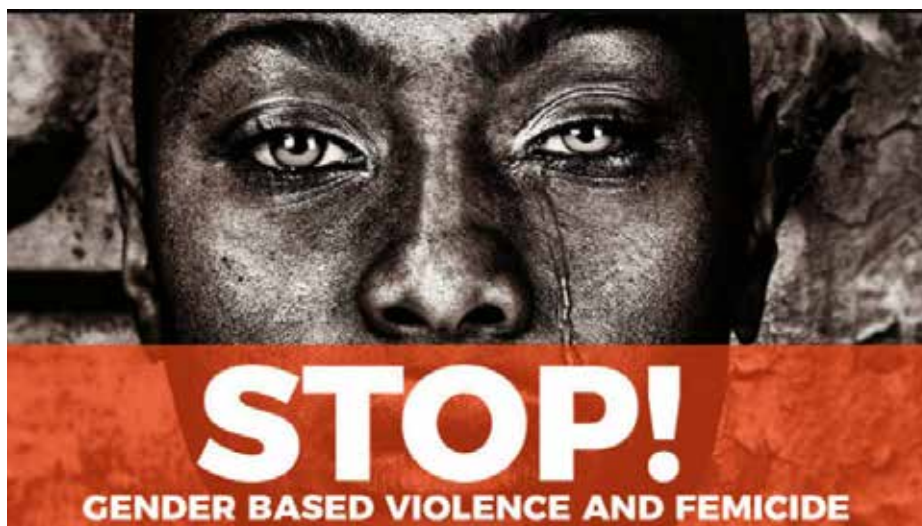
The prosecution must present relevant evidence.

The courts must apply the law independently.

The victim must not be abandoned after reporting violence. And the state must learn from cases in which warning signs existed before a woman was killed.

The ultimate constitutional objective is therefore not simply: justice after femicide.

It is: constitutional protection before femicide.





After Egypt: Advancing African Unity and Shared Prosperity

■ By **LINDIWE ZULU**

AFRICA'S unity must find expression in the everyday lives of her people. It must be felt by those who need clean water, the young people seeking employment and the small producer trying to reach markets beyond national borders. Access to water, opportunities for employment and the ability to trade across borders give practical meaning to African integration. This is the responsibility that must guide our continental institutions.

On the 4th of October, African leaders gathered in El-Alamein, Egypt, for the 8th African Union Mid-Year Coordination Meeting, with President Cyril Ramaphosa participating as Chairperson of SADC.

Making African Unity Practical

At the meeting, African Union

Commission Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf emphasised clearer responsibilities between continental and regional institutions. This is an important contribution because the AU, unlike other continental bodies such as the European Union, depends on regional economic communities and member states to support one another with each taking responsibility for implementation. The connection between ambition to implementation is vital especially given both the ambition behind Agenda 2063 and the patient work that is required to advance it.

In 2012 already, former AU Commission chairperson, Comrade Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, highlighted the fact that the African Union's success depended on implementation by regional economic communities and member

states. Our continental vision must find expression in national plans, budgets and capable institutions because economic transformation lies at the heart of building a better Africa for Africans. Where difficulties remain, we must address them together.

Producing and Financing our Future

While Egyptian president, Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, called for expanding manufacturing, technology transfer and stronger regional value chains at the African Union Mid-Year Coordination Meeting, Burundi's president, Evariste Ndayishimiye, cautioned that a free trade area alone was insufficient.

As mentioned so many times before, the AfCFTA merely provides a continental framework for



accelerating the freer flow of goods and services on the continent. Yet productive capacity must be expanded and elevated. The task now is to broaden and advance this capacity through skills development and infrastructure investment.

For example, in an article titled *“the Silk Route’s a one-way road”*, in this month’s edition of The Content magazine, it is reported that *“last year, China exported \$225-billion in goods to Africa. It imported \$123-billion – a \$102-billion deficit for the continent, according to China’s General Administration of Customs.”*

The article goes on to point out that *“raw materials like crude oil and unprocessed minerals account for 80% to 90% of Africa’s exports to China, whereas 85% of China’s exports to the continent are finished goods like machinery, electronics, and vehicles. These command a higher value than raw minerals.”*

The separate AU-NEPAD founders’ summit that was held on the 3 October 2026 considered financial and technical resources for development. African institutions

and international partners have important contributions to make towards the advancement of the continent. We should prioritise regional projects connecting minerals and agriculture to processing, manufacturing and markets. Investment in science and technical education must accompany infrastructure, with women and young people participating as producers and decision-makers.

Peace, stability and dignity as a foundation for development

However, the on-going conflicts in Ethiopia, Democratic Repub-

lic of the Congo, Sudan, South Sudan and Mozambique do not make conditions conducive for infrastructural development on the continent. Ending wars, silencing of the guns, political stability and building strong institutions of governance will ensure that when we invest into infrastructure these remain in place while accelerating the conditions to grow economies to the needs of the African society.

The AU Mid-Year Coordination meeting’s focus on water and sanitation brings us back to everyday needs and to the purpose of Agenda 2063, as they are among the rights which are central to our continental vision alongside education and health.

Nearly three in ten Africans lack basic drinking water while more than half lack basic sanitation. We must approach water as the foundation for health, food production, education and economic participation. A community without reliable water faces obstacles across all these areas.

Thus, the ANC remains committed to African Unity, peace, security, stability and development of the entire African continent.



THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

17–23 October 2026

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

17 October 1887

The Star published in Johannesburg



The Star newspaper appeared for the first time in Johannesburg as The Eastern Star. It was founded in Grahamstown under that title on January 6, 1871, and was moved to the Witwatersrand sixteen years later by its owners, brothers Thomas and George Sheffield. In 1889, the name Eastern Star was changed to The Star, currently owned by the National Media Group.

17 October 1973

Egyptian and Israeli forces in fierce fights

From 6 to 26 October 1973 a coalition of Arab nations led by Egypt and Syria, and Israel were involved in a bloody war in the Sinai desert and Golan Heights. The war began on Yom Kippur with joint attack by Egypt and Syria. Israel, caught unawares, was stunned by the fury and execution of the Arab onslaught, who made excellent progress during the first 24-48 hours. However, by the second week of the war, the Syrians had been pushed entirely out of the Golan Heights.

The war also set the two superpowers (United States of America and Soviet Union) on a conflicting course. The USA supported Israel while Egypt received backing from the Soviet Union.

17 October 1989

Elephant poaching reached a height

While African elephants have been hunted for several centuries, the exploitation of elephant herds on a massive scale began in the 1970s. Organized gangs of poachers used automatic weapons and laundered tons of ele-

phant tusks through several African countries to destinations in Eastern and Western countries. The huge increase during the 1970s was the result of automatic weapons availability and growing demand, as ivory was perceived as a valuable hedge against rising inflation. In the 1960s, raw ivory prices remained between \$3 and \$10 per pound. In 1975, prices reached \$50 and by 1987, the price was \$125 per pound. This decimated elephant populations across Africa and they faced extinction in the wild. Eastern African nations such as Kenya lost





OCTOBER IS THE MONTH IN WHICH WE HONOUR CDE PRESIDENT OLIVER TAMBO

"Let us, therefore, root ourselves amongst the people, live their experiences, share their trials and tribulations and, jointly with them, find ways and means to advance our cause at both local and national levels."

As in the past, our cadres should be the first to rally to the defence of the people and the last to seek rewards."

Cde President O.R. Tambo, 1990.

A BETTER LIFE FOR ALL
VOTE ANC




THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

almost all of their elephants to poachers in the 1980s. Overall, the elephant population in Africa plummeted from about 1.2 million to 600,000 in the 1980s, prompting the global ban on all ivory trade in 1989, through the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Despite this, elephant numbers continue to drop, the Wildlife organisation estimates that in 2020 there were just 415,000 elephants across the continent.

18 October 1983 SADF bombs ANC offices in Maputo

South African National Defense Force (SADF) commandos bombed the African National Congress (ANC) office in Maputo, Mozambique and injured 5 people. Captain Wynand Petrus du Toit was caught later and admitted his role in the raid. This was one of many cross border raids by the SADF in the 1980s to neighbouring countries who gave refuge to South African freedom fighters.

18 October 1966 Rand Afrikaanse Universiteit established

The Rand Afrikaans University (RAU), the second university in Johannesburg after Witwatersrand University, was established by an act of parliament as the academic home of Afrikaans-speaking students. The University attracted students, academics, donors and business partners from other language groups, but explicitly excluded black South Africans. RAU was merged with the Witwatersrand Technikon and the two Vista campuses of Soweto and the East Rand, to form the University of Johannesburg (UJ). UJ was officially launched on 1 January 2005. It now boasts four

campuses, Auckland Park Kingsway, Auckland Park Bunting, Doornfontein and Soweto. The University has approximately 46 000 students spread over five campuses across Jo'burg.

18 October 1985 Benjamin Moloise executed



Upholsterer and poet, Benjamin Moloise was executed by apartheid government on 18 October 1985. Moloise was accused of murdering a black police officer. The African National Congress claimed responsibility for the murder and repudiated the claim that Moloise was involved. The US and the Soviet Union warned the apartheid government against the execution, but the government still decided to go ahead with it. The execution aroused so much anger in the townships that violence escalated, reaching Johannesburg CBD which had previously remained sheltered from it.

18 October 1990 Nomsa Mapongwana assassinated

Nomsa Mapongwana (34), wife of chairperson Michael Mapongwana of the Western Cape Civic Organisation, a UDF affiliate, was shot dead at night in her home in Lingeletu West. Mapongwana and her husband woke up

to the sound of shots fired from the front and rear windows of their house. Petrol bombs were thrown through the windows. Mr Mapongwana dragged his wife and children into the kitchen and hid underneath the table until the shooting stopped, when he found that his wife had died from a bullet wound in the chest. The Urban Monitoring and Awareness Committee later reported that neighbours saw four balaclava-clad men run from the burning house and jump over the back fence, escaping in a white combi.

19 October 1954 Britain and Egypt sign the Suez Canal agreement

The Suez Canal was opened in 1869, linking the Indian and Mediterranean Oceans, thus a strategic asset. It forms part of Egyptian territory, and was largely owned by Egypt. Shares in the canal operating company were sold to the British government in 1875, and when the British invaded Egypt in 1882, they seized full control of the canal, throughout the Second World War. This situation was resisted by the Egyptians, and the Agreement signed on this day was an attempt to maintain the status quo, with Britain maintaining control of the Suez canal even after withdrawal from Egypt, especially with the discovery of oil in the Middle East. Two years later, Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser re-nationalized the Suez Canal.

19 October 1977 Apartheid government bans BC organisations and media

After the Soweto uprisings in 1976 and ongoing protests, followed by arrests and the death in detention of Steve Bantu Biko, the Apartheid government banned SASO and 18 other

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY



black consciousness organisations, and also clamped down on media freedoms, banning *The World*, *Weekend World* and the church publication *Pro Veritate*.

19 October 1977

Editor Percy Qoboza and Aggrey Klaaste arrested

Editor of *The World* and *Weekend World*, Percy Qoboza and his deputy, Aggrey Klaaste were arrested by the Special Branch police in a mission to shut down the two Black publications. Qoboza and Klaaste spent five months in solitary confinement after being led straight to their cells – in their suits and ties – from the newspapers' building. Journalists Mathatha Tsedu, Joe Tiholoe, Don Materra and many others were detained and handed down 5 year banning orders upon their release.

19 October 1992

Skweyiya report on abuses in camps released

ANC President Oliver Tambo appointed the Skweyiya Commission, following reports of abuses in ANC camps, especially Quatro in Angola. On 19 October 1992, the internal commission with members Louis Skweyiya (chairperson), Gilbert Marcus and Bridgette Mabandla, found evidence of brutality and torture to extract confessions from al-

leged South African spies and other detainees. The worst abuses were at the Quatro rehabilitation centre in Angola, but they added that the conditions in other ANC camps in Angola, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia had in no way been acceptable. On behalf of the ANC, Nelson Mandela accepted responsibility for the findings of the commission.

19 October 1986

Samora Machel, President of Mozambique dies in a plane crash



On 19 October 1986, Mozambique President, Samora Machel and thirty-three other passengers, died when their Tupolev 134 plane crashed into the Lebombo Mountains, South Africa. Machel was a prominent leader of the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) and a leader of the liberation struggle.

In 1975, FRELIMO won independence and he was elected as Mozambique's first president. Machel was returning from an African leaders' summit in Zambia. His death sent shockwaves throughout Southern Africa and the entire world. The crash remains a mystery; with some blaming it on bad weather and others believing that the South African authorities were to blame.

20 October 1999

Jackie Selebi set to take over as Police Commissioner



The South African government announced that former diplomat and Director of Foreign Affairs, Jacob Sello Selebi, would take over from the outgoing South African Police Services (SAPS) national commissioner, George Fivaz, with effect from 1 January 2000. Selebi was appointed by president Thabo Mbeki.

20 October 2011

Libyan Leader Muammar Gaddafi killed in Tripoli

The death of Pan Africanist and Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi made global headlines, following soon after the attack by NATO on Libya. Initially Gaddafi was said to have perished in the bombings of Sirte, but it later emerged he was captured and tortured before he was killed in Tripoli.

21 October 1968 Author, Linguist and Activist, AC Jordan passed on

Archibald Campbell Mzolisa Jordan (62), acclaimed and exceptional academic, author, linguist, teacher and activist, passed on this day. Born on 30 October 1906 at the Mbokothwane mission station in the Tsolo district of Pondoland, he studied at St John's College in Umtata, Lovedale College at Alice and Fort Hare University College, where he obtained a BA degree in 1934. He taught for 10 years in Kroonstad, where he mastered Sesotho and was elected president of the African Teachers' Association. Some of his poetry was published in the *Imvo Zabantsundu* newspaper. In 1940 he started working on his only novel, *Ingqumbo Yeminyana*, a novel that was to become a landmark in South African literature. His voice continued to be heard long after his death. In 1972 his critical study of Xhosa literature was published, and in

1973 a collection of short stories in Xhosa was translated into English under the title *Tales from Southern Africa*. His great novel *Ingqumbo Yeminyana* was published in English as *The Wrath of the Ancestors* (1980), in Afrikaans as *Die Toorn van die Voorvaders* (1990) and in Dutch as *De Wraak van het Voorgeslacht* (1999). In 2004, 36 years after his death, the University of Port Elizabeth conferred a doctorate in literature on him. He was awarded the Order of Ikhamanga in Gold for his contributions. The award was collected by his son, Pallo Jordan. [Source: <http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/national-orders/recipient/archibald-campbell-mzolisa-jordan-1906-1968>]

22 October 1931

Mammo Wudneh born

Mammo Wudneh (1931-2012) was a playwright, journalist and president of the Ethiopian Writers Association. He was actively involved as a peacemaker between Ethiopia and Eritrea working on

an interfaith committee chaired by Abune Paulos, the Patriarch of the Tewahedo Church.

22 October 1999 SA boxers, Zolile Mbityi and Peter Malinga win world titles

22 October 1999 was a red-letter day in South African boxing history, as both Zolile Mbityi and Peter Malinga captured world titles. Mbityi, South African (SA) flyweight, won the International Boxing Organisation (IBO) flyweight title, while Peter Malinga, SA welterweight, won the International Boxing Organisation (IBO) welterweight title.

22 October

Birthday of many prominent South Africans

- **Thomas Titus Nkobi** – ANC Treasurer General, born on 22 October 1922 in South Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe); lived and went to school in Soweto, following his father who was a migrant mine worker. He did his BA at the University of Lesotho, where he joined the ANC and getting involved in the Alexandra Bus Boycott. He was on the of Alex delegates to the Congress of the People in 1955, and participated in the potato boycott. Nkobi he was arrested, banned and left for exile,



THIS DAY

ISITHWALANDWE/SEAPARANKOE MAMA NONTSIKELELO ALBERTINA SISULU WAS BORN

21 OCTOBER 1918

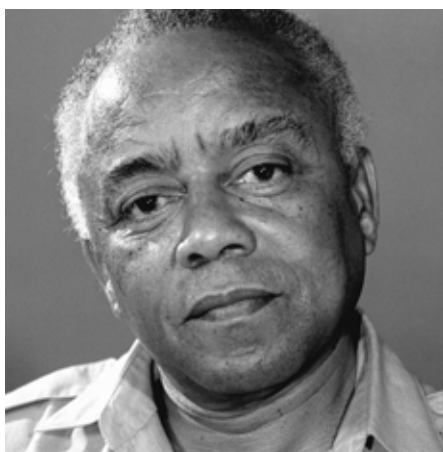
ANC and ANC Women's League stalwart Nontsikelelo Albertina Thetiwe was born on 21 October 1918 in the village of Xolobe in the Tsomo district of the Transkei. MaSisulu, as she became fondly known as, married fellow ANC activist, Walter Sisulu on 15 July 1944. Despite constant harassment by the apartheid regime, she was one of a handful of political activists who managed to continue with clandestine ANC work. MaSisulu became an ANC Member of Parliament after the first democratic elections in 1994. She passed away on 2 June 2011.



THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

where he became ANC chief representative. He became Treasurer in 1977, and was a member of the ANC NEC until his death in 1994.

- **Dr Neville Alexander** was born on 22 October 1936. An intellectual, activist, academic and linguist, born in Cradock, Eastern Cape and co-founder of the Yu Chi Chan Club (YCCC) along with Dulcie September, and later the National Liberation Front. He was imprisoned for 10 years on Robben Island. Neville Alexander passed away in Cape Town in 2012.



- **Dr Baldwin Sipho (Ben) Ngubane**, political activist and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) politician, was born at Inchanga Roman Catholic Mission, Camperdown, Natal on 22 October 1941. Dr. Ngubane occupied many high political positions in the IFP and



other spheres of government. He was minister of arts, culture and technology in President Mandela's Government of National Unity from 1994 until August 1997. In March 1997, Ngubane was appointed as premier of KwaZulu-Natal province, until he was replaced by Lionel Mtshali in 1999. In 2006, he resigned from the IFP and joined the ANC.

- **Amanda Coetzer** – born on 22 October 1971 in Hoopstad, Free State, Amanda Coetzer began playing tennis at the age of six and began her professional tennis career in 1988. At only 1.58m in height, her petite stature did not hindered her performance as she managed to beat bigger players (both in size and rank) throughout her career, earning her the nick name “giant killer”.



23 October 1920 Poet Nontisi Cizama first poem, Mqgwetho, is published

The first poem of Nontstizi (Cizama, Imbongikazi yakwaCizama) Mqgwetho is published in Umteteli under her clan name, Cizama. Nontsizi Cizama is the amongst the most significant female Xhosa poets, with her work only recently being rediscovered. She contributed close to ninety poems, which urged South Af-



rican Black people to put aside their differences and unite to fight against the White oppressors. Her poetry also recognised the role of rural people in the struggle against apartheid.

23 October 1954 FLN of Algeria formed

The Algerian independence movement, the National Liberation Front (FLN) is formed to unite the people of the country to fight against French colonialism.

23 October 1958 Apartheid government established a department of Coloured Affairs

Long before the inception of apartheid, the name “Coloured” people was used for people ranging from descendants of the Khoi and San, Malay and other slaves, and people of mixed heritage in South Africa. They occupied this precarious position between White and Black South Africans. This position was intensified during apartheid by the creation of a separate identity, reinforced by the various apartheid laws that strived to keep racial groups apart. Some of these laws included the Mixed Marriages Act, the Immorality Act, the Group Areas Act and others. The apartheid classification of Coloured was sub-divided into Cape Coloured, Malay, Griqua, Chinese, Indian, Other Asiatic and Other Coloured.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

23 October 1984
SADF seals off Vaal Townships

A combined force of seven thousand South African Defence Force (SADF) troops and the South African Police (SAP) sealed off the Vaal Triangle townships of Sebokeng, Sharpeville and Boipatong, in the aftermath of the Vaal Uprising, which fuelled the resistance and heightened struggles to destroy apartheid of the 1980s.

23 October 1968
Kip Keino wins Olympic Gold

Kipchego "Kip" Keino was born in Kipsano, Kenya on 17 January 1940. Keino began his international running career in 1962. From early on he trained under very high altitudes to prepare his body to perform under all con-

ditions. Keino won several gold medals between 1962 and 1972, but it was his gold medal win in the 1500 m athletics, within 3 minutes, 34.9 seconds and setting of a new record in the 1968 Olympics in Mexico, that catapulted him to stardom. He later served as the President of the National Olympic Committee of Kenya. In 2012 Keino was amongst the first inductees in the IAAF Hall of Fame

23 October 2006
Songster Lebo Mathosa passed on

Kwaito star Lebo Mathosa (29), one of the lead duo of Boom Shaka, passed on after a car accident in Johannesburg. Born in Daveyton, she started singing in the church choir at age 7, and attended St Mary's in Johannesburg. She joined the four mem-



ber Boom Shaka at age 14, along with Thembi Seete, Theo Nhlengethwa and Junior Sokhela, and soon launched their overnight hit, *Its Summer Time, Listen to Boom Shaka*. Mathosa went solo in 1999, charting her own success and winning a SAMA in 2001 for best female vocalist. The versatile Lebo Mathosa also acted in the soapie Muvhango.

**LET'S CONTINUE
BUILDING
BETTER
COMMUNITIES, TOGETHER**


4 NOVEMBER
VOTE ANC


THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

17–23 October 2026

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


OCTOBER O.R. TAMBO MONTH

OLIVER REGINALD TAMBO

BORN 27 OCTOBER 1917

LONGEST SERVING PRESIDENT OF THE ANC
FOUNDER MEMBER
AND FIRST NATIONAL SECRETARY OF THE ANCYL

A BETTER LIFE FOR ALL

VOTE ANC



17 October**International Day for the Eradication of Poverty**

Celebrated since 1987 as the World Day for Overcoming Extreme Poverty and recognized by the United Nations in 1992, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty focuses on the persistence of poverty, and the choices societies make. The United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have at its centre the goal of eradication of poverty across the world.

**18 October****World Menopause Day**

Menopause is a point in time 12 months after a woman's last period, and signal the end of her reproductive years. The years leading up to that point, when women may have changes in their monthly cycles, hot flashes, or other symptoms, are called the menopausal transition or perimenopause. The menopausal transition most often begins between ages 45 and 55.

19 October**International Gin and Tonic Day**

Genever was first used in Holland in the 17th century. During one of the European tribal wars, the British discovered genever and brought it back to the UK, shortened as Gin. Later as the British colonial empire spread across the globe, quinine, a treatment for malaria, was drunk in tonic water but the bitter taste was unpleasant. Colonial armies' officers in India in the early 19th century took to adding a mixture of water, sugar,

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

lime and gin to the quinine in order to make the drink more palatable, and thus the gin and tonic cocktail was born.

20 October

World Statistics Day



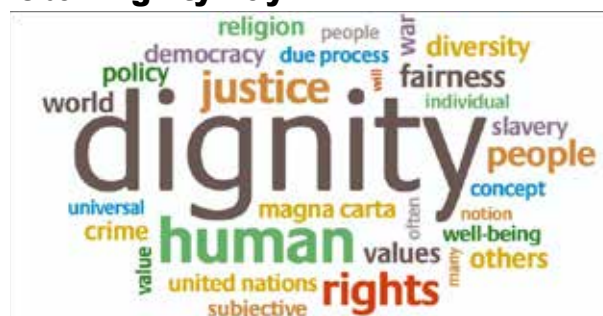
Statistics shape the decisions that build better policies, businesses, and communities. From population data to climate trends, numbers help us understand the world and plan for the future. The day raises awareness about the importance of building national statistics capacity, such as our official Statistics South Africa. Statistics shed light on problems that might otherwise remain hidden, helping our government in their mission to leave no one behind.

20 October
World Information Overload Day



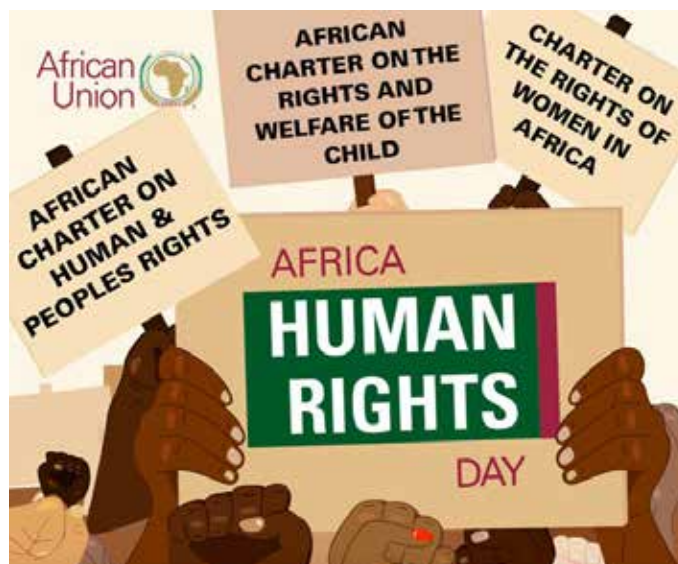
From social media and online news to radio, television, emails and text messages, we're constantly bombarded with a plethora of information. Some research suggests we are bombarded with 7.9 gigabytes per day, the equivalent of watching 16 movies! On this day, try to switch off, and smell the coffee, or fresh air!

20 October
Global Dignity Day



On Global Dignity Day, everyone everywhere is invited to look beyond what divides us and recognize the dignity and humanity we share. Global Dignity Day is held on the third Wednesday of October.

21 October
African Human Rights Day



African Human Rights day commemorates the date in 1986 when the African Charter on Human and People's Rights came into effect. The Charter is a central commitment of the states of the Organisation of African Unity and its successor, the African Union, to the continent's citizens numerous rights and freedoms.

22 October
World Stuttering Awareness Day

Stuttering is a communications disorder, that sees a person struggling to produce words and sounds fluently. It usually starts in childhood, but can also evolve over time or appear suddenly. About 1% of the world's population stutter, and it is more prevalent amongst men than amongst women. 80% of young children who stutters, eventually outgrow it.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE PLAN PILLAR 1

For all your service delivery issues,
call toll free number or send an email or
WhatsApp to:

-  **basic.services@anc1912.org.za**
-  **+27 81 698 8522 / +27 81 698 8523**
-  **080 030 1912 (Toll free number)**

Issues will be escalated to the relevant department,
municipality, or province.



2026: The Year of Decisive Action
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LET'S CONTINUE BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES, TOGETHER

4 NOVEMBER

VOTE ANC

