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Conversations with the
President



Vote for communities that work

By **PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

ON **Wednesday 4 November**, millions of South Africans will go to the polls to choose the councillors who will run their municipalities for the next five years.

The choices they make will determine whether the taps run and the streetlights work, whether refuse is collected and whether our local economies grow.

I call on all eligible voters to cast their ballots for the African National Congress. The work that we began 32 years ago, of building better communities, is not finished. Working together, we can complete this work.

When we launched our Local Government Elections Manifesto in Diepsloot two months ago, we said that many municipalities do not work as they should. Too many communities live with unreliable services and deteriorating infrastructure.

In recent weeks, we have campaigned across the country. We have listened to South Africans. We have heard their frustrations about the state of local government. But we should not mistake disappointment for hostility. Often those who criticise the ANC most strongly are those who expect the most from our movement. They want us to succeed because they want their communities and their country to succeed.

As the ANC, we accept criticism that is justified and, as we have shown, we are determined to act on it.

Acknowledging our shortcomings does not mean forgetting the progress we have made together. Over three decades, we have built homes, roads, power lines, water pipes and neighbourhoods where once there was just empty veld. We have provided free basic services to millions of poor households and expanded access to clinics, schools, colleges and university.

But we are not stuck in the past. We are firmly focused on fixing the problems of the present and building a successful future for all.

Electricity shows what we can achieve when we work together. After more than a decade of load shedding, we undertook far-reaching reforms to restore Eskom's performance and expand generating capacity. It is due to our collective efforts that the country has gone more than 525 days without load shedding.

We are bringing the same determination to water. Through the National Water Action Plan and the National Water Crisis Committee, government is working on

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fixing the immediate challenges in municipalities and undertaking reforms that will secure the supply of quality water into the future.

Our Manifesto commits the ANC to six actions over the next five years.

First, we will provide water, lights and other services that are affordable and work for all. ANC-led municipalities will fix leaks, end sewage spills, upgrade electricity networks and rely less on contractors. We will keep tariffs fair, bill accurately and protect free basic services for poor households.

Second, we will bring work and investment to where people live. We will digitise municipal business services and speed up approvals for building plans, rezoning and licences. We will support spaza shops, informal traders and township enterprises.

Third, we will build safer streets, cleaner neighbourhoods and healthier communities. We will maintain street lighting, parks and taxi ranks, act against illegal dumping, and reclaim hijacked buildings for housing and community use.

Fourth, we will ensure municipal finances serve people's needs. We will complete the review of the local government funding model, eliminate unfunded budgets, improve audit outcomes and make sure municipal workers are paid on time.

Fifth, we will build municipalities that are run well and honestly, with leaders that serve with integrity, make sound decisions, protect public resources and account for their performance.

Sixth, we will build municipalities that account to and listen to residents.

Every ANC councillor will sign a public performance agreement and a code of ethical conduct. They will undergo regular performance assessments and report regularly to their communities. Those who fail to fulfil their responsibilities will be removed.

ANC mayors and councillors will have 100 days from taking office to show real progress on the most pressing issues. Every council will have a localised manifesto, and a tracking mechanism will allow communities to monitor their councillors' performance.

Where the ANC governs, municipalities will act on Auditor-General findings within 12 months. Mayors will account publicly for audit outcomes. Budgets, procurement information and council decisions will be published.

We do not ask to be judged only on what we promise before the election. We ask to be judged on how we govern after it.

On the campaign trail, we have seen both progress and neglect. Our people should not continue to live in squalor. In Cape Town, we see a tale of two cities: one well taken care of, the other neglected. The ANC's commitment is that every community, not just some, receives the services it deserves.

We have been deeply troubled by the killing of candidates and campaigners in recent weeks. This is completely unacceptable. We cannot accept a situation which seeks to derail our elections and our people's path to democracy.

We call on all political leaders to discourage violence among their supporters and on the police to leave no stone unturned in bringing those responsible to justice. Every South African must be free to campaign and vote in peace.

The Manifesto that we have put before the people is a working document. We present it in full acknowledgement of the areas in which we have fallen short and proud of how far our nation has come.

We humbly ask all South Africans to work with us as we work to restore confidence and trust.

Our message to South Africans is to go out and vote on 4 November. Vote for municipalities that are capable, honest and accountable. Vote for councillors who will answer to you. Vote ANC.

Together, we will continue to build better communities.



Cyril Ramaphosa
President of the African National Congress

4 NOVEMBER VOTE ANC

CONVERSATIONS WITH THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT



Parliamentary Constituency Offices play an important role in strengthening the relationship between communities and public representatives

Remarks by **Deputy President Paul Mashatile**, on the Occasion of the establishment of the Deputy President's Parliamentary Constituency Office in Kwamashu and Ntuzuma, Durban, Kwazulu-Natal Province

TODAY is more than just the opening of a Government office. It is about creating a platform where communities can engage directly with their elected representatives, raise concerns, access support, and participate meaningfully in the democratic process.

Too often, citizens feel that Government is distant and only visible during election periods. This office seeks to change that. It is a practical demonstration of our commitment to ensuring that Government remains accessible, responsive, and accountable to the people it serves.

Parliamentary Constituency Offices play an important role in strengthening the relationship between communities and public representatives. They provide a direct channel through which residents can engage Government, raise service delivery concerns, seek assistance, and make their voices heard.

This office belongs to the people of KwaMashu and Ntuzuma. It must serve as a place of engagement, accountability, and active citizenship.

The establishment of this office for KwaMashu and Ntuzuma carries particular significance given the history of these communities.

These townships were shaped by apartheid's policies of exclusion and spatial segregation. Yet despite those challenges, they have

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become centres of resilience, activism, entrepreneurship, culture, and community leadership.

KwaMashu and Ntuzuma have produced leaders, professionals, entrepreneurs, artists, and community builders who continue to make valuable contributions to KwaZulu-Natal and South Africa as a whole.

Their story reminds us that while apartheid sought to restrict opportunity, it could never extinguish the determination, dignity, and aspirations of our people.

While we celebrate this milestone, we must also confront the realities facing many households in these communities.

Unemployment, poverty, inequality, crime, gender-based violence, and infrastructure backlogs continue to affect many families. Young people and women remain disproportionately impacted by these challenges.

This is why Constituency Offices must be more than administrative centres. They must become instruments for improving service delivery, facilitating access to opportunities, and ensuring that community concerns receive timely attention.

They should be equipped with the necessary technology and supported by capable personnel who can assist residents, particularly young people, to access employment, skills development, and entrepreneurial opportunities.

As public representatives, we have a responsibility to ensure that Constituency Offices function effectively and deliver real value to communities.



Residents must be aware of the services available and how they can access them. More importantly, these offices must become centres of problem-solving, community engagement, and service facilitation.

They are not intended to replace existing Government services. Rather, they should strengthen coordination between communities, Government departments, and public entities, ensuring that matters raised by residents are directed to the appropriate institutions and followed through to resolution.

Our Constitution recognises the right of citizens to engage democratic institutions and make their voices heard.

Furthermore, sections 56(d) and 69(d) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa empowers the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces, respectively, to receive petitions, representations and submissions from any person or institution.

Accordingly, Constituency Offices have a responsibility to facilitate and support local communities in exercising this constitutional right by assisting them to prepare and submit petitions and engage elected representatives on matters affecting their communities.

In doing so, we strengthen public participation, deepen democracy, and ensure that Government remains responsive to the people.

I must acknowledge that the success of this Constituency Office will depend on strong partnerships across Government and society.

It is only through coordinated action and shared responsibility that we can deliver meaningful and lasting change.

To this end, I have called on national departments and state entities to work closely with this office in accordance with their mandates, approved programmes, available resources, and legislative responsibilities.

I must reiterate that this is not about creating parallel structures or imposing additional responsibilities on departments. Rather, it is about ensuring that existing programmes, services and interventions reach the communities they are intended to serve.

It is about improving coordination, strengthening accountability, and bringing Government

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closer to the people. We have therefore identified several areas of cooperation:

Firstly, we encourage departments to actively participate in community outreach, awareness and information sessions. Too often, Government services and opportunities exist, but communities are unaware of them or do not know how to access them.

Through regular engagements, departments can provide citizens with information about programmes, services, funding opportunities, support mechanisms and developmental initiatives that may improve their lives.

Secondly, where appropriate and within available resources, departments are encouraged to deploy relevant officials and mobile service teams to local communities.

This will help bring Government services closer to residents, particularly those who may face financial, geographical or other barriers in accessing Government offices. Government must meet people where they are and make services more accessible and responsive.

Thirdly, departments can play an important role by providing programme information, educational material and clear referral pathways.

Communities should have access to accurate information about Government services, application processes, eligibility requirements and points of contact. It has been proven that an informed citizen is better able to access opportunities and hold Government accountable.

Fourthly, this Constituency Office will serve as an important platform for the identification, escalation and monitoring of matters that fall within the mandates of different departments.

Residents must have confidence that when they raise concerns relating to service delivery, infrastructure, social support, energy, housing, employment or any other Government function, those concerns will be directed to the appropriate department and tracked until a response is provided.

This is particularly important because one of the frustrations often expressed by communities is that concerns are raised but little feedback is received. Through stronger coordination and regular engagement, we want to ensure better communication, greater transparency and improved accountability.

Finally, we have requested departments to nominate dedicated focal persons who will serve as points of contact between their institutions and the Constituency Office.

These officials will help strengthen collaboration, facilitate information-sharing, coordinate responses, and ensure that matters raised by communities receive the necessary attention.

The nomination of focal persons will also help establish clear lines of accountability. Communities must know where to turn for assistance, and departments must have designated officials responsible for maintaining engagement and monitoring progress.

Ultimately, this initiative is about building a Government that listens, responds, and acts.

As the Deputy President, I remain committed to strengthening partnerships across Government, business, labour, civil society, and communities because the challenges we face require collective action.

Through working together, aligning our efforts, and focusing on the needs of our people, we can improve service delivery, expand economic opportunities, and

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accelerate development.

Government remains committed to building a capable, ethical, and developmental state that places citizens at the centre of governance.

Our priorities remain clear: growing the economy, creating jobs, reducing poverty, improving service delivery, and building safer communities.

I want this office to become a trusted centre of engagement and collaboration, one that is accessible, responsive, and guided by the principles of dignity, respect, and accountability.

We remain committed to creating opportunities through investment, skills development, enterprise support, and employment initiatives. We want young people to play a leading role in shaping the future of our country.

To women, youth, traditional leaders, faith-based organisations, civic formations, and community stakeholders, your contribution to social cohesion and local development remains invaluable. Your partnership will be essential to the success of this office.

Let us make this office more than a place where problems are reported.

Let it become a place where solutions are found, partnerships are strengthened, and progress is achieved.

As we launch this Constituency Office today, let us renew our shared commitment to building stronger communities, restoring public confidence, and improving the lives of our people.

I want to assure the residents of KwaMashu and Ntuzuma that this initiative reflects my commitment to a Government that is accessible, responsive, and accountable.

Development cannot be achieved from offices alone. It requires leaders who engage directly with communities, listen to their concerns, and work with urgency to deliver results.

Together, we can build safer, more inclusive, and more prosperous communities. We can expand opportunities, improve service delivery, and create a better future for current and future generations.

Ngithanda ukuphinde nginibonge nonke ngokuba lapha namhlanje, nokuzimisela kwenu ekuqinisekiseni ukuthi leli hovisi Lesifunda sePhalamende liba yimpumelelo futhi libawusizo, liphende lisebenzele imiphakathi yaKwaMashu naseNtuzuma.





ANC CONGRATULATES PRESIDENT LULA DA SILVA ON HIS HISTORIC RE-ELECTION

By **ANC SECRETARY GENERAL FIKILE MBALULA**

THE African National Congress (ANC) extends its warm congratulations to Comrade Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva on his re-election as President of Brazil for a historic fourth term. We congratulate the Workers' Party and the people of Brazil on this significant milestone, which carries renewed hope for progressive forces across the world.

President Lula's victory resonates beyond Brazil, affirming the continuing importance of solidarity, social justice and the struggle against poverty and inequality. The ANC welcomes this opportunity to deepen cooperation among progressive forces in advancing the aspirations of working people and building a more equitable international order.

South Africa and Brazil share a strong bilateral and strategic relationship anchored in South-South cooperation and multilateralism, including through BRICS, IBSA, the G77+China and the G20. President Cyril Ramaphosa's state visit to Brazil in March 2026 further strengthened the political and trade relations between our countries, providing a foundation for deeper cooperation that benefits both peoples.

The ANC reaffirms its commitment to strengthening relations with the Workers' Party and supporting closer cooperation between South Africa and Brazil. We wish Comrade Lula strength and success as he continues to serve the Brazilian people and contribute to the collective pursuit of a just and peaceful world, underpinned by solidarity, respect for sovereignty and adherence to international law.

NONTSIKILELE ALBERTINA SISULU
Leader of a Generation on Whose Shoulders We Stand

By **ANC Deputy Secretary General NOMVULA MOKONYANE**

THE generation of Nontsikilele Albertina Sisulu, or Ma Sisulu as she was affectionately known, set the vision in 1954, when women from all walks of life came together to form the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) and adopted the Women's Charter.

They fought for a South Africa that ensures:

- The development of every child through free compulsory education for all;
- The protection of mother and child through maternity homes, welfare clinics, crèches and nursery schools, in countryside and towns;
- Proper homes for all, and through the provision of water, light, transport, sanitation, and other amenities of modern civilisation.
  (Women's Charter, 1954)

These rights are in our Constitution today, and over the 32 years of freedom:

- Only 25% of five-year olds were in school in 1994, by 2022 over 90% had access to early childhood education through the introduction of Grade R and the integration of ECD as part of Basic Education aimed at improving the quality of and access to ECD for all children.



- 96% of women give birth in a health facility, and a steady decline in our maternal and infant mortality rate.
- According to Lightstone Property and Deeds Register data, women-only buyers account for roughly 2.15 million properties (38%), co-own another 1.88 million properties (33%), and outpace men-only owners (1.69 million properties or 29%).
- Access to water, electricity, sanitation, internet have drastically increased since 1994.

Building on the legacy of Ma Albertina Sisulu and decades of women struggles, South Africa has since the advent of democracy in 1994 made important gains towards women's empowerment gender equality.

Women have played a leading role in the driving the country's development and realizing the constitutional vision of a non-sexist and prosperous democracy.

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Women's empowerment not only empowers women

Women's empowerment propels the country's growth and development and the advancement of the citizenry as a whole.

Evidence comparing the 1996 and 2022 Census data shows that women have made significant progress in many areas such as leadership and political representation, education, employment and life expectancy. However, major challenges remain in areas such as gender-based violence and femicide, harmful norms and practices and economic inclusion.

Women's political participation

Women have made great strides in political representation, compared to the pre-1994 apartheid government, which was overwhelmingly dominated by white men. South Africa ranks eighth globally in achieving gender parity in parliament.

According to a CGE report on the 2024 elections, women's representation in parliament increased from 27% in 1994 to 46% in 2019. This was largely due to the gender quotes of the ANC and the EFF. However, 2024 saw this drop to 43%, as other parties increased their representation. However, the percentage of women in the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) more than doubled from 21% in 2019 to 44% in 2024.

Women have occupied the top leadership positions in parliament. The Speaker and Deputy Speaker and the Chair of the NCOP in 2024 are women.

In 2024, the ANC allocated 53% of its National Assembly seats to women, with the EFF allocating 54% and the PA 67%. Parties allocating around one third of their seats to women included the DA (32%), IFP (29%) and MKP (34%).



Women's representation in the national cabinet increased from 8% in 1994 to 50% in 2019. However, this dropped to 40% under the GNU cabinet in 2024, as some of the parties to the GNU lacked a commitment to gender parity. The DA appointed only one female minister out of six ministers (17%).

The Commission on Gender Equality report showed that the ANC had made notable strides in its 2024 candidate lists at national and provincial levels (p33), with women exceeding men on both lists. This demonstrated in practice the ANC's dedication to surpassing its own gender equality goals.

In terms of registered voters, in 2024, 55,2% were women and 44,8% were women.

For the 2026 Local Government Election, the percentages were similar, with 55,27% of registered voters being women and 44.73% being men.

Opening the doors of learning

Women in South Africa are more educated than ever before, with universal access to free basic education. Key achievements across the education system are as follows:

- The percentage of women who completed matric more than doubled, from 15,8% in 1996 to 36,9% in 2022 while those who completed a post-matric qualification doubled from 6,4% to 12,8%.
- The percentage of women with no formal schooling decreased from 20,9% to 7,6%.
- Women's performance in completing a Bachelor's degree outstripped males, according to Census 2022.
- Women continue to dominate in fields such as Psychology, Education and Communication and Journalism, with gains in Business, Economic and Management Sciences, Law and Agriculture.

Work and Sustainable livelihoods

The overall employment of women has grown from 5.5 million in 2001 to 6.8 million in 2022, despite an increase in the unemployment rate. The proportion

of women (aged 15 to 64 years) employed in the formal non-agricultural sector grew from 50,7% in 2001 to 69,0% in 2022.

Women have increasingly moved beyond traditional roles into professional, financial and technical sectors. There was an expansion in the number of women employed in the following sectors: community and social services (including education, health and public services), finance, construction and utilities. Over the same period, the number of women employed in private households, manufacturing and trade declined.

However, there are still significant races and gender disparities, with males representing 54.3% of the Economically Active Population (EAP) and females at 45.7%. Top management is still overwhelmingly dominated by males at 70,7% with females at 29,3%. Representation of females is higher in government compared to the private sector. At senior management level, 61,4% are males compared to 38,6% females.

Women workers

Since 1994, the ANC government introduced a range of new labour laws to restore the rights of workers, including women workers. These included the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, the Labour Relations Act and the Employment Equity Act. Women workers for the first time benefitted from unemployment insurance, decent maternity leave and occupational health and safety standards.

Women's living arrangements

More women are heading households. The percentage of female-headed households shifted from 37,8% in 1996 to 49,5% in 2022.

Social Wage

In addition to the achievements outlined above, women have been major beneficiaries of the social wage interventions introduced by the ANC government. These include:

- The social grant system, including through the Child Support Grant, which benefits over 13 million people, and grants such as the Older Persons Grant.
- Free primary health care for pregnant women and children under six.
- Free access to primary health care clinics.
- Free basic education (no-fee schools), school nutrition and scholar transport support.
- Subsidised ECD and Grade R support
- Housing opportunities and subsidies, including RDP houses.
- Subsidised transport.
- Free basic services for the indigent at municipal level.
- Public employment programmes, including EPWP, CWP etc.

We indeed stand on the shoulders of giants like Ma Albertina Sisulu and others.



A BETTER LIFE FOR ALL VOTE ANC

OR TAMBO
109TH ANNIVERSARY



Oliver Tambo Memorial Lecture

Keynote Address by **Maropene Ramokgopa**
ANC Second Deputy Secretary General

27 October 2026

TODAY, we remember Oliver Tambo and reflect on our collective responsibility.

We are here in Wattville to **commemorate Oliver Reginald Tambo, a leader whose life remains central to our liberation struggle and the building of a democratic South Africa.**

Tambo led the African National Congress (ANC) through one of its most difficult periods. The organisation was banned, its leaders imprisoned or forced into exile, and the apartheid state set out to destroy it. Yet the ANC survived, built an international presence, strengthened its alliances, and kept organising for a democratic South Africa. That outcome required leadership that understood the relationship between conviction and strategy, and between organisational discipline and collective purpose.

More than three decades into democracy, Tambo's life puts three questions to us:

- What does it mean to lead an organisation through uncertainty?
- How do we hold on to our founding principles while responding to changed conditions?
- How do we ensure that the institutions built through the struggle continue to serve the people in whose name freedom was won?

The most fitting tribute to Oliver Tambo is to understand how he led, what his leadership demanded of those around him and what his example requires of us now.

Today we remember the making of a disciplined and strategic Leader.

Oliver Reginald Kaizana Tambo was born on 27 October 1917 in Nkantolo, near Bizana. He grew up under colonial rule, in a society where race determined access to education, political participation and economic opportunity.

He trained as a teacher, and the profession shaped him. It demanded patience, clarity of thought, discipline and the ability to explain ideas to others. These qualities defined his leadership of the ANC in often uncertain and dangerous circumstances.

Tambo belonged to a generation that wanted a more assertive movement. With Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and others, he helped establish the ANC Youth League in 1944. The 1949 Programme of Action shifted the ANC

toward strikes, boycotts, and civil disobedience, and the 1952 Defiance Campaign showed what organised mass action against unjust laws could achieve. The lesson of these years was that a struggle does not advance through declarations. It needs structures that reach communities, carry demands and sustain action beyond a single event.

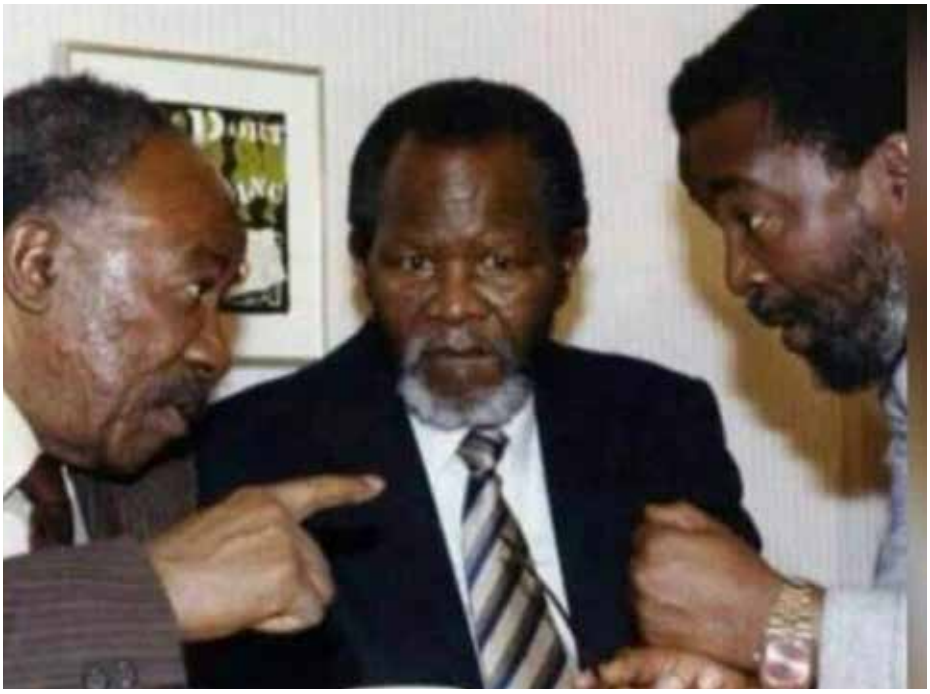
It is worth remembering that this generation came into its own as young people. The Youth League was not a junior wing waiting for permission to lead. It changed the movement's direction. That history should shape how we regard young people today, especially young women.

Sustaining the movement in exile was not easy.

The ANC's banning in 1960 changed the conditions of struggle. The organisation could no longer operate openly inside South Africa. That year, Oliver Tambo left the country to build the ANC's external mission.

The ANC in exile had to maintain its legitimacy, build diplomatic relations, secure resources, care for its members, and stay connected to the struggle at home, all while holding together across distance and disagreements over strategy. Tambo worked across countries, political traditions and competing interests. He persuaded governments and international bodies that South Africa's liberation was also their concern. He built relationships with African states emerging from colonial rule and with progressive movements worldwide.

He understood that solidarity could not be taken for granted. It had to be organised through consistent diplomacy and the ability to explain the South African struggle in ways that won support without compromising the movement's objectives. The external mission was one of several pillars, alongside mass mobilisation, underground organisation and armed struggle, and Tambo's task was to keep them all serving the same political purpose.



Nor did he lead alone.

Activists inside the country, underground operatives, combatants, political prisoners, workers, young people, international partners, and the many women whose organising, care, and sacrifice held families and structures together, often without recognition, collectively ensured the ANC's survival.

Tambo's contribution was to bring these efforts together under a common project.

Exile also taught the movement that survival requires adaptation. The methods used before 1960 could not simply be carried over. New structures had to be built. The discipline lay in changing the methods of struggle while remaining faithful to its purpose. Our circumstances today are fundamentally different, and we must not equate our challenges with the repression of apartheid. But the principle holds: methods that served us in one period cannot be assumed to be sufficient in the next.

Comrades, **Morogoro and the discipline of collective renewal must be part of our fibre**.

By the late 1960s, the ANC faced hard questions about its strategy, its organisation and the direction of the struggle. The 1969 Morogoro Conference was where the movement confronted them. It examined the relationship between political organisation and armed struggle, opened the way for broader participation in the movement and adopted a revised Strategy and Tactics document. Its discussions were not without disagreement. They required engagement, negotiation and difficult choices.

Tambo's call to close ranks must be understood in this light. Unity was necessary because the struggle required coordinated action. But unity was not the absence of disagreement. It was the discipline to debate honestly, decide collectively and then carry out what had been decided, placing the collective purpose above individual interests.

This is a lesson we need. When an organisation is in difficulty, it is tempting to treat criticism as a threat to cohesion. But suppressing difficult questions does not resolve the problems behind them. Equally, disagreement that becomes an end in itself consumes the energy needed for collective work.

Morogoro also teaches us what renewal is. Reflection must lead to decisions, decisions to action, and action must be assessed against the objectives that were set. A conference or a resolution means little if it does not change how an organisation works. The measure of renewal is not how often we announce our intention to change. It is whether that intention shows in our conduct and our structures.

The 1970s and 1980s were about staying connected to the people.

The 1976 Soweto uprising marked a turning point. Led by students who refused the imposition of Afrikaans and the wider injustice of apartheid education, it revealed the depth of opposition among a new generation. The state's brutality drew many young South Africans into the struggle, including those who left the country to join the movement.

For Tambo, this confirmed that the external mission could never substitute for the courage and agency of people confronting apartheid at home. The international campaign carried weight precisely because South Africans kept showing that apartheid could not command their consent. In the 1980s, community organisations, students, trade unions, civics, women's organisations and churches broadened that resistance, and the United Democratic Front, launched in 1983, gave it national expression.

The lesson is that a liberation movement draws its strength from its connection to the people in whose name it acts. That connection is not inherited. Each generation must earn it again by showing why the organisation matters to the problems people face in their own time. Tambo's generation did this by adapting to new realities while holding to the goal of a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa. That is the difference between honouring a legacy and merely celebrating it.

The democratic breakthrough of 1994 was a historic victory. But it also changed the task. The movement that had organised resistance now had to build a state capable of undoing the inequalities of colonialism and apartheid: transforming institutions, making policy, allocating resources and answering for the results.



The struggle's values remained essential, but they now had to be expressed through the practical work of governing. Political commitment had to match administrative capacity. Promises had to become programmes, programmes had to be funded and implemented, and people judged implementation by what changed in their lives.

The challenges remain substantial. Poverty, unemployment and inequality still constrain millions of lives. Access to reliable services is uneven. Young people struggle to find work, small businesses struggle to grow, and apartheid's spatial patterns still shape who has access to opportunity. These burdens do not fall evenly. When water is unreliable, when clinics are far, when transport is unsafe or unaffordable, it is very often women, and young Black women in particular, who absorb the cost through unpaid labour, lost income and lost time. Any honest assessment of government performance must account for this.

Governing is therefore inseparable from accountability. Democracy gives citizens the right to choose their leaders and demand explanations when services fail or commitments go unmet.

Governing well is not separate from the struggle for a better society. It is how that struggle continues.

Comrades, **organisational renewal is about diagnosis, discipline and accountability**.

The 2024 national election clearly signalled a changed political environment. The ANC's national vote fell from just over 10 million in 2019 to about 6.5 million, and the party lost its parliamentary majority for the first time since



1994. This is not only an electoral setback. It reflects people's experience of government, the condition of our structures and the changing nature of political competition.

We need to understand, on evidence rather than assumption, why some of our supporters have turned to other parties and why others have stopped voting altogether. The ANC's Diagnostic Report and the 2025 National General Council Base Document give us a basis for that work. But diagnosis is only the beginning. Its value lies in the corrective action that follows, in five areas:

First, branches. A branch is functional not because it has members and holds meetings, but because it does meaningful political work: it knows the conditions in its ward, engages residents and follows through on the issues they raise. Regional, provincial and national structures exist to support that work, monitor it and intervene where it is weak.

Second, public representatives. Councillors must be accessible and must report honestly on what has been achieved, what remains outstanding and what is being done about it. Where they need support, the organisation must provide it. Where they neglect their responsibilities, corrective action must follow.

Third, ethics. Corruption, abuse of public resources, patronage, and manipulation of internal processes destroy the movement's credibility. Accountability must apply regardless of position or influence.

Fourth, political education and our relationships with society. We need members who understand our history and policies and can explain them to the people. And we must rebuild relationships with workers, young people, women, faith communities, traditional leaders, professionals and persons with disabilities through continuous engagement, not appeals for support at election time.

Fifth, measurement. Every commitment should carry indicators, responsibilities and timelines, and be assessed regularly. Monitoring and evaluation is not an administrative exercise detached from politics. It distinguishes activity from results. The test of renewal is simple: whether our communities will feel the difference.

CURRENT AFFAIRS

The 2026 Manifesto is about turning commitments into action.

The ANC's 2026 Local Government Elections Manifesto must be treated as a programme of action, not a list of promises. It must guide the work of public representatives and structures before, during and after the elections. It is organised around six action areas:

1. ***Reliable Basic Services as a Right***. Improve the reliability and quality of services and fix the infrastructure failures that affect households and businesses.
2. ***A Funding Model that Matches the Mandate***. Ensure municipalities have the resources and capacity to fulfil their responsibilities.
3. ***Stable, Accountable and Ethical Governance***. Strengthen municipal institutions through capable leadership, ethical conduct and financial discipline.
4. ***Effective Support, Interventions and Integrated Planning***. Support municipalities with persistent weaknesses and coordinate planning across spheres of government.
5. ***Local Economic Development, Jobs and Inclusion***. Create the conditions for local businesses to grow and for more people to participate in the economy.
6. ***Reconnecting with Communities and Communicating Delivery***. Engage communities consistently, report on progress and respond to concerns.

The **First 100 Days programme** presented in our 2026 Manifesto is the starting point. It includes



community imbizos to set local priorities; State of the Municipality reports; Integrated Development Plan reviews linked to budgets; updated indigent registers so that qualifying households receive support; Community Safety Forums; engagement between mayors and traditional authorities; the publication of Umhlaba Wethu: The People's Property Register; and Councillor Public Performance Agreements, tracked through a 100-day scorecard.

None of this should be treated as a checklist. An imbizo matters when we follow up on what residents raise. An IDP review matters when the budget reflects community priorities. A performance agreement matters when we use it to assess performance and correct it.

We must also be honest about how we respond to criticism in a fast-moving information environment. Misinformation is real, and we must counter it. But not every criticism is propaganda. Much of it reflects experiences that communities can verify for themselves. Communication cannot replace performance. The best response to criticism about failing services is to fix the problem and report what you have done.

Local government is where the promise of democracy is felt most directly, through water, electricity, sanitation, refuse removal, roads, and the conduct of councillors. Communities do not judge government by the plans it announces. They judge it by what happens in their streets.

As we head to the 2026 Local Government Elections in a few day's time, the ANC must not approach these elections as though its history guarantees support.

Every vote is a decision by a citizen who expects leadership to make a real difference to their community. Our case must rest on a credible commitment to make municipalities work, and we must make it with confidence and with humility, acknowledging where we have fallen short and showing how we will correct it.

Campaigning cannot be reduced to posters, rallies and last-minute visits. Our candidates must know the realities of their wards, understand how municipal government works, and take seriously the commitments they make. Their election must be followed by ongoing development, including political education, so they enter council clear on the standards expected of them.

On 4 November 2026, South Africans will make their choice. The mandate we seek carries

obligations that extend well beyond election day, and we will be judged by what we do after the campaign ends.

As I conclude, **let us carry OR Tambo's Legacy into the work before us**.

Oliver Tambo gave his life for South Africa's freedom. He held the ANC together through banning and exile, built solidarity across the world and kept the movement's direction steady through its hardest years, as part of a collective struggle carried by generations of South Africans.

We honour him by accepting that history is a foundation, not an exemption from accountability. We must defend the freedom won in 1994 through active participation, uphold the Constitution, and strengthen democratic institutions. That work cannot be left to a handful of leaders. It belongs to members, public representatives and communities, each accountable within their own sphere.

Comrades, our democratic gains are under threat on numerous locally and globally. Let us channel the spirit of OR Tambo's leadership which helped to keep our movement together in its most trying period, and kept alive our commitment to fight for our freedom.

In this regard, let us continue building an organisation that listens to the people, leaders who are accountable to the people and institutions that serve the people. And let us ensure that the next generation, especially the young women who carry so much of the weight of our communities, inherits not only the history of the liberation struggle but a democracy that improves their lives.

As we prepare for the elections on 4 November, let us go out to our communities, engage our people, explain the ANC's programme and make the case for an ANC that listens, learns and delivers.

Let us encourage our families, neighbours and friends to participate and to vote for the ANC.

The most fitting tribute to Oliver Reginald Tambo is not to claim that we have fulfilled his vision.

It is to show, through our actions, that we accept the responsibilities that vision places before us.

Amandla!



OR TAMBO
109TH ANNIVERSARY

The ANC Veterans League recalls the legacy of Comrade President OR Tambo on the anniversary of his 109th birthday

By **SNUKI ZIKALALA, ANC Veterans League President**

AS we commemorate the birth of Isithwalandwe-Seaparankwe Comrade Oliver Reginald Kaizana Tambo, we honour a revolutionary whose life embodied sacrifice, humility, integrity and an unwavering commitment to the freedom and dignity of all South Africans.

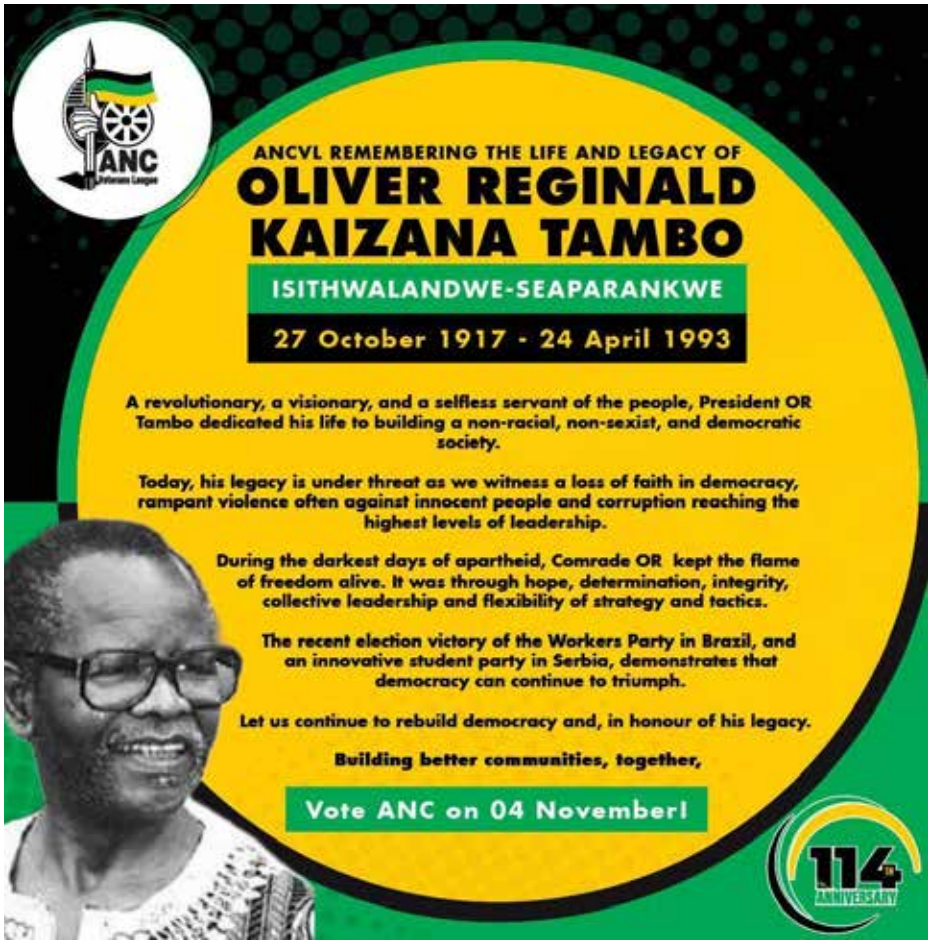
Cde President Tambo sustained the movement through the darkest days of exile and oppression. He was forced to make the hardest of decisions and respond to the most difficult of circumstances.

Faced with low morale, internal dissent, and military setbacks, he convened the Morogoro ANC Conference in secret and pulled the ANC from the brink of collapse. offered to resign. When a negotiated solution became possible in the late 1980's, at the expense of his own health, he crisscrossed the world to win support for a document that would form a blueprint for negotiations for a democratic South Africa – The Consensus Resolution.

This is the mark of a true leader and shows what is possible when leadership prioritises the will of the people and trusts them.

In the face of the rise of authoritarian and right-wing governments, irresponsible and uncaring presidents like Donald Trump and the genocidal actions of Netanyahu and his cohorts, one may believe that trusting in the will of the people has been in vain.

Yet, on Sunday 25th October, Brazilian President Luiz Inácio



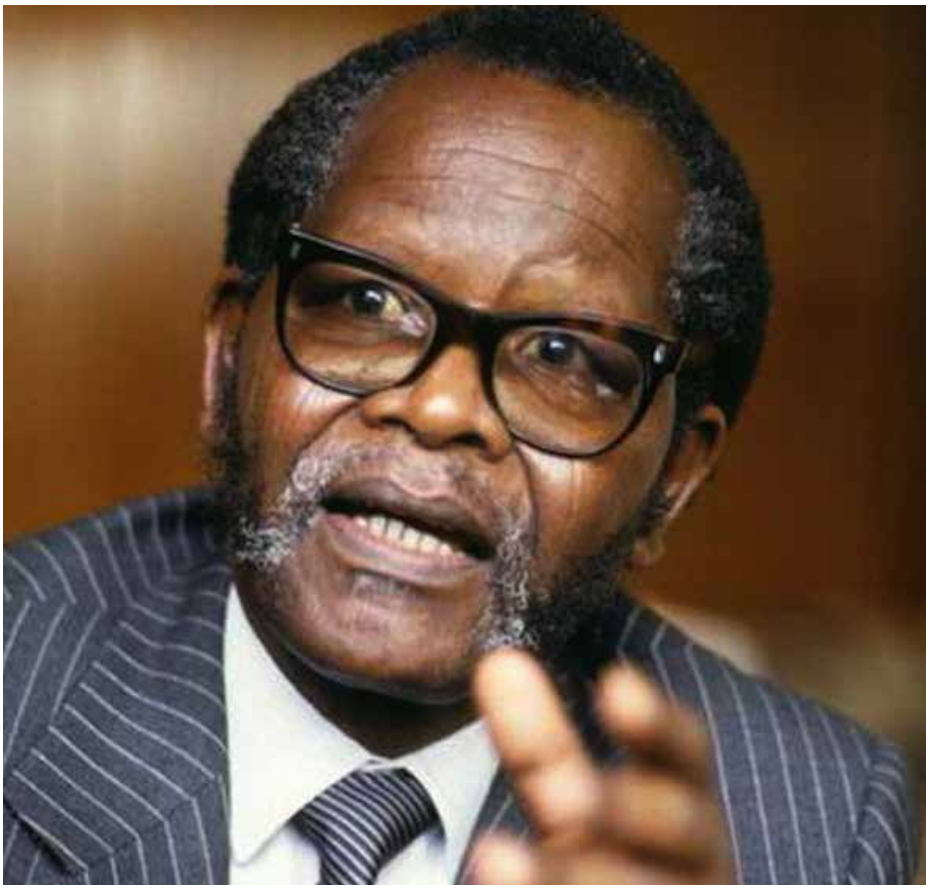
CURRENT AFFAIRS

Lula da Silva won an unprecedented fourth term by as many as four million votes, against precedent and global anti-incumbent sentiment, to put the brakes on a wave of right-wing election victories across Latin America.

On the same day, a student-led movement defeated Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić in a snap parliamentary election, ending his 14-year grip on power. And this with a voter turnout of 70%! Young people and students are asserting their agency and power in France, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Madagascar and other places with increased vigour.

With Israel going to the polls tomorrow and the United States' midterms next week, let's hope that the tide against exploitation, extraction, violence and wanton disrespect for the lives of those who are 'other' – migrants, Palestinians, black people, LGBTIQ+ – will turn.

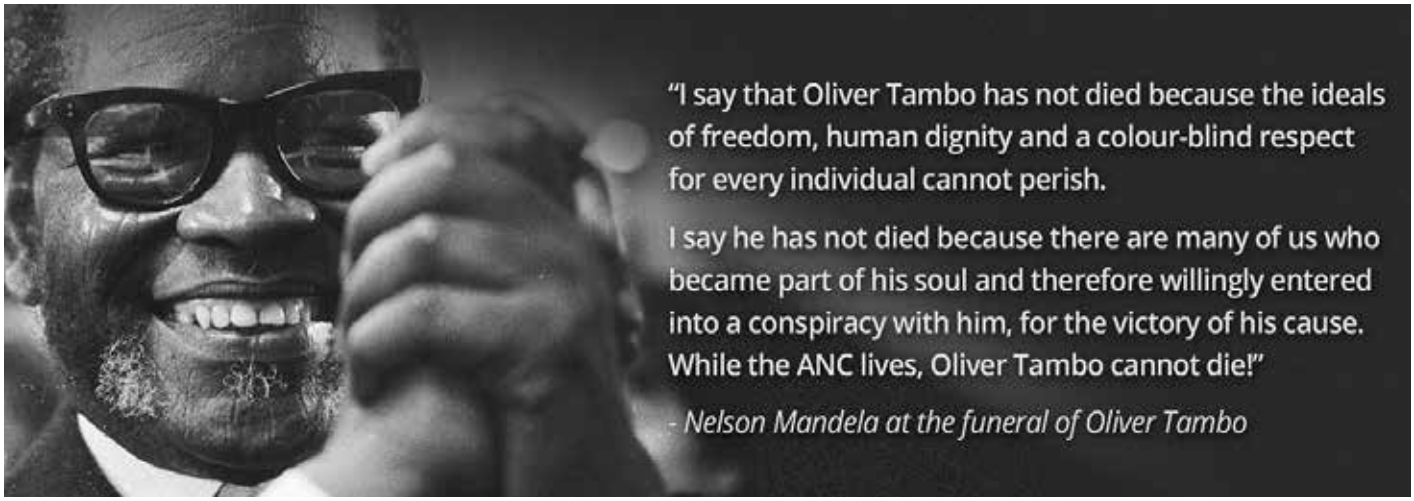
We face a similar challenge in South Africa. Will the local government elections next week reaffirm or betray Cde President Tambo's legacy and faith in the will of the people?



A vote for the ANC should not be a vote for the ANC's liberation legacy, but for effective governance for a better life. Thirty-two years into our democracy, we have made significant strides, but poverty, unemployment, inequality and social exclusion continue to undermine what freedom promised.

As a result, many people are turning to parties that offer quick solutions to the complex challenges we face. Others turn away from voting and a belief in government; some even call for a change in our Constitution. And others look for scapegoats in migrants.

The ANC is the political party most committed to the constitutional principles that Cde President Tambo introduced and to preserving democratic processes and practices.



OR TAMBO
109TH ANNIVERSARY

OR Tambo and the Making of a Revolutionary Cadre

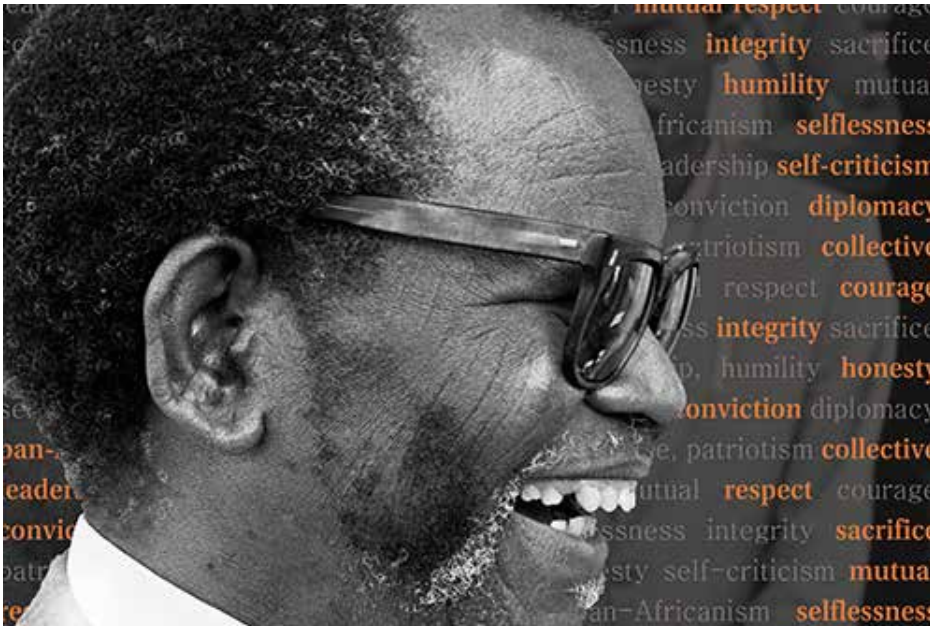
The renewal of the ANC depends on developing cadres who combine ideological clarity, revolutionary morality and governing competence in the service of fundamental social transformation.

By **SASABONA MANGANYE**

OLIVER Reginald Tambo's enduring contribution to South Africa's liberation struggle lies not only in his leadership of the African National Congress (ANC) during some of its most difficult years, but also in the political values and organisational traditions he helped sustain.

Tambo understood that a liberation movement requires more than popular support and the determination to defeat an oppressive system. It needs politically conscious cadres who understand the historical purpose of the struggle, possess the discipline to work collectively and place the aspirations of the people above personal ambition.

His leadership through decades of repression and exile demonstrated the importance of ideological conviction, collective responsibility and international solidarity. He helped preserve the ANC as a political organisation committed to a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa.



For the ANC today, his legacy raises a fundamental question: what kind of revolutionary cadre does the National Democratic Revolution require in a constitutional democracy?

The answer must go beyond commemorating OR Tambo's life. It requires examining how his political values should inform cadre development, organisational renewal and the exercise of public power.

Beyond membership: the making of a cadre

A revolutionary cadre is not simply an ANC member, an elected representative or an office-bearer. Cadre development is a process through which political

consciousness, ideological understanding, ethical discipline and practical competence are cultivated in the service of collective transformation.

This conception draws from the ANC's history of mass mobilisation and national liberation, as well as the broader traditions of working-class organisation and Marxist political school of thought. It recognises that political consciousness develops through study, debate, collective action and engagement with the material conditions of society.

Tambo's experience as a teacher, lawyer and political organiser reflected the importance of connecting intellectual development with practical struggle. His leadership demonstrated that political conviction must be accompanied by the capacity to analyse circumstances, build alliances and make strategic decisions.

This remains an important distinction for the contemporary movement. Political ambition is not the same as ideological maturity, and occupying a position does not automatically confer the qualities required of a cadre.

The making of a revolutionary cadre demands continuous learning, critical reflection and a willingness to subordinate individual interests to a shared political purpose.

The National Democratic Revolution and its unfinished tasks

The National Democratic Revolution (NDR) provides the strategic framework through which the ANC seeks to overcome the historical consequences of colonialism and apartheid and build a democratic society characterised by equality, dignity and shared prosperity.

The Freedom Charter remains central to this vision. Its principles that the people shall govern and that the wealth of the country shall be shared among its people establish a democratic and socioeconomic purpose that extends beyond the transfer of political office.

Political democracy creates the opportunity for transformation; it does not automatically deliver it. The concentration of wealth, persistent unemployment, poverty and unequal access to economic opportunities demonstrate the continuing challenges of restructuring South African society.

For cadres, ideological clarity means understanding these conditions and helping develop practical responses to them. It requires an appreciation of how race, class and gender continue to shape access to land, employment, education, wealth and economic power.

The ANC's historical alliance with the working class and its relationship with the South African Communist Party and the Congress of South African Trade Unions reflect the importance of connecting national liberation with broader struggles for social and economic transformation.

These relationships must be understood through their political purposes, not treated as ends in themselves. The central question is whether the movement's policies and organisational practices advance the interests of workers, the poor and historically marginalised communities.

The NDR cannot be reduced to the presence of ANC members in government. Its success must be measured by the extent to which democratic power transforms people's material circumstances and expands their ability to participate in society.

Tambo's lesson: collective leadership and organisational integrity

Tambo led the ANC through a period in which sustaining the movement required considerable political judgement, organisational discipline and the ability to build solidarity across national boundaries.



His experience illustrates that unity is essential to a liberation movement, but unity must be built around a shared purpose and legitimate collective processes. It cannot depend exclusively on personal loyalty or the suppression of disagreement.

For the ANC, this distinction is particularly important amid the challenges of factional competition and organisational renewal.

Collective leadership requires members to participate in debate, respect established procedures and implement democratically adopted decisions. It also requires leaders to accept scrutiny and recognise that no individual is indispensable to the movement.

Organisational discipline must strengthen collective action rather than shield office-bearers from accountability. Similarly, internal debate must enable the organisation to correct mistakes, not become an excuse for destructive factionalism.

The principle of unity is most sustainable when members trust the fairness of internal processes and believe that organisational decisions are directed towards the interests of the people.

Tambo's legacy challenges the ANC to build an organisation in which political authority is exercised collectively, leadership positions remain accountable and the movement's strategic direction is not subordinated to individual ambitions.



Revolutionary morality and the exercise of power

The transition from liberation movement to governing party introduced new responsibilities. The ANC must now translate its political programme into effective administration, economic transformation and improved public services.

This requires cadres who combine ideological commitment with technical competence and ethical conduct.

Revolutionary morality is central to that responsibility. Honesty, humility, sacrifice, discipline and respect for public resources are not merely personal virtues; they are conditions for exercising political power in the public interest.

Corruption and patronage undermine the objectives of the NDR because they divert resources and opportunities from their intended beneficiaries. When procurement is manipulated or public appointments are determined by private loyalty rather than lawful and objective criteria, the capacity of institutions to serve communities is weakened.

The consequences are material. Resources that should support infrastructure, schools, clinics, housing and local economic development may be lost, while already disadvantaged communities bear the cost.

Not every administrative failure is evidence of corruption. Poor planning, limited capacity and inadequate oversight also require attention. Allegations must be investigated fairly, and established wrongdoing must attract appropriate consequences regardless of political standing.

The constitutional principles governing public administration, par-



ticularly section 195, reinforce the requirements of professional ethics, accountability, transparency and the efficient use of public resources.

For elected representatives, these principles demand responsiveness to communities and measurable performance. For public servants, they require professionalism and impartiality. For party office-bearers, they require respect for organisational resources, democratic procedures and collective decisions.

Deployment into public institutions must be understood as a responsibility to advance the democratic mandate, not as a reward for political loyalty. The relevant test is whether those entrusted with authority possess the integrity and competence to fulfil their responsibilities.

Political education must prepare cadres to govern

The ANC's tradition of political education must remain central to its renewal. However, political education must develop more than familiarity with the movement's history, terminology and resolutions.

It must equip cadres to understand the Freedom Charter, the NDR, the relationship between race and class, the role of the working class and the practical challenges of transforming the economy.

It must also develop the skills required for contemporary leadership: policy analysis, public administration, financial oversight, community engagement and institutional management.

Ideological clarity without governing competence can result in ambitious programmes that institutions are unable to implement. Technical competence without ethical discipline can expose those same institutions to abuse. The two must be developed together.

The OR Tambo School of Leadership represents an institutional expression of the ANC's commitment to political education. The broader challenge is to ensure that learning extends into branch activities, policy debates, community campaigns and the evaluation of public representatives.

Cadres must be encouraged to question assumptions, assess outcomes and correct mistakes. Political education should develop independent analytical capacity within a collective framework, rather than produce the mechanical repetition of established formulations.

A movement that ceases to educate its cadres risks losing its ability to interpret changing social conditions and lead meaningful transformation.

Democratic renewal must restore the relationship with the people

The quality of a revolutionary movement is ultimately reflected in its relationship with the communities it claims to represent.

Tambo's leadership depended on the understanding that liberation could not be achieved by a small group of individuals acting alone. It required organised participation, collective sacrifice and solidarity.

That lesson remains relevant in democratic South Africa.

Branches must function as centres of political discussion, community engagement and account-

ability, rather than becoming active principally during internal elections. Public representatives must explain their decisions, report on their performance and respond to legitimate community concerns.

This is especially important where residents continue to experience inadequate services, unemployment and limited economic opportunities. Political freedom must be accompanied by sustained efforts to improve material conditions and make democratic institutions more responsive.

Such transformation requires more than ethical leadership. It demands coherent economic policies, capable institutions, effective public investment and the deliberate expansion of economic opportunities.

But without accountability and public trust, even well-designed policies can fail. Democratic renewal must therefore address both the competence of leadership and the organisational practices that allow patronage, factionalism and misconduct to persist.

Renewal is not simply the replacement of one group of leaders by another. It is the development of an organisational culture in which ideological purpose, ethical conduct and measurable public service reinforce one another.

Reclaiming the revolutionary cadre

OR Tambo's legacy should challenge the ANC to examine the quality of its cadre development and the consistency between its stated principles and its actual conduct.

A revolutionary cadre must understand that the NDR is a collective project of social transformation, not a route to personal advancement. Such a cadre must combine political consciousness with competence, organisational discipline with democratic participation, and ideological conviction with ethical responsibility.

The movement must develop leaders capable of analysing society, managing institutions and advancing policies that improve people's lives. It must also ensure that public authority remains subject to scrutiny and that organisational loyalty never becomes an excuse for wrongdoing.

The historical sacrifices of the liberation struggle cannot serve as a permanent claim to legitimacy. Every generation must earn the confidence of the people through its own contribution to democratic development.

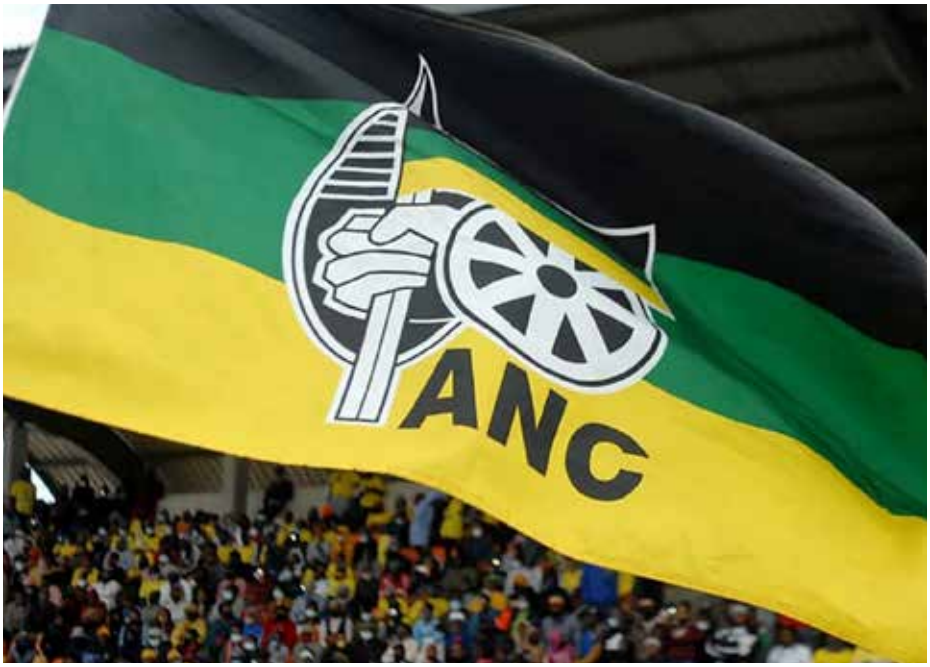
For today's cadres, that means treating public resources as a collective trust, organisational positions as temporary responsibilities and political power as an instrument for advancing human dignity and equality.

Tambo's legacy is therefore more than a memory to be celebrated. It is a standard against which the ANC must assess its political education, organisational integrity and performance in government.

The making of a revolutionary cadre is ultimately the development of a person capable of connecting ideological conviction with practical service, individual discipline with collective purpose, and political power with social transformation.

The ANC does not honour OR Tambo merely by remembering the sacrifices he made. It honours him by developing cadres who understand the purpose of the struggle, embody its values and possess the competence to advance its unfinished tasks.

The revolution requires more than people who speak in its name. It requires cadres who understand its purpose, practise its principles and remain accountable to the people in whose interests it is waged.



OR TAMBO
109TH ANNIVERSARY

Tambo kept the Alliance together. Who will keep it together now?

By **BUTI MANAMELA**

WE have a comfortable way of remembering Oliver Tambo. We recount his life, list his achievements and conclude that the present would be less troubled if he were still with us. Then we recruit him to settle arguments he never encountered.



His legacy deserves a harder question. For three decades in exile, Tambo's most demanding work was not diplomacy, though he was a formidable diplomat. It was holding together a movement of African nationalists, communists, trade unionists, the Indian and coloured congresses and white democrats, scattered across continents, under military pressure and divided by real disagreement. That movement did not hold because its members agreed. It held because its leadership kept building the terms on which they could disagree and still act together.

Within days, South Africans vote in local government elections in which that inheritance is under more strain than at any time since 1990. The question his memory puts to us is not who will win. It is who does the work of holding the progressive movement together once the counting is done.

Tambo's method is clearest at the points where the movement nearly broke.

By 1969, military setbacks, frustration with the leadership in exile and arguments about who could belong to the movement had produced a serious crisis. The memorandum associated with Chris Hani and fellow cadres put the leadership on notice. Tambo did not answer with appeals to loyalty. He called the consultative conference at Morogoro and demanded preparation, analysis and criticism capable of changing the organisation. Morogoro opened ANC membership in exile to people of all races and created a non-racial Revolutionary Council, while keeping the NEC restricted to Africans. These were real changes and negotiated limits. Unity was produced by decisions about membership, authority and strategy, not by affection for the organisation.

Kabwe in 1985 carried that logic further. It removed the racial restriction on the NEC and adopted a code of conduct intended

to regulate discipline. It also met against the background of detentions and abuses in the camps, which the Truth and Reconciliation Commission later found to be grave violations. That record belongs in any honest account, because it teaches something the Alliance needs now: the integrity of leaders cannot substitute for institutions that restrain power and give members a way to be heard without being treated as enemies.

Both conferences carry the same lesson. Alliances survive when the partners renegotiate the terms of the relationship openly, before resentment hardens into exit.

Measured against that, the present is sobering. The SACP is contesting local elections in its own name for the first time, while insisting that it remains within the Alliance and will no longer accept the role of junior partner. The ANC opposed the decision, has acknowledged that it could not prevent it, and has required members who belong to both organisations to campaign for ANC candidates. COSATU's national congress this month resolved to support both.

These positions do not say the same thing, and pretending otherwise helps nobody. Nor can the dispute be reduced to personalities. It concerns representation, the record of local government, the weight each partner carries in decisions, and whether the Alliance still has a programme or only a history.

The wider picture is worse. Beyond the Alliance, forces that describe themselves as progressive have broken into ever-smaller parties, each claiming



the mantle of the working class, the poor or the liberation tradition, and each too small to govern anything. Those who benefited most from apartheid's distribution of land, capital and opportunity have never needed a single party. Their interests are organised through business associations, professional bodies and a shared understanding of what must not change. They can afford to disagree about parties because they agree about property. The forces of transformation, meanwhile, increasingly agree about little except the right to stand separately.

The ballot shows it. Of 732 registered parties, 546 are contesting these elections. More than 142,000 candidates have been nominated for 10,526 council seats, roughly 43% more than in 2021. Johannesburg's ballot carries 75 parties and Tshwane's 70, and the IEC has had to design double-column ballot papers to fit them.

Nobody should question the right of any citizen or organisation to stand. That right is part of what was won. But an argument must be made about what democracy means when exercising that right becomes the main form of politics. If every disagreement becomes a party and every ambition a candidacy, the voter is offered abundance and denied a meaningful choice. The decisions that matter move from the ballot to the coalition negotiations afterwards, conducted by parties whose bargaining power bears little relation to their mandate. Councils become unstable, budgets go unpassed, and services suffer most where they are needed most.

Turnout in the 2021 local elections fell to 45% of registered voters. Fragmentation does not explain all of that. But a politics that multiplies choices while weakening government gives citizens little reason to believe their vote changes anything. Democracy requires the freedom to stand apart. It also requires the discipline to build majorities that can govern and be held to account. The liberation movement understood both. It is the second we are in danger of forgetting.

Whatever the results on 4 November, the work begins the next

day, and some of it should not wait.

The Alliance partners should meet promptly, at the highest level, to read the results together and honestly rather than each explaining them to its own members. If the SACP has drawn support, the ANC must ask why. If it has not, the SACP must ask the same question. Both answers concern the Alliance as a whole.
In councils where no party holds a majority, the partners should agree at the outset that they will not be traded against one another. A council in which Alliance partners vote with opponents of transformation to defeat each other would confirm every argument for fragmentation.

The Alliance also needs a written local government programme with named responsibilities: water and sanitation, electricity, refuse removal, municipal finances, the capacity of officials, local employment and procurement. Each partner should know what it has agreed to, who will implement it, and how progress will be reported to members and communities.

The rules of the relationship must then be settled through the structures of each organisation, not through campaign-season directives. That includes how the partners consult on deployment, how they treat members who belong to more than one organisation, and how disagreements are raised before they become public ruptures. The Alliance has met often. It has rarely had a standing mechanism for resolving disputes and checking implementation. It needs one.

Finally, the conversation must reach beyond the four formal partners to the civic organisations, unions and smaller formations that share the commitment to the National Democratic Revolution but have drifted away from the progressive forces. The aim should be agreement on a programme, not absorption into a party.

None of this will happen through appeals to history. Tambo cannot cast a deciding vote, and we should stop borrowing his authority for conclusions we must defend ourselves. What we can take from him is a practice: identify the material basis of a disagreement, establish what remains shared, decide openly, and build institutions that keep the decision honest.

He held a movement together under conditions far harsher than ours, without the resources of a state and while comrades were dying. We have fewer excuses. If progressive forces emerge from these elections more divided and less able to govern, it will not be because the people chose fragmentation. It will be because those who claim to lead them did not do the work.



Political Polling and Manufactured Objectivity: HOW THE DA'S POLITICAL STRATEGY MASQUERADES AS INDEPENDENT RESEARCH

By **MAHLENGI BHENGU**

THE silly season is upon us. As we approach November 4, a familiar pattern is reasserting itself. The Democratic Alliance's statistical echo chamber continues to blur the boundary between political strategy and independent research, where polling and political messaging increasingly become indistinguishable and a party's political narrative is presented as objective "data" to an unsuspecting electorate.



In any healthy democracy, polling is meant to illuminate public opinion, not manufacture it. But in South Africa, an uncomfortable pattern has emerged around the Democratic Alliance (DA) and polling outfits closely connected, formally and informally, to its strategic communications apparatus. The pattern raises questions about conflicts of interest, political messaging presented as neutral science and the shaping of public perception.

The DA has perfected the art of statistical ventriloquism, where polls appear to speak independently, while the voice behind the curtain carries a distinctly partisan accent. This is particularly significant when the same political narrative is repeatedly reinforced by polling organisations whose leadership, personnel or operational relationships intersect with the DA's strategic circles.

South Africans are no strangers to political theatre. But few productions are as polished or audacious as the DA's repeated parade of polling results portraying the party as perpetually on the rise, regardless of the electoral climate. The concern is heightened by the fact that many of these "polls" originate from institutions connected to individuals with past or present DA associations.

To be clear, the DA is not the first political organisation to engage sympathetic researchers. Parties routinely commission polling and there is nothing inherently improper about doing so. What is unusual is the scale, proximity and self-reinforcing character of the DA-pollster ecosystem, in which ostensibly independent polling is commissioned, produced, promoted and amplified through an interconnected web. The result is a remarkably consistent stream of findings presenting the DA as gaining ground, sometimes with such regularity that even probability theory might lodge a formal complaint.

The issue, therefore, is not that the DA commissions polls, but the degree of institutional intertwining. Across several election cycles, the DA has showcased polling from organisations whose leadership and affiliations connect them to the party, while findings have tended to portray, with monotonous regularity, the DA as ascendant, credible, accountable or capable of overtaking the ANC.

At the centre of this nexus sit the Institute of Race Relations (IRR) and the Social Research Foundation (SRF), both of which have consistently produced polling favourable to the DA. The SRF, founded and led by former IRR CEO Frans Cronje, has frequently published polling portraying the DA as outperforming expectations, as did the IRR during its own polling phases.

Further questions arise from the institutional relationships linking Victory Research, the SRF and The Common Sense. Victory Research is led by Gareth van Onselen, part of the DA communication apparatus for many years, while its founder Johan van den Berg has been identified as having worked on DA polling and as the party's Head of Polling. Victory has conducted polling commissioned by the SRF, whose leadership includes Cronje. The Common Sense, headed and edited by Cronje, with Gabriel Makin serving as executive producer and SRF Research Director.

This revolving door raises an obvious research-ethics concern. When individuals involved in shaping a political party's strategy also conduct fieldwork for polls presented as "independent snapshots of national opinion", the boundary between analysis and advocacy becomes blurred. The SRF's leadership under a former IRR CEO, alongside the IRR's longstanding association with ideological allies of the DA, including Helen Zille, reinforces the pattern. The revolving door is thus demonstrable, documented and persistent.

Taken together, these associations demonstrate a striking concentration of professional relationships within a relatively small political-research establishment closely connected to the DA's intellectual and political orbit. This constellation is therefore not simply a collection of polling companies, but an interconnected web of people and institutions whose professional histories and current roles overlap.

Taken individually, each of these links may be defensible. People frequently move between political communication, policy think tanks and research institutions. But collectively, they form a tight, mutually reinforcing system in which polling risks becoming another extension of political messaging. The situation extends beyond conflicts of interest. It embodies an epistemic echo chamber, a system where knowledge is produced inside an ideological loop and then exported to the unsuspecting public as untainted empirical truth.

The issue is not whether every poll is necessarily wrong. It is whether sufficient institutional distance, methodological transparency and independent oversight exist to justify presenting these findings as wholly politically neutral. More importantly, the polling output repeatedly portrays the DA in a favourable light and as capable of overtaking the ANC. Consistent with this pattern, their recent surveys have predictably placed the DA well ahead of the ANC in Johannesburg and suggested significant national gains.

The latest News24/SABI Strategy Group poll, conducted between 25 August and 17 September 2026, illustrates why polling claims must be scrutinised rather than accepted as definitive verdicts on electoral outcomes. In Johannesburg, the survey placed the DA at 29%, the ANC at 23%, MK Party at 12%, the EFF at 11% and ActionSA at 7%, with no party approaching the majority required to govern alone.

While some see these figures as offering a snapshot of voter sentiment, they also reinforce the importance of examining who produces political research, the professional affiliations of those involved and the extent to which institutional independence is demonstrated.

SABI conducts its own polling and is led by Henry Sands, whose professional background includes work at C|T Group; its political director, Jonathan Moakes, is a former DA chief executive. These connections do not, in themselves, invalidate the survey or establish political interference. They do, however, underscore why transparency about personnel, methodology and institutional relationships is essential, particularly when poll findings are amplified as evidence of a party's electoral ascendancy. The central question is not whether the DA is entitled to benefit from favourable polling, but whether the public is given sufficient information to distinguish independent measurement from research produced within overlapping political and strategic networks.

In a competitive democracy, one expects polls to differ because methodology, sample selection and question phrasing vary. However, DA-aligned polling repeatedly and predictably arrives at the same conclusion: the DA is rising; the DA is winning; the DA is the inevitable alternative; the DA is merely awaiting coronation. Within the DA-aligned polling community, triumph seems baked into the data like a pre-installed feature. Call it predictive

optimism. Call it strategic numerology. Call it polling with benefits. But do not call it neutral.

Data produced within ideologically aligned institutions can be validated internally and then disseminated externally as ostensibly neutral evidence. The repeated circulation of DA-favourable polls contributes to a self-fulfilling momentum narrative: "we are rising, the ANC is collapsing, the electorate is shifting our way." When this strategic narrative is repeatedly reinforced by polling organisations that are not necessarily neutral observers, but part of the party's broader ideological and communications apparatus, polling begins to function more as an instrument for validating and amplifying political messaging.

This helps explain how a cluster of polling entities connected to the DA's ideological and strategic circles can produce data, confer upon it the authority of academic objectivity, and then use it to reinforce a narrative of national ascendance. It is, in effect, the political equivalent of writing one's own peer reviews and then citing them as independent evidence of one's argument.

When pollsters and political strategists share résumés, professional circles, boardrooms or institutional affiliations, the distinction between method and motive becomes increasingly difficult to sustain. At that point, institutional independence and public confidence in the credibility of the research risk becoming collateral damage.

Especially during electoral contests, public perception is the real battleground. Polling is not simply measurement, but messaging. Its power lies in shaping expectations and momentum. When surveys consistently show one party rising, they can influence donor confidence, media coverage, coalition negotiations and ultimately voter psychology. They can galvanise supporters or demoralise opponents. The DA appears to understand this dynamic well. Polling can be used not only to measure political momentum, but also to manufacture and reinforce it, thereby shaping the very reality it claims to observe.

Every political party has every right to poll its support, conduct research and trumpet findings that support its political case. The problem is the pretence of neutrality. Transparency is key. If a poll is commissioned, say so. If the pollster is connected to the party, disclose it prominently. If the research involves current or former party strategists, acknowledge it. Democracy cannot function on opacity dressed up as objectivity.

More striking still is the role of sections of the media in amplifying these findings, often presenting politically partisan polling claims as uncontested indicators of public sentiment. In this way, polling can move from research to messaging and from messaging to perceived political reality.

South Africa desperately needs a media willing to interrogate polling claims rather than merely to reproduce them.

When polling becomes part of self-reinforcing ideological messaging, public perception can be manipulated because a party's political narrative is carefully packaged and suddenly presented as objective "data". The principle is that polls should measure public opinion, not manufacture it.

When research and political strategy collapse into one, the result is choreography. Citizens and voters deserve better than choreography disguised as science.

Mahlengi Bhengu *is the National Spokesperson of the ANC.*



A PROMISE OF A BETTER LIFE: What We Dreamed, What We Built and What Remains To Be Done

Five days before the polls – Remembering where we started, recognising how far we have come and confronting how far we still have to go.

By **MADIEPETSANE CHARLOTTE LOBE**

FIVE days before South Africans go to the polls in the 2026 Local Government Elections, my thoughts travel back to November 1995, when we held our first democratic local government elections. I find myself reflecting on a journey that is not simply part of our country's political history, but one in which I have had the privilege of being both a participant and a witness.

I ask myself a question that is simple, yet profound: What has the promise of a better life for all meant to ordinary South Africans? How much have we changed their lives? And, perhaps more importantly, what must we do to ensure that this promise does not become an empty political slogan, but remains a living commitment to present and future generations?

I ask these questions as someone who was part of the liberation struggle, an activist who believed that freedom must mean something in the everyday lives of ordinary people, a former local government councillor and a former Provincial Secretary of the African National Congress (ANC). I remain deeply invested in the promise of a democratic South Africa and the historic mission of the organisation that led our struggle for liberation.

In 1994, when South Africa emerged from the darkness of apartheid into the promise of democracy, the ANC, under the leadership of President Nelson Mandela, gave expression to a collective aspiration: political freedom must translate into a better life for all.

For millions of South Africans, this was never just an election promise. It was deeply personal. It was about children having opportunities their parents were denied; families living in decent homes; communities having electricity, clean water and proper sanitation; access to education and healthcare no longer being determined by race or privilege; and every person being able to live with dignity in their own country.

We were not simply fighting to change who governed the country. We were fighting to change how people lived.

I remember when the promise began to take shape

When I think about the promise of a better life, I do not begin with government reports, policy documents or statistics. I remember Botshabelo.



I remember the excitement and the enormous responsibility that came with becoming one of the local government councillors in 1995. We were entering uncharted territory. We had inherited communities shaped by apartheid spatial planning, neglect, deprivation and inequality. The expectations were enormous, and so was the work ahead of us.

I remember the massive electrification programme in Botshabelo. I remember the process of households gradually getting access to electricity, and families slowly having their own taps. These may sound like ordinary things today, but they were not ordinary achievements for people who had lived for generations without such basic amenities.

Think about what electricity meant to a family that had previously depended on candles and paraffin. Think about a mother who no longer had to walk long distances or depend on communal water points to secure water for her household. Think about children who could study after sunset without the limitations imposed by darkness.

These were not abstract development indicators. They were changes that people could see, touch and experience in their homes.

I also remember 1994, when the late Joe Slovo, then Minister of Housing, came to Botshabelo for a Housing Summit. Government had committed itself to the ambitious goal of building one million houses. The summit brought together government, communities, financial institutions and developers to confront the enormous housing backlog inherited from apartheid and to shape a new national housing policy.



It was an important moment in the early years of democratic governance. The discussions and commitments helped lay the foundation for a non-racial housing policy and informed the development of the Housing White Paper, which sought to increase the national budget allocation towards housing from approximately one per cent to five per cent.

What made these moments significant was not simply the scale of the commitments. It was the belief that government had a responsibility to intervene deliberately in the lives of people who had been systematically excluded from opportunity.

We were learning how to govern, but we were also learning what it meant to be entrusted with the responsibility of changing people's lives.

I remember the hope. I remember the expectations. I remember the sense that, finally, things could be different.

And they were different.

Over the years, democratic government expanded access to housing, electricity, water, sanitation, education, healthcare and social protection. Millions of people who had previously been excluded from opportunities and services began to participate more meaningfully in the life of the country.

These changes did not happen by accident. They were the result of deliberate policy choices, public investment and social programmes implemented under successive ANC-led governments.

We must be able to acknowledge this history without embarrassment or defensiveness. To deny the progress made would be to disregard the lived experiences of millions of South Africans whose circumstances have changed.

But I also know that the people who experienced those improvements are the very same people who today demand more. And rightly so.

The expectations we created were high because the promise was high. The people are not wrong for expecting us to do better.

A better life is not an abstraction

For ordinary people, democracy is not measured by the number of policies adopted or speeches delivered. It is measured by what

happens when they wake up in the morning and go about their lives.

It is the family that has a roof over its head, even if it is still working towards a more secure future. It is the child from a working-class household who enters a classroom with opportunities that apartheid deliberately denied. It is the pensioner whose social grant makes the difference between eating and going hungry. It is the parent who receives assistance to support a child. It is the person who can walk into a public health facility and receive medical attention without being entirely excluded because they cannot afford private healthcare.

It is the young woman who becomes the first graduate in her family. It is the household that switches on a light without having to worry about lighting a candle. It is the community that finally has access to clean water.

These are the human experiences behind the promise of a better life.

However, we must also be honest about the other side of the story.

A family may have a house but still have no one employed in that household. A young person may have a qualification but remain unable to find a job. A community may have electricity but experience prolonged interruptions. Another may still be waiting for reliable water and proper sanitation.

A mother may have access to a public clinic but spend hours in a queue because of staff shortages. A small business owner may have the determination and entrepreneurial spirit to succeed but struggle to access finance, reliable infrastructure and a supportive local economic environment.

Unemployment, poverty, inequality, corruption, crime, deteriorating infrastructure and uneven municipal performance continue to undermine the promise we made.

These are not merely political talking points. They are people's lives.

We cannot continue to explain away every failure by invoking apartheid, even as we recognise its enduring structural consequences. Nor can we pretend that every challenge is the responsibility of one sphere of government. National, provincial and local government have distinct constitutional responsibilities, and each must account for what it is expected to deliver.

As the ANC, we must have the courage to examine our record without defensiveness. Where we have delivered, let us acknowledge and account for it. Where we have failed, let us admit it, correct it and demonstrate that we have learned.

I do not believe our people are asking for perfection. They understand that no government or political organisation can solve every problem overnight. What they are asking for is leadership that listens, takes responsibility and delivers tangible improvements.

They want to believe in the people they elect, not merely obey the positions those people occupy.

Leadership credibility rests on honesty, competence, the ability to inspire and a clear vision of the future. It is about aligning private convictions, public pronouncements and everyday conduct. There must not be a great distance between what leaders promise and what communities experience.

Our people want us to walk the talk. They want us to acknowledge our difficulties without hiding behind excuses. They want to know that we have heard them and that we are prepared to mend our ways.

History matters, but the future matters just as much.

Why local government matters

On 4 November, South Africans will not simply be choosing political representatives. They will be making decisions about the institutions closest to their everyday needs.





Local government is where the promise of democracy becomes tangible. It is where people expect water to flow, refuse to be collected, roads to be maintained, electricity distribution to function, public spaces to be safe and municipal funds to be used responsibly.

A national policy may be well conceived, but its value is diminished when a municipality cannot implement it. A budget may be approved, but it means very little to residents when projects remain incomplete, infrastructure deteriorates and public money is mismanaged.

This is why local government must never be treated as an afterthought in our political work. In my view, it is precisely where we should place some of our best and most capable people.

Municipal leadership must not become a reward for factional loyalty, a consolation prize for political contests or an opportunity for personal advancement. The opportunity to serve must come with a deep understanding that public office is a public trust.

Our councillors must possess integrity, sound judgement, the ability to work with communities and a demonstrable commitment to effective governance.

They must understand that their responsibility does not begin and end with election day. It begins with listening to residents and continues through the difficult, often unglamorous work of making municipalities function.

We must also recognise that political leadership and professional municipal administration have to work together, each respecting its responsibilities and being held accountable for its performance.

We cannot afford to allow internal political disagreements, factional battles and personal ambitions to spill over into the administration of municipalities and compromise service delivery.

The people who queue for water, who wait for refuse collection, who struggle with deteriorating roads and who need municipal services cannot be expected to pay the price for our internal differences.

If we have performed poorly, we must not expect our liberation history alone to secure the confidence of voters. Our contribution to the democratic transformation of South Africa is important, but our present conduct and future commitments matter just as much.

The promise must be renewed, not abandoned

I remain convinced that the promise of a better life for all is worth defending. But defending that promise does not mean defending every decision, every leader or every failure made in its name.

It means being prepared to confront what has gone wrong and to do the difficult work of putting it right.

It means placing loyalty to the people above loyalty to individuals, the interests of communities above factional considerations and public service above personal ambition.

As we approach these elections, I think about the people behind every ballot paper. The young

person looking for an opportunity. The mother trying to provide for her children. The elderly person seeking dignity. The small business owner trying to keep a business alive. The community that has waited too long for basic services.

These people deserve more than campaign promises. They deserve practical plans, capable leadership, responsible management of public resources and measurable results.

The question is not whether South Africa has changed since 1994. It has, and we must never diminish the significance of that transformation. The question is whether the pace and quality of change are sufficient to meet the legitimate expectations of our people.

Five days before the polls, my appeal is simple: let us honour what has been achieved without concealing what has gone wrong.

Let us acknowledge the ANC's contribution to our democratic transformation while demanding that it does better where it has fallen short.

Let us remember why we entered the struggle in the first place. We did not struggle for positions, titles, tenders or the privilege of occupying public office. We struggled for the dignity, freedom and material wellbeing of our people.

That must remain our compass.

The promise of a better life for all must be greater than the politics of self. Greater than our positions, our ambitions, our internal differences and our individual interests.

I want future generations to inherit more than the stories of our struggle. I want them to inherit a country in which the sacrifices of those who came before us are reflected in the opportunities available to those who come after us.

Because, ultimately, the measure of our democracy is not simply who holds power. It is what that power makes possible for the people.

And the measure of our political legacy will not be how long we occupied positions of leadership, but how many lives we changed, how much dignity we restored and what kind of country we leave behind.

The promise was made to the people.

It must be fulfilled for the people. And none of us should ever be bigger than that promise.

I write in my personal capacity as a former Provincial Secretary of the ANC, a former local government councillor, a former freedom fighter, a social and political activist, and an ANC member in good standing from Ward 20, Fezile Dabi Branch, Mangaung.





Lula's Electoral Triumph: A victory for the Global South, a Lesson for the ANC

By **CORNELIUS MONAMA**

THE victory of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in Brazil carries significance far beyond its borders. It affirms that, even in an era of polarisation, rising nationalism and geopolitical confrontation, democracy can produce leaders who recognise that national sovereignty and international cooperation are complementary, that national interests can advance alongside international solidarity, and that development and peace must reinforce one another. For the African National Congress (ANC), Lula's victory also offers important lessons in political mobilisation, democratic renewal and the enduring need to earn the people's confidence.

Lula's victory comes at a defining moment for the international community. Multilateralism is under mounting pressure, great-power rivalries are intensifying, international law faces growing challenges, and the Global South is demanding not charity, but a meaningful voice, equitable representation and the power to shape a fairer global order. This moment represents a political rebuke to the idea that the future belongs exclusively to the politics of division. It is also an affirmation that the progressive world has not disappeared.

This electoral triumph strengthens the prospects for progressive internationalism, multilateral cooperation and a more representative global order at a time when geopolitical rivalry, protectionism, trade disputes and armed conflicts threaten peace and shared prosperity. It creates renewed space for South Africa and Brazil to deepen cooperation in trade, education, health, technology, climate action and development finance. Our partnership must translate diplomatic solidarity into tangible benefits for workers, entrepreneurs, students and communities.

In a world increasingly divided by confrontation, South Africa and Brazil must demonstrate that nations can defend their sovereignty while cooperating for the common good. Peace requires dialogue across political differences, respect for international law and a commitment to resolving conflicts through peaceful means. The strategic importance of this partnership is also reflected in the role both countries play

within BRICS and the wider aspirations of the Global South.

BRICS provides an important platform for developing countries seeking a greater voice in global governance. The Global South is not asking for charity. It is demanding fair representation, mutually beneficial partnerships and the opportunity to shape decisions affecting its future.

Consider what might have happened had Lula lost. A Flávio Bolsonaro presidency would almost certainly have altered Brazil's international orientation. A Bolsonaro victory could have meant Brazil significantly reducing its role in BRICS and withdrawing from some of the Global South-oriented diplomacy associated with Lula's Workers' Party. That would have been a disaster of biblical proportions.

BRICS has become an important platform through which emerging powers seek greater representation in global governance, financial reform, development finance and international trade. Brazil without Lula would have weakened its political coherence at the moment when the Global South needs greater strategic confidence.

Washington had much more to gain, politically, from a Bolsonaro victory. Such an outcome would have strengthened the network of Trump-aligned governments emerging across Latin America and would have represented a significant victory for his hemispheric strategy. Lula's victory frustrates that project.

Progressivism is not simply about left-wing electoral victories. It is about the defence of human dignity, social justice, democratic institutions, environmental responsibility, peaceful coexistence and a world order in which the powerful are subject to the same rules as everyone else. This is where Lula's victory acquires international significance.



Lula's victory offers the ANC an important lesson

The significance of Lula's victory, however, extends beyond global affairs and carries important lessons for progressive movements seeking renewal, including the ANC as South Africa approaches a crucial electoral period. Elections are not won on history alone. They are won when a movement reconnects with the hopes of ordinary people, mobilises those who have withdrawn from political participation and recognises that no movement can take the people's confidence for granted. It must continually earn it.

Lula's campaign demonstrated the power of grassroots mobilisation, alliances with organised labour and progressive movements, direct engagement with communities and strategic use of social media. It showed that political momentum can be rebuilt when a movement listens, adapts and mobilises around the material concerns of ordinary people.

For the ANC, this is more than an international electoral story. It is an opportunity to reflect on how the movement can renew its relationship with its historical constituency while reaching those who have become disillusioned, disengaged or remain undecided.

South Africa has made significant advances in political inclusion, social protection and access to essential services. These achievements must be acknowledged and defended. However, history cannot substitute for present-day performance. Unemployment, poverty, inequality, inadequate municipal services and declining public confidence demand honest reflection and decisive action.

Lula's victory reminds us of a fundamental democratic principle that historical legitimacy does not confer a permanent electoral mandate. People must experience the value of progressive politics in their daily lives. The ANC must therefore approach the elections as an opportunity to renew its relationship with communities. Where government has failed, the response must be honest acknowledgement and correction. Where progress has been achieved, it must be demonstrated. Where commitments remain unfulfilled, communities deserve credible plans and accountability.

The working class and the poor must remain central to the renewal agenda. They carry the heaviest burden of unemployment, rising living costs, unreliable water and electricity, deteriorating infrastructure and dysfunctional municipalities. The ANC must deepen its relationships with workers, trade unions, young people, women, community organisations and progressive formations. These

relationships cannot be activated only during elections. They must be sustained through meaningful participation, responsive leadership and a shared commitment to social transformation.

Lula's campaign also illustrates the importance of combining traditional political organising with effective digital communication. Social media helped carry campaign messages beyond rallies and established political networks, enabling supporters to share content, engage communities and contest competing political narratives.

For the ANC, digital communication must be treated as a central arena of democratic engagement, not merely an additional publicity channel. WhatsApp networks, short videos, community-based digital platforms and direct engagement with young people must complement door-to-door campaigning, public meetings, community radio and local-language communication.

But digital visibility alone cannot win lasting trust. Communication must be grounded in facts, credible commitments and demonstrable performance. The ANC must counter disinformation with evidence, answer criticism without defensiveness and show how its policies can improve people's lives. Most importantly, social media must become a listening tool. A movement that broadcasts without listening risks losing touch with the people it seeks to represent.

Perhaps the most important electoral lesson is the need to look beyond those who already support a party. The ANC must pose these questions to itself: who is absent from our meetings? Who has stopped voting? Who feels politically abandoned and who remains undecided? These citizens may include first-time voters, young people frustrated by unemployment, residents disappointed by municipal performance and eligible voters who no longer believe their participation makes a difference.

Electoral renewal begins by finding the people who are missing, understanding why they have disengaged and giving them compelling reasons to participate. Reaching them requires returning to communities where trust has weakened, listening without dismissiveness and responding to legitimate grievances with practical solutions.

The local government elections are an important test of the movement's capacity to renew itself, strengthen democratic participation and advance the unfinished project of social transformation. The task is neither to romanticise the past nor to surrender to pessimism. It is to defend democratic achievements while confronting failures that undermine the promise of a better life for all.

Lula's victory reminds the ANC that progressive politics remains relevant when it places people at the centre of its purpose. On 4 November, the task is bigger than winning votes. It is about renewing hope, restoring confidence and demonstrating that democracy can deliver meaningful change in every community.

The ANC must reach the absent, engage the undecided and persuade the disappointed, not through entitlement, but through humility, conviction and a credible programme of action. Let us defend the gains of democracy, confront the failures that threaten them and mobilise our collective strength to advance the National Democratic Revolution. Let us build municipalities that work, communities where dignity is protected and an economy that creates opportunities for those excluded for too long.

Lula's victory teaches us that history alone cannot win the future. The ANC must reconnect with the people, mobilise their hopes and earn their confidence through action and delivery.

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Cornelius Monama *is a communication specialist and former National Communication Manager of the ANC*



VETERANS' *Voices*

The contest for popular authority begins at the ballot box

Political stability, accountable government and the unfinished struggle for economic freedom

By **ESROM MATAMBUYE SADIKI**

ON 4 November, South Africans will test whether democratic representation can translate into competent administration, reliable public services and tangible improvements in people's lives.

Voting is an instrument of popular power. It is not the end of the struggle for democracy.

For millions of people, democracy is measured by whether water flows from the tap, electricity remains reliable, rubbish is collected and municipal officials respond to complaints. When services fail, households pay more, businesses lose income and public confidence erodes.

The central question is whether the authority conferred by the ballot will produce local government that places public needs above political self-interest.



The lesson of 2021: Trust must be earned

In the 2021 local government elections, approximately 46% of registered voters cast their ballots, the lowest turnout in South Africa's municipal election history. Disillusionment, practical barriers and declining confidence in political institutions may have contributed, but no single explanation accounts for such widespread non-participation.

The warning is unmistakable: democratic institutions cannot take public participation for granted. The election also exposed a fragmented political landscape. The ANC's share of the vote fell from 53.9% in 2016 to 45.6% in 2021, making coalition negotiations central to governing numerous councils.

Coalitions can broaden representation and require parties to negotiate. However, when negotiations become dominated by executive positions and political influence, decision-making can suffer and accountability can become blurred.

Residents should not endure administrative paralysis because political parties cannot agree on priorities.

The ANC's liberation legacy remains an important part of South Africa's history. But history cannot substitute for effective governance today. A liberation movement in government must demonstrate what political freedom means in everyday life.

Trust must be earned through performance, integrity and a demonstrable commitment to improving people's material conditions.



A majority must mean accountability

An outright majority can provide a clearer mandate and a more predictable foundation for implementing a municipal programme. But a majority is not unrestricted permission to govern without scrutiny.

Stability has value only when it enables responsible administration. A stable council that tolerates corruption, incompetence or negligence does not serve the public simply because its leadership remains in office.

The same principle applies to opposition parties and coalitions. Coalitions are not inherently incapable of governing, just as single-party majorities are not automatically competent. Outcomes depend on leadership, institutional capacity, financial discipline, professional administration and effective oversight.

Every party seeking office should be judged against measurable commitments: reliable infrastructure, sustainable municipal finances, transparent procurement, competent management and improved service delivery.

A mandate is a responsibility entrusted by the people, not a licence to govern without accountability.

Coalitions: stability without entrenching power

Coalition government is likely to remain a feature of South African metropolitan politics. The problem is not coalition government itself, but arrangements consumed by disputes over positions, budgets and political influence.

Coalition agreements should be publicly accessible and specify policy commitments, service-delivery priorities, financial responsibilities and procedures for resolving disputes. Residents must be able to judge whether their representatives honour those agreements.

Professional municipal officials must be protected from improper political interference while remaining accountable for their lawful responsibilities.

Reforms to leadership transitions must preserve legitimate votes of no confidence and democratic oversight. Administrative continuity should not become a mechanism for protecting incumbents from accountability.

Whether a council is governed by one party or several, residents deserve an administration that makes decisions, implements them and explains its performance.

Political stability is a means to effective government, not an end in itself.

Municipal finances: Follow the money

South Africa's municipal crisis cannot be explained by funding shortages alone. Weak revenue collection, inadequate expenditure controls, neglected maintenance, flawed procurement and poor financial management also contribute to deteriorating services.

In the Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement on 21 October, Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana announced an additional R21.8 billion for the local government equitable share over the medium term. A further R3.5 billion was announced for smart

meters, in addition to R2 billion previously allocated.

These allocations must be assessed against their intended outcomes. Additional funding does not automatically translate into reliable services.

Smart meters can improve billing and revenue collection, but only when properly installed, maintained and supported by accurate customer records, functioning billing systems and effective financial controls.

National Treasury had suspended the next equitable-share transfer to 69 municipalities over persistent non-payment to creditors. By the end of July, 37 municipalities had council-approved repayment plans, and creditors had received R4.2 billion.

Fiscal discipline is essential, but it must be accompanied by fairness. Outstanding accounts must be assessed in light of billing errors, disputed charges, household poverty and the recoverability of debt.

Municipalities need accurate billing, fair tariffs, consistent credit control and appropriate protection for vulnerable households.

Residents must be able to follow public money from the budget to the service it is intended to provide. Budgets, expenditure reports, procurement records and performance indicators must become practical instruments of public accountability rather than documents that few residents can access or understand.

Professional administration and consequences

On 22 October, the Revised White Paper on Local Government was officially launched, establishing a framework to address municipal finances, institutional weaknesses, professionalisation, and service delivery. Implementing it will require coordinated action, clear responsibilities, and sustained political commitment.

The challenge is no longer simply to produce another policy document. It is to translate policy into measurable improvements in municipal performance.

No White Paper can repair a leaking pipe by itself, restore a failed wastewater treatment plant or ensure that a municipality appoints a qualified engineer.

Patronage, irregular appointments and political interference weaken expertise, institutional memory and the ability to plan beyond electoral cycles.

Professionalisation requires merit-based appointments, transparent recruitment, enforceable performance standards and clearly defined responsibilities. Councillors must set policy priorities and oversee delivery; administrators must implement decisions lawfully and professionally.

Corruption must carry consequences. Those who offer or solicit bribes, manipulate tenders or abuse public office must face investigation and appropriate legal action, regardless of political affiliation.

An allegation is not proof of guilt. Due process must be respected, but it must not become an excuse for indefinite delay or protection of the politically connected.

Municipalities should strengthen procurement oversight, publish contract information, protect whistle-blowers and investigate credible allegations. Where evidence and law justify it, those who pay bribes, those who receive them and officials responsible for serious misconduct must face appropriate disciplinary or criminal proceedings.

Accountability must extend to the corruptor and the corruptee. Publi c office is a duty entrusted by citizens, not an entitlement to personal enrichment.

Infrastructure is economic policy

Water, sanitation, electricity, roads and waste management are the foundations of public health and economic activity. When these services fail, households incur additional costs, businesses lose productivity and communities become less attractive for investment.

The Auditor-General's 2024–25 municipal audit findings highlight persistent weaknesses in financial management, infrastructure oversight, procurement and accountability. The report reinforces the need for municipalities to address recurring deficiencies rather than treat each audit cycle as an isolated exercise.

Problems differ between municipalities, ranging from leaking pipes and ageing equipment to inaccurate meter readings, infrastructure losses and poorly maintained facilities. Effective intervention begins with reliable information about the specific challenges each municipality faces.

Councils should maintain accurate infrastructure registers, prioritise preventive maintenance and publish information about



faults, repair times and outstanding work.

New projects often attract political attention, but maintaining existing assets can deliver greater value and prevent expensive failures.

Public-private partnerships may contribute where they offer demonstrable public value and allocate risks fairly. They must not permit private interests to capture gains while residents and the public purse absorb disproportionate losses.

Municipalities cannot solve national unemployment alone. However, reliable services, accessible trading spaces, transparent licensing and fair procurement can help small businesses survive, expand and create local opportunities.

Economic freedom is not secured by declarations. It requires working infrastructure, productive local economies and decisions that widen access to opportunity.

The first 100 days: From promises to performance

Election promises must not expire when the votes are counted. Every new council should publish a first-100-days programme that assesses inherited finances, creditor obligations, service failures, maintenance backlogs, stalled projects, and critical vacancies.

Each commitment should identify the responsible department or official, establish a deadline, specify the required budget and define an outcome residents can independently verify.

Urgent water and sanitation failures must receive priority. Stalled projects should be reviewed to establish why they stopped, whether contracts were properly administered and whether completion remains lawful and cost-effective.

Fill critical vacancies through transparent, merit-based processes.

Public dashboards should track service reliability, revenue collection, repairs, procurement and audit progress. Ward committees and digital fault-reporting platforms can strengthen accountability, but only when residents receive meaningful responses and can follow the progress of their complaints.

Public participation must influence decisions rather than merely satisfy procedural requirements.

Young people must have genuine opportunities to shape local planning, acquire skills and establish enterprises. They should not become visible to political leaders only when election campaigns begin.

Promises must become plans, plans must become action, and action must produce results people can see.

Voting without fear

The Electoral Commission reported 376,140 new voter registrations between January and May 2026. Registration is important, but it is not the same as participation on election day.

The challenge is to encourage eligible voters to participate freely and to ensure that the electoral process remains peaceful, accessible and credible.

Reports of intimidation and political violence during previous election cycles underline the importance of protecting candidates, communities and voters. Allegations concerning particular incidents must be investigated on the evidence, without unsupported accusations against political parties or individuals.

Every party leader has a responsibility to condemn intimidation, including when it appears to benefit their own organisation. Law enforcement must act impartially, and those responsible for unlawful conduct must answer through proper legal processes.

No person should have to choose between exercising a democratic right and protecting their personal safety.

Democracy loses its meaning when people fear exercising their political rights.

People's power must be more than a slogan

The traditions of Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela and Joe Slovo remind us that political freedom cannot be separated from material dignity.

The struggle against apartheid was also a struggle against the denial of economic opportunity, decent living conditions and political voice. Local government is where much of that promise becomes immediate and measurable.

The ANC must make its case through service, competence and integrity. Its liberation legacy cannot answer residents whose taps are dry, whose streets are neglected or whose complaints go unanswered.

Opposition parties, coalition partners and independent candidates face the same scrutiny. No organisation escapes accountability simply by presenting itself as the alternative.

Political freedom remains incomplete where access to services, safe neighbourhoods, decent transport and economic opportunity is profoundly unequal.

Closing these gaps requires capable institutions, sound public finances, competent planning and a sustained commitment to redistribution and development.

The real measure of political authority is not how firmly a party holds office, but how responsibly it uses that authority in the public interest.

The ballot gives citizens the power to choose. Between elections, that power remains alive through public participation, transparent budgets, active ward committees and demands for answers from those entrusted with office.

The battle for people's power begins at the ballot box. It continues in every budget, every procurement decision, every repaired pipe, every working streetlight and every public official held to account.

The vote confers a mandate. Only responsible action turns that mandate into people's power.

VOTE ANC.

Aluta Continua!

Esrom Matambuye Sadiki *is an ANC Veteran.*



From Solidarity to Coherence: The Work of Renewal Begins With Us

By **FAIEZ JACOBS**

COMRADES, let us speak plainly. For three weeks I have been away from these pages, immersed in the work of our local government election structures. Returning to the branches, wards and regional machinery has reminded me of what is still beautiful and powerful about our movement: ordinary people who give extraordinary effort.



There are comrades who arrive early, leave late, make the calls, prepare the venues, assist their neighbours and solve problems nobody sees. Many carry their own struggles at home. Yet they continue to serve, often without resources, recognition or applause.

To every volunteer, branch activist, organiser, candidate, election party agent and quiet worker behind the scenes: your contribution matters. You are not merely a *"warm body"* on a deployment list. You are a valued part of this movement.

This deserves more than words of thanks. It deserves leadership that cares, values your time, protects your dignity and makes your work meaningful.

The strength we must never lose

Our struggle for freedom was carried by people who understood that they belonged to something larger than themselves. Workers, students, women, faith communities, trade unions and civic organisations did not always agree. But they found common purpose and organised to advance it.

That was the strength of the mass democratic movement: unity in action, discipline in struggle, solidarity in difficult times.

This week, as we remember the birth of Comrade Oliver Reginald (OR) Tambo, we are reminded of the patient leadership, principled unity and collective responsibility that sustained our movement through its most difficult years.

OR understood that unity was not simply something we declared. It was something we had to build, nurture and defend through our conduct.

After more than thirty years in political organisation and public service, one lesson remains clear. A movement is not held together by its leaders alone. It is held together by the trust, sacrifice, care and initiative of its people.

That spirit is still alive. It deserves to be renewed, not taken for granted.

But dedication is not the same as effectiveness. A branch can work hard and still be disconnected from a ward. A ward can complete its tasks while the region lacks a clear picture. Meetings can multiply without decisions becoming action. Good comrades can become exhausted trying to compensate for weak systems.

The lesson from our regional campaign is simple: when information does not reach the next person, goodwill is stranded.

When we repair that connection, the same energy goes much further.

The answer cannot be to demand twice the work from already stretched volunteers. We must remove obstacles, share knowledge, give timely support and make decisions that hold.

Cadreship is not a title. It is the responsibility to bring people together, accept accountability and get useful work done.

These are not reasons to lose heart. They are reasons to organise better.

When we ask for sacrifice, we owe our people competence. When we ask for responsibility, we owe them support. When we demand discipline, we must demonstrate it ourselves.

From unity to coherence

This brings me to a word I have been reflecting upon: coherence.

Unity brings us together around a common purpose. Coherence ensures that our people, plans, resources and actions work together to achieve that purpose.

A branch must know its task. A ward must know what support it can expect. Regional leadership must know what is happening on the ground. Problems must travel upwards quickly; decisions and support must travel back just as quickly.

Everyone must know what has been agreed, who is responsible and whether the work has been done. That is not bureaucracy. It is respect for people and their time.

The same lesson applies to government.

The citizen lives one life but too often encounters disconnected services. A young person needs education and skills connected to employment. A family needs housing connected to transport.

A community needs safety connected to economic opportunity. An elderly resident needs a municipality that listens, maintains and cares.

The citizen experiences one life. Government must learn to respond as one connected system.

The ANC's vision of **A Better Life for All** must be experienced in the everyday lives of our people. Reliable services, safer communities, local economic development, youth empowerment and accountable government must reinforce one another.

Building better communities together means more than delivering separate projects. It means connecting people to opportunities, institutions to responsibilities and public resources to measurable improvements.

From paper to pavement. From promises to proof.

Honour our people by telling the truth

There is no renewal without honesty.

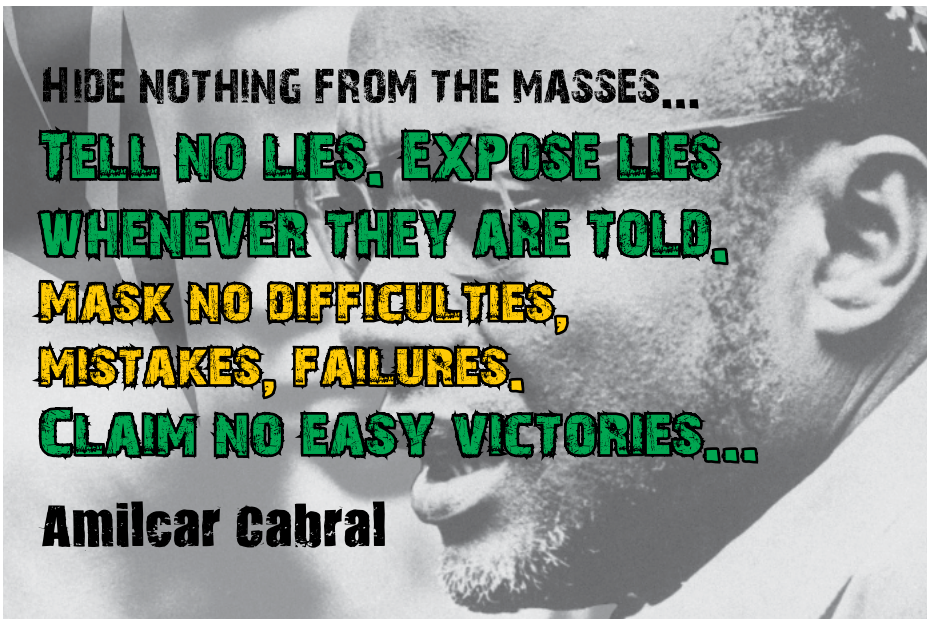
We must hear the disappointment of communities that have not experienced the service, humility and accountability they expected.

The ANC's history is rich with sacrifice and achievement. But that history is not a debt the people must repay. It is a responsibility we must honour through our conduct today.

We cannot speak of people-centred leadership while being unavailable to people. We cannot speak of unity while allowing unnecessary division to consume our energy. We cannot celebrate volunteers while failing to organise their work.

And we cannot speak of renewal if we are unwilling to learn.

This is not the week for a long catalogue of shortcomings. It is a moment to reaffirm the standard by which we must conduct ourselves.



We serve the people. We respect one another. We tell the truth. We complete what we undertake.

In the final days before 4 November, let our conduct demonstrate these values. Prepare thoroughly. Communicate accurately. Support those carrying responsibility. Resolve problems without blame. Safeguard a peaceful, free and fair election.

Our democracy was won through enormous sacrifice. Every voter has the right to make their own choice, and every political worker has the responsibility to respect it.

The work must continue beyond 4 November

On 5 November there will be another morning.

Whatever the electoral verdict, unemployment, violence, the cost of living, municipal services and the struggle for dignity will remain. So will our responsibility to the communities from which we come.

This is where the real test of renewal begins.

What worked? What did not? Where did our systems fail good people? What should we stop doing, start doing and improve? What knowledge must we preserve? Which younger leaders must we develop?

Reflection must not become an exercise in finding people to blame. It must become a programme of rebuilding.

Not only new resolutions, but better habits. Not only new structures, but clearer responsibilities. Not only new promises, but visible results.



Our people know the difference between a meeting and a result. They know when we listen and when we return. They know who answers the telephone after election day.

That everyday accountability is where renewal will be judged.

We must deepen our engagement with young people, students and emerging community leaders. Their ideas, energy and aspirations belong at the centre of our democratic future.

We must build a political home where generations learn from one another, where difference need not become division, and where leadership develops others rather than simply occupying positions.

A movement that cannot renew itself cannot fully lead the renewal of society.

This responsibility belongs to all of us.

Love and solidarity must become action

Hope is not pretending that everything is fine. Hope is seeing what remains possible and taking responsibility for building it.

This campaign has reminded me that South Africa still has a deep reservoir of commitment, courage and human generosity.

Our task is to connect it.

To turn goodwill into organisation. Organisation into capability. Capability into service. And service into real change in people's lives.

That is how solidarity becomes coherence.

That is how we build trust.

That is how the promise of a better life becomes an everyday reality.

We knew how to unite to win our freedom. Now we must learn how to unite our capabilities to make freedom work.

So, comrades, honour those who carry the work. Encourage the tired. Make room for the young. Respect the experienced. Correct what is failing. Protect what is good.

Above all, never forget whom we serve.

Masibambisane. Kom ons bou saam. Let us build better communities together.

We are. We can. We shall overcome.

#VoteANC2026
#LetsBuildBetterCommunities



Fiscal Progress Must Advance Transformation: **Building a Capable Developmental State and Stronger Local Government**

By **DR BEJANI CHAUKE**

As local government elections approach, South Africa's challenge is to consolidate fiscal stability and translate it into improved service delivery, effective governance and inclusive economic growth. The African National Congress (ANC)'s task is to build on the progress achieved through its fiscal and economic policies, advance the National Democratic Revolution and ensure that working-class and poor communities experience tangible improvements in their lives.

South Africa's fiscal direction must be understood in the context of the ANC's historic mission to build a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous society. Bringing public debt under control while protecting essential services and expanding investment is not merely an exercise in financial management. It is part of building a capable developmental state that can advance transformation and progressively realise the constitutional promise of a better life for all.

The Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement offers grounds for cautious optimism. Government debt has stabilised relative to the economy and begun to decline. This progress reflects the importance of responsible fiscal management in creating a more sustainable foundation for growth and development. The ANC-led government must consolidate these gains to sustain economic recovery, strengthen investor confidence and expand opportunities for our people.

Fiscal discipline is not an end in itself. It must protect the state's ability to deliver services, invest in infrastructure, sustain the social wage and confront poverty, unemployment and inequality. The ANC's commitment to the National Democratic Revolution requires that economic stability benefit working-class and poor communities, transform historically unequal economic relations and create opportunities for those long excluded from economic participation.

The ultimate test of fiscal progress is whether people experience reliable services, businesses can invest with confidence and historically disadvantaged communities share more fully in economic opportunity. As municipal elections approach on 4 November 2026, government's credibility is tested by whether water flows, electricity networks function, roads are maintained, waste is collected and communities are safe.

The increased share of public spending allocated to local government, reaching 10% for the first time, together with an additional R21.8 billion in the local government equitable share, creates an important opportunity to strengthen municipalities. These resources must advance the developmental mandate of local

government, improve essential services and address infrastructure backlogs. For the ANC, transforming local government is inseparable from advancing social justice and improving the material conditions of our people.

However, increased allocations cannot, by themselves, overcome weak administration, poor financial management or inadequate technical capacity. A water project in a budget does not mean water reaches households. An electricity upgrade does not guarantee reliable supply, and a road in an infrastructure plan improves mobility only when completed and maintained. Effective procurement, competent project management, financial control and maintenance are essential to converting public spending into tangible development.

A capable developmental state must be judged by its ability to turn public resources into public value. Municipalities need realistic infrastructure plans, transparent procurement and sustained investment in existing assets. The ANC's commitment to building a capable state must be reflected in institutions that deliver, account for their performance and use public resources ethically.

Municipal sustainability also depends on rebuilding the social contract between local government and the people. That contract is weakened when residents face unreliable services and unanswered complaints while municipalities struggle with low revenue collection, infrastructure losses and unpaid bulk water and electricity accounts.

Municipalities cannot maintain infrastructure or expand services if revenue is not collected and



supplier accounts remain overdue. Equally, residents cannot be expected to trust institutions that charge for services they fail to provide reliably or do not explain how public money is used. Municipalities must deliver and account for their performance, while residents and businesses that can afford to pay must meet their obligations.

The ANC's commitment to social justice requires protection for poor and vulnerable households and equitable access to basic services. Protecting the poor, however, must go hand in hand with collecting revenue from those who can afford to pay. Accurate billing, reduced water and electricity losses, stronger revenue collection and decisive action against corruption, wasteful expenditure and financial mismanagement are indispensable. The misuse of public resources undermines transformation by depriving communities of services and opportunities.

Accountability must be visible and measurable. Municipalities should publish clear delivery commitments, identifying budgets, deadlines, responsible institutions and verifiable outcomes. Priorities should include repairing water leaks, upgrading electricity networks, completing delayed projects and improving refuse collection. Where targets are missed, municipalities must explain why and identify corrective action. Oversight institutions must examine not only whether money was spent, but whether expenditure improved services and benefited communities.

Municipalities lacking the capacity to fulfil their responsibilities need targeted technical and financial support, credible recovery plans and measurable milestones. The objective must be to rebuild institutional capability and independence, not normalise permanent dependence on external intervention.

These principles must inform political commitments during the election period. Proposals to reduce tariffs, write off municipal debt or introduce new projects must explain how they will be funded and how they will affect service delivery. Immediate relief that undermines infrastructure maintenance may simply transfer costs into the future. Responsible leadership requires socially responsive policies that are financially sustainable and implementable.

Municipal performance is also central to economic transformation. Businesses depend on reliable water and electricity, maintained roads, efficient administration and safe communities. When these conditions fail, costs rise, investment is discouraged and opportunities for employment and enterprise are lost. Fiscal stability pursued through the ANC-led government's economic and fiscal policies provides a foundation for investor confidence, but sustainable investment also requires capable municipalities and dependable infrastructure.

South Africa can strengthen its position as a gateway for investment and trade on the African continent. Realising this potential requires cooperation between government, communities and the private sector. Consistent with the ANC's vision of an inclusive and transformed economy, growth must expand participation rather than reproduce historical exclusion. Townships, informal settlements and historically underserved communities must share in development through better services, stronger small businesses, employment and enterprise opportunities.

The infrastructure pipeline of more than R207 billion provides a basis for mobilising investment. Its developmental value will depend on project readiness, effective implementation and lasting public benefit. Public-private partnerships can contribute capital and expertise, provided they are transparent, financially sound and protect the public interest. Private investment must complement the developmental responsibilities of the state and safeguard access to essential services.

Progress towards fiscal stabilisation, protection of the social wage, increased support for local government and infrastructure investment provides important foundations for South Africa's development. The ANC must consolidate these gains through policy consistency, disciplined implementation and stronger institutions. National fiscal stability must be matched by capable municipalities; allocations must become functioning infrastructure; and economic growth must create broader opportunities for employment and enterprise.

The answer to implementation failures is not to abandon the developmental state or retreat from transformation, but to strengthen state capacity, correct weaknesses and ensure public resources serve the common good. The true measure of fiscal progress is whether stability translates into reliable services, productive investment and greater opportunity in our homes, streets and workplaces. By consolidating the gains of its fiscal and economic policies while advancing social justice and inclusive growth, the ANC-led government can strengthen public trust and help build a more equal, prosperous and united South Africa.

Dr Bejani Chauke *is a member of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress.*



Algorithms Against Democracy: How Digital Platforms Are Being Weaponized in Post-ICJ South Africa

By **GOMOLEMO MOTHIBI**



SOUTH AFRICA went to the International Court of Justice on 29 December 2023 to enforce the 1948 Genocide Convention and on 26 January 2024, the ICJ ordered provisional measures requiring Israel to take all measures within its power to prevent acts prohibited under the Convention in Gaza. It was a legal milestone that reaffirmed the constitutional values that the ANC has championed over the past 30 years of human rights, equality, justice and solidarity with oppressed peoples.

In the months since that ICJ order, South African social media has increasingly been flooded with fear-mongering narratives about a purported *"Islamic takeover."* There is no such takeover. Yet internet search engines and social media platforms continue to amplify content that reinforces prejudice, fuels Islamophobia and undermines the social cohesion painstakingly built through three decades of democracy. This phenomenon raises urgent questions about the role of digital platforms and the algorithms that determine what millions of people see every day.

How the Algorithm Becomes a Political Weapon

Those opposed to South Africa's progressive constitutional order understand that overt appeals to apartheid nostalgia have little resonance in contemporary South Africa. Instead, the strategy is more subtle. First, harmful stereotypes are reproduced and amplified, particularly those portraying the ANC-led government as irredeemably chaotic, corrupt and incapable of governing effectively or securing its borders. Second, Islamophobic content is circulated through videos, posts and articles alleging that mosques are funded by foreign extremists, or that Muslim communities in Durban and Cape Town pose some form of demographic threat.

Facebook and other social media platforms routinely claim to uphold community standards and protect users from harmful content. Yet unfounded claims of a looming "Islamic takeover" continue to circulate widely. If community standards are genuinely applied consistently, then coordinated campaigns targeting a religious minority should receive the same scrutiny afforded to other forms of discriminatory content.

Their continued visibility raises legitimate questions about the effectiveness and consistency of platform moderation systems.

Economic Anxiety and the Politics of Fear

The weaponisation of social fears is not unique to South Africa. Recent developments in several European countries demonstrate how legitimate economic grievances can be transformed into cultural and religious panic.

Across countries such as France, Italy and others, public protests often emerged in response to rising living costs, economic insecurity, stagnating wages, unemployment and declining standards of living. Citizens took to the streets demanding economic relief, better governance and more equitable economic outcomes. Yet over time, public discourse in many

instances shifted away from the structural causes of economic hardship and increasingly focused on immigration, border control, national identity and Islam.

The Lessons of History: Propaganda Before Persecution

History demonstrates that social division does not emerge in a vacuum. Before discrimination becomes institutionalised and before violence becomes normalised, there is often a sustained campaign of propaganda aimed at portraying a particular group as dangerous, alien or undeserving of equal citizenship.

In Nazi Germany, the regime of Adolf Hitler mastered the use of mass communication as a political weapon. Through newspapers, radio broadcasts, films and public messaging campaigns, Jewish people were systematically portrayed as threats to German society, the economy and national security. Propaganda was not simply intended to persuade. It sought to normalise prejudice, isolate a minority community and gradually make discrimination appear acceptable. By the time the world confronted the horrors of the Holocaust, years of relentless propaganda had already conditioned public attitudes.

A similar pattern emerged during the Rwandan Genocide of 1994. Extremist media outlets used radio broadcasts and other communication platforms to disseminate falsehoods, deepen ethnic tensions and dehumanise Tutsis. Repetition, disinformation and fear-based messaging helped create an environment in which violence could be justified and eventually unleashed on a catastrophic scale.



The narrative that Muslims are *"taking over"* South Africa mirrors this dangerous logic. It constructs an imagined threat, casts suspicion on an entire religious community and encourages distrust between citizens who have lived together peacefully for generations. Whether directed against Jews in Europe, Tutsis in Rwanda or Muslims in contemporary societies, the mechanism remains the same: manufacture fear to generate political resentment.

Legislation That Is Being Undermined and Broken

Nothing illustrates the tension between South African law and global technology platforms more clearly than the manner in which harmful online content continues to circulate despite an extensive legislative framework designed to protect social cohesion.

First, Section 16(2) of the Constitution makes clear that freedom of expression does not extend to propaganda for war, incitement of imminent violence, or the advocacy of hatred based on race, ethnicity, gender or religion that constitutes incitement to cause harm.

Second, the Films and Publications Act 65 of 1996, as amended by the Films and Publications Amendment Act of 2019, prohibits the distribution through any medium, including the internet and social media, of content amounting to propaganda for war, incitement of imminent violence or hate speech. In March 2024, the Film and Publication Board further cautioned against the dissemination of misinformation and disinformation capable of inciting violence or spreading hate speech, particularly during electoral periods.

Defending the Democratic Project

The ANC's democratic project has, for three decades, sought to build a non-racial, non-sexist society in which every person enjoys equal dignity and protection under the law, regardless of race, religion, gender, language or background.

That project now confronts new challenges in the digital age. Unlike previous threats, these do not always arrive through legislation, police power or organised political movements. They often emerge through algorithms, recommendation engines and coordinated online campaigns capable of shaping public opinion at unprecedented speed and scale.

The same technologies that can be used to inform and connect citizens can also be used to divide them. If South Africans allow digital platforms to become vehicles for racism, Islamophobia and social division, we risk surrendering hard-won democratic gains to forces that thrive on polarisation.

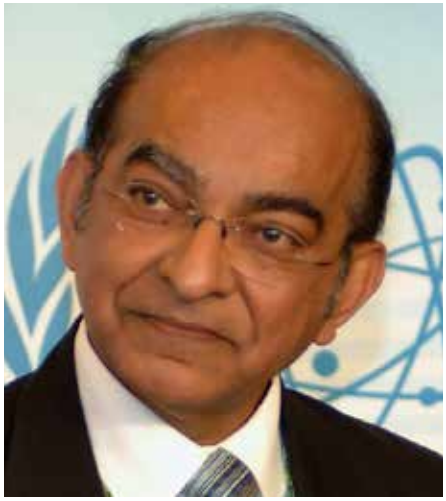
Gomolemo Mothibi *is a co-founder of the Maftowm Book Club. She writes in her personal capacity.*

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

31 October–6 November 2026

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

31 October 1939
Abdul Minty born



On 31 October 1933, Abdul Samad Minty was born in Hartebeesfontein, and left the country in 1958 for Britain to further his studies, graduating with an MSc in Economics and International Relations at the University College in London. A tireless campaigner against apartheid, Minty worked for the International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, which provided support, especially legal defense to liberation movements from the region; and between 1962 and 1995 he was the Honorary Secretary of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement. Minty played an important role in lobbying the International Olympic Committee in 1963 for the suspension of the South African Olympic Committee from the Olympics. In 1969 he published his study on the defence strategy of the apartheid government in South Africa; which helped the Anti-Apartheid Movement to campaign for the termination of the Simonstown Agreement between South Africa and Britain on the defence of the seas around Southern Africa. After 1994, Minty was appointed as the Deputy Director-General for Multilateral Affairs in the Department of Foreign Affairs, a position he held till 2004 during which he steered South Africa's new membership of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Commonwealth. On 12 September 2008 South Africa nominated Minty for the post of Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and his nomination was endorsed by the African Union, although he did not garner enough votes for the position. Ambassador Minty continued to represent South Africa on the board of this body, including serving as a member of Troika Group until May 2009.

31 October 1939
Ali Farka Touré born

Malian musician and amongst the best African instrumentalist, Ali Ibrahim "Farka" Touré was born in Timbuktu on this day. He is a trailblazer of Desert Blues genre that combines North African folk music with other contemporary styles. Touré toured the world and won his first Grammy for his 1994 collaboration, Talking Timbuktu with Ry Cooder. He then retreated to his home town of Niafunke, on the banks of the Niger river in north-west Mali, where he devoted his time to farming



and his role as the local mayor, spending the money he earned from his albums on irrigation and development schemes that transformed the region, making it self-sufficient for food. The musical icon passed away from bone cancer in 2006.

31 October 1959
First television station goes on air in Nigeria

The first television service in sub-Saharan Africa, the Western Nigeria Television goes on air in Ibadan, Nigeria on this day. South Africa only got television on air in 1976.

31 October 1996
Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act passed

The South African National Assembly passes the Choice on Termination of Pregnancy (CTOP) Act. The law gives women a choice to terminate pregnancies on request within the first twelve weeks of pregnancy. It also

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provides for abortion under specified circumstances within the thirteenth week through to the twentieth week, and under very limited circumstances beyond that point. The Act, a critical milestone for gender equality, secured all South African women the right to make decisions about reproduction and according to their individual beliefs. Review of national data indicates that abortion mortality dropped by more than 90% between 1994 and 2001.

31 October 2020

Abdelmoumen Dam dries up

As climate change ravages the continent least responsible for emissions, Morocco's Abdelmoumen Dam, an essential source of water for the Souss-Massa region, has virtually dried up, at 1% capacity.

1 November 1910

Construction starts on Union Building

As the Union of South Africa was formed between the two British colonies and the Boer Republics, construction started in Pretoria on a new capital, and the construction of its seat, the Union Buildings, was completed in 1913.

1 November 1930

Statue of Menelik II unveiled in Addis Ababa



The statue of Abyssinian Emperor Menelik II, who defeated the Italian invaders in Adwa, was unveiled in the city Addis Ababa, the day before the coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie. Each year on the anniversary of the Battle of Adwa, Selassie would lay a wreath beneath the statue.

1 November 1954

Algerian War of Independence starts



On the 1 November 1954, small units of Algerians organized by Front de Liberation National (FLN) attacked government buildings. The liberation struggle was kicked off by a broadcast made by FLN in Nasser's Egypt. The French's conquest of Algeria started in 1830 and by 1848 Algeria was annexed as three French departments. The Algerian war began in 1954 and lasted until 1962. During the war over one million Algerians lost their lives.

1 November 1985

The World of Can Themba published

The World of Can Themba, a collection of the South African writer's short stories about life under apartheid was published by Ravan Press as part of its Staffrider series, 17 years after Themba's death.

1 November 1995

First non-racial local government elections take place



South Africa's first non-racial elections for municipalities was held on 1 and 2 November 1995, after the national and provincial elections of 1994 that heralded in a democratic country. As a result of civic and community struggles, a National Local Government Negotiation Forum was set up, negotiated the Local Government Transition Act in 1993, which saw the inclusion of local government as a third sphere of government, and laying the foundation for the local government elections on 1 November 1995. KZN held its local government elections the next year in March 1996

1 November 2001

Apartheid Museum opens

The Apartheid Museum near Gold Reef City in Johannesburg, chronicling the rise and fall of apartheid, is opened.



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2 November 1930
Haile Selassie crowned Emperor of Ethiopia



Emperor Selassie played an important role in the nation-formation of Ethiopia. His served as advisor and heir apparent in the court, before ascending to this position. He played an important role in Ethiopia joining the League of Nations (in 1923), in leading the resistance against Italian invasion in 1929, the creation of national institutions such as Ethiopian Airlines (1945) and the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) with Addis Ababa as its capital in 1963. Selassie was disposed as Emperor in 1974 by Mengistu Haile Mariam.

2 November 1932
Author Ernesto Lara Filho born

Filho was born in Benguela, Angola and published several books and poetry collections. He was a founder of the Association of Angolan Writer, and was arrested by the Portuguese authorities for his pro-independence activities.

2 November 1951
Sipho Hotstix Mabuse born

Musician and record producer was born in Soweto. His music combined elements of funk, soul and pop, with songs in isiZulu,



English and SeSotho. He produced huge South African hits like ***Burn Out*** and ***Disco Shangaan*** in the 1980s, and went on to produce other big South African names.

2 November 1995
Magnus Malan stands trial for murder and hit squads

Former South African Defence Minister, General Magnus Malan and nineteen others were charged with murder and for having established hit squads to destabilize South Africa before the end of apartheid. They were further charged for the 1987 massacre of thirteen people in Durban's Kwamakutha township.

2 November 2007
Actor Henry Cele passed on

Henry Cele, revered actor, was known for *"his chilling portrayal"* of the Zulu King, Shaka in the



1985 mini-series, ***Shaka Zulu***; landing Cele the role after he played King Shaka in a stage drama. He became famous for this role internationally, and went on to act in international and local films, such as ***The Last Samurai***, ***Ghost*** and others. He was born on 30 January 1949 in KwaMashu, Durban

2 November 2019
South Africa wins Rugby World Cup

For the third time since the dawn of democracy, the Springboks beat England 32-12 to win the Rugby World Cup in Yokohama, Japan. The team was led by its first black captain, Siya Kolisi. The Springboks were crowned world champions in 1995 and 2007, all in a twelve year cycle.



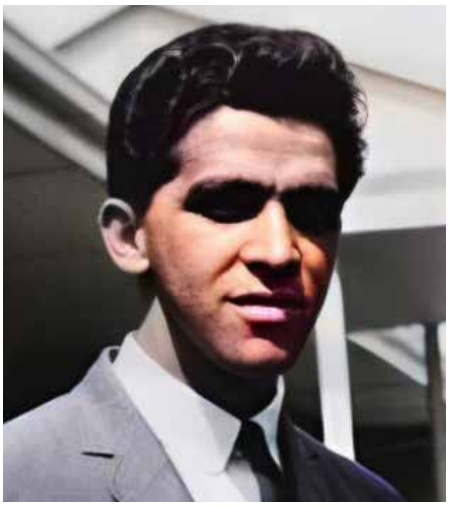
3 November 1915
Landmark Meikles Hotel opens

Harare's landmark Meikless Hotel opens its doors, an imposing stone building surrounded by balconies in the centre of the capital city.

3 November 1941
Ahmed Timol is born

Ahmed Timol was born in Breyten Mpumalanga on this day. He grew up in Roodepoort and trained as a teacher. In 1964 he attended the funeral of Suliman 'Babla' Saloojee who had died in

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detention. This influenced him to join the liberation movement. He went for political training abroad in 1969, training with Thabo Mbeki and Anne Nicholson. In February 1970 he returned to the country and went underground. He was arrested at a roadblock and 4 days later, on the 27th Oct 1971, died at the hands of the security police at the infamous John Vorster Square.

3 November 1955
Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka born

Educationist, gender activist and former ANC NEC member, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, who served as UN Women Executive Director, and former deputy president and minister of South Africa, was born on this day in Claremont, Durban.



3 November 1964
Brenda Fassie born



Brenda Nokuzola Fassie, multi hit music phenomenon was born in Langa, Cape Town on this day. The daughter of a pianist, Brenda began singing to her mother's accompaniment and already at the age of five was part of her band The Tiny Tots. After moving to Soweto, over a career that spanned three decades, she sold millions of albums. MaBrr was fiercely independent and able to reinvent herself, despite difficult public and personal odds. She passed on in 2004 at the age of 39.

3 November 2017
Nutzy Peanut butter launched

Nigeria's first locally produced peanut butter, Nutzy Peanut butter hits the country's store shelves. The product hopes to give local groundnut farmers, who hitherto exported their product unprocessed, new markets. In 2022, the Lagos Food Bank partnered with Nutzy Peanuts to feed over 250,000 pupils in schools as part of its Zero Hunger campaign.

3 November 2021
Mohamed Mbougar Sarr wins Prix Goncourt

The Senegalese author became the first black author and first writer from sub-Saharan Africa to win the Prix Goncourt, France oldest and most prestigious literary prize for his novel, ***The Most Secret Memory of Men***.

4 November 1922
Discovery of King Tutankhamen's tomb in Egypt

Archeologist Howard Carter and team searched for years in Egypt's Valley of the Kings for the tomb, known only through rumour. The discovery of the tomb on 4 November 1922 of King Tutankhamen, who became pharaoh at the age of nine and died around 1352 B.C. at age 19, was found mostly intact. Items from the tomb are exhibited in Egypt's National Museum in Cairo. *(https://www.thoughtco.com/tomb-of-king-tut-discovered-1779242)*

5 November 1987
Govan Mbeki released from Robben Island



After 23 years in prison, Govan Mbeki, a member of the ANC National Executive Committee and Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) High Command, was released from Robben Island. His release followed a call for all political prisoners to be freed, as apartheid was dying. Upon his release the government restricted him to the magisterial district of Port Elizabeth until November 1989. In February 1990, when the ANC

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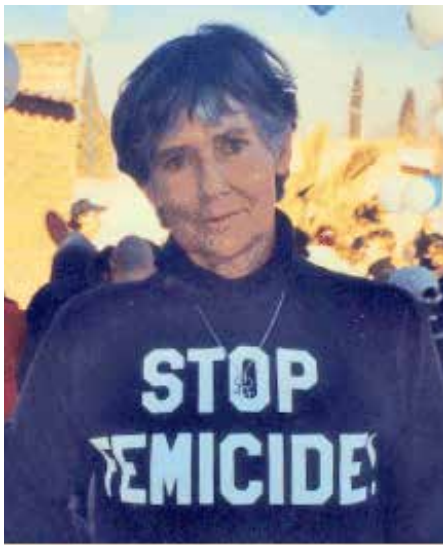
and other liberation movements were unbanned, he resumed duty on the ANC's NEC as well as the Central Committee of the SACP. A teacher and intellectual, while on Robben Island, Mbeki wrote many songs and manuscripts, which were smuggled out of prison. These writings are housed at the University of Fort Hare, as the ***Govan Mbeki Collection***. In 1954 Govan Mbeki joined the editorial team of the political newspaper, the *New Age*. He was sentenced to life imprisonment during the 1964 Rivonia Trial with Nelson Mandela, Ahmed Kathrada, Dennis Goldberg and others. In 1980 he received the **Isithwalandwe Seaparankwe**, the highest award within the ANC, for his dedication to securing freedom and democracy in South Africa. Govan Mbeki passed away on 30 August 2001 at the age of 91.

6 November 1929
Ray Alexander, trade unionist arrives in South Africa



Ray Alexander Simons nee Alexandrowich arrives in South Africa from Latvia where she was born on 12 January 1913. After her arrival, she realized that many workers in Cape Town and the rest of the country were not organized into unions. She became involved in the labour movement by organizing Black workers' unions in the Western Cape. After joining the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) she took part in the anti-pass campaign. Ray Alexander in 1941 founded the Food and Canning Workers' Union (FCWU) in the Western Cape; by 1945 the Food and Canning union obtained a wage determination for the fish canning industry and in the 1950s, members of FCWU played a leading role in the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU). In April 1954, Ray Alexander together with Helen Joseph, Lilian Ngoyi and Florence Mkhize helped found the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) which fought for women's rights. She was issued with a banning order in 1954 which forced her to resign from FEDSAW. Ray Alexander was forced into exile where she continued to support the struggle against apartheid. Between 1981 and 1983 Ray Alexander wrote a series of articles for the *African Communist* under various pseudonyms and in 1986, she was elected life president of FAWU. She died on 12 September 2004 at the age of 91.

6 November 1938
Feminist Diana Russell born



Diana E.H. Russell was born in Cape Town on 6 November 1938. Her mother was British and her father South African. After completing her bachelor's degree at the University of Cape Town, Russell left for Britain. In 1963, she moved to the United States where she completed her PhD at Harvard University, focusing on sociology and the study of revolution. Russell is known for her research on sexual violence against women. She has written books on the subject and was the first person to offer Women's Studies. In 1963, Russell joined the Liberal Party of South Africa and was arrested while participating in a peaceful protest in Cape Town.

6 November 1962
United Nations condemns Apartheid



The U.N. General Assembly adopted a resolution condemning South Africa for its apartheid policies and recommended economic sanctions. The United Nations Special Committee Against Apartheid (originally called the Special Committee on the Policies of Apartheid of the Government of the Republic of South Africa) was established by the General Assembly, under resolution 1761 (XVII) of November 6, 1962, to keep the racial policies of the South African Government

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under review throughout the year. It began its work in April 1963. The Committee worked to promote the international campaign against apartheid under the auspices of the United Nations. Its primary concern was to press for effective international sanctions against the South African regime, arrange assistance to the victims of apartheid and to the liberation movements; and to ensure constant publicity to the inhumanity of apartheid and the resistance of the people in order to secure widest support for action. The Special Committee Against Apartheid elected African Ambassadors from member states as its chairperson. The Chairs were: Diallo Telli (Guinea), 1963-1964; Achkar Marof (Guinea), 1964-1968; Abdulrahim Abby Farah (Somalia), 1969-1972; Edwin Ogebe Ogbu (Nigeria), 1972-1975; Madame Jeanne Martin Cisse (Guinea), 1975-1976; Leslie O. Harriman (Nigeria), 1976-1979; B. Akporode Clark (Nigeria), 1979-1981; Alhaji Yusuff Maitama-Sule (Nigeria), 1981-1983; Major-General J.N. Garba (1984-1990); Ibrahim A. Gambari (Nigeria), 1990-1994. E.S. Reddy served the Special Committee Against Apartheid from 1963-1984 first as Principal Secretary of the Committee and later as Director of the Centre Against Apartheid.

6 November 1964

Vuyisile Mini, executed by the Apartheid regime

Vuyisile Mini (1920-1964) a trade unionist and uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK) combatant was hanged for his role in the MK and anti-apartheid resistance. As a member of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), he was responsible for the organisation of metal workers at a time when the government had increased



its repressive measures against Black trade unions. He became the first African National Congress (ANC) member to be executed by the government. Vuyisile Mini was hanged together with Wilson Khayinga and Zinakile Mkaba. After his 1964 execution, Mini was secretly buried in a pauper's grave at Rebecca Street Cemetery in Pretoria. The bodies of Mini, Khayinga and Mkaba were exhumed in 1998 and Mini was given a heroes funeral at the Emlotheni Memorial Park in New Brighton township in Port Elizabeth. At the time of his death, Mini was married, and had six children. His daughter, Nomkhosi Mini also joined MK and survived a March 1979 South African Defence Force attack on the Novo Catengue camp in Angola. She was shot dead by members of the notorious Vlakplaas hit squad during the 1985 Maseru raid. Seven members of the Security branch, including its then deputy chief were refused amnesty for this killing.

6 November 1964

Names of 303 banned persons published

A government notice published on 6 November 1964 gave the names of 303 persons on whom banning notices under the General Laws Amendment Act of 1963 (the so-called 90 Day Act), consisting largely of amendments to the Suppression of Communism Act, had been served up to 30 April 1964. Of that total, 68 were listed Communists, but 235 were not. Amongst this last group have been Liberal Party members. The strict security legislation aroused huge protests. By the end of 1964, 671 persons had been charged with contravention of the security laws and the campaign of violence to overthrow the South African government had almost been broken. Nearly all the revolutionary leaders had either been banned, jailed or fled the country.

6 November 1982

Paul Biya becomes Cameroon president

After Ahmadou Ahidjo resigned as president of Cameroon, he was replaced by Paul Biya, the serving Prime Minister. Biya is the second-longest ruling head of state and the oldest president in Africa.



INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

31 October–6 November 2026

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



31 October

World Cities Day

World Cities Day is designated by the UN to promote global awareness of urbanization and sustainable cities. For the first time in history, there are more people living in urban areas (55%) than in rural areas; and this figure is set to rise to 68% by 2050. The world's most populated cities are Tokyo (37.4 million), Delhi (29.4 million) and Shanghai (26.3 million) inhabitants. Cairo, Egypt is the most populated African city, with 20.4 million inhabitants, followed by Lagos, Nigeria (14.36 million) and Kinshasa, DRC (14.34 million) inhabitants.

1 November

Africa Youth Day

The 1st of November was proclaimed and instituted as Africa Youth Day on the occasion of the African Youth Charter adoption in the Executive Council Decision of the Banjul Summit 2006. The day recognises a unified voice of young people, which aims to increase awareness of, commitment to and investment in youth; increase and strengthen youth participation and partnerships, as well as increase intercultural exchanges and understanding among young people. Youth are the continent's biggest resources and are at the centre of the development agenda. With the immense potential of over 420 million young people aged between 15 and 35 years (35% of Africa's population), some of the ways to develop their capacities and reap the fruits is to strengthen relationships with youth, and equip them with the spaces needed to amplify their voices to audiences of influence while confronting the existing barriers that compromise meaningful youth engagement.



THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

1 November
World Vegan Day
Vegans are people who eat only a plant-based diet; they do not eat any meat, fish or meat products like eggs or milk. A vegan diet is high in fiber, low in cholesterol and good for the environment because of the large amount of resources, including water it takes to raise livestock to keep up with our meat consumption.

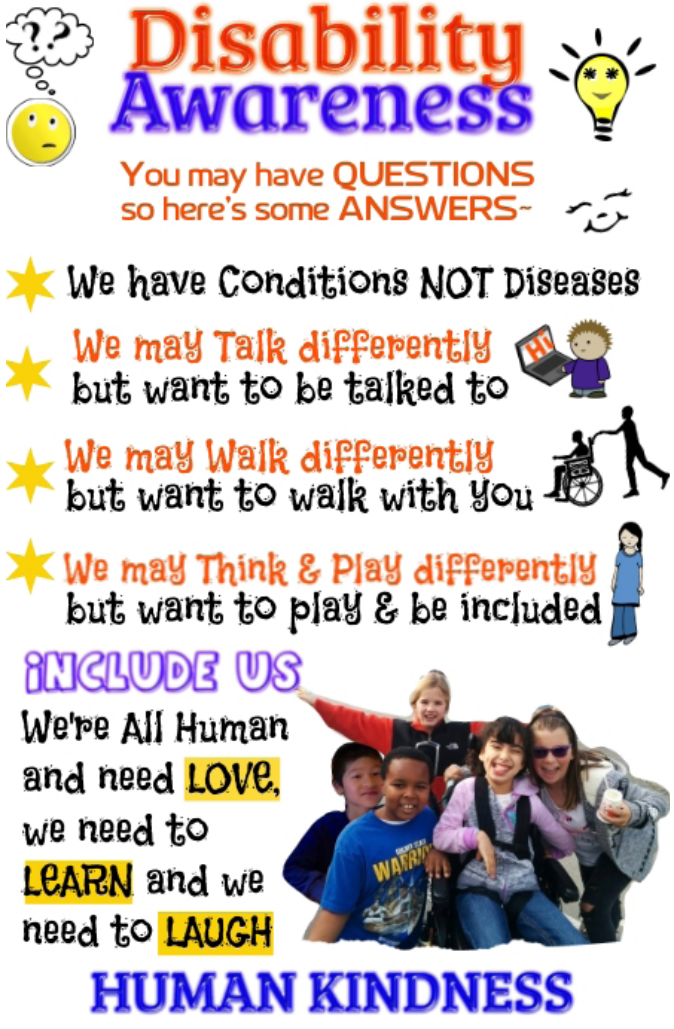
2 November
International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists



Since 2006, according to UNESCO, over a thousand journalists have been killed for reporting the news and bringing information to the public, on average one death every four days, with only one in ten cases where the killers are convicted. Impunity leads to more killings and is often a symptom of worsening conflict and the breakdown of law and judicial systems. Governments, civil society, the media, and everyone concerned to uphold the rule of law are being asked to join in the global efforts to end impunity. The day is commemorated in line with the UN Resolution adopted in 2013 which urged Member States to implement definite measures countering the present culture of impunity for crimes against journalists. The date was chosen in commemoration of the assassination of two French journalists in Mali on 2 November 2013. On the occasion of International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists (IDEI), UNESCO will roll out a global advocacy campaign under the theme ***"THREATS EVOLVE. IMPUNITY ENDURES."*** New technologies and weapons are changing the ways attacks against journalists are carried out. Yet one thing remains unchanged: those who kill journalists are rarely held accountable. In the Middle East, Israel has been cited as being responsible for the killing of several journalists, with some accusing them of covering up the killings.

2 November
All Saints Day
All Saints Day or the Day of the Dead have been celebrated since 900 AD across the world. On this day families and others visit gravesides and pay respect to their departed loved ones by cleaning their graves.

3 November – 3 December
National Disability Awareness Month
Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. The Disability Awareness Month offers an opportunity for every single person and institution to remove these barriers and to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities through concrete action.



5 November
World Tsunami Day
Though rare, tsunamis are among the most devastating natural disasters. They know no coastal borders. Coastal communities – often concentrated

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

in low-lying and highly populated areas – are the most potentially vulnerable to coastal hazards including tsunamis, with heavy human and economic losses. International cooperation is key for deeper political and public understanding; as well as involvement in reducing our risks from these coastal natural hazards. In December 2015, the United Nations General Assembly designated 5 November as World Tsunami Awareness Day to promote a global culture of tsunami awareness. A tsunami is a large ocean wave that is caused by sudden motion on the ocean floor, as a result of an earthquake, a powerful volcanic eruption, or an underwater landslide. The strongest recorded tsunami was in 1958 in Lituya Bay, Alaska reaching waves nearly half a kilometres high, resulting in five deaths. The worst recorded was however the 2004 Asian tsunami of 26 December 2004, affecting 13 countries and causing 230,000 human deaths.

6 November

International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict

Though mankind has always counted its war casualties in terms of dead and wounded soldiers and civilians, destroyed cities and livelihoods, the environment has often remained the unpublicized victim of war. Water wells have been polluted, crops torched, forests cut down, soils poisoned, and animals killed to gain military advantage. Furthermore, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) found that over the last 60 years, at least 40 percent of all internal conflicts have been linked to the exploitation of natural resources, whether high-value resources such as timber, diamonds, gold and oil, or scarce resources such as fertile land and water. Conflicts involving natural resources have also been found to be twice as likely to relapse. The United Nations attaches great importance to ensuring that action on the environment is part of conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding strategies – because there can be no durable peace if the natural resources that sustain livelihoods and ecosystems are destroyed

6 November

World Saxophone Day

The saxophone is part of the wood instruments, designed in 1846 by Belgian Adolphe Sax. It gets its sound from the vibration of a single reed, and can be made of brass, silver, copper, etc. Famous African saxophone players include Manu Dibango from Cameroon (who died of COVID-19 this year), South Africans Kippie Moeketsi and Basil 'Mannenberg' Coetzee, Ethiopian Getachew Mekurya, and of course African American Charlie Parker.

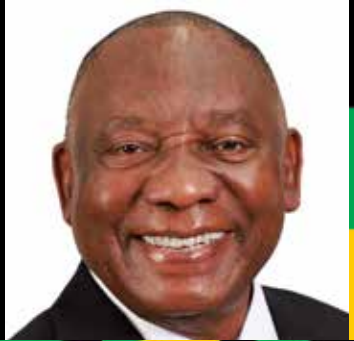


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4 NOVEMBER

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