



ANC TODAY

VOICE OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

22 - 28 November 2024

Conversations with the
President



The stand-off at Stilfontein must be resolved peacefully and safely

By **PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

AS a Government, we have made a clear determination to deal with acts of criminality, whether they be cash-in-transit heists, extortion, illegal mining, gang violence, or related crimes.

Illegal mining is a form of criminality that has caused a great deal of anger and anguish in communities. To address this problem, we set up an illegal mining task force involving various parts of the security cluster. We also deployed personnel from the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) to support the work of the police.

For over a month now, the South African Police Service (SAPS) and other Government agencies has been working to resolve a sit-

uation of several hundred illegal miners refusing to surface from an abandoned gold mine in Stilfontein in the North West.

The miners, who entered the mine to conduct illegal mining operations, face arrest. The operation forms part of the nationwide **Operation Vala Umgodi**, which continues to register gains in cracking down on illicit mining activities across the country.

Law-enforcement authorities have information that some of the miners may be heavily armed. It is well-established that illegal miners are recruited by criminal gangs and form part of wider organised crime syndicates.

The hazardous nature of illicit

and unregulated mining poses considerable risk in terms of the presence of explosives, the inhalation of toxic fumes and the possible collapse of unstable mine shafts. This endangers not only the illegal miners, but also our police and other law enforcement agencies.

Because of the many hazards such an operation poses, law enforcement agencies have been negotiating with the illegal miners since the stand-off began to get them to the surface and to safety. Police, mine safety experts and emergency and rescue personnel remain at the scene. The situation is precarious, uncertain and potentially volatile.

As part of the operation, police

CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PRESIDENT

had closed off the entrances the illegal miners use to transport their supplies underground. This has generated a great deal of public debate about the rights of illegal miners.

Acts of violence and intimidation of communities by illegal miners is well-documented. Some illegal miners have been implicated in serious and violent crimes, including murder and gang rape. Many are in the country illegally.

Illicit mining activity costs our economy billions of rands in lost export income, royalties and taxes.

Violence between rival gangs over the spoils of illicit mining has spilled over into surrounding communities and has cost a number of lives.

The hazardous materials used by illegal miners endanger the health of neighbouring communities. Last year, 16 people, including three children, were killed in an explosion in Boksburg in Gauteng linked to gas used by illegal miners to process gold. This was just one of many such accidents linked to illegal mining activity that has claimed the lives of both min-



ers and innocent civilians.

We need to be clear that the activities of these miners are illegal. They pose a risk to our economy, communities and personal safety.

The Stilfontein mine is a crime scene where the offence of illegal mining is being committed. It is standard police practice everywhere to secure a crime scene and to block off escape routes that enable criminals to evade arrest.

In doing so, the police must take

great care to ensure that lives are not put at risk and that the rights of all people are respected.

So far, more than 1,000 miners have surfaced and been arrested. Those who resurface are assessed by medical personnel on site. Those in good health are detained and will be processed according to the law. Those who require medical care will be taken to hospital under police guard.

The police will carry out their duties and responsibilities to bring the illegal miners to the surface safely. They will do all they can to reduce the risk of harm to the miners and to our law enforcement officials.

We will continue to work with the mining industry to ensure they take responsibility for rehabilitating or closing mines that are no longer operational.

As a country committed to the rule of law and dedicated to upholding the human rights of all, we will continue to work towards a peaceful resolution of the stand-off at Stilfontein.



CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PRESIDENT



REMARKS OF **PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA** AT THE **G20 CLOSING AND HANDOVER CEREMONY** OF THE G20 LEADERS' SUMMIT IN RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

IT is an honour to accept, on behalf of the people of South Africa, the responsibility of the Presidency of the G20 for the next year.

I congratulate President Lula da Silva and Brazil on a most successful G20 Presidency.

I wish to thank my good friend of many years, President Lula, for his inspirational leadership.

We commend Brazil for elevating the participation of social and civil society groups in the work of the G20 by convening the first ever G20 Social Summit.

South Africa firmly believes that civil society serves as a bridge between the G20 leaders and the people who have the greatest in-

terest in their deliberations.

We will continue with this innovative platform for engagement during our Presidency.

This is in line with our own traditions as South Africa to involve civil society formations in all matters of importance to the people of the country.

It was through the actions of civil society formations in South Africa that we were able to end apartheid and achieve our democracy.

Through its Presidency, Brazil has effectively contributed to 'Building a Just World and a Sustainable Planet'.

The work undertaken throughout the Brazilian Presidency has ad-

dressed some of the most pressing global challenges of our time.

We welcome the heightened focus on the development agenda through the lens of developing economy countries.

South Africa expresses its gratitude to Brazil and the rest of the G20 membership for the opportunity to build upon the excellent work led by Brazil.

We applaud all G20 members, led by Brazil, in finalising the G20 Rio de Janeiro Leaders' Declaration, which outlines the actions we must take together to build a better world.

We appreciate that once sufficient consensus was reached on the Declaration, those members

CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PRESIDENT

who still had points of disagreement did not stand in the way of the adoption of the Declaration.

As South Africa, we undertake to advance the work of the G20 towards achieving greater global economic growth and sustainable development.

We will work to ensure that no one is left behind.

The world is faced with severe challenges and crises. These are exacerbated by the fragility of global solidarity, crippling underdevelopment and deepening inequality.

Yet, throughout the years of its existence, the G20 has always sought to confront global challenges head on.

Through partnerships across society, and by reigniting our common humanity, South Africa will seek to harness global collective energy to confront these challenges.

South Africa has adopted the G20 Presidency theme of “**Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability**”.

In line with this theme, we will seek to strengthen and advance our common pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Pact for the Future.

The achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 must be a priority for the next five Presidencies of the G20.

Through our G20 Presidency, we will seek to strengthen solidarity.

Whether it is in Gaza, Sudan or Ukraine, we must all stand in solidarity with those people who are facing hardship and suffering.



We must stand in solidarity with those countries that are most vulnerable to pandemics and other global public health emergencies.

At this moment, many countries in Africa are experiencing worsening m-pox outbreaks that call for urgent international action.

Through our G20 Presidency, we will work to tackle inequality, which is a major threat to global economic growth and stability.

The disparities in wealth and development within and between countries is unjust and unsustainable.

These disparities show themselves in the lack of predictable and sustainable financing and capacity building for climate action.

Inequality is manifested in the crippling debt that has forced many countries to forgo their developmental programmes to service exorbitant debt.

South Africa’s Presidency will be the first time an African country has presided over the G20. We will use this moment to bring the

development priorities of the African Continent and the Global South more firmly onto the agenda of the G20.

South Africa’s G20 Presidency will advance three high-level priorities, which will find expression in the work of the Sherpa and Finance Tracks.

The **first** of these priorities is **Inclusive Economic Growth, Industrialisation, Employment and Inequality**.

The **second** priority is **Food Security**.

The **third** priority is **Artificial Intelligence and Innovation for Sustainable Development**.

South Africa looks forward to working with all G20 members and invited guests.

We will continue to work with partner countries and multilateral institutions.

Approximately 130 meetings of the G20 will take place across our country, and I am honoured to welcome you all to South Africa for the year ahead.

THE G20 PRESIDENCY: INCLUSIVE MULTILATERALISM

■ By **GEORGE MAGOMA**

THE African National Congress's international policy and its approach to internationalism and inclusive multilateralism is being brought to the hilt, catapulting it to the helm of the G20 as it assumes its leadership.

Since 1994, and through the solid path laid by President Oliver Tambo in mobilizing the international community, these efforts are finally yielding positive results, discarding SA's odious shell as an international pariah by assuming its role in the community of nations.

This is a quantum leap from isolation, from exclusion to cooperation and progressive internationalism, to pursue a new order



through a policy of partnerships and collaboration for mutual benefit and reciprocal growth, an end to wars, non-aggression and non-alignment, including the resolution of conflicts by peaceful means.

In the midst of the raging war between Ukraine and Russia, the Sudan crisis, the occupation of the Western Sahara by Morocco, the shelling of Palestine by the genocidal Israel, NATO expansionism, the BRICS alliance, the African Union Agenda 2063, there is a clear and discernible strengthening of the Global South and its attendant trade relations.

This includes Africa's economic growth path and South Africa's lobby for Africa's representation and permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council, where South Africa neatly carved itself a place internationally. A world gravitating towards a new order, from imperialism, protectionism, depravation, famine, diseases, political and economic subjugation, extractive capitalism to mutual growth, partnerships and cooperation.

“On the international front we are at a point where political, military, cultural and economic sanctions have been imposed. It is true that several Western countries have tried to undermine the sanctions movement. Nevertheless, the imposition of sanctions in the face of outright hostility from some countries, is a victory of no small measure given the crucial role of the international factor in our struggle. We take this opportunity to thank the international community for standing solidly behind us. In particular, we thank the anti-apartheid movement, individuals and governments who supported us all these years.”

Oliver Tambo, ANC President

CURRENT AFFAIRS

This is a monumental moment to savour, with the country's flag flying high with pride, reinforcing the potency of internationalism, peace and friendship as advocated by the Freedom Charter. These developments happen in context.

The G20 Summit converged in Brazil under the theme **“Building a Fair World and a Sustainable Planet.”** It was a gathering of nations, world and regional bodies pursuing an agenda of inclusive multilateralism, cooperation and partnerships for the common benefit of humanity and global sustainability.

As this was happening, faraway in Azerbaijan, the world and climate and non-governmental activists met to save the ozone layer and the environment from harm, and the assessment of the commitments of the Paris Agreement.

The Conference of Parties (COP) 29 agenda was a plan for climate action, sustainable targets as set out in the Paris Agreement, the assessment of progress made in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), and the just energy transition.

The G20 Summit took place when the BRICS Summit converged under the theme **“Strengthening Multilateralism For Just Global Development and Security.”** These themes demonstrate the power of partnerships to achieve SDGs in a manner that is collaborative.

Contextualized, properly harnessed and juxtaposed, these themes introduce a new paradigm of cooperation and inclusivity, equality of nations, ushering

a new period of respect for the sovereignty of states, fair and equal trade and commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals. This is in accordance with the pillar and election manifesto priority of a better Africa and a better world.

South Africa's ascendency to the G20 is an opportune and strategic platform to exert its leadership in the realization of the Africa Agenda 2063, Sustainable Development Goals, the National

Development Plan, complementing the BRICS agenda, building a fair world and a sustainable planet, social inclusion and fight against poverty and hunger.

In reaction to the G20 outcomes and the new responsibility on South Africa's shoulders as a leader of the G20 post the Rio de Janeiro Summit the ANC had this to say:

“The ANC proudly welcomes the announcement that South Africa, under the leadership of President



“Since the advent of democracy 30 years ago, South Africa has dedicated great effort and resources towards alleviating poverty and reducing inequality. Through its substantial social protection programmes, our government has provided vital support to millions of South Africans, lifting many out of extreme poverty and ensuring that our communities meet most of their basic needs.

These social protection measures include the provision of free basic services, health care, basic education, higher education, social housing and transport. South Africa is committed to end poverty, malnutrition and hunger in line with our National Development Plan. Food security will be one of the high-level priorities of South Africa's G20 Presidency. As the G20, we need to ensure that the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals remains at the forefront of international financing decisions.”

President Ramaphosa, G20 Summit, Brazil

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Cyril Ramaphosa, will assume the Presidency of the G20 for the year 2025. This historic milestone marks the first time an African nation will lead this important global forum, providing a platform to champion the development priorities of South Africa, the African continent, and the Global South.

The ANC commends President Ramaphosa for his bold and inclusive vision, encapsulated in the theme “**Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability.**” This aligns seamlessly with the ANC’s 2024 Manifesto commitments to create jobs, reduce inequality, and drive inclusive economic growth.

Under this Presidency, South Africa will focus on three critical areas:

- **Inclusive economic growth and industrialisation;**
- **Food security; and**
- **Innovation through artificial intelligence and sustainable development.**

The focus on inclusive economic growth and industrialisation will bring much-needed investment into key sectors such as manufacturing and infrastructure, creating sustainable jobs and driving transformation in communities.

The emphasis on food security will strengthen agriculture, particularly in rural areas, boosting food production and providing opportunities for employment.

Additionally, the prioritisation of artificial intelligence and innovation will prepare South Africans, especially the youth, for future jobs, ensuring they are equipped with the skills needed in a rapidly changing global economy.



Hosting 130 G20 meetings across South Africa will also stimulate local economies, generate tourism opportunities, and showcase South Africa as a global hub for investment and innovation. These engagements will open doors for increased international partnerships and access to funding for critical national projects, ultimately contributing to the upliftment of communities and economic growth.

The G20 Presidency will also focus on advocating for fair financing mechanisms to address the debt burdens faced by many developing countries. This is critical to freeing resources for developmental programmes, which will help reduce poverty and drive job creation across the Global South.

As the gateway to this beloved continent, South Africa will ensure that its G20 Presidency maintains a strong symbiotic relationship with the African Union (AU). This unprecedented opportunity will allow South Africa to champion the development of the African agenda, ensuring that the aspirations of the continent are central to the global discourse. The Presidency provides

a platform to advance priorities such as regional integration, infrastructure development, and sustainable industrialisation, in line with the AU’s Agenda 2063.

The ANC is confident that President Ramaphosa’s leadership will advance South Africa’s commitment to sustainable development, social justice, and building a better future for all.

We call on all South Africans to rally behind this once-in-a-generation opportunity to position our country and continent at the centre of global decision-making and to ensure that the benefits of this Presidency reach every corner of our society.”

South Africa is riding on a wave crest of progressive internationalism and inclusive multilateralism.

This paves the way for a better Africa and a better world.

Indeed, this is a proud moment for the country and the continent go give impetus to development on the soil, exploiting the Africa Continental Free Trade Area and African Development Bank opportunities.

From Hidden Shops of Shame and Horror to Township Titans: Transforming South Africa's SPAZA shops into better inclusive General Dealer Economy

■ By **FAEIZ JACOBS**

THE tragic deaths of children from consuming unsafe food sold in unregulated SPAZA shops have shocked us all, creating outrage and demanding change in the informal food retail sector. These heart breaking events demand immediate action, and President Cyril Ramaphosa's decisive mandate to register all SPAZA shops within 21 working days is an important and critical step toward ensuring consumer safety and fostering a vibrant, inclusive economy. This is a wakeup call that we all must heed!

This crisis surrounding SPAZA shops need us to move away from blaming and complaining to urgent action and immediate accountability. These informal food retail enterprises have not only provided essential goods but also embodied resilience and innovation in underserved and marginalised communities. To safeguard their future, we must address regulatory gaps, ownership patterns, and challenges like extortion while fostering collaboration among local entrepreneurs, foreign nationals, and the private sector. This is a rallying call for all stakeholders – government across all spheres, communities,

and the private sector especially the big 5 food retailers - to support the registration and formalization of SPAZA shops, ensuring their continued contribution to South Africa's economy and society.

Historical Roots: From General Dealers to SPAZA Shops

South Africa's informal and semi-formal food retail sector has deep historical roots. General Dealers – larger, family-run stores often managed by Afrikaans, Indian, African, Greek, Portuguese entrepreneurs – once served as the backbone of township

and rural retail during the 20th century. Known for their personal service and trust-based credit systems, these stores became cornerstones of their communities, offering a wide range of goods from groceries to hardware.

The term “SPAZA” originates from isiZulu, meaning “hidden”, a fitting description of the sector's origins during Apartheid era prohibition of Black ownership of formal businesses. Hidden within homes, they catered to local needs and became symbols of defiance against economic exclusion.



CURRENT AFFAIRS

Post-apartheid, SPAZA shops have evolved from modest corner stores to integral components of township economies. Today, they serve millions of mainly indigent South Africans, providing goods ranging from basic groceries to household necessities. Despite their growth, many SPAZA shops remain informal, operating outside regulatory frameworks and facing significant challenges that threaten their sustainability.

The Economic Significance of SPAZA Shops

South Africa is home to about 100,000 SPAZA shops, with a significant portion operating informally. Many operate outside regulatory frameworks, contributing to health risks, counterfeit food distribution, and unfair competition.

Recent investigations by the Department of Small Business Development (DSBD) highlighted the circulation of counterfeit and unsafe food products, often facilitated by unlicensed SPAZA shops. Compounding the issue, many of these shops are run by undocumented foreign nationals,

which adds layers of complexity to enforcement and compliance. SPAZA shops are more than just food retail outlets; they are pillars of township economies, contributing significantly to local employment and economic activity. Estimates suggest that the informal sector, where SPAZA shops operate, accounts for 30% to 40% of South Africa's annual food expenditure, representing a market value of approximately R178 billion. In recent years, ownership patterns within the SPAZA shop sector have shifted. Challenges Facing SPAZA Shops Despite their contributions, SPAZA shops face numerous challenges that hinder their growth and sustainability:

- **Regulatory Hurdles:** Many SPAZA shops operate without formal registration, leading to issues with compliance, oversight, and access to support services.
- **Health and Safety Concerns:** The recent foodborne illnesses have highlighted the dangers of unregulated operations. Expired and counterfeit goods often find their way into these shops, posing serious risks to consumer health.

- **Intensified Competition:** The influx of foreign-owned SPAZA shops, coupled with the expansion of formal retail chains into townships, has created stiff competition, often disadvantaging local entrepreneurs.
- **Criminal Extortion and Insecurity:** Many shop owners are subjected to extortion by criminal syndicates demanding protection fees. This not only threatens their livelihoods but also destabilizes communities.
- **Supply Chain Inefficiencies:** Small-scale shop owners struggle to access affordable, high-quality stock due to limited economies of scale and the dominance of intermediaries.

The Role of Foreign Nationals

A significant number of shops are now owned and operated by foreign nationals, particularly from countries such as Somalia, Ethiopia, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. While these entrepreneurs have brought some innovation and competitive pricing to the sector, their dominance, monopolistic, unregulated and in some cases exploitative business practises has raised concerns about the exclusion of local South Africans from economic opportunities. The recent death of children resulting from food poisoning has resulted to understandable anger and resentment towards especially these SPAZA shops owned and operated by foreign nationals.

Key challenges linked to this needed shift include:

- **Illicit Trade and Unsafe Products:** Many unregistered shops, regardless of

Foreign national inside his spaza shop



CURRENT AFFAIRS

ownership, sell counterfeit or expired goods, posing severe health risks.

- **Lack of Local Ownership:** South African citizens often struggle to compete due to limited access to affordable stock, training, and infrastructure.
- **Community Tensions:** The dominance of foreign-owned SPAZA shops has sometimes led to xenophobic tensions, exacerbating social divides.

This must change but immediately to foster harmony and mutual growth, we must promote compliance, cooperation and collaboration.

Empowering South Africans to Build and Own Businesses

As we address the challenges within the SPAZA sector, we must also inspire South Africans to embrace entrepreneurship. SPAZA shops are more than small businesses – they are lifelines for communities. By formalizing and supporting these enterprises, we South Africans can unlock their potential to drive inclusive economic growth.

The Department of Small Business Development's efforts to integrate township enterprises into broader supply chains are commendable. However, we need to do more:

- Provide mentorship programmes that connect aspiring entrepreneurs with experienced business leaders.
- Invest in digital literacy to help small businesses leverage e-commerce platforms.
- Foster innovation by encouraging youth-led enterprises in underserved areas.



The Path to a Safer, Inclusive, and Thriving Sector

To transform the SPAZA sector, we must navigate the complex transition from its current state of informality and fragmentation to a regulated, inclusive, and thriving ecosystem. This requires a multi-faceted approach and a coordinated strategy that addresses immediate risks while laying the groundwork for long-term growth.

1. Immediate Actions Why Registration Matters

Mandatory registration of SPASA shops is not just a bureaucratic exercise – it is a critical intervention to:

- **Ensure Food Safety:** Registered shops must comply with health and safety standards, reducing risks to consumers.
- **Protect Consumer Rights:** Licensing ensures accountability and recourse for communities affected by substandard products.
- **Promote Fair Competition:** Registration levels the playing field for local entrepreneurs, reducing the influence of illicit trade.

- **Strengthen Local Economies:** By supporting locally owned businesses, we create jobs and stimulate economic growth.

To transform the current state of SPAZA shops into a vibrant and compliant sector, we must implement a multi-pronged approach:

- **Streamline Registration Processes:** Simplify business licensing through the upcoming Business Licensing Policy and Bill. This is long outstanding. SALGA must expedite simplify by law on business rezoning, registration and compliance. Create centralized databases for township and rural economies to reduce red tape. This is also long overdue.
- **Intergovernmental Collaboration:** Establish Provincial Inspection Teams to monitor compliance. Work with municipalities to enforce bylaws and support local economic development initiatives.

2. Medium-Term Solutions

- **Financial and Non-Financial Support:** Allocate government funding from the R500

CURRENT AFFAIRS



million for South African owned and operated SPAZA Shop Support Programme to provide grants, loans, and infrastructure support and for cold storage, secure premises, and renovations.

- **Training and Digital Tools:** Provide training in inventory management, customer service, and digital payment systems to enhance competitiveness. Offer training in food handling, hygiene, and business skills to build capacity among local entrepreneurs.
- **Strengthen Supply Chains:** Develop partnerships with legitimate suppliers to ensure access to genuine products. Introduce technologies such as barcodes and RFID for product authentication.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Educate communities and shop owners about the dangers of counterfeit goods and the importance of compliance. Promote the role of SPASA shops as community hubs of economic activity.

3. Long-Term Goals

- **Regulatory Reforms:** Simplify licensing processes and implement stronger penalties for non-compliance.
- **Economic Integration:** Link SPAZA shops and General Dealers to local manufacturers and farmers, fostering a more localized supply chain.
- **Collaborative Retail Models:** Encourage partnerships between SPAZA shops, General Dealers, and formal retailers to create synergies and expand market access.

The Role of Communities and the Private Sector

The transformation of SPAZA shops is not solely a government responsibility. Communities and the private sector must play active roles:

Community Support: Encourage local consumers to support registered shops, fostering accountability and economic circulation.

Private sector players, particularly in retail and logistics, are critical

to transforming the informal economy:

- **Stock and Logistics:** Partner with SPAZA shops and General Dealers to provide affordable, high-quality goods and reliable delivery services.
- **Security Solutions:** Work with communities to implement security measures that deter extortion and crime.
- **Corporate Investment:** The private sector must invest in training, infrastructure, and supply chain networks to empower local entrepreneurs. Ensure localization and improve ownership of the entire food value and supply chain.
- **Investment in Innovation:** Fund pilot projects exploring cooperative models, digital tools, and eco-friendly retail practices.

To create a vibrant and sustainable SPAZA sector, we must think beyond traditional approaches. Here are some innovative ideas:

- **SPAZA Franchising:** Develop a franchise model where experienced entrepreneurs

CURRENT AFFAIRS

mentor and support new SPAZA shop owners, ensuring consistency and quality across the sector.

- **Microfinancing Platforms:** Use fintech solutions to provide microloans to aspiring SPAZA owners, with flexible repayment options linked to sales performance.
- **Eco-Friendly Practices:** Promote environmentally sustainable practices, such as solar-powered refrigeration and reduced plastic packaging.
- **Digital Literacy Programmes:** Equip SPAZA owners with the skills to use digital payment systems and e-commerce platforms, enhancing convenience for consumers.
- **Youth Entrepreneurship Programmes:** Engage young South Africans through mentorship and funding opportunities to build a new generation of SPAZA owners.

In the ideal scenario, South Africa's SPAZA shops will be:

- **Safe and Compliant:** Every shop will adhere to health, safety, and licensing standards, ensuring consumer protection.
- **Locally Owned and Inclusive:** The majority of SPAZA shops will be owned and operated by South Africans, with fair opportunities for foreign nationals who comply with regulations.
- **Economically Vibrant:** These shops will serve as anchors of local economies, creating jobs and fostering entrepreneurship.
- **Technologically Advanced:** Leveraging digital tools, SPAZA shops will be integrated into broader supply chains and equipped to compete in the modern retail landscape.

A Call to Action

The SPAZA shop sector stands at a crossroads. We call on all SPAZA shop owners – both local and foreign – to embrace registration and compliance without delay. To the private sector, we urge you to partner with government and communities in building a sustainable and inclusive SPAZA ecosystem. Finally, to all South Africans, let us support this initiative, rallying behind the President's vision for a safer and more equitable future. STOP THE BLAME and COMPLAIN! The government's interventions must inspire and empower citizens to build businesses that are safe, sustainable, and community-centred. Together, we can transform the SPAZA sector into a model of resilience and opportunity. It must reflect

the values of safety, inclusivity, and shared prosperity. The journey ahead is challenging, but the rewards are immense. Let us take this step together, transforming SPAZA shops into beacons of hope and opportunity for generations to come.

Let us reclaim and reimagine the informal retail sector, honouring its historical roots while building a future that reflects South Africa's values of safety, inclusivity, and resilience. Together, we can transform these hidden gems of the township economy into township titans, driving economic growth and community empowerment for generations to come.

Faiez Jacobs is Former Chairperson of the Small Business Development Parliamentary Portfolio Committee



CURRENT AFFAIRS



■ By **LINDIWE MATLALI**

SOUTH Africa faces significant challenges in enhancing government efficiency, fostering innovation, and tackling youth unemployment. By embracing technology to improve collaboration among government departments and creating an environment that nurtures innovation and creativity, the nation can stimulate economic growth and prosperity. Drawing inspiration from countries like Estonia and Rwanda, the adoption of technology and improved communication can be instrumental in addressing these issues.

Enhancing Government Efficiency through Technology

Inefficient government operations can impede economic development and public service delivery. In South Africa, bureaucratic hurdles and disjointed departmental functions often lead to duplication of efforts and resource wastage. According to the World Bank's

2020 Ease of Doing Business report, South Africa ranked 84th out of 190 countries, highlighting the need for improved government efficiency.

Adopting advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), blockchain, and cloud computing can streamline administrative processes. Implementing e-government services can reduce paperwork, expedite service delivery, and enhance transparency. Estonia serves as a prime example, having digitized 99% of its public services. This digital transformation has led to significant cost savings and increased citizen satisfaction, positioning Estonia as a global leader in e-governance.

Managing Innovation and Avoiding Duplication

Effective innovation management is crucial for developing solutions to societal challenges. The South African government can estab-

lish centralized innovation hubs to encourage inter-departmental collaboration. By sharing data and resources, departments can avoid project duplication and focus on complementary initiatives.

Integrated digital platforms can facilitate real-time communication and project management across departments. Rwanda's adoption of the "*Smart Rwanda Master Plan*" emphasizes ICT integration in government services, promoting collaboration and efficiency. This approach has led to cohesive policy implementation and improved public services, contributing to Rwanda's rapid economic growth.

Reinstating the Presidential 4IR Commission

The premature disbandment of South Africa's Presidential Commission on the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) halted the implementation of crucial recommendations aimed at integrating ICT

CURRENT AFFAIRS

in government. Reinstating this commission could provide the necessary support for adopting advanced technologies across government departments. The commission can play a pivotal role in guiding the government's digital transformation, ensuring that technological advancements align with national development goals.

Establishing a Commission on Government Efficiency

To further enhance government operations, establishing a new commission focused on government efficiency is essential. This body would advise the president on restructuring government systems to ensure they are efficient and citizen-centric. By analyzing current inefficiencies and recommending strategic reforms, the commission can help build a government that effectively serves its people.

Creating an Environment that Supports Innovation and Creativity

An ecosystem that fosters innovation requires supportive policies, infrastructure, and a culture that encourages creative thinking. The government can invest in education and training programmes that equip the youth with skills relevant to the digital economy. With the unemployment rate among young people aged 15-34 at 46.3% in the first quarter of 2021, according to Statistics South Africa, urgent action is needed.

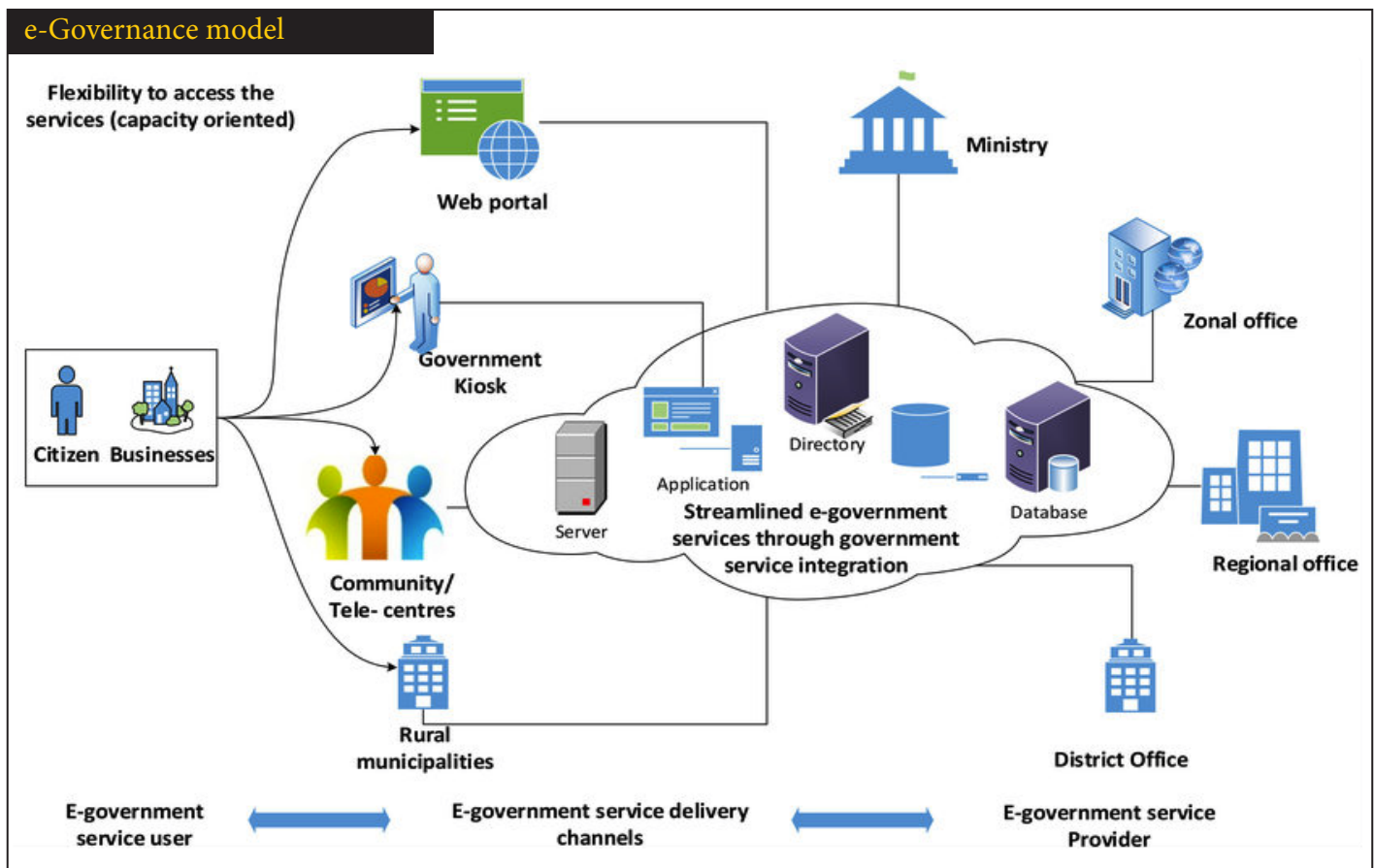
Establishing innovation labs, incubators, and providing grants for startups can stimulate entrepreneurial activities. Estonia's e-Residency programme, for instance, has attracted entrepreneurs worldwide, fostering innovation and boosting the economy. Similarly, Rwanda's focus on ICT has turned it into a regional tech

hub, with initiatives like the Kigali Innovation City supporting startups and attracting investment.

Improving Collaboration for Economic Growth

Effective communication and collaboration among government departments are vital for coherent policy implementation and economic development. Rwanda's economic resurgence is partly due to coordinated efforts between government entities and the private sector. The government's focus on ICT and streamlined services has facilitated business operations, attracting foreign investment and promoting growth.

In South Africa, adopting similar collaborative frameworks can ensure that policies aimed at reducing unemployment and stimulating growth are well-coordinated. Utilizing technology platforms for



CURRENT AFFAIRS



shared databases and joint planning can align departmental goals and resources, reducing overlaps and enhancing efficiency.

Leveraging Technology to Address Youth Unemployment

Technology can play a crucial role in creating job opportunities for the youth. By embracing the Fourth Industrial Revolution, South Africa can position itself as a competitive player in sectors like information technology, renewable energy, and advanced manufacturing. Educational reforms focusing on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) can prepare the workforce for future demands.

Partnerships with private tech companies can offer internships and apprenticeships, bridging the gap between education and employment.

Rwanda's investment in ICT education has empowered its youth, reducing unemployment and driving innovation. The establishment of institutions like the Carnegie Mellon University Africa campus in Kigali provides advanced training, aligning skills with market needs.

Conclusion

South Africa has the potential to enhance government efficiency, manage innovation, and reduce youth unemployment by adopting technology and fostering collaboration among government departments. Learning from Estonia and Rwanda, the integration of technology in government operations can lead to significant improvements in service delivery and economic performance.

Reinstating the Presidential 4IR Commission and establishing a new commission focused on government efficiency are criti-

cal steps toward achieving these goals. These bodies can provide strategic guidance on implementing ICT solutions and restructuring government systems to be more efficient and responsive to citizens' needs.

By creating an environment that supports innovation and creativity, South Africa can unlock the entrepreneurial potential of its youth, leading to job creation and sustained economic growth. The government's role in facilitating education, providing resources, and establishing collaborative frameworks is crucial in this transformative journey.

Investing in technology and innovation is not merely a strategy for modernization but a necessity for South Africa to overcome its current challenges and achieve long-term prosperity.

Lindiwe Matlali is CEO of Africa-TeenGeeks

WWIII IS IMMINENT, AND IT WOULD TAKE A SHEER MIRACLE TO EVADE IT

■ By **SEPHOKA DAVID SEKGOBELA**

THE world is teetering on the brink of third world war (WW III) – tensions amongst countries in the Middle East and the Russian-Ukrainian war seem to be the igniting factors that are likely to spiral into full-blown WW III. All signs that war is imminent and appears inexplicable are there, and WWIII has technically (but not officially), started, and the UN has been exposed to be a toothless bulldog that is failing to decisively intervene in world conflicts, e.g. restraining Israeli genocidal regime supported by its Western allies, including the US and UK, from annihilating Palestinians in Gaza.

Not satisfied with the killing and maiming of innocent civilians in Gaza, including women and children, Israel launched an unprovoked attack on the Iranian embassy in Syria, killing a few high-ranking Iranian officials. Israel did a miscalculation of thinking that Iran would just roll down and play dead. Iran did in fact retaliate with more than 300 drones in the direction of Israel.

Israel was subsequently advised to restrain itself and not escalate tensions further by responding to Iran's attack. However, Israel defied its allies, including the US, as the Israeli warlord Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, foolishly responded with a barrage of explosions in central Iran, triggering



further tit-for-tat retaliations.

Besides the Israel-Iran tensions, recent series of disproportionate attacks by the US and the UK forces of the Houthi rebels in Yemen, in response to continuing attacks on shipping in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, also added to simmering instability in the Middle East.

In one of his electioneering rhetoric, Donald Trump made a claim that Vice President Kamala Harris was “guaranteed” to get the United States into WWIII if she was elected president, vowing

that, if elected, he would avoid World War III even if it has “never been so close”. WWIII seemed to have been a bit far-fetched illusion at that time, but the recent authorisation by the outgoing US President, Joe Biden's administration, of the US-supplied long-range missile to Ukraine is clearly an attempt to fast-track WWIII before Donald Trump takes over.

Joe Biden still has two more months before Donald Trump could take over the US Presidency, and if not restrained, he would cause untold damage in that short period. Joe Biden's term

CURRENT AFFAIRS

has been uneasy, mainly due to the Russia-Ukrainian and Israel-Palestinian conflicts raging on, and with the US being at the centre thereof. He seems to be stoking WWIII, making sure that he also leaves some sort of “legacy” for himself, like his predecessors who had all been, in one way or another, involved in some wars.

Whilst his successor is preaching peace, it is ironic that, in his last two months in office and 1000 days into the Russia-Ukrainian conflict, instead of calling for cessation of hostilities, Joe Biden authorised long-range missiles by Ukraine inside Russia. This will only serve to harden the attitudes than resolving any problems. This did not go down well with Russia, which has since warned of “tangible” retaliation, whatever that means, should Ukraine release any of those missiles against Russian targets. The Russia foreign ministry added that, “any attack inside Russian territory using these missiles would be seen as direct involvement by the US and its allies in the ongoing war”. Russia warned that it might re-

sort to the use of nuclear weapons if Ukraine made use of the US-supplied long-range missiles. Responding to Joe Biden’s authorisation of Ukraine to the use of long-range weapons to attack Russia, Vladimir Putin approved the revised nuclear doctrine in terms of which, *“an attack by a country without nuclear weapons (like Ukraine) but which receives the support of a country with nuclear weapons (like the US), can be considered an attack by these two countries. In case of such an attack, Russia could then deploy nuclear weapons”*.

Ukraine launched, for the first time, six of its American-supplied ATACMs (Army Tactical Missile System) long-range missiles, with a range of 300km (190 miles), to strike hundreds of miles inside Russia. Five of those missiles are said to have been successfully destroyed by Russia.

SA could be drawn into this imminent WWIII with relative ease. Though coupled with the best humanitarian intentions, SA ruffled feathers and attracted some ene-

mies to herself by, probably being the first country to take this step in recent history, laying a case against Israel to the ICJ for violation of Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crimes of Genocide. SA’s case against Israel at the ICJ was the turning point of SA’s international relations, not only with Israel, but with many of Israel’s allies, including the US and the western countries.

In today’s geopolitical alignment, SA should look at whatever is going on globally with keen interest, so that it would not be caught off-guard. SA should not just be the sitting duck, but continue strengthening relations with fellow BRICS member countries. Iran, together with Russia, are some of SA’s partners in BRICS, and it is expected that partners should stand together through thick and thin.

One of the causes of the Second World War was armament of the nations. Countries like Germany were heavily armed at that time, and provokingly flexed their



CURRENT AFFAIRS

muscles. However, WWII would be messy. Nuclear “*weapons of mass destruction*” could be used with relative ease, resulting in unparalleled destruction of property and loss of life. Nuclear weapons are “*characterized by long-distance attacks and uncontrollable consequences, surpassing the scale and impact of conventional warfare*”.

Today, some of the so-called super powers like the US, China, Russia, etc. are also nuclear super-powers. Iran is also one of the nuclear powers. Even Israeli weapons arsenal is estimated to consist of more than 90 nuclear weapons, in contravention of the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in terms of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Donald Trump is busy getting himself ready to govern by populating his office and cabinet with, not only suitably qualified, but also dependable individuals whom he could rely on for implementation of his policies, to run his administration. Donald Trump comes back like a wounded lion after allegedly been cheated in the previous elections that saw Joe Biden becoming President. He is extremely bitter, especially after all failed attempts to impeach and/or prosecute him, and seems to have a score to settle with many people.

Whilst some people are happy for his return, there are those, especially in the current Biden administration, who wish they could just evaporate into non-existence. His abrasive and arrogant attitude repulses some, but certainly delights others. Donald Trump’s and the Republicans’ victory apparently make him one of the most powerful leaders in



the world, and like someone who has never been shy to stamp his authority, he is certainly going to make his presence felt by all and sundry. Most of the Democrats’ policies are obviously going to be discarded, and his hard-line and protectionist policies will prevail.

During election campaigns, Donald Trump was striking the right chords when he vowed to put an end to both Russian-Ukrainian and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts. The whole world is now looking at him to put that into practice. Trump seems to have a cosy relationship with Russian President, Vladimir Putin, and they both seem to be smoking the proverbial piece pipe.

If it could indeed happen, as Donald Trump said, that he would not spend one more US cent to finance Ukraine and Israel, and that the Israeli war has to come to an end, that means the Russia-Ukrainian and Israel-Palestinian conflicts would soon end. Both Ukraine and Israel would not be able to sustain their respective conflicts without direct and bolstered role of the US in NATO. That would catapult him from being a villain to some, but a hero in the eyes of the world, because the world needs peace.

There was never any such thing called Ukrainian-Russian war. Ukraine is but just a pawn in the game, because if Russia did wage war against Ukraine, it would not have lasted more than 24 hours. Therefore, it has always been Russia against more than 31 NATO countries. These NATO allies are sovereign states that come together through NATO to discuss political and security issues, and make collective decisions by consensus.

Who is sustaining Russia in its war against NATO? Russia itself is not a walkover. However, is Russia that strong to stand against the US and NATO? The recent signing of strategic partnership between Russia and Iran also adds new impetus in geopolitics. Iran’s hand against Israeli’s genocidal Zionists has been strengthened in leaps and bounds. Where does China fits in the equation? China and Iran developed a friendly, economic and strategic relationship. As BRICS member states, they are watching each other’s backs – “*An injury to one, is an injury to all*”.

In conclusion, to date, the US and NATO members could not defeat Russia in 1000 days of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Russia was probably making use of the so-called Russian-Ukrainian war to size up the strength of the US and NATO allies. The Russian-Ukrainian war was just the curtain-raiser, and the real war is just about to start, WWII. More than 10,000 troops from North Korea have been lined up to help Vladimir Putin’s forces, and “*Unconfirmed reports say North Korea may send as many as 100,000 soldiers, in addition to artillery and other weapons to its ally*”.

The game is on!



■ By **AMB. PHATSE JUSTICE PIITSO**

History bequeaths to the warrior women of the Amazons of the Latin American and the Caribbean archipelago unparalleled milestones of relentless struggles for freedom and dignity of humanity. The epoch breaking landmarks of relentless resilience and heroism magnify them as true philanthropists of the golden age of human civilisation.

On the canyon of the magnificent thousands of hills of hope in the pearl of the Antilles, along the paradise of the blue Caribbean sea, during the historic congress of Arcahaie, a needle in the hands of a beautiful slave woman of African descent knitted a flag which its illuminating colours, and sparked the flames of the world revolutionary movement. The magnetic hands of the slave woman, Cathrine Flon, knitted the fabric of the first flag of the first independent slave republic of Haiti.

The historic congress of Arcahaie, took place against the backdrop of the mounting tensions between the two martial forces, led by General Jean Dessalines and Alexander Sabes Petion, who were at loggerheads over the control of both the East and the West of Saint Domingue. The east is the present day republic of Haiti and the west is the present day Dominican Republic, which were respectively under the jurisdiction of the French and Spanish colonial regimes.

The principal strategic question was the consolidation of the two warring factions against the impending onslaught of the revolutionary upsurge by Napoleon Bonaparte. The unity Congress of Arcahaie unanimously agreed on the formation of the new army and the adoption of a new flag, signifying the birth of a new nation from the unyielding womb of tumultuous struggles.

During the plenary session, the newly elected leader of the slave rebellion, general Jean Dessalines, instructed one of the warrior women of the Amazons, Cathrine Flon, to knit a new flag of the coming independent republic. The architectural designs of the flag were derived from the French tricolour national flag, by removing the white band between the blue and the red colour.

The white band represented the monarchy, whilst the red colour represented the blood and sacrifices of the heroes and heroines of the struggles and the blue colour an emblem of hope and unity of the people. The motto of the flag was freedom and death, vowing to ensure that slavery could not raise its ugly head again in their mother land.

Upon the completion of the design and sewing of the flag on the 18 May 1803, all delegates

HISTORY

from the plenary of the Congress took an oath of allegiance before it, swearing a pledge of liberty, freedom and death. The pledge which was called the oath of the ancestors is still celebrated today as the Haitian national flag day.

History will remember Cathrine Flon to have birthed the new flag of the slave republic, which has come to symbolise the freedom of all humanity, of the millions of the downtrodden, the suffering people of the world, the flag which represents the aspirations of the future of humanity. It represented the resilience, strength and determination of the slave people to overcome adversity.

The tapestry of the rich history of heroic struggles by legendary figures such as Cathrine Flon, is a living testament of the centrality of the leadership role of the womenfolk in the building and formation of the modern day society. The nobility of their leadership role to the struggles for the freedom of humanity, does not only distinguish them as the most beautiful flowers to have birthed the first black independent republic but its blossoming ideas.

Women guerrilla fighters of the Paris Commune, who history revere as the spectrum of the struggles of the new world of democracy, such as Louise Michel, one of the members of the Vigilance Committees of the Commune, when French government sent troops to seize the cannons from the militant working class, staged a fierce resistance, forcing the powerful regiments of the monarchy, to turn the guns against the commanding officers. The Paris Commune is renowned as the first working class revolution in the history of the struggles of humanity.



Portrait of
Catherine
Flon

In her memoir published in 1886, Louise Michel writes *“Barbarian I am, love cannon, the smell of the powder, machine guns bullets in the air, that’s all.”* Her fervent conviction to the noble cause of the struggles for freedom was nourished by the very same ideas that the liberation of women cannot be accomplished without the liberation of the whole of society.

The Tricoteuses, the mothers of the French revolution, the knitting women of the markets of Versailles, who gained prominence by staging a successful march in protest against the rising food prices, forcing King Louis XVI to accede to their demands and also agreeing to relocate the capital city of French from Versailles to Paris, are the examples of how throughout history, women

demonstrated remarkable feats of courage and determination, becoming the pathfinders of the new foundations of the modern society.

During the trials of the reign of terror, after facing much resistance from the male dominated political establishment, the women decided to sit at the palace of the revolution, knitting in between each execution at the guillotine, ululating as each head fell. This was during the historic period of the development of human society, when the bloody realities of the defining moment, from the womb of the feudal society, gave birth to the new society of capitalism.

When Napoleon Bonaparte assembled one of the largest contingents of his soldiers under

HISTORY

the command of his brother in law, General Charles Emmanuel Leclerc, his only male dominated army was accompanied by women who were wives, cooks and prostitutes, whilst on the other side of the Atlantic, General Toussaint Louverture, was preparing a formidable army of the slave people, constituted not only of men, but the warrior women of the Amazons of the Antilles, who were ready to occupy the front trenches of the battlefield.

Napoleon sent a massive expedition of more than forty thousand soldiers to the most lucrative colony of Saint Domingue, to wrest control of the revolutionary uprising of the slave people, which was igniting a wave of slave rebellion in the British and French colonial archipelago.

The coming of the age of the revolutionary upsurge of the Latin American and the Caribbean wars of independence.

On his arrival to the shores of the colony of Saint Domingue, General Leclerc wrote a letter to Napoleon, committing himself that the army expedition would destroy all the blacks of the mountains, men and women, and spare only children under the age of twelve years, that he would ensure that his soldiers do not leave a single coloured person in the colony who has worn an epaulette.

General Dessalines defeated the French army at the Battle of Vertières on the 18 November 1803, reclaiming the indigenous Taino name of Haiti, which means the land of the mountains, therefore ushering in a new era of freedom to the slave people and building on the foundations of the aspirations of the millions of the people of the world, free of slavery.

During the occupation of Haiti by the United States of America during the year 1915–1934, the empire banned the flag of the slave republic, declaring treason for anyone to hoist the flag in the public arena. But many of the Haitians held secret ceremonies in their homes in a form of lunches and other forms of social togetherness, celebrating the national flag day.

On 2 January 1893, Frederick Douglass, the former minister of the USA on Haiti, who resigned from his post in protest against the cruelty of the system of slavery to the Negroes of Saint Domingue, gave a path breaking lecture about Haiti, titled *“The Haitian Pavilion”* delivered at the world fair, in Jackson Park, Chicago, giving account of how the Haitian revolution profoundly shaped the world, giving enormous impetus to the new era of human democracy and civilisation.

He says *“My subject is Haiti, the black republic, the only self made black republic in the world. I am to speak to you of her character, her history, her importance and her struggle from slavery to freedom and statehood. Until she spoke, no Christian nation has abolished Negro slavery. Until she spoke, no Christian nation had given to the world an organised effort to abolish slavery. Until she spoke,*

the slave ship, followed by hungry sharks, greedy to devour the dead and dying slaves, flung overboard to feed them, ploughed in peace the South Atlantic painting the sea with the Negro blood. Until she spoke, the slave trade was sanctioned by all the Christian nations of the world and the land of liberty and light included...”

We are ennobled by the extraordinary feats and living examples of heroism and dedication by the women of the Latin American and Caribbean hemisphere, their incalculable episodes of epic struggles against imperialism and colonial domination, shall forever inspire generations of humankind.

They volunteered themselves for the noble cause of the struggles for the freedom of humanity, aware that men and women of conscience should die, without their immortal inviting tears, as their unnamed bodies fertilise the topsoil of the earth, without flowers and the hymns of the funeral ceremony and procession. They shall be celebrated by the heavens into eternity and shall be celebrated by our mother earth for posterity.

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



TRIBUTE

TRIBUTE TO MECRO MASTERPIECES MORIPE

■ By **TITUS MAFOLO**

THE Italian soccer writer, Beppe Branco famously wrote: *“If Pele of Brazil is the Rolls-Royce of soccer players, Stanley Mathews of England the Mercedes-Benz and Alfredo di Stefano of Argentina and Spain the Cadillac of soccer players, then Kala Mokone of South Africa, lithe and lean, is surely the Maserati.”*

This was a great tribute to Steve ‘Kalamazoo’ Mokone, a soccer trendsetter from South Africa, and dare we add, from Atteridgeville in Tshwane where he had played for the local club Home Stars.

Of course, Beppe Branco, did not have the privilege of seeing another soccer star, from the township that gave the world Steve ‘Kalamazoo’ Mokone.

Was it perhaps, that the gods of Africa were giving those who came later, the glimpse of what, when they so wish, they do endow some with exceptional talents, when, from the same area of Atteridgeville, Oudstad, where Mokone emerged, they gave us another soccer genius, Mecro Masterpieces Moripe!! What would Beppe Branco say, had he witnessed the mesmerizing artistry of Mecro Moripe. But perhaps, some of us, lesser wordsmiths, can try to briefly share what we



TRIBUTE



saw of this eminently gifted footballer.

Mecro Moripe was a cut above the rest. His touches were bewitching, his movements mesmerizing and his dribbling simply entrancing, leaving his teammates, opponents and spectators spellbound.

Many people who frequented the then Super Stadium, today's Lucas Masterpieces Moripe Stadium, don't forget one particular game. It was Pretoria Callies against Bloemfontein Celtics. Mecro Moripe dribbled past about six Celtics players, including the goalkeeper.

But instead of placing the ball into the empty net, he turned and raced back with the ball. Everyone at the stadium was confused. A large section of Callies supporters started swearing at him.

Mecro Moripe then dribbled the same players for the second time, including the goalkeeper.

He then scored. It is something that has etched into the memories of those who were at the stadium on that day.

This is over and above his mesmerizing dribbling when Pretoria Callies beat Orlando Pirates 2-1, twice within a fortnight as well as when he came during the inter-



val against Kaizer Chiefs (he had been benched because of disciplinary issues).

But because of pressure from supporters, Mecro Moripe was brought in after interval. He dribbled the entire midfield and backline of Chiefs before scoring.

Indeed, there is that unforgettable magical football artistry of Mecro Moripe that he showed against the British XI, when he dribbled them from the other side of halfway until he scored.

Those from Soweto who were seeing him for the first time at that Rand Stadium game said he had changed their view about him. Thus, they called him 'Changer Soweto'.

There are so many out of the world memories of this extremely talented player, who were denied more global glories by apartheid. He was undoubtedly, Modimo wa Bolo, Mecro Maspieces Moripe. Rest in Peace, Master.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

23 – 29 November 2024

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

23 November 1887 ESKOM and ISCOR founder born

Hendrik Johannes van der Bijl, an industrialist who founded ESKOM (1923) and later ISCOR was born on 23 November 1887 in Pretoria. His father was a merchant and property investor. Van der Bijl studied physics in Germany where he obtained a Masters of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degree at the University of Leipzig, returning to South Africa in 1920. He founded the Electricity Supply Commission (Eskom) in 1923, providing inexpensive power to South Africa. Van der Bijl then set his sights on the steel industry and established the South African Steel and Iron Corporation (Iskor). Van der Bijl died in 1948 and is regarded as one of the great South Africans for his contribution to the country's industrialisation.

23 November 1971 Bridge of Death

Just 11 days after its opening, the Van Staden's bridge between Gqeberha and Humansdorp, Eastern Cape became known as the Bridge of Death, when the first of dozens of suicidal persons leaped to his death. In 2013 a wire mesh barrier and warning signs were erected to hinder jumpers. To date nearly 100 people have jumped to their death from the bridge, the latest reported in September 2021.

23 November 1973 Arab states agreed on Oil Embargo against apartheid South Africa

A summit of Arab countries adopted an oil embargo against apartheid South Africa. Other Arab countries, like Kuwait, already since 1962 refused to sell oil to South Africa

23 November 2005 Ellen Johnson Sirleaf elected as first female president in Africa



After a closely contested elections in Liberia, Ellen Sirleaf Johnson, a former assistant minister of finance (1972-73) and finance minister (1980-1985) was announced as the winner of the Presidential elections. She was sworn in as President in January 2006, and served as President until 2017, when she stepped down at the end of her second term. President Johnson Sirleaf,

along with Leymah Gbowee and Tawakkul Karman won the Nobel Peace prize in 2011.

23 November 2019 National Museum of the DRC opened

President Felix Tshisekedi opened the National Museum, dedicated to Congolese artifacts stolen by European colonialist and now scattered around the world.

24 November 1948 Sculptor Vuminkosi Zulu born



Vuminkosi Zulu was born in Mampumulo, KZN on 24 November 1948. He studied art at Rocke's drift art school and completed his course in 1972, staying on as resident artist until 1974. Zulu is famous for his etchings and wood carvings and his famous wood-carving titled the Battle of Isandlwana (1982) won him praise and a sculpture award. Zulu had the ability to capture emotions such as loneliness or fear in his etch-

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

ings. His work can be found in many collections locally and abroad. Zulu died in 1996.

24 November 1986 Barclays Bank announces its disinvestment from South Africa

Barclays Bank, announced that it was selling its remaining 40 per cent holding in its South African associate, Barclays National Bank Limited of South Africa Sir Timothy Bevan, chairman of Barclays, admitted that while the decision to pull out of the South African market was a commercial one, the pressure exerted against the bank by anti-apartheid protesters had a detrimental effect on the bank's business in other areas.

24 November 1995 Pretoria's first black mayor

Johannes Lebone Slo Ramokhoase was born in 1951 in Eesterus before the residents were moved to Mamelodi. He was the headmaster of Mamelodi High School and chairman of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU). On 24 November 1995, Ramokhoase became the first black mayor of Pretoria. He was instrumental in integrating the old city council of Pretoria with the local municipalities of Mamelodi and other townships. A street in the Pretoria CBD has been named in his honour.

25 November 1841 Amistad survivors returned home

The 35 surviving Africans enslaved on La Amistad, who revolted, took over the slave ship and were arrested on arrival in the USA, set sail on a return voyage to Africa. They were freed by the

US Supreme court, and arrived in Sierra Leone in January 1842.

25 November 1867 Banker Talaat Harb born

The Egyptian economist and financial pioneer, Talaat Harb was born in Cairo. A successful entrepreneur, he contributed to the building of an indigenous national economy, when he founded Banque Misr in 1920, with business conducted exclusively in Arabic, entirely owned and staffed by Egyptians. Today, Banque Misr is owned by the state, with 18,000 employees, 10 million clients and around 700 branches.

25 November 1980 Footballer Aaron Mokoena born



Footballer, Tebogo Aaron Mokoena was born on 25 November 1980 in Boipatong Johannesburg. In his early career, he played for local teams such as Jomo Cosmos. He later moved on to teams like Ajax Amsterdam, KRC Gent, Portsmouth and Bidvest Wits. Mokoena is the youngest player ever to represent South Africa. He was only 19 when he played in 1999 at the 2000 Olympic qualifiers. He also led Bafana Bafana in the 2008 Africa Cup of Nations in Ghana. Mokoena's tough tackling skills earned him the nickname "Mbazoz", meaning "The Axe".

25 November 1981 South African mercenaries involved in Seychelles coup

South African mercenaries, collaborating with Seychelles citizens who wanted to overthrow the Marxist government led by Prime Minister France-Albert René, were involved in a failed coup attempt in the African island state of Seychelles on this day. Twenty-seven (27) of the 54 mercenaries participating in the coup were members of the South Africa Defense Force.

25 November 1993 Cyclist Mossana Debasai born

Eritrean cyclist, Mossana Debasai was born in Asmara. Before competing in the Women's Road Race at the 2020 Olympics, she won the 2019 African Road Championships, establishing herself as one of Eritrea's and Africa's top cyclists.

25 November 2004 Poet Sheila Cussons passed on



Acclaimed South African poet Sheila Cussons died in Cape Town at the age of 82. Cussons was known for her poetry works in Afrikaans, produced in ten volumes. Cussons was born on 9 August 1922 in Moravia, near

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

Piketberg in the Cape Province. She published her poetry over a period of 33 years with her first volume, Plektrum, appearing in 1970. She won awards such as the Hertzog prize, the WA Hofmeyr prize which she won twice and the Ingrid Jonker, Eugene Marais and CNA prizes.

25 November 2016 Fidel Castro passed on



90-year old former First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba and President of the Council of State, Fidel Castro died of natural causes on the evening of 25 November 2016. Castro, a founder of the Cuban revolution, staunch supporter to the anti-colonial movements in Africa, was one of the defining leaders of the 20th century.

25 November 2011 Solar eclipse over Antarctica

The partial solar eclipse, with the moon covering about 80% of the sun is visible only in the most Southern Hemisphere areas, including South Africa. The eclipse was used to create awareness amongst thousands of school children.

25 November 2017 Minga and the Broken Spoon

Cameroon's first animated film,

Minga and the Broken Spoon was released by Cledley Productions, based on a national folk tale. An orphaned girl accidentally breaks a spoon washing dishes in the river, and her furious stepmother tells her to find the only identical spoon that was hidden by her late mother.

26 November 1919 Corner stone of the Union Buildings laid



The Union Buildings is the seat of the South African government and is situated in the capital city, Pretoria, now known as Tshwane. It was designed by Sir Herbert Baker in 1908 and the building started in 1909. On 26 November, 1910, the corner-stone was laid, with completion intended for 1913. The construction of the Union Buildings took approximately 1,265 artisans and labourers. Almost fourteen million bricks were used for the interior office walls. South African stone was used throughout the building, with most of the mountain stone quarried on the site.

26 November 1953 First woman to win Formula 1 racing born

Desiré Randall Wilson was born on 26 November 1953 in Brakpan. Wilson is a former racing driver who is one of only five women to have competed in

Formula One. In 1980 she won the Formula One race at Brands Hatch in the British Aurora F1 series. The win made her the only woman to ever hold the Formula One title. Wilson also competed in CARTS and sports car racing. A book documenting her life as a racing driver titled 'Driven by Desire' has been published.

26 November 1957 Simon Nkoli born

South African gay rights and anti-apartheid activist was born in Soweto. He was the founder of the Gay and Lesbian Organisation of the Witwatersrand (GLOW), a leader of the United Democratic Front and was charged with Treason in the famous Delmas trial. Nkoli founded and organised the first Pride March in Johannesburg. The Market Theatre in 2023 features an opera about his life, The Vogue Opera.

26 November 1975 Afrikaans Author Breyten Breytenbach sentenced as a "Terrorist"

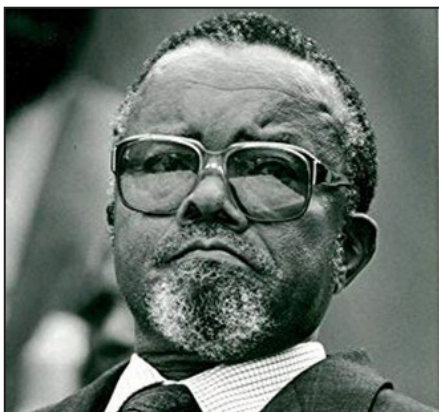


On an illegal trip to South Africa with a false passport, writer Breyten Breytenbach was betrayed, arrested and sentenced to nine years imprisonment for high treason under the Terrorism Act by the Pretoria Supreme Court. He had pleaded guilty for entering South Africa to start an organ-

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

isation Atlas or Okhela, a resistance group fighting apartheid in exile and was intended to be the White wing of the banned African National Congress (ANC). He served seven years as a political prisoner until his release in December 1982 amid international intervention.

26 November 1988 Struggle Icons Harry Gwala and Zeph Mothopeng released



Two members of the banned liberation movements, Harry Gwala (ANC) and Zephania Mothopeng (PAC) were released from Robben Island. Both Gwala (1920-1995) and Mothopeng (1913-1990) served two terms on Robben Island for their political activities. After the banning of the ANC in 1960, Gwala became active in ANC underground structures until his arrest in 1964. He was charged and convicted for sabotage and recruiting members for uMkhonto weSizwe (MK). In 1972 he was released from prison and restricted to Pietermaritzburg. After the workers strike in August 1976, Gwala was arrested again with scores of ANC members, charged under the Terrorism Act and sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island. In the 1980s, Gwala developed a motor neuron disease which left him disabled. Mothopeng was arrested in 1963 and sentenced in

May 1964 to 3 years in prison for furthering the aims of the banned PAC. He was released in 1967 and restricted to QwaQwa for two years. Mothopeng continued with his political activities and was arrested in 1976 under the Terrorism Act and was sentenced to 15 years in prison on 26 June 1979. Even after their release, both men remained politically active within their respective organizations. Mothopeng died on 23 October 1990 and Gwala died of a heart failure on 21 June 1995.

27 November 1929 ANCWL and ANC Stalwart Winkie Direko born on this day



Isabella Winkie Direko, former teacher, winner of the Bloemfontein of the Year Award in 1993, Premier of the Free State from 1999-2004 and a member of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP), was born in Botshabelo. Direko served in numerous positions in the educational and development fields, including as President of the National Council of African Women, a member of the Council of Vista University and Chancellor of the Free State University. Direko also played a leading role in the Girl Guides Association of South Africa and was a council member of NICRO and the Child Welfare Organisa-

tion. In 2001 she obtained an M Ed degree at the University of the Free State. Mam Direko passed away on 17 February 2012 at the age of 83 years.

27 November 1987 Namibian artist John Ndevasia Muafangejo passed on

Muafangejo was born at Etunda lo Nghadi, Angola in 1943. He grew up in a traditional homestead herding cattle during the day, playing communal and literary games, with their strong moral and philosophical content. This influenced his artistic work, with its strong autobiographical subject matter. He attended St Mary's Anglican mission school at Odibo in Namibia where his artistic skills were recognized, and trained at Rorke's Drift from 1968 to 1969 before returning to teach and establish an art school at St Mary's in 1971. He held his first of several solo exhibitions in Windhoek and represented South Africa at the Sao Paulo Biennale. He applied to attend the Michaelis School of Art in Cape Town but his application was rejected. In 1974 he took up the position of artist-in-residence at Rorke's Drift, producing his unique colour woodcuts. He held an exhibition at the African Art Centre in Durban and in 1976, participated in the Brooklyn Museum's exhibition 'Black South Africa: Graphic Art'. Muafangejo returned to Namibia in 1977, continuing to participate in various global exhibitions. He died in 1987 at Katutura Township, Windhoek. In 1988, the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown hosted a retrospective exhibition of his work. A second retrospective was held at the Museum of Modern Art at Oxford in England between 1990 and 1992. Muafangejo is best known

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

for his linocuts of figures, religious and historical scenes. His work can be seen in public galleries throughout South Africa.”

[Source: <https://www.lifewithart.com/artists/john-muafangejo.html>]

27 November 1995

Rwanda Genocide Tribunal gets on the way

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), set up by the UN Security Council, got underway in Arusha, Tanzania, prosecuting those responsible for the 1994 Rwanda Genocide who saw close to a million people massacred, whilst Africa and the world watched. The genocide prompted the African Union in its Constitutive Act to shift from the OAU principle of ‘non-interference’, to the principle of non-indifference. The ICTR was the first international tribunal to deliver verdicts for persons responsible for genocide, and also the first to recognize rape as a means of perpetuating genocide.

27 November 1996

SA severed diplomatic ties with Taiwan

South Africa announces its decision to sever diplomatic ties with Taiwan, in recognition of the one-China policy.

28 November 1907

King Leopold II hands over administration of Congo to Belgium

In the 1880s, following the ‘scramble for Africa’, the Congo belonged to King Leopold II of Belgium, the only private colony of the time. Leopold’s administration of the Congo was ruthless and brutal, eventually leading to the death of over 10 million Congolese in his État Indépendant du

Congo (Congo Free State). His rule resulted in the culling of African elephants for ivory, clearing natural forests for rubber plantations, amongst other environmental devastations wreck on nature and humans. Africans, employed as labourers by the company, were subjected to extreme levels of violence to ensure that they met the targets set for them by the officials. Atrocities committed by colonial officials in the Congo are chronicled in Conrad’s book “*The Heart of Darkness*”, which was to be the most graphic account of the excesses committed by colonial officials on their subjects in Africa.

28 November 1934

ANCWL Stalwart Bertha Gxowa born

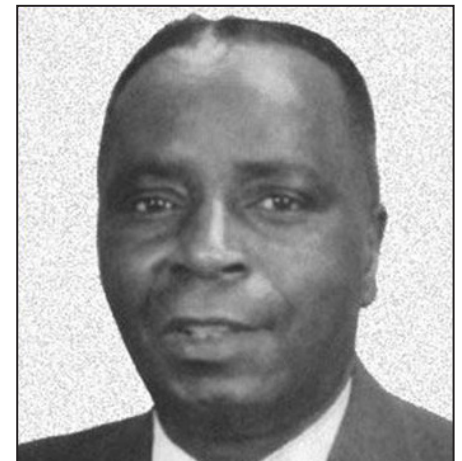


The anti-apartheid activist, ANC Women’s League leader and trade unionist Bertha Gxowa (née Mashaba) was born in Germiston and attended school in Thokoza. She joined the ANC Youth League during its campaign against Bantu education, started work in the South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union, and volunteered during the Defiance campaign in Krugersdorp, when she was arrested for the first time. She was at the founding conference of the Federation of South African Women

(FEDSAW), which adopted the first Women’s Charter in 1954, and two years later helped mobilise for the 1956 Womens March to Pretoria. She was one of the famous 1956 Treason Trialists, and was banned under the Suppression of Communism Act. She was part of the rebuilding of the ANC after its unbanning in 1990, with Thokoza as one of its largest branches. She served as ANC Womens League Treasurer, and a Member of Parliament. Mam Bertha Gxowa passed away on 19 October 2010.

28 November 1951

Trade unionist Clements Kadalie passed on



Trade unionist, Lameck Koniwaka Kadalie Muwamba, known by his adopted name, Clements Kadalie, was born in April 1896, in Nyasaland, now Malawi. After schooling at the Church of Scotland mission station, he was trained as a teacher. In 1915, he went to South African in search of work. Three years later, he settled in Cape Town and befriended activist and trade unionist, Arthur F. Batty. Kadalie established the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) in 1919, to protect the rights of workers, particularly those of Black workers. In the same year, Kadalie led a dockworker’s strike, in which

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

all goods were prevented from being exported at Cape Town's harbour. By 1927 the ICU had around 100,000 members. Kadalie welcomed cooperation with other organizations, such as the Communist Party of South Africa (now SACP). Due to his activities, Kadalie was classified as a "prohibited immigrant" and was deported from South Africa in 1924. By 1928, the ICU was marked by internal strife, and in the same year Kadalie was forced to resign. He then established his own branch of the ICU in East London and became a provincial African National Congress (ANC) organiser. On 28 November 1951, he passed away in East London.

28 November 1987 **South African Airways** **Boeing 747 crashes into** **Indian Ocean**

SAA flight 295, a Boeing 747 called Helderberg was en route from Taiwan to then Jan Smuts International airport (now OR Tambo International) in Johannesburg crashed. Reports indicated that the plane experience a catastrophic fire in its cargo area and crashed in the Indian Ocean near the island of Mauritius, killing all 159 passengers and crew aboard. The government appointed Judge Margo to investigate the causes of the crash, but no conclusions were reached as to the causes of the crash, especially since some of the air traffic control tapes of the incident were alleged to have gone missing. The Margo commission's inconclusive findings spurned many theories, the most persistent that the plane carried substances for the security forces (including mercury and other dangerous substances), which caused the fire that led to the crash. The matter also served before the Truth and Rec-

onciliation Commission in 1996. A decade after the crash, it was discovered that apartheid South Africa's chief oil sanctions buster, who was also a director of the IDC, also perished on the flight.

28 November 2009 **Moses Mabhida Stadium** **officially opens**



The stadium in eThekweni, completed for the 2010 FIFA World Cup, was named after SACP Secretary General, opened on this day.

29 November 1776 **Transatlantic Slave Trade** **boom**

The most profitable 25-year period for the Transatlantic Slave Trade started, with a record number of over 2 million enslaved Africans shipped to the Americas between this date and 1800.

29 November 1781 **Zong Massacre**

British slave ship Zong, carrying thousands of enslaved Africans drifted off course in the Transatlantic Slave Trade as drinking water ran low. To save water, 130 African slaves were thrown overboard to their deaths. The ship owner later filed a claim with his insurance for the 'losses', a common practice to insure slaves against death at sea.

29 November 1967

Oskido born

Oscar Sibonginkosi Mdlongwa, musician and DJ was born in Oukasi, Brits. Oskido, as he is known popularized Kwaito music and became a music mogul.

29 November 1991 **CODESA starting date set**



Delegates from twenty groups agreed after preparatory talks in Johannesburg on a date for the start of substantive negotiations on South Africa's future constitution, a Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). Its opening session in Johannesburg was going to be on December 20 - 21. The SA government and the ruling National Party (NP) sent two separate delegations. The CODESA eventually concluded negotiations around an Interim Constitution in 1993, and paving the way for the 1994 first non-racial and non-sexist elections on a common voters roll.

29 November 2019 **Africa's first GMO** **mosquitoes released**

To combat malaria, 10,000 genetically modified mosquitoes that are sterile male *Anopheles gambiae* were released in Burkina Faso, with the hope that they would mate with local females and drive down the deadly malaria parasite carriers.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

23 – 29 November 2024

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

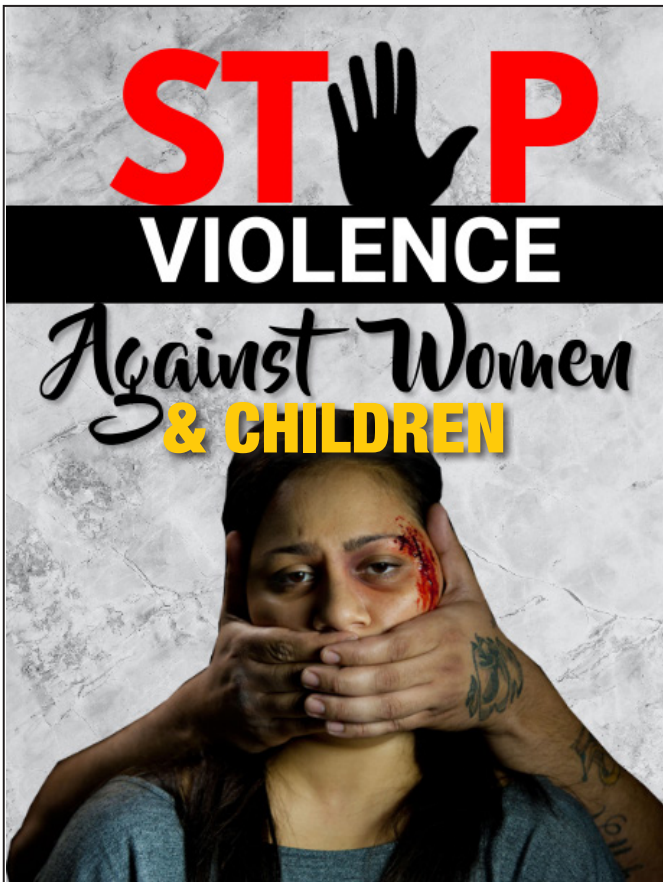


25 November – 10 December 16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women and Children

The 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children Campaign 2024 takes place under the theme: **“30 Years of Advancing Collective Action to End Violence Against Women and Children”**. The theme focuses on prevention and economic empowerment to foster financial independence and resilience. This year’s campaign emphasizes addressing the root causes of GBVF, promoting positive masculinity, promoting gender equity, and creating economic opportunities for women and children. At its core, the theme aims to accelerate and amplify multisectoral and whole-of-society accountability. This year marks the 26th anniversary of the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children campaign. Over the years, the campaign has raised awareness of the devastating impact that Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) has on women and children, and the social fabric of our society. This year’s campaign emphasizes addressing the root causes of GBVF, while promoting positive masculinity and gender equity, along with creating economic opportunities for women and children. Moreover, it affirms the importance of an all-of-society approach to combatting GBVF and the importance of multisectoral accountability.

25 November International day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

Violence against women and girls is one of the most widespread, persistent and devastating human rights violations in our world today. It remains largely unreported due to the impunity, silence, stigma and shame surrounding it. UN Women recall the 2013 WHO global study, according to which *“35 per cent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual violence... and with national studies show(ing) that up to 70 per cent of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime from an intimate partner.”* In general terms, Gender-Based Violence includes: intimate partner violence (battering, psychological abuse, marital rape, femicide); sexual violence and harassment (rape, forced sexual acts, unwanted sexual advances, child sexual abuse, forced marriage, street harassment, stalking, cyber-harassment); human trafficking (slavery, sexual exploitation); as well as female genital mutilation and child marriage. The theme for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women 2024 is **“UNiTE! Invest to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls.”** It is also the first day of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (25 November – 10 December)



25 November International Systems Engineer Day

The system that is sending and receiving your email, your company website, social media platforms, the file sharing system you use at work. These are just some examples of systems you may be using that someone somewhere designed, built and tested before empowering you with it to use. We may call them many things, such as Engineers, Systems Engineers, Infrastructure Engineers, Systems Integrators, Architects, Systems Analysts and so forth; they are at the heart of innovation and technology developments. (<https://www.systemsengineerday.com>)

26 November World Olive Tree Day

The olive tree, with its roots in the Mediterranean, is a universal symbol of peace and harmony. Growing across five continents, olives provide jobs, security and natural resources to rural communities around the world. As an agent against global warming, olive trees have a positive carbon balance – they take more CO₂ out of the atmosphere than is emitted during the olive oil production process. Olive oil and table olives are a proven source of nutrition, and key ingredients in the many diet. They offer a

wide variety of aromas and flavours and enhance a unique cuisine that is gaining interest from renowned chefs around the world. The ability of their multiple medicinal and nutritional properties to prevent certain diseases is now widely recognised. Although the olive producing market in South Africa is still small, it is big business, with just 11 producers owning most of the country's olive groves, mainly in the Karoo region of the W Cape. Olive growers also tend to process and package their own olive oils and olive packaging.

29 November International day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People



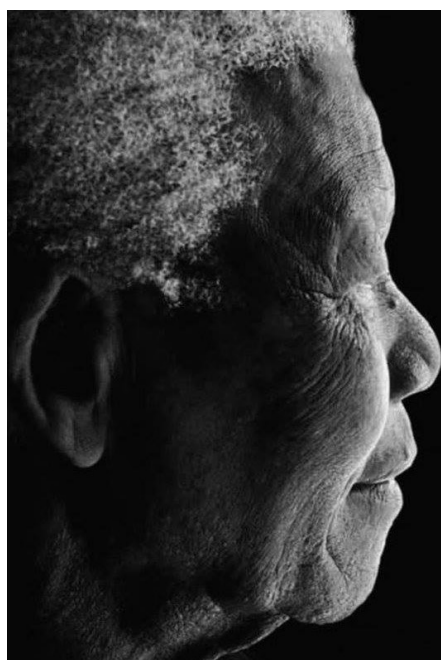
The UN General Assembly in 1977 declared 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the day in 1947 when the UN General Assembly adopted the resolution on the partitioning of Palestine. On the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, all UN member states are encouraged to continue to give the widest support and publicity to the human rights of the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination. The African Union has been consistent in its condemnation of Israel's aggression, and the Palestinian Authority is invited to address every Summit of the African Union. In 2021, the AU Commission Chair Mohamed Faki granted Israel observer status to the AU, a step to which at least 22 AU member states objected to and was reversed. The 2024 day of solidarity takes place in the context of Israel's continued war and genocide in Gaza. The theme for this year's International Day of Solidarity is *"Together for Justice and Lasting Peace in Palestine."*

16 DAYS OF **ACTIVISM**

16 Days of Activism against Gender- Based Violence

Every 10 minutes, a woman is killed. #NoExcuse. UNITE to End Violence against Women

25
NOV
-
16
DEC



“Domestic violence, rape, abuse of women remain disgraceful blots on the reputation of a country that is called a miracle nation in other respects”

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela

“ Violence against women is an issue that cannot wait . . . and we know that when we work to eradicate violence against women, we empower our greatest resource for development; mothers raising children; lawmakers in parliament; chief executives; negotiators; teachers; doctors; policewomen; peacekeepers and more. ”

Ban Ki Moon, Former UN Secretary General

Connect with ANC Today and be part of the conversation via our social media platforms.

CONNECT WITH US

Communications@anc1912.org.za
011 376 1000
www.anc1912.org

Visit our interactive ANC Website
www.anc1912.org

- Follow us on @MyANC
- Follow Us @MyANC Twitter page
- Follow @myanc_ on Instagram
- View @MyANC on YouTube