



# ANC TODAY

VOICE OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

21–27 March 2025

Conversations with the  
**President**



## SOUTH AFRICA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION LOOK TO THE FUTURE

■ By **PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

ON Thursday last week, we had the privilege of hosting European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President António Costa at the 8th Summit of South Africa and the European Union in Cape Town.

As a bloc, the European Union (EU) is one of South Africa's largest trading partners and the source of much investment in our country. Our economic ties with European countries go back to colonial times. Since the advent of democracy 30 years ago, we have steadily been growing the volume and value of trade.

This summit will be remembered as a watershed moment in the development of our trade and

investment relations. While expanding our traditional areas of cooperation, we are now focused on working together to develop the industries of the future.

We agreed to work towards a Clean Trade and Investment Partnership. This partnership will support the development of value chains that are more environmentally sustainable. It will make South Africa and the EU more competitive in a low-carbon global economy by improving conditions for investment in the extraction and local beneficiation of rare minerals, renewable energy, low carbon hydrogen and clean technology.

This partnership will improve cooperation between South Africa and the EU on some of the

regulatory issues that constrain greater levels of trade. This work should enable South African companies to export products like sustainable fuel and electric and hybrid vehicles to the EU.

One of the most important outcomes of the summit was the announcement by the EU of an investment package worth €4.7 billion – around R90 billion – to support investment projects in South Africa. This package will include grants and loans from European financial institutions and businesses.

Among other things, this investment will be used to build South Africa's vaccine production capacity and boost local pharmaceutical value chains. The package will also support South

## CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PRESIDENT



Africa's just energy transition through the development of critical raw minerals and low carbon hydrogen. In addition to investments in transport and digital infrastructure, the package will provide resources for skills development.

We will work with our EU partners to develop the industries that process our natural resources into finished goods for export. This creates more jobs here in South Africa and ensures that our country derives a greater benefit from our natural resources.

We agreed on further cooperation in the areas of education, science, technology and innovation, specifically providing opportunities for young people to acquire skills through greater investment in education and science.

At a time of great geopolitical turmoil, the summit reaffirmed the unwavering commitment of

South Africa and the EU to multilateralism, the consistent application of international law and the centrality of the United Nations Charter. We agreed that a collective effort was needed by all countries to overcome global challenges such as climate change, pandemics, rising inequality and conflict.

The EU shares South Africa's view that the UN Security Council needs to be reformed so that it is more inclusive, efficient and democratic. In its composition and actions, the Security Council needs to better reflect the realities of today's world. We also agreed to strengthen efforts to safeguard and advance human rights across the world.

As a G20 member, the EU expressed its support for South Africa's G20 Presidency and its emphasis on solidarity, equality and sustainable development. It welcomed South Africa's focus

on forging partnerships between G20 members and other African countries.

The summit confirmed the great alignment between the South Africa and the EU on matters of global and continental significance. We share a vision of a just, peaceful and more equal world order in which all countries are able to develop and thrive.

We share similar views on how to navigate these difficult times, by standing together to uphold the principles of the UN Charter, to adhere to international law and to strengthen the institutions of global cooperation.

Above all, we are committed to the mutual well-being and development of the peoples of South Africa and all the member states of the European Union. We have a shared vision of the future and we are determined to work together to achieve it.

# AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY BILATERAL MEETING STATEMENT



Issued on behalf of the ANC and the SACP  
By the **ANC SECRETARY-GENERAL FIKILE MBALULA**  
and **SACP GENERAL SECRETARY SOLLY MAPAILA**



**T**HE African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP) held a bilateral meeting on Monday, 17 March 2025, to strengthen the decades-old relationship between the two principal political formations of our Alliance. The President of the ANC, comrade Cyril Ramaphosa, led the ANC National Officials and technical team, while the General Secretary of the SACP, comrade Solly Mapaila, led the SACP National Office Bearers and technical team.

We held robust yet very constructive discussions on how domestic, African continental and global developments impact the lives of the people of South Africa, especially the working class and poor as the majority. Within this context, we discussed the economic and broader social transformation and development of our country to overcome our nation's challenges, solve our people's problems and build shared prosperity, guided by the Freedom Charter. This strategic task requires a united, strong revolutionary movement.

Against this background, we discussed the implications for the Alliance and reviewed the state of the National Democratic Revolution – our shared strategy of the struggle for liberation and emancipation, through transformation and development. Based on both our previous bilateral discussion and our shared analysis of recent developments, we engaged in further reflections on the aftermath of the May 2024 election and the state of the Alliance, focusing on its reconfiguration and renewal to strengthen the national democratic revolutionary front in our country. This strategic task includes building the unity of revolutionary forces and the broader democratic movement.

The foundation of our constructive discussions is that the ANC and the SACP share common strategic objectives defined by the National Democratic Revolution and the need to defend, advance and deepen the revolution towards completing it. Because of this intersection of our strategic objectives, we are interdependent, even though we are also foundationally independent

formations, each with its historical mission to accomplish.

The bilateral reaffirmed our unwavering collective commitment to the National Democratic Revolution and the Alliance. We agreed to strengthen the relationship between the ANC and the Communist Party, a relationship forged in over a century of national-revolutionary democratic struggles to achieve liberation and improve the quality of life of all South Africans towards social emancipation.

The meeting agreed to establish a structured process to reassert the imperative of moving the National Democratic Revolution into a second, more radical phase – as part of our strategic objectives to defend, advance and deepen the revolution. To this end, we agreed to set in motion joint Alliance consensus-seeking democratic consultation.

Convening Alliance Political Council Study Sessions on economic policy, including fiscal, monetary, trade and industrial policy, as well as social policy

## EDITORIAL

broadly understood, is an immediate task we have proposed the bilateral and Alliance Secretariat should implement. We have agreed that these Alliance Political Council Study Sessions must culminate in the Alliance Summit this year.

The agreement to set in motion joint Alliance consensus-seeking democratic consultation will cover – and thus take forward – the outcomes of our engagements on the reconfiguration and renewal of the Alliance. In addition, there are questions of electoral strategy and tactics for further and ongoing consideration not only by the ANC and the SACP but equally importantly also by the entire Alliance and broader movement.

Given the organisational and political thoroughness with which we want to build and ensure the success of our meeting outcomes on every issue we have discussed – including our exchanges on

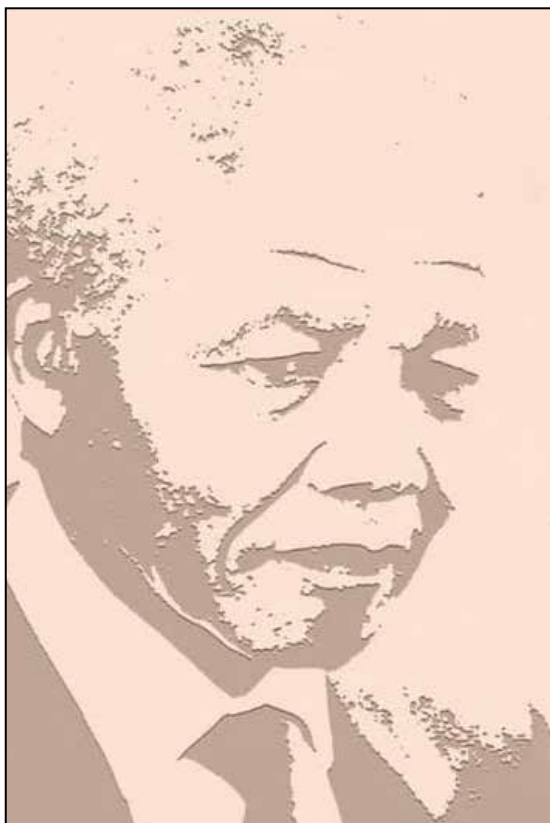
the national budget, we agreed to prioritise first reporting to our respective structures before we can communicate further details via the media. At the national level, these structures include the ANC's National Working Committee and National Executive Committee, and the SACP's Political Bureau and Central Committee. This process includes further engagements within the full complement of the Alliance in line with our commitment to set in motion joint Alliance consensus-seeking democratic consultation.

Finally, from our assessment of the unfolding international context, we reaffirmed our shared programme to consolidate unity and strengthen international solidarity to build a better Africa and world. This has become more critical amid the many risks of a resurgent and consolidating right-wing force across the globe, its domestic expression and the risks it poses to global peace and stability, as well as to the social

and economic lives of the people. In this regard, the bilateral session also called for the unity of the revolutionary and progressive forces across the world, both in the Global South and North.

In our country, in particular, we are determined to build the widest possible patriotic unity and defend our democratic national sovereignty, thus securing our national independence and fundamental right to self-determination. We will not flinch or give any quarter to bullying. To this end, we will close ranks to defend and implement democratic transformation legislation towards a completely non-racial and non-sexist South Africa. This shall include tackling the imbalances and inequalities created by the racist systems of colonial and apartheid oppression.

We are determined to build a nation characterised by equality and shared prosperity in line with the Freedom Charter.



**“Accountability of leaders to the rank and file and the accountability of members to the structures to which they are affiliated is the flip side of the coin of democracy. Such accountability must extend also to the relations existing between the movement as a whole and our people”**

*Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela*

# EXPROPRIATION OF LAND IS INTEGRAL TO ECONOMIC INCLUSION

■ By **ANC SECRETARY GENERAL FIKILE MBALULA**

**A**S we celebrate Human Rights Month, it is apt to reflect on the land issue that has been weaponised to bully us into abandoning the historic injustice of land dispossession.

After all, every colonial conquest was achieved by dispossessing indigenous peoples of their land and stripping them of their dignity. We have witnessed the same being done to the people of Palestine since 1947 through the illegal occupation by Israel.

In recent weeks there has been much fanfare about the desirability of the Expropriation Act of 2024, with the US terminating aid, boycotting participation in the G20 and placing South Africa on a watchlist. This is clearly a scapegoat for a deeply veiled political agenda with nefarious intent.

The manner in which our ambassador to the US, Ebrahim Rasool was humiliated and expelled from the US bears credence. We have no doubt that this agenda is bound to fail as it is predicated on a lie that cannot be sustained.

While much has been made of the role of the right-wing apartheid apologists AfriForum and Solidarity, the role of the so-called Paypal Mafia in the US – a group



of white male billionaires with deep roots in apartheid South Africa – should not be downplayed.

Perhaps the starting point should be to examine how a country such as the United States of America deals with the question of the expropriation of land. In the United States expropriation is done through a system known as eminent domain. This is strikingly similar to what is provided for in section 25(3) of the Constitution of South Africa, which provides that payment must be just and equitable.

## **Eminent domain**

In the US system, eminent domain refers to the power of the

government to take private property and convert it into public use, referred to as “*a taking*”. A taking may be the actual seizure of property by the US government, or it may be in the form of a regulatory taking, which occurs when the US government restricts a person’s use of their property to the point of it constituting a taking.

Therein lies the duplicity of those who allege that by proclaiming an act of Parliament that has gone through due process of law, South Africa is committing human rights violations and treating certain classes of its citizenry “*very badly*”.

The use of the words “human rights violations” in the wording

of the Donald Trump executive order is a strange twist of irony, considering that merely three days later, Trump withdrew his government from the UN Human Rights Council and terminated funding to this important body.

While we pontificate about the apartheid legacy that the Expropriation Act of 2024 seeks to unwind, it must not elude us that the questioning of this law is nothing more than a distraction from the real issue.

The wording of Trump's executive order cancelling all aid to South Africa is instructive where it says: *"South Africa has taken aggressive positions towards the United States and its allies, including accusing Israel, not Hamas, of genocide in the International Court of Justice, and re-invigorating its relations with Iran to develop commercial, military, and nuclear arrangements."*

This is the real reason the US is taking these atrocious measures against South Africa, a sovereign state. An African country that dared to haul the apartheid Israeli state before the International Court of Justice to be held accountable for its actions in Gaza and the broader Palestine.

History has no blank pages. The world will not forget that the US has used its veto power in the UN Security Council 48 times over the decades to block any attempt to hold Israel accountable for its illegal actions and violations of international law. The fundamental question is why does the US need to resort to subterfuge to punish South Africa for championing the cause of the oppressed people of Palestine?

South Africa's Expropriation Act of 2024 fulfils a constitutional im-

perative to regulate expropriation of property by law of general application. The law further seeks to redress an historical imbalance that had the effect of depriving the vast majority of people of the ownership of land.

It is important to appreciate that this law repeals the apartheid-era Expropriation Act of 1975, which was used to entrench racial inequality and land dispossession through forced removals of black people from their land. This was the law that gave the apartheid state a blank cheque to do very bad things and arbitrarily force people off their land.

The 2024 law seeks to redress the past injustices of racial discrimination and dispossession of black people. This puts paid to another lie that the democratic South Africa has a litany of race-based laws

that are intended to discriminate against white people.

Over a period of 15 years, this law has gone through a tedious and robust process, resulting in a number of iterations since the publication of the first draft in 2008.

### A nation in transition

As we navigate the challenging landscape of a nation in transition, we are guided by the policy dictates of the Freedom Charter, which proclaims that *"The land shall be shared among to those who work it"*.

Ours remains a contested terrain, and the promised land for those who bore the brunt of apartheid oppression cannot remain a pipe dream. President Cyril Ramaphosa, in his maiden State of the



Nation Address in 2018, referred to the land question as the “*original sin, which must be confronted head-on if we are to reach our full potential as a nation*”.

The ANC is under no illusion about the importance of land as a catalyst to grow the economy, restore the dignity of millions of South Africans and ensure food security. For the ANC, land redistribution is not limited to farm land, but also extends to urban areas to include land for human settlement and commercial industry.

Any suggestion that the ANC policy posture with regards to land – or any other matter – seeks to alienate any race group is rejected with the contempt it deserves. Ours is to seek a progressive outcome that places the country’s economy on a higher growth path.

Our land reform and land redistribution programme has always been guided by due process and characterised by fairness in its approach. After all, South Africa is a constitutional democracy founded on the bedrock of human rights, the rule of law, and equality. These are sacrosanct values that define our nation.

The issue of land is emotive and carries with it historical scars that can no longer wait to be healed permanently. The law defines the parameters under which the state may expropriate land without compensation. Sober reading of the law makes it clear that this will neither erode property rights, nor result in unfair compensation.

#### **False narrative**

A false narrative that suggests otherwise has been peddled in



our public discourse by those with nefarious motives who are wistfully yearning for the return of apartheid, which has been permanently relegated to the rubbish bin of history.

There is no doubt that the Expropriation Act ensures that the rights of all South Africans to land will be strengthened. It must be appreciated that our commitment to ensuring thriving agro businesses that benefit all citizens and empower black farmers is central to the country’s land redistribution programme.

It is no fallacy that those who have a genuine interest in working with us for mutually beneficial outcomes have understood our vision on land redistribution and have expressed appreciation of the need to move decisively in addressing this challenge. Many

nations around the world stand with us and have expressed their unconditional support for our policy direction.

A landless people is a lost nation that has no prospects of lifting itself out of the quagmire of poverty.

We are under no illusion about the intentions of those who seek to bully us into submission with threats of unleashing economic mayhem on us because we dare forge ahead with actions aimed at unwinding the colonial and apartheid legacy to restore the dignity of our people.

These are the authors of neo-colonialism and modern-day imperialism steeped in entrenching racial inequality and disdain for solidarity, equality and sustainability.

# From Mtolo to Gumede: The Colonial Industry of Anti-Transformation Noise and the FIGHT FOR SOUTH AFRICA'S SOUL

■ By **MDUMISENI NTULI**

**E**VER since the days of Bruno Mtolo – the ex-MK operative whose testimony in the Rivonia Treason Trial not only shattered the myth of unwavering liberation but also laid bare a strategy of betrayal – the apparatus of anti-ANC rhetoric has been a well-oiled machine. This industry, steeped in colonial tactics and opportunistic profit, continues to thrive today. It is an industry as old as colonialism itself – the monetisation of betrayal, the weaponisation of respectability and the repackaging of white supremacy as “*rational critique*”.

Mtolo's betrayal during the Rivonia Trial was not merely an act of individual treachery; it was a strategic victory for Apartheid's architects who understood that fracturing liberation movements required infiltrators and informants. Fast-forward six decades and the tactics have evolved, but the objective remains the same – to destabilise the march of transformation by laundering reactionary agendas through respectable channels.

It pays handsomely this industry. Careers are made, reputations built and institutions such



as think-tanks are established on the very premise of undermining the legacy of liberation. The playbook is as old as colonialism itself, yet its modern incarnation wears new faces and new guises, repackaged for a post-Apartheid era. Today, it thrives anew in the shrill theatrics of groups like the AfriForum, the pseudo-work-erism of Solidarity and the intellectually contorted narratives of commentators like William Gumede.

Their overarching mission is not to contribute constructively to a democratic debate, but rather to drown out South Africa's noisy,

vibrant democracy with a cacophony of distraction, disinformation and Apartheid nostalgia.

AfriForum and Solidarity, descendants of the fascist Ossewa Brandwag, have perfected the art of howling about “white genocide” and “property rights” to mask their true objective – the preservation of racial privilege.

Their allies? Commentators like William Gumede, who lend intellectual legitimacy to this charade by pathologising the ANC's transformative agenda while absolving apartheid's heirs of their complicity in perpetuating inequality.



Take Gumede's recent Sunday Times broadside, *"Irresponsible Populist Policies Lead to Abysmal Outcomes"*. Framed as a sober critique, the article is a master class in selective amnesia. It reduces the ANC's land reform agenda – a constitutional imperative to redress centuries of colonial and Apartheid theft – to *"populist recklessness"*. It dismisses South Africa's non-aligned foreign policy, rooted in anti-imperialism, human rights and Pan-Africanism, as *"anti-US"*. And it sidesteps the inconvenient truth that Apartheid's beneficiaries remain overwhelmingly privileged in a nation where Black poverty still wears the face of deliberate underdevelopment.

Gumede's arguments are not new. They echo the colonial logic that framed Mandela as a terrorist, the Freedom Charter as a communist plot and Black self-determination as inherently *"irrational"*. When he dismisses Affirmative Action and BEE as *"marginalisation of minorities"*, he promotes the Apartheid-era myth that equality for Black people constitutes oppression for Whites. When he bats an eyelid to AfriForum's *"white genocide"* propaganda – a lie debunked by recent official SAPS crime statistics – he fuels the racist trope that Black governance is inherently chaotic and violent.

What makes Gumede's intervention so insidious is its veneer of reasonableness. Unlike AfriForum's cartoonish racism or Solidarity's faux-workerism, his rhetoric is calibrated to appeal to liberal sensibilities. He speaks of *"accountability"* and *"pragmatism"* while erasing context – the ANC's policies are not arbitrary, but Constitutional obligations to dismantle Apartheid's legacy, as



**A minority of our white compatriots still refuse to let go of their apartheid past.**

stated in its pre-amble.

Land reform, economic redress and a foreign policy sceptical of Western hegemony are not *"populist"* indulgences – they are the baseline demands of justice in a nation still gasping for air after 350 years of colonial suffocation. This is the banal face of modern reaction – the columnist who conflates redress with revenge, the think-tank that rebrands White anxiety as *"civil rights activism"*, and the union that fights not for workers, but for the racial hierarchy that Apartheid built. Their success lies in their ability to distort reality. They lament *"state failure"* while opposing every effort to transform that state. They decry crime rates but ignore how poverty and inequality – direct legacies of Apartheid socio-economic engineering – feed desperation. They demand *"non-racialism"* while resisting the redistribution of land, wealth and power that would make it possible.

Let us be clear, the ANC is not beyond critique. Its missteps are real, its internal contradictions glaring and its pace of delivery often perceived as glacial. But

to conflate these challenges with the legitimacy of its transformative project is to surrender to the anti-liberation playbook. Our policies are not perfect either, but they are necessary.

Land reform is not *"theft"* – it is restitution. Affirmative action is not *"racism"* – it is redress. A foreign policy that challenges Western double standards is not *"irresponsible"* – it is the bare minimum of sovereignty.

To those who argue that we must *"move past apartheid"*, we ask: How do you move past a system whose economic architecture still stands? When 72% of South Africa's farmland remains in white hands, when Black households earn six times less than White ones and when the World Bank ranks us the world's most unequal society? Transformation is not a choice – it is an existential imperative.

Bertolt Brecht once wrote, *"The bitch that bore [fascism] is in heat"*. In South Africa, her pups wear many disguises – the human rights activist quoting *"property rights"* to defend stolen



## THE OPPORTUNITY COST OF TRUE PROGRESS: **Sacrifice, Unity, and the Future of South Africa**

■ By **KEFENTSE MKHARI**

land, the columnist pathologising Black-led governance, the unionist screaming “white genocide” while hoarding apartheid’s spoils. Their bark is loud, but their bite is lethal. To silence them, we must confront not just their lies, but the rotten industry that feeds them – an industry built on colonial logic, sustained by White fear and funded by those who profit from a South Africa forever in chains to its past.

Comrade Joel Netshitenzhe, an ANC veteran, once quipped that ours is a “noisy democracy”. He was right – but what he perhaps understated is how much of this noise is not grassroots dissent, but a calculated campaign. It is the hum of a well-oiled machine, funded by apartheid’s beneficiaries and operated by their modern-day proxies.

Our greatest crime, in the eyes of our critics, is not failure – it is our refusal to surrender. For 30 years, we have dared to govern as if a free, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and equitable South Africa is possible. That noise you hear? It’s not chaos. It’s the sound of a nation fighting for its soul.

**Mdumiseni Ntuli** is ANC Chief Whip.

**E**VERY year, on the **21st of March**, we commemorate **Human Rights Day** to honour the sacrifices our forebears made in the long and arduous struggle for a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa. As the preamble of our Constitution vigorously asserts, this is a nation that must *“take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.”*

This annual reflection reminds us that the political and socioeconomic freedoms we enjoy today were not handed to us lightly – they were hard-earned through immense sacrifice. It is the overflowing blood, sweat and tears of our ancestors, who courageously and selflessly placed their lives on the line in the fight against the wrath of colonialism and apartheid that gave birth to our democratic society. Human Rights Day serves not merely as a day of remembrance but a call to action – a reminder of the ongoing struggle to realise and fulfil the promise of our democracy and a better life for all.

This year, our commemoration



carries added significance as South Africa celebrates 70 years of the Freedom Charter – the cornerstone of our constitutional democracy. The Freedom Charter, adopted in 1955, articulated the collective aspirations of a people yearning for freedom, equality, economic emancipation and justice. Its enduring principles shaped our Constitution and continue to inspire the pursuit of a more just, equitable and inclusive society. Importantly, the 70th anniversary is underpinned by an encompassing commitment to an all-inclusive National Dialogue aimed at crafting a new vision for South Africa and fostering a social compact to achieve that vision. The proposed National

Sharpeville 1960



Dialogue must be underpinned by the consultative and inclusive spirit that guided the drafting and adoption of the Freedom Charter which left no one behind.

As we mark **Human Rights Day** this year, it is impossible to separate this commemoration from the underlying political context. The May 2024 National and Provincial Elections (NPE) proved to be a defining moment in South Africa's democratic journey. For the first time since the advent of democracy in 1994, the African National Congress (ANC) secured less than 50% of the national vote, a seismic shift that has forced the party to invite other political parties that secured seats in parliament to form national government. Consequently, the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU), under the leadership of the ANC, now shapes the contours of our political landscape.

The significance of this political shift cannot be overstated. For the past three decades, the ANC has been a dominant force in South African politics,

steering the country through the complexities of post-apartheid governance. However, the 2024 elections sent a clear message – a growing number of South Africans are dissatisfied with the status quo. The persistent triad of poverty, unemployment, and inequality as well as a lapse in governance capacity continue to cast long shadows over our nation, and many citizens feel that the promises of the 1994 democratic breakthrough are yet to fully materialise. In fact, some of the key socioeconomic indicators suggest that we are significantly regressing from the gains that have been registered in the last 30 years.

The GNU has emerged as a mechanism to foster political collaboration in governance from an electoral outcome that gave no one political party a decisive mandate in 2024. According to the Statement of Intent, the GNU represents a commitment by participating political parties to “*ensure stability and peace, tackle the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality, entrench our Constitutional de-*

*mocracy and the rule of law, and build a South Africa for all its people.*” As the leader of this unity government, the ANC bears the critical responsibility of guiding the coalition towards meaningful change, ensuring that the spirit of collaboration does not dilute the urgency of addressing the nation's most pressing issues.

Notably, the Statement of Intent also commits the GNU to the National Dialogue process, stating that “*Parties commit to an all-inclusive National Dialogue process – with parties, civil society, labour, business and other sectors ... The National Dialogue process will seek to develop a national social compact that enables the country to meet the aspirations of the National Development Plan.*” This commitment aligns with the spirit of the Freedom Charter's vision of a South Africa that belongs to all who live in it and offers a platform for collective reflection and forward planning.

At its core, the GNU signals a willingness among political parties to put aside their ideologi-

## CURRENT AFFAIRS

cal differences and immediate narrow political interests for the collective good. This is no small feat in a country with such a diverse and often polarised political landscape. It demands a level of political maturity that prioritises national interests over partisan gains – a principle deeply rooted in the spirit of Human Rights Day. The ANC, as the leading force within the GNU, must set the tone by fostering unity, promoting inclusive governance, and holding itself and the coalition partners to the highest standards of accountability.

However, while the formation of the GNU may be framed as an act of sacrifice for the greater good, it is crucial to interrogate the nature of this sacrifice. Is it a genuine commitment to collaborative governance, or is it just a tactical manoeuvre to secure political power and influence? This question lies at the heart of our political reality.

The experience at the local government sphere teaches us that coalition governments can be a double-edged sword. On one hand, they can promote stability by fostering inclusivity and cooperation. On the other, they risk becoming mere power-sharing arrangements that entrench elite interests while sidelining the very people they purport to serve. The suc-

cess or failure of the GNU will ultimately hinge on whether its participants can transcend narrow political agendas and focus on the urgent task of addressing the country's pressing social and economic issues.

Yet, the main question we must all grapple with – both leaders and ordinary citizens alike – is this: what political and socioeconomic sacrifices are we willing to make for our collective prosperity?

What are we prepared to endure today to secure a better tomorrow?

These are not abstract philosophical musings; they are urgent, practical considerations. Each generation must answer these questions, both in words and deeds, for the benefit of those who will inherit the nation we build.

For ordinary South Africans, the true measure of the GNU's effectiveness will be seen and felt in tangible improvements to their dai-

ly lives. Will we see a meaningful reduction in unemployment rates?

Will poverty alleviation programmes be strengthened and expanded?

Will the glaring inequalities that continue to define our society finally be tackled with the urgency they deserve?

These are the questions that must guide the GNU's work, and the ANC, as the leader of this unity government must shoulder the responsibility of ensuring these goals are not just aspirational but actionable.

As citizens, we must also reflect on what we are willing to contribute and sacrifice to achieve this vision. Are we prepared to hold our leaders accountable even when it is inconvenient?

Are we willing to engage in civic processes, to organise, to actively participate in electoral processes, and to demand transparency



and justice? The sacrifices of the past were not made so that we may stand idle as passive on-lookers taking no responsibility for the future being shaped today. Ultimately, we need to be crystal clear about the opportunity cost of a better tomorrow and be willing to forego whatever needs to be foregone. Like our forebears, we must be willing to pay the price today demands for a better South Africa tomorrow.

As we approach the National Dialogue, let us draw inspiration from the spirit of the Freedom Charter and the grassroots activism that shaped it. Just as ordinary South Africans – workers, youth, women, and community leaders – came together in 1955 to articulate their vision for a just society, so too must we actively participate in shaping the future of our nation today. The National Dialogue is not the sole preserve of political elites; it is a platform for every South African to voice their aspirations, concerns, and ideas for building a more equitable and prosperous nation.

Participation in this process is, in itself, an act of sacrifice – a willingness to set aside personal apathy, to engage with complex issues, and to commit to the hard work of nation-building. True progress demands collective effort and the courage to endure short-term discomfort for long-term gains.

Furthermore, as we commemorate Human Rights Day, we must ask ourselves whether the principles enshrined in our Constitution – dignity, equality, and freedom – are being fully realised in our current political climate. It is not enough for political parties to pay lip service to these ideals; they must be actively pursued through concrete policies and pro-

grammes that uplift the most marginalised members of our society.

We must also remain vigilant against the erosion of democratic values. In times of political uncertainty, there is always a risk that democratic norms may be compromised in the name of expediency. The GNU must operate with transparency and accountability, ensuring that its actions are guided by the will of the people and the principles of the Constitution. The ANC, as the leading party, must exemplify these values, setting a high standard of integrity and democratic commitment for its coalition partners.

Ultimately, Human Rights Day reminds us that the struggle for justice and equality is far from over. Just as our forebears made immense sacrifices to dismantle the oppressive systems of colonialism and apartheid, so too must we be prepared to hold our leaders accountable and demand

a South Africa government that truly serves all its people.

As we navigate this new era of coalition politics, let us draw inspiration from the enduring spirit of 69 freedom fighters who lost their lives during the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre while they were peacefully protesting against draconian pass laws that denied them the freedom of movement and association. Let it be a reminder that genuine progress requires both sacrifice and unwavering commitment to the common good. Whether the GNU will rise to this challenge remains to be seen, but one thing is clear: the people of South Africa will be watching – and we will not be silent!

**Kefentse Mkhari** is a Public Relations and Communications coordinator at the OR Tambo School of Leadership. He holds a BA Degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics from the University of South Africa.



**NATIONAL DIALOGUE**

**Let's come together, listen, and build a better future. Every voice matters. Together, we can heal, grow, and create a united and prosperous South Africa.**

113<sup>TH</sup>

ANC

# HUMAN RIGHTS DAY – ENGENDERING A CULTURE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

■ By **GEORGE MAGOMA**

**T**HE 21st of March 1960 represents a turning a point which changed the course of history in our country. As we commemorate this historic day, we reflect on the epic journey of the 65th anniversary of **Human Rights Day**. We do so in the context of unity and renewal, and rebuilding the African National Congress for the battles that lie ahead, variables at play and impediments hamstringing our strategic objectives of advancing the National Democratic Revolution (NDR).

This we do in a complex and unique environment of an organisation confronted with challenges that pose an existential threat in the life of the movement, inhibiting its capacity to advance the essence underpinning its strategic objective of building a true non-racial, non-sexist, united democratic South Africa, deferring a dream of a National Democratic State (NDS).

In our diagnostic analysis of this organisational paralysis and various factors contributing to our weaknesses, electoral decline and the waning confidence of society in the ANC as the vanguard of the struggle and a leader of society, on the occasion of the 113th anniversary of the ANC we declared 2025 as “*The Year of Renewal to Make the ANC*

*a More Effective Instrument of the People to Achieve the Vision of the Freedom Charter: The People Shall Govern! The People Shall Share in the Country’s Wealth”* to drive the agenda as set out by President Ramaphosa.

This declaration is dialectically linked to the Freedom Charter as we commemorate its 70th anniversary, a loadstar upon which our democratic constitution is founded, a blueprint that guides us in our pursuit for a society we aspire to build. It is an embodiment of a country embedded in a culture of human rights, fought and achieved through the blood and the sacrifices of those who marched against the wretched pass laws on 21 March 1960, and the mothers who on the 9th of August 1956 led the strug-

gle against secondary citizenship united under the banner of the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW).

Both these events were pivotal in shaking the apartheid pillars, laying a solid foundation for a dispensation where “*The People Shall Govern*” and a country based on the expressed will of the people.

The Freedom Charter enjoins us to build a world through peace and friendship, to reverse the frontiers of poverty and inequality through land redistribution. To achieve these key pillars of the Freedom Charter, to give effect to the imperatives of the democratic Constitution the ANC adopted a non-aligned approach for a global order predicated on the sovereignty of all states, inclusive



multilateralism, progressive internationalism, peace and a better Africa and a better world.

To address and give impetus to landownership, access and equality and to reverse the vestiges of the 1913 Land Act the ANC government passed the Expropriation Act. This sparked a diplomatic row, straining US-SA relations. As President Mandela once opined, reaffirming the Freedom Charter, as a democratic country our sovereignty is aligned to the struggles of progressive internationalism, solidarity, peace and friendship in pursuance of the common goal of humanity.

This is a complex milieu within which the ANC and the country exist, traversing treacherous diplomatic and racial storms, fighting the anti-transformation agenda and an orchestrated plot engineered to reverse the gains of the 30 years of democracy. At worst, to sow racism and polarisation against the grain of our strategic objective of unity, democratic, non-racialism, our resolve to address landlessness, and to honour those who suffered injustice as result of the odious and putrid apartheid pass laws which account for the present day inequality and landlessness.

The journey to this day is laden with historic moments, one which recognizes the power of dialogue to explore everlasting solutions to any problem as opposed to conflict. Amongst this is the Harare Declaration which set the path for a negotiated settlement:

*"We believe that a conjuncture of circumstances exists which, if there is a demonstrable readiness on the part of the Pretoria regime to engage in negotia-*



*tions genuinely and seriously, could create the possibility to end apartheid through negotiations. Such an eventuality would be an expression of the long standing preference of the majority of the people of South Africa to arrive at a political settlement."*

Why is the Harare Declaration relevant in the circumstances? South Africa is facing immense challenges of poverty, corruption, crime, unemployment and inequality. In the aftermath of the 29 May 2025 National General Elections a need for dialogue arose, necessitating an inclusive approach to build national consensus in a bid to find solutions to these persisting problems. This includes building a capable, ethical developmental state with the vision and wherewithal to the attainment of the nature of the country we yearn to restore the dignity of the people.

Dialogue is a powerful tool in joining all South Africa across the political spectrum, binding them to a common bond of prosperity and human dignity. In addition to other complimentary pillars of the struggle this is an approach which constituted part of our strategy to end minority apartheid rule. It is

a tactic relevant today to explore solutions to problems facing the country through dialogue.

The struggles of those who resisted apartheid subjugation, racial segregation were recognized on the 10 the December 1996 when President Mandela signed the Constitution into law, giving effect to the Freedom Charter. This was in honour of those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land. These are those who perished on the tragic day of 21 March 1960. Their struggle was a struggle for human dignity. It is for this reason that this day is commemorated as Human Rights Day.

The sacrifices of those who fought for freedom are not in vain. In the midst of these problems and in commemorating this milestone, we must pause, reflect and introspectively ask, who can defend the democratic state? In 2025 we declared to defend freedom and advance democracy as one of the pillars of our election manifesto. This is a patriotic duty, otherwise our struggle is obsolete, with severe threats on the gains of the last 30 years of democracy, the onslaught our sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Juxtaposed against the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Constitution of the country we have through the Freedom Charter and our quest for a better world, we assumed our rightful place in the community of nations. It is for this reason that South Africa was isolated, apartheid declared a crime against humanity. In building a global peaceful order we took up the cudgels for the voiceless and the defenceless, rising against the obnoxious ideology of apartheid. We hoisted our peaceful flag high, assumed a rightful place in community of nations for human rights in furtherance of the Freedom Charter and declared that there shall be peace and friendship.

We pride ourselves with our feat of the leadership of G20, our role in BRICS, Southern Africa Development Community and other multilateral organisations, peace on the continent and the African Union Agenda 2063.

The journey towards a prosperous country is too long, the implementation of the National Health Insurance Act, the Appropriation Act, the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act and other progressive legislation to engender human rights, access and equality, to foster global peace and collaboration across the ever-changing world needs a new thinking and approach and progressiveness rooted in the culture of human rights. With the ANC at the helm of this inclusive paradigm of partnerships the world is undergoing a metamorphosis from unilateralism to inclusivity and cooperation.

As we commemorate the epic struggles of our forebears this day will remain indelibly etched in our calendar in defence of de-



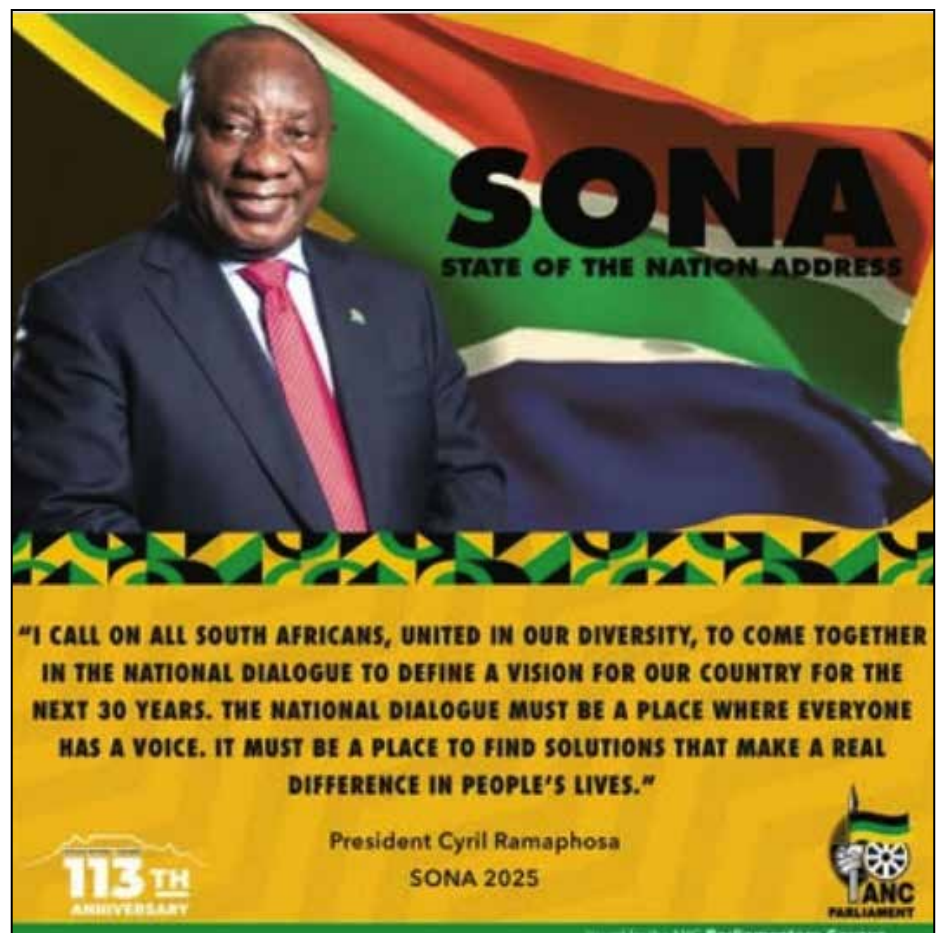
mocracy, advancing freedom, animating the dream of the 1955, 1956 and the 1960 generations, honouring those who suffered the injustices of the past. We believe that South Africa belongs to those who live in it, to heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights.

We commit ourselves to return

land to the people, to restore their dignity, and to lay the foundations for a democratic society and an open society in which the government is based on the will of the people. As advocated by the Freedom, a clarion call which is relevant today, we declared that *"These freedoms we will fight for, side by side, throughout our lives, until we have won our liberty."* This instils activism, a revolutionary duty and consciousness to advance and defend our revolution and achievements.

These struggles are about the ANC remaining on the side of the poor, fighting side with the poor and working class for a society based on equality and justice. The People Shall Govern! The People Shall Share in the Country's Wealth.

The struggle continues.



**SONA**  
STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS

**"I CALL ON ALL SOUTH AFRICANS, UNITED IN OUR DIVERSITY, TO COME TOGETHER IN THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE TO DEFINE A VISION FOR OUR COUNTRY FOR THE NEXT 30 YEARS. THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE MUST BE A PLACE WHERE EVERYONE HAS A VOICE. IT MUST BE A PLACE TO FIND SOLUTIONS THAT MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE IN PEOPLE'S LIVES."**

President Cyril Ramaphosa  
SONA 2025

113<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY

ANC  
PARLIAMENT



# South Africa Will Not Be Bullied: Standing with Ambassador Ebrahim Rasool and Defending Our Sovereignty

■ By **FAEIZ JACOBS**

**S**OUTH Africa is a nation that does not bow to intimidation, that stands firm in the face of injustice, and that has always been a moral superpower in global affairs. Today, we are being tested once again.

The expulsion of Ambassador Ebrahim Rasool by the United States is not merely a diplomatic slight – it is a blatant act of political coercion aimed at silencing South Africa’s independent voice. His only ‘crime’ was telling the truth – calling out the white supremacist tendencies within the “Make America Great Again” (MAGA) movement and exposing the broader racial anxieties fuel-

ing the U.S. political landscape.

For this, the U.S. has declared him persona non grata, proving once again their double standards on free speech and democracy. But we will not be bullied.

South Africa will stand by its diplomats. We will defend our sovereignty. And we will not be silenced by an empire that preaches democracy but punishes truth-telling.

**Ambassador Rasool:  
A Truth-Teller Who Must Be  
Honored**

I was present at the MISTRA we-

binar, where Ambassador Rasool provided a factual, historically grounded analysis of the racial and political tensions in the U.S. His insights were not radical – they were realities acknowledged even within America itself. The backlash against him is not about what he said, but who said it and from where.

His words were met not with debate, but with expulsion. This is not diplomacy; this is intimidation.

But South Africans do not abandon those who stand for justice. When Ambassador Rasool returns, he must be welcomed as a hero. A national reception must be organized.

Government must formally honor him for his service. Our people must mobilize to show the world that we defend those who speak truth to power.

We must make it clear: You do not silence a South African and expect us to bow down.

**Exposing U.S. Hypocrisy: They Preach But Do Not Practice**

The United States claims to uphold democracy, free speech, and human rights, yet their actions repeatedly show otherwise.



Consider this:

They preach democracy, yet they have orchestrated coups and invasions against elected governments (Chile, Iraq, Libya, and more).

They claim to protect free speech, yet they expel diplomats for political analysis.

They claim to fight racism, yet their own justice system disproportionately imprisons, kills, and disenfranchises Black and minority citizens.

They demand respect for international law, yet they ignore the rulings of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and continue to fund Israeli apartheid.

As the African proverb says: *“The axe forgets, but the tree remembers.”*

South Africa remembers U.S. complicity in apartheid.

South Africa remembers how the U.S. supported dictators while lecturing others on democracy.

South Africa remembers how the U.S. imposes economic warfare through sanctions while claiming to promote trade.

And we will not forget.

### Defending South Africa’s Sovereignty: The Protections for Our Diplomats

The treatment of Ambassador Rasool is a violation of international diplomatic norms as enshrined in the United Nations Charter and the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961).

The U.S. expulsion of our ambassador was a clear breach of dip-



lomatic protocol, demonstrating their willingness to abuse power to suppress critical voices. Under international law:

Diplomatic representatives are entitled to freedom of expression, within the scope of their official duties.

The expulsion of an ambassador should be an act of last resort, not political punishment for an inconvenient truth.

The United Nations must hold Washington accountable for violating the principles of diplomatic immunity and fair diplomatic engagement.

South Africa must demand a formal review of this decision through the UN, highlighting the precedent it sets for global diplomatic relations.

If Washington can expel an ambassador for simply stating facts, what does this mean for the integrity of global diplomacy? This

is not just about South Africa – this is about protecting diplomatic immunity worldwide.

### What South Africa Must Do: A Plan of Action

#### 1. Give Ambassador Rasool a Hero’s Welcome

A national civic reception must be organized at OR Tambo International Airport upon his return.

Government and civil society must formally recognize his contributions. Public mobilization must show that South Africa stands by its own.

#### 2. Defend South Africa’s Sovereignty in Global Forums

Take this issue to the United Nations and African Union to challenge the U.S. abuse of diplomatic protocols.

Engage BRICS and other allies to condemn this action and prevent similar treatment of other diplomats.

### 3. Strengthen Protections for South African Diplomats

Introduce a Diplomatic Protection Bill in Parliament to legally prevent the unfair targeting of our representatives abroad.

Demand reciprocity in diplomatic relations – if the U.S. expels our ambassador for political reasons, we must have the right to respond in kind.

### 4. Reduce Economic Dependence on the U.S.

Accelerate our trade shift toward BRICS and Africa.

Strengthen the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) as an alternative to AGOA dependency.

Leverage our critical mineral resources (platinum, chromium, rare earth metals) as bargaining power.

### 5. Expose U.S. Hypocrisy in Global Media

Launch an international PR campaign exposing the double standards behind this expulsion.

Engage digital diplomacy to ensure South Africa's narrative is heard globally.

### We Will Not Be Bullied – We Will Lead

South Africa is not a vassal state. We do not take orders from Washington. We will not be intimidated into silence.

Ambassador Rasool's expulsion is proof that our stance on global justice is effective – when you are punished for speaking truth, it means your words carry power.

This is our moment to reassert South Africa's moral leadership on the global stage.

We will not bow to intimidation.

We will not apologize for defending justice. We will not allow superpowers to dictate our principles.

As another African proverb says: *"When the elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers."*

South Africa refuses to be the grass. We are the baobab tree – deep-rooted, unshaken, and standing tall for justice.

### South Africa Will Not Be Silenced

Ambassador Rasool spoke truth to power. Now, South Africa must stand up for him.



We have survived apartheid, we have rebuilt a democracy, and we have always stood on the side of justice. We will not be silenced now.

We are not afraid.

We will not be bullied.

We will lead.

South Africa: This is our time to stand together.

**Faiez Jacobs** is a former ANC WC Provincial Secretary, Member of Parliament and social entrepreneur and commentator.



# *Who's Caring for Who?*

## The Vital Role of Social Workers in South Africa's Mental Health Crisis

■ By **KEITUMETSE FATIMATA MOUTLOATSE**

**E**VERY year, the third Tuesday of March is declared World Social Work Day to celebrate and acknowledge social workers' invaluable contributions to addressing complex societal issues, advocating for vulnerable populations, and promoting social justice and well-being. Now more than ever, social workers should be at the frontlines as we navigate compounding crises including volatile geopolitical dynamics and increasing wars, reversal of fundamental human rights, growing social and economic inequalities, and increasing mental health disorders.

In South Africa, however, the future of social work practice remains uncertain. Despite the growing worldwide demand for social workers, with an expected employment growth of 7% between 2023 and 2033 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), there are over 6,000 unemployed social workers in the country, with the majority in Kwa-Zulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape.

This is particularly concerning given South Africa's high prevalence of mental health disorders, which are attributed to challenges in providing integrated psychosocial support services, including a



shortage of mental health professionals and resource constraints.

### **Social Work in Integrated Mental Health Care and Support**

The state of mental health post-COVID-19 remains a significant concern globally, with rates of common mental health disorders increasing by 26% and 28% for anxiety and depression, respectively as reported by the World Health Organization (WHO). In South Africa, the high burden of mental health disorders is exacerbated by several factors including inequality, unemployment, poverty, historical trauma, social instability and violence, and the

impact of the COVID-19 pandemic amongst others.

Therefore, urgency is required to address the growing number of unemployed social workers. This is equivalent to direct investment in strengthening integrated mental health care, which is essential for the well-being of individuals, the economy, and national development. While mental health awareness initiatives have grown exponentially worldwide, support services, including psychosocial support, remain largely limited, particularly in low-to-middle-income countries like South Africa.

To truly address the prevalence of mental health and destigmatize it, we must invest in the capacity to respond, support, and prevent mental health issues. As a social work practitioner, I believe that social workers should be at the heart of South Africa's mental healthcare strategies. Social workers are equipped with skills from diverse fields of specialization, providing expansive experience to respond to the evolving nature of mental healthcare, thus providing a more integrated approach to support.

As social workers, we should advocate for greater political will and financial commitment from

the public and private sectors to create employment opportunities for practitioners in addressing the mental health crisis. The National Mental Health Policy Framework and Strategic Plan 2023-2030, emphasizes investing in personnel, which includes increasing the capacity, availability, and resources of social workers in primary healthcare facilities. The Policy Framework aims to improve mental health by integrating mental healthcare into primary and community care, boosting budgetary resources, and addressing stigma and accessibility issues.

Therefore, as a social worker, I fully endorse the country's commitment to the implementation of the National Health Insurance (NHI). The NHI has catalytic potential in financing mental healthcare services including its practitioners. According to the 2023-2030 National Mental Health Policy Framework and Strategic Plan: *"In the financing of the National Health Insurance (NHI) system, mental health services will be given parity with other health conditions, in proportion to the burden of disease and evidence for cost-effective interventions. NHI will specifically include packages of care for mental health, in line with the evidence for the most cost-effective interventions."*

### Social Work in Development

Social workers play a critical role in accelerating the attainment of development imperatives, as outlined in South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP). The plan estimates that 55,000 social workers are needed by 2030 to meet the growing demand for social services. Social workers are

essential in addressing the social determinants of health, education, and economic growth which are key to achieving sustainable, and inclusive development.

In understanding the relationship between mental health and national development, the economic investment in mental health, particularly in ensuring integrated support and care is non-negotiable.

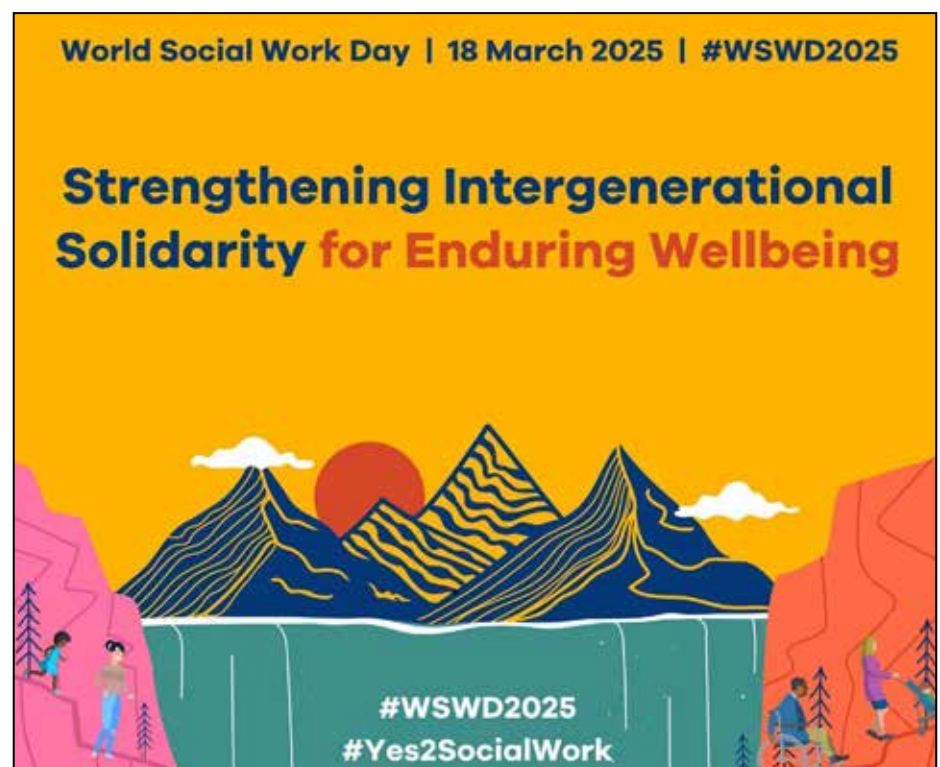
According to the National Mental Health Policy Framework and Strategic Plan 2023-2030, the cost of mental health conditions for the economy of South Africa is too big to ignore, with estimates suggesting a loss of over US\$3.6 billion (R61.2 billion) in lost earnings. Likewise, there is growing evidence that scaling up mental healthcare can yield significant returns on investment, with estimated economic benefits of R60.2 and R117.7 billion over 15 years.

Therefore, investing in social

workers and the social work profession is a matter of national development and improving the overall well-being of all living in South Africa. Throughout March, we celebrate social workers and applaud them for their critical contributions to addressing mental health and development in South Africa.

We must affirm the call to invest in creating employment across sectors for social workers, advocate for greater political will and financial commitment, and prioritize integrated mental health care to ensure the well-being of individuals, the economy, and national development.

**Keitumetse Fatimata Moutloatse** is Chairperson of Black Womxn Caucus, a youth-led intergenerational, feminist movement advocating against GBVF. She is the Executive Director of Crisis of Care, a psychosocial support services company. She is an MA candidate in Social Development at Wits University and a former public servant in the Presidency.



## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

# THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

22–28 March 2025

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

### 22 March 1945 Arab League formed

The Arab League was formed by Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, Syria and Yemen, with the objectives to promote economic growth in the region, resolve disputes between members, and coordinate political aims. The Arab League formed a common market in 1965, and by 1999 Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Mauritania, Syria, and Yemen were members; the dream of a full common market was never reached, but over time reduced customs duties and taxes amongst member countries. The 22 Members states of the Arab League as of 2018 are Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

### 22 March 1961 Nkrumah calls for sanctions against Apartheid South Africa



In the aftermath of the Sharpeville massacre, Kwame Nkrumah,

president of Ghana and one of the founders of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) called for the '*total political and economic sanctions*' against apartheid South Africa.

### 22 March 1985 Treaty to Protect the Ozone Layer signed

The ozone layer protects the earth from excessive ultraviolet radiation which could cause mutations and damage in human, animal and plant cells. In 1974 scientists published their first scientific hypotheses that chemicals, particularly chlorofluorocarbon gases (CFC), could remain trapped in the stratosphere for decades or even centuries, release chlorine and thus break down the ozone layer. The Vienna convention signed on 22 March 1985 is a multilateral environmental agreement in which "*states agree to cooperate in the relevant research and scientific assessment of the ozone problem, to exchange information and to adopt appropriate measures to prevent activities that harm the ozone layer.*" This treaty is seen as one of the successes of multilateral cooperation, leading to drastic reduction in the production of CFC gasses.

### 23 March 1960 Robert Sobukwe and others charged after anti-pass protests

PAC president, Robert Sobukwe,

PAC national secretary, Kitchener Leballo and eleven others were charged with incitement to riot, following anti-pass protests.

### 23 March 1984 Dorothy Nyembe released from prison



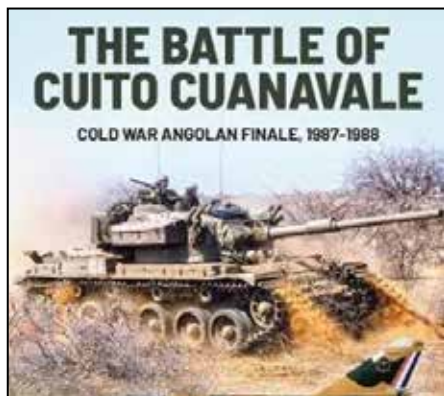
Dorothy Nyembe, a leader of the Cato Manor protests was released from prison. She went on to become one of the leaders of the Natal Organisation of Women (NOW), an affiliate of the United Democratic Front (UDF). Before her imprisonment, she was a founder of the ANC Women's League in Cato Manor in 1954, led the Natal contingent of women to the 1956 Women's March to the Union Buildings, and became ANCWL Natal President in 1959 where she led the League in the potato boycott against poor treatment of prisoners on farms. Dorothy Nyembe was amongst the first Umkhonto we Sizwe re-

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

cruits in 1961. Her release on 23 March 1984 came after she was sentenced to 15 years in prison for harboring Umkhonto we Sizwe members. After the first democratic elections of 1994, she was one of the pioneer Members of Parliament and one of the founding mothers and fathers of the South African democratic constitution. Mam Nyembe passed on in 1998.

### 23 March 1988

#### Battle of Cuito Cuanavale ends



The Battle of Cuito Cuanavale, which saw on Angolan soil the epic battle between the South African apartheid forces, which backed UNITA, and the Angolan government forces, supported by the Cubans with over 300,000 troops, ended on this day in March 1988 in defeat for the Boers. The battle is regarded as the second largest battle after the World Wars, and part of the apartheid government's Border Wars started in 1966, for which it conscripted white South Africans. The defeat of the South African Defence Force marked a turning point, forcing the apartheid regime to sign the Angolan peace accords in 1988.

### 23 March 1991

#### SAFA founded

The South African Football Association (SAFA) was found-



ed on 8 December 1991 after a long period of racial segregation. SAFA's inaugural conference in Johannesburg was chaired by Interim Chairman, Mr Mluleki George, of the National Sports Congress (NSC). Four disparate units came together to form the organisation in Johannesburg to set South African football on the road to a return to international competition after a lifetime of apartheid in soccer. These four entities were the Football Association of South Africa (FASA), the South African Soccer Association (SASA), the South African Soccer Federation (SASF) and the South African National Football Association (SANFA), who later withdrew from the process only to return again two years later. The proposal for SAFA to apply for CAF membership was taken at this congress.

### 24 March 1855

#### Olive Schreiner, feminist and author born

Author, feminist, intellectual and



anti-war campaigner Olive Emily Albertina Schreiner (1855-1920) was born on this day at the Wesley Missionary Station in Wittebergen near Herschel and grew up in Cradock, Eastern Cape. A campaigner against the excesses of the Anglo Boer War, she is the author of the South African classic, *The Story of an African Farm* (1883), as well as *Women and Labour* (1911), and a host of other works. She was a prolific letter writer and over 5000 of her letters, written between 1871 and 1920 are available online at [www.oliveschreiner.org](http://www.oliveschreiner.org).

### 24 March 1961

#### Establishment of Ciskei as a bantustan

Ciskei was established as one of the bantustans, part of the apartheid government's separate development policy, which along with the Land Acts of 1913 and 1923, and the Group Areas Act, saw black people restricted to ownership of 13% of the land. In 1972 Ciskei became a self-governing territory with Zwelitsha as capital, and granted 'independence' in 1982. The Bantustan system was met with resistance from the onset, gaining momentum after the formation of the Border region of the United Democratic Front in 1983, and finally abolished in 1994.

### 24 March 2013

#### Séléka rebels captures Bangui

An alliance of rebel groups took over the capital of Central African Republic, after taking over control of most other provinces in the country. The takeover of Bangui saw CAR President François Bozizé fleeing to neighbouring Congo. This led to a spiral into violence in the country, with thou-

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

sands of internally displaced and refugees. The African Union in July 2013 deployed the African-led International Support Mission in the CAR (AFISM-CAR), and also initiated peace talks in 2015, eventually leading to a peace agreement in 2018.

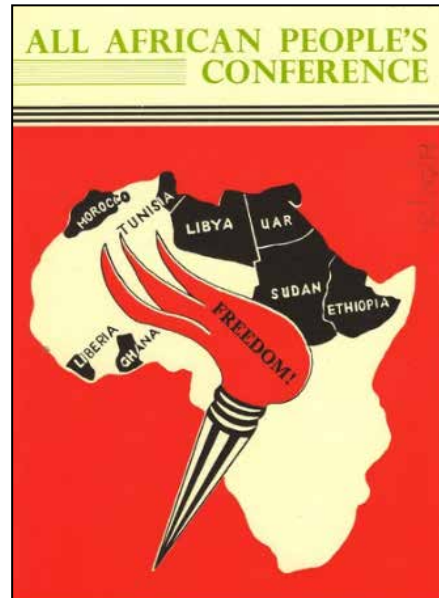
### 25 March 1807 Abolition of the Slave Trade Act passed

The British Parliament passed the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act, which outlawed the slave trade within the British empire, but not slavery. An act abolishing slavery was only passed in Britain in 1834. According to the UK government archives, 3.1 million African slaves were transported to its various colonies in the Americas, Caribbean and other countries, of which only 2.7 million arrived alive over the 300 years of the slave trade. London, Bristol and Liverpool were the most important ports for the British slave trade.

### 25 March 1957 European Economic Community formed

The Community was a precursor to what is today known as the European Union, and was formed initially by six countries. The founding members of the Rome Treaty were Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and West Germany. The United Kingdom, Denmark, and Ireland joined in 1973, followed by Greece in 1981 and Portugal and Spain in 1986. Its initial aim was to bring about economic integration, including a common market and customs union, among its six founding members. On 10 December 1991, the EEC transformed into the European Union with the signing of the Maastricht Treaty.

### 25 March 1961 All-in African Conference starts in Pietermaritzburg



The two-day All-in African Conference – with 1,400 delegates from 145 religious, cultural, peasant, intellectual and political bodies – was hosted in Pietermaritzburg. The conference called for a national convention of elected representatives of all adult men and women, regardless of race, colour or creed. Nelson Mandela was appointed secretary of the National Action Council. The conference was held four days after the first anniversary of the Sharpeville Massacre.

### 25 March 1995 Wiki web introduced

Ward Cunningham introduced the wiki, or user-editable website. A wiki is a web-based tool that can be used by educators, students, businesses and staff to work collaboratively to create materials, resources and instructional presentations. Known for their simplicity, users can easily add and edit wiki content, creating a group website. Wiki is a Hawaiian term meaning 'quick'. Today, Wikipedia is the world's most well-known and widely used wiki.

### 25 March 2001 Pedestrian week inaugurated



Pedestrian week (25-31 March 2001) was started by the South African government on this day. According to the UN, each year, over 270,000 pedestrians are killed in road accidents. In South Africa between 35-40% of road deaths are pedestrians. Contributing factors to these high figures, according to the Arrive Alive campaign, include drunk, distracted, reckless pedestrians, poor visibility and state of pavements. The Arrive Alive campaign includes educating children in schools on road safety, and physical infrastructure to encourage safety such as wider pavements, traffic bumps, and pedestrian bridges.

### 26 March 1881 Youngest judge appointed

Reinhold Gregorowski is appointed a judge in the Orange Free State at the age of 25, making him the youngest judge in SA history. Judge Gregorowski delivered the death penalty in the Jameson Raids, and died in 1922. In 1999, Leona Theron was appointed as judge at the age of 33, making her the second youngest judge.

### 26 March 1970 Bantustan citizenship law passed

The Black Homelands Citizens Act consolidated colonial land



dispossession, the 1913 and 1926 Land Acts, by making all black South Africans aliens in their own country and citizens of tribal bantustans. By 1979, 17 other enabling laws were passed to enforce the act.

### 26 March 1979

#### Egypt suspended from Arab League for peace treaty with Israel

Egypt's President Anwar al-Sadat and Israel's Prime Minister Menachem Begin signed a peace agreement, and was suspended from the Arab League. Sadat and Begin received the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize for this betrayal of the Palestinian people. The League headquarters moved from Cairo to Tunis. It was only readmitted to the Arab League a decade later in 1989.

### 26 March 1984

#### Ahmed Sékou Touré passed on

Ahmed Sékou Touré (1922-1984) was a Guinean trade unionist and freedom fighter, who after the independence of Guinea became its first president. Touré, a brilliant organiser and planner, introduced far-reaching reforms to his country. He brought the notorious landlords under the control of the Guinean government and oversaw the distribution of land (and thus effectively, wealth). He was also an avid Pan Africanist and supported the struggles against colonialism across the continent.

### 26 March 1991

#### MERCOSUR formed

Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, and Paraguay were the founding members of the Southern Common Market; it was later joined by Venezuela and Bolivia.

### 26 March 2019

#### Map of Africa Monument

The Map of Africa Monument is dedicated at the southernmost point of Africa, at the Cape Agulhas National Park. The monument has a circumference of 30 metres and includes the shape of the continent and the design elements of a compass.

### 26 March 1898

#### Hunting banned in the Kruger National Park



Hunting in the area now known as the Kruger National Park was banned through a proclamation by the then Zuid Afrikaanse Republic (the Boer republic of Transvaal). First named the Sabie Game Reserve, it was re-named after Paul Kruger in 1926, and opened to the public in 1927. The Kruger National Park is the largest game reserve in Africa, 19,633 square kilometres large. At last count, it had 93 mammal, 518 bird and 118 reptile species, including the Big Five: Buffalos, elephants, leopards, lions and rhinos and the Little Five: antlions, eastern rock elephant shrews, leopard tortoises, red-billed buffalo weavers and rhino beetles.

### 26 March 1943

#### Die Burger published use of "apartheid" for the first time

The Afrikaans newspaper, Die

Burger, published the word "Apartheid" for the first time.

### 26 March 1956

#### NAFCOC leader and businessman Sheiks Makhado born

Sheiks Mutondi Makhado, businessman and well-known leader in the area of Black economic empowerment, was born in Johannesburg. He was executive director of NAFCOC (1989-91) and founder of the Retabile Group, with stakes in telecommunications, airlines and casinos.

### 26 March 2020

#### SA COVID-19 Lockdown starts



President Cyril Ramaphosa, in a televised announcement to the nation (family meetings) announced a lockdown as part of the National State of Disaster. The lockdown started at midnight on 26 March and was supposed to end 13 April 2020, but eventually the state of disaster and various lockdowns lasted for 750 days until April 2022.

### 27 March 1876

#### Cape Times newspaper hits the streets

This day was the Cape Times newspaper's first day on the streets of Cape Town. It was the first daily newspaper in southern Africa, published as an English language morning newspaper with Frederick York St Leger as

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

editor. It sold for the cheap price of a penny and had been in continuous daily production ever since. The Cape Times: An Informal History, written by Gerhard Shaw was published in 2000.

### 27 March 1963

#### Khady Sylla born

Senegalese writer and filmmaker, Khady Sylla was born in Dakar on March 27 1963. Following graduation, she went to Paris and studied philosophy at the École Normale Supérieure. Sylla became interested in a literary career, taught basic education to migrant workers and wrote many short stories and a novel before embarking on film production. She is part of an early wave of African women filmmakers. She worked on and participated in different projects. She also taught German at Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar, Senegal.

### 27 March 1985

#### Westdene dam disaster

A bus with 76 learners from Vorentoe High school, Johannesburg plunged into the Westdene dam, killing 42 learners. To this day, the cause of the accident is not known.

### 27 March 1985

#### Boesak and Naude arrested for leading protest march

Two anti-apartheid clergy Reverends Beyers Naudé and Allan Boesak, and 200 others protesters were arrested for leading a march through the city of Cape Town to Pollsmoor Prison. They were protesting against the Uitenhage massacre that took place on 21 March 1985 in the township of Langa, and also called for the release of Nelson



Mandela. The charges were subsequently dropped, but the South African police kept the two men under surveillance.

### 27 March 2019

#### Warning to 7-year old rapper

Seven year old Ugandan rapper, Patrick Ssenyonjo, performing as Fresh Kid, was warned by the Minister of Youth to hang up his microphone, following reports that he skipped school and performed at clubs late into the night.

### 27 March 2022

#### Biniam Girmay wins World title

The Eritrean cyclist, born 2 April 2000 in Asmara, became the first African to win a classic world cycle race, when he led his team to victory in the UCI World championship in Gent-Wevelgem race in Belgium on 27 March 2022. He rides for Intermarché-Wanty (UCI WorldTeam), has won 12 UCI races, and is currently 109th in the UCI Ranking.

### 28 March 1656

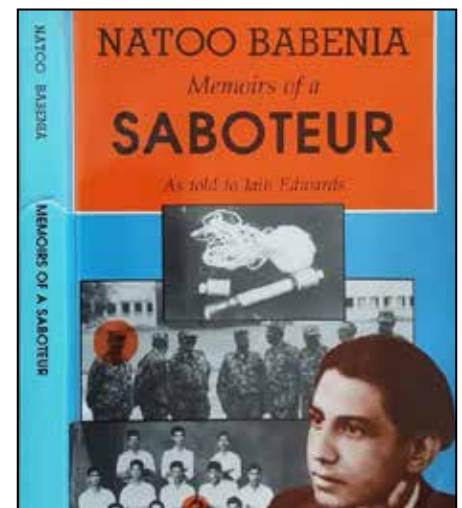
#### First slaves arrive in Cape Town

The first 174 slaves arrived in Cape Town – hardly four years after Van Riebeeck landed at the Cape of Good Hope to establish

a halfway station for the Dutch East Indian Company (VOC). The slaves arrived on a VOC company ship, the Amersfoort. They were part of a contingent of 250 Angolan slaves originally destined for Brazil, but stolen by the Amersfoort traders from the Portuguese slave traders. The rest died during the trip, before landing in Cape Town, where they were sold. The slave trade in the Cape colony officially lasted until 1822, with slaves captured from Angola, Ghana, India, Mozambique, Madagascar, and what is now known as Indonesia and Malaysia. When slavery was finally abolished in 1834 by the British, nearly 200 years later, the Cape had a population of over 38,000 slaves.

### 28 March 1924

#### Natoo Babenia was born



Natvarlal Dayalji “Natoo” Babenia, a political activist first in India, resisting British rule and later in South Africa against the Apartheid government, was born at Coedmore Road, Bellair, Durban. In 1936, faced with economic hardship, his family returned to India, where the struggle against British colonialism was being waged. Babenia played an active role in the Indian Congress movement in Baroda, and served

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

several terms of imprisonment, before returning to Durban in October 1949, settling in Beatrice Street, Durban. In South Africa he was a member of the National Indian Congress, the African National Congress (ANC), South African Communist Party (SACP) and Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK) and served sixteen years on Robben Island. In 1995, Babenia released his biography, which was titled "Memoirs of a Saboteur". Ntsoo Babenia passed away on 1 January 1999 at the age of 75.

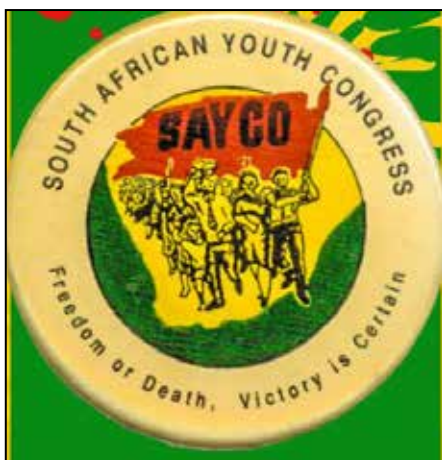
### 28 March 1960

#### Oliver Tambo leaves South Africa

Oliver Reginald Tambo was sent by the ANC to establish the ANC outside of South Africa, and to mobilise support for the struggle against apartheid. He left South Africa illegally, became ANC President and led the movement, returning only 30 years later in 1990.

### 28 March 1987

#### Launch of the South African Youth Congress



SAYCO was the most significant youth organization to emerge during the 1980s. Initiated by COSAS, it focused on organizing the non-student youth, unemployed youth and young workers who

shared the interests and aspirations of COSAS but could not belong to it. In 1982, a COSAS Commission was established to investigate the formation of a national youth organization. It was decided that individual townships and regions establish their own youth congresses that would work in close cooperation with COSAS and AZASO. By 1983, 20 new youth organizations were launched and by 1986 more than 600 youth congresses were launched across the country. 28 March 1987 saw SAYCO launched amidst great secrecy, with representatives from nine regional structures elected to the national executive, at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). It adopted the Freedom Charter, pledged itself to work closely with COSATU and the NECC, and was affiliated to the UDF. Its principle objectives were to unify and politicize all progressive youth irrespective of race; to encourage young workers to join trade unions; and to ensure that women participate fully in the activities of the youth movement. At the outset SAYCO focused on the organization of all youth in order to tackle their problems through united and collective action and to develop a role for young people in their communities and in the broader democratic struggle.

### 28 March 1988

#### Dulcie September assassinated



Dulcie September, ANC chief representative in France, Luxembourg and Switzerland was assassinated. An activist who dedicated her life to freedom, she was born on 20 August 1953 in Athlone, Cape Town.

### 28 March 1994

#### Shell House "massacre"

20,000 IFP members armed with traditional weapons marched to ANC Headquarters in Johannesburg, in the midst of violence in Gauteng and KZN. In defense of the headquarters, 53 marchers were killed by ANC security personnel.

### 28 March 1996

#### Trevor Manuel appointed as Finance Minister



Trevor Manuel appointed as first black Finance minister, after the resignation of Chris Liebenberg, a position he served from 1996-2009). On the same day, the Reconstruction and Development (RDP) office in the Presidency was closed. Manuel unveiled the Growth Employment and Redistribution plan (GEAR) in June of the same year. He served as Finance minister from 1996 to 2009, and subsequently as Minister in the Presidency for the National Planning Commission from 2009-2014.

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

# INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

22–28 March 2025

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

### 22 March

#### World Earth Hour

Earth Hour is happening at 8.30pm on Saturday 22 March 2025. The global event takes place every year to encourage people to turn off their lights for 60 minutes to raise awareness about big issues affecting the environment. The night will also see some of the world's most famous buildings plunged into darkness for one hour. South Africans are urged to join the Earth Hour movement by pledging 60 minutes of activity in support and celebration of our planet.



cle more unpredictable. For billions of people, melt-water flows are changing, causing floods, droughts, landslides and sea level rise. Countless communities and ecosystems are at risk of devastation. As we work together to mitigate and adapt to climate change, glacier preservation is a top priority. We must reduce greenhouse gas emissions to slow down glacial retreat. (Source: <https://www.un.org/en/observances/water-day>)

### 22 March

#### World Water Day



The theme of World Water Day 2025 is **Glacier Preservation**. Glaciers are critical to life – their meltwater is essential for drinking water, agriculture, industry, clean energy production and healthy ecosystems. Rapidly melting glaciers are causing uncertainty to water flows, with profound impacts on people and the planet. Global reductions in carbon emissions and local strategies to adapt to shrinking glaciers are essential. This World Water Day, we must work together to put glacier preservation at the core of our plans to tackle climate change and the global water crisis. Glaciers are melting faster than ever. As the planet gets hotter, our frozen world is shrinking, making the water cy-

### 23 March

#### World Meteorological Day

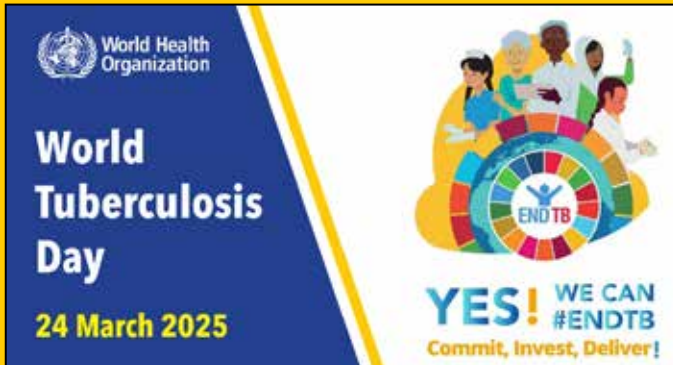


The day commemorates the coming into force of the Convention establishing the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) on 23 March 1950. This year, the WMO celebrates its 75th anniversary, under the theme **Closing the Early Warning Gap Together**. WMO recently confirmed that 2024 was the hottest year on record. Changes in our environment are driving more extreme weather events. Rapidly intensifying tropical cyclones, devastating rainfall, storm surges, flooding, deadly droughts, and wildfires are on the rise. Sea levels are increasing, exposing densely populated coastal areas to coastal inundation and ocean wave impacts. The societal effects of these events continue long after the headlines fade. Now is the time to act. By closing the early warning gap together, we can build a safer, more resilient world.

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

### 24 March

#### World Tuberculosis Day



World Tuberculosis (TB) Day is commemorated annually on 24 March to remind us that tuberculosis remains a global pandemic, amongst the world's deadliest infectious killers, killing up to 4000 a day, although the condition is treatable. On this day in 1882 Dr Robert Koch announced that he had discovered the bacterium that causes TB, which opened the way towards diagnosing and curing this disease. This year's theme, **Yes! We Can End TB: Commit, Invest, Deliver**, is a bold call for hope, urgency, and accountability. South Africa has a particularly high burden of TB, with an incidence rate of 468 per 100 000 of the population.

### 24 March

#### International Day for the Right to Truth concerning Gross Human Rights Violations

This annual observance pays tribute to the memory of Monsignor Óscar Arnulfo Romero, who was murdered on 24 March 1980. Monsignor Romero was actively engaged in denouncing violations of human rights of the most vulnerable individuals in El Salvador.

### 25 March

#### International Day of Remembrance of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

The day remembers those who suffered and died as a consequence of the transatlantic slave trade, which has been called *"the worst violation of human rights in history"*. Over a period that lasted for more than 400 years, more than 15 million African men, women and children were traded as slaves. No compensation has ever been paid. The theme for 2025 is: **Ending Slavery's Legacy of Racism: A Global Imperative for Justice**.

### 25 March

#### International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff members



Observed annually, it commemorates the anniversary of the abduction of Alec Collett, a former journalist who was working for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) when he was kidnapped by armed gunmen in 1985. His body was finally found in the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon in 2009.

### 26 March

#### Purple Day

This day is a grassroots celebration to raise awareness of epilepsy, a condition that affects over 65 million people globally. It is a neurological condition that causes seizures and often begins in childhood.

### 27 March

#### World Theatre Day

Theatre has a long history as being part of human cultural expressions, telling stories through dramatic representation. *"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players."* (Shakespeare)

### 27 March

#### International Scribble Day

Show appreciation for and celebrate the simplicity of the activity of scribbling. All it takes is just a piece of paper along with a writing utensil, and it's perfectly simple to enjoy the day! Art can come in any form and anyone can be encouraged to be an artist.

### 28 March

#### World Piano Day

Piano day takes play on the 88th day of each year, since a piano has 88 keys. *"Celebrate the piano and everything around it: performers, composers, piano builders, tuners, movers and most important, the listener."* (Nils Frahm)