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## Media release

Pretoria, 25 February 2010

### **Freedom Park honours victims of the Mamelodi Massacre**

Tomorrow, 26 February 2010, at 10:00, survivors of the Mamelodi Massacre as well as family and loved ones of those who perished convene at Freedom Park for a ceremony to officially submit the names of the 13 victims. These names will be verified and inscribed on the Wall of Names in time for the anniversary of the Mamelodi Massacre on 21 November 2010.

The bulk of the programme will be devoted to a dialogue between Freedom Park and survivors, family and loved ones. "It is imperative that we obtain first hand accounts of what happened during that fateful day," says Dr M W Serote, CEO of Freedom Park. "This was a significant event in our history and it is vital that we preserve the memory – not only for future generations but also for ourselves. As a people we need to know what exactly happened so that we can fully understand and appreciate exactly how precious and hard-won our freedom is. We can never take it for granted. Those who mourn the loss of loved ones or bear the physical and emotional scars of the massacre bear witness."

"This research has an overwhelming human element. Speaking about traumatic events and sharing your memories of a loved one in a safe environment is what we hope another step on the route of healing for these people. That is why we are making the handover of names official. We want them to know that their loved ones did not sacrifice in vain. We remember and honour them."

Apart from the submission of the names, family and loved ones will also hand over articles and artifacts relating to the victims and the actual event. These will be included in the Freedom Park archives for exhibition purposes.

The Mamelodi Massacre, which took place on 21 November 1985, occurred when nearly 80,000 residents took to the offices of the Mamelodi Town Council to present a list of grievances, including rent increases and the SADF presence in Mamelodi. A breakdown in communication due to a reported malfunctioning of the sound system resulted in an order for the crowd to disperse. Given the noise level of the singing and chanting of freedom songs, not all heard the warning. The ensuing police action, including tear gas and live ammunition being fired, left 13 dead and many more wounded. Today, Solomon Mahlangu Freedom Square marks the place where the Mamelodi Massacre took place.

Members of the media are invited to cover the first hand account of survivors as well as the official handover.

Issued by Freedom Park

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