
MAMELODI MASSACRE NOVEMBER 21 EVENT

CEO DRAFT OPENING REMARKS

The Executive Mayor of Tshwane, Cllr Kgosientso Ramokgopa,

The DDG Mr Vusi Ndima

MMC Councillor Faith Kgaditse

Distinguished guests,

Interfaith committee,

Families and friends of the victims of Mamelodi Massacre,

Colleagues, ladies and gentlemen!

Let me express on behalf of Freedom Park, my warm welcome and gratitude to everyone for attending this memorable event in the history of our beloved country - the 26th anniversary of the Mamelodi Massacre, which is jointly organised by Freedom Park and the Mamelodi Massacre November 21.

This collaboration, which honours the heroes of our struggle for liberation, epitomise in concrete terms, not only the significance of partnership with communities, but also the importance of Freedom Park as a monument, memorialising those who sacrificed their lives for freedom and humanity. Today's event, which started with the cleansing and healing ceremony at Isivivane, and leading up to the unveiling of the 13 names on the Wall, bears testimony to the many sacrifices that people made for a free and just society.

26 years have passed since the shooting of 13 protestors in Mamelodi Township, which occurred when nearly 80,000 residents took to the offices of the Mamelodi Town Council to present a list of grievances to the town council, which included rent increases, funeral

restrictions, and the SADF presence in the township. The ensuing police action to disperse the crowd, that included tear gas and live ammunition being fired, left 13 dead, including a baby, and many more wounded. This event is just but one of the many incidences where brave men and women were massacred by the then system.

Therefore, let us use this day to commemorate the commendable heroism, bravery and sacrifice made by these great South Africans who, together with other heroes and heroines in the struggle fought for the freedom during the most difficult climate in the country when political violence was at its peak. By inscribing the names of these heroes and heroines on the Wall of Names, their contributions will always be remembered in history and in the hearts of many for generations to come. This will serve as a permanent reminder that our freedom was not free.

The Wall of Names forms part of The Freedom Park's memorial element, S'khumbuto, where names of those who paid the ultimate price during eight conflicts that shaped South Africa today are inscribed. These are Pre-Colonial Wars, Genocide, Slavery, Wars of Resistance, The South African War, the First World War, the Second World War and the Liberation Struggle. These names are inscribed under the liberation struggle.

Let us celebrate our history, which is etched with the footprints of those who planted the seeds of freedom, of those who laid the foundations for equality. Let us recommit ourselves to continue with the struggle for the improvement of the lives of all our people, irrespective of race, gender or station in life. Despite the challenges we are still facing as a country, let us pledge to past generations that we shall continue to build a better world for South Africans and that we shall work together to improve the quality of life for all so that the fullness of freedom becomes our lived reality as a united and prosperous people.

It is therefore my hope that today's event will not only contribute to healing and closure for family and friends, but will also enhance reconciliation, and foster among the nation social cohesion and nation building.

With those few words, please feel welcome and participate fully to make this day memorable.

Thank you.