

---

## Media release

17 May 2012, Soweto

### **Freedom Park mourns the passing on of Reverend Motlalepula Chabaku**

Freedom Park CEO, Mr Fana Jiyane, today on behalf of the Freedom Park expressed his deepest condolences to the family and loved ones of Reverend Motlalepula Chabaku for the loss of their beloved daughter, sister, mother and grandmother.

Speaking from the Reverend's memorial service at the Regina Mundi Catholic Church in Soweto, Mr Jiyane said that Reverend Chabaku's passing on is not only grieved within her family. "South Africa itself today mourns the loss of a great and respectable liberation stalwart, who served this country selflessly all her life. At the young age of 15, she joined the ANC and played a leading role in the youth and women structures. She established herself as a leader who stood by the people, especially women, the poor and the down-trodden. As a feminist, community leader, teacher and humanitarian, she never submitted to the extreme pressures of the Apartheid government but strived to confront the insurmountable challenges faced by the people. Her unwavering stance against the former regime is reflected in various of the speeches she delivered. She used these as a platform to relentlessly and gallantly expose South Africa's atrocious conditions to the international community, thus urging them to participate in abolishing the Apartheid system."

Reverend Chabaku was the last surviving leader of the score of brave women, such as Lillian Ngoyi and Helen Joseph, who marched to the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956 in Pretoria to petition against legislation that required African people to carry special identification documents.

Mr Jiyane expressed his confidence that, like the two leaders mentioned above, after following due processes, Reverend Chabaku's name will also be honoured on the Wall of Names at Freedom

Park, in acknowledgement of her selfless commitment and sacrifice to serve South Africa both during the Apartheid era and also during the nurturing and building of our democracy.

“Freedom Park was indeed honoured to have Rev Motlalepula Chabaku as a member of its Interfaith Committee. This committee is not only responsible for leading inter-faith prayers that precede various ceremonial events of national importance at Freedom Park, but also plays a role in the support and counseling of those many individuals who lost their loved ones during the struggle for freedom and humanity,” explained Mr Jiyane.

“As a national icon that integrates history, culture, indigenous knowledge and spirituality, Freedom Park also has programmes like the “dialogue between youth and elders”, which serve as a forum to encourage the youth in their diversity to learn about their history and heritage in order to engender a patriotic spirit. Reverend Chabaku will indeed be remembered as a versatile and selfless leader. In addition to her role within the Interfaith Committee which she executed with distinction, she also volunteered her time to share her knowledge and experiences with the youth and staff members of Freedom Park.”

“Mama Chabaku served Freedom Park without fail and participated in various ceremonies and events until her untimely demise. We therefore bid farewell with a heavy heart, to a leader of our people who understood only too well the great responsibility that history had bestowed upon her. We pay tribute to a leader whose personal attributes and character will live on as an inspiration to all of us. All those who knew her will remember her for her strength, compassion and strong sense of community; her dignity, sincerity and affable manner, and her humble demeanour. Her spirituality and great passion for full liberation have enriched not only Freedom Park but the country’s understanding of duty and responsibility,” concluded Mr Jiyane.

Lala ngoxolo.

Igalelo lakho kumzabalazo liyabonakala. Ugqatso ulufezile.