



MILESTONES OF FREEDOM CAMPAIGN KEY MESSAGES

2 June 2026

BRIEF

This year marks several significant milestones in South Africa's democratic history, which will be commemorated under the Milestones of Freedom Campaign. The campaign will be launched at the Union Buildings on 18 June 2026 by His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa at 11:30. The official theme of the campaign is:

“Honouring the Past. Delivering the Future”.

The campaign will commemorate the following significant milestones:

- **“The 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution”.** This milestone presents a profound opportunity for South Africa to pause, reflect and take stock of how the Constitution has shaped and continues to guide us on our democratic journey.
- **“The 50th year, the golden jubilee commemoration of the 1976 youth uprising”.** This milestone is a constant reminder of the pivotal role played by youth in the fight for freedom and democracy. It also allows us to reflect on our many democratic achievements and the role of the youth in ensuring a better tomorrow for all.
- **“70th commemoration of the anti-pass campaign”.** History reminds us that on August 9, 1956, 20.000 women of all races, some with babies on their backs, from the cities and towns, from reserves and villages, congregated at the Union Buildings in Pretoria to demand the abolishing of pass laws.
- **“The 60th anniversary of the forced removals from District Six”.** This milestone is a painful reminder of how the apartheid government destroyed families and communities, forcing them to move from their homes and places of birth.
- **“The 25th Anniversary of Democratic Local Government and the Year of Service Delivery Acceleration”.** The 2026 Local Government Elections provides an important opportunity to highlight the role of democratic local government in bringing services closer to communities.

These seminal moments in our history are a reminder of the road we have travelled to attain democracy and freedom. They remind us that despite notable progress, the journey continues and that this generation must now lead in ensuring a better tomorrow for everyone.

KEY MESSAGES	SUPPORTING STATEMENTS
<p><i>Join us as we proudly commemorate the Milestones of Freedom Campaign.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Africans are encouraged to come together in commemorating the Milestones of Freedom Campaign. • The official theme of the campaign is: “Honouring the Past. Delivering the Future”. • The campaign commemorates four significant anniversaries, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “The 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution”. ○ “The golden jubilee commemoration celebrating 50 years since the 1976 youth uprising”. ○ “70th commemoration of the anti-pass campaign”. ○ “The 60th anniversary of the forced removals from District Six”. • This national commemoration gives South Africans from all walks of life an opportunity to reflect on our historic journey and what it means to live in a democratic South Africa. • It is a moment to honour our past, celebrate our progress and renew our shared commitment to the future.
<p><i>The Milestones of Freedom Campaign is a powerful catalyst for nation building.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government calls on all South Africans to use the Milestones of Freedom Campaign to deepen social cohesion, strengthen nation building and foster a shared national identity. • Real change begins with each of us and grows through a shared willingness to engage more meaningfully with diverse fellow South Africans on an equal footing. • By speaking to each other honestly and openly about our painful history and shared future, we can build greater social cohesion and deeper common understanding. • Ultimately, we all want a nation defined by greater social connection, co-operation and solidarity. • Nation building is an ongoing journey, and we must continue to nurture, protect and defend it. • Let us stand firmly against racism, racial discrimination and every form of related intolerance.
<p><i>We can never afford to take our freedom for granted.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We must never forget how the majority of South Africans were systematically marginalised and exploited by unjust apartheid laws because of the colour of their skin.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These laws were used to systematically strip black people of their fundamental human rights including the right to vote, freedom of movement and freedoms of expression and association. They enforced widespread land dispossession and destroyed livelihoods, entrenching deep social and economic inequalities. • A new social order of constitutionalism was ushered in with the adoption of the Constitution in 1996. • This year we commemorate the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution as the supreme law of our country.
<p><i>2026 marks 30 years since the adoption and signing of the Constitution into law — a defining milestone in our democracy.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Constitution is one of the country’s greatest national achievements and everything government does is guided by the constitution and its vision of the society we are building. • It establishes a comprehensive framework of accountability and oversight essential for the effective governance of the country. • It is a living expression of the nation’s collective commitment to constitutional democracy, human rights, freedoms, and the rule of law. • It enshrines the rights of every South African and outlines our obligations as citizens to each other and the country within those rights. • The commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the adoption and signing of The Constitution into law is an opportunity for all of us to reaffirm that our democracy and freedom remain strong.
<p><i>The Class of 1976 helped shape our freedom — let us honour and preserve their legacy.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our youth were at the forefront of the fight against apartheid. • The Class of 1976 exposed the brutality of the apartheid regime to the world and ignited resistance around the country. • We call on young people to keep their legacy alive by taking advantage of opportunities to build our country and change their lives. • By unlocking the potential of our youth, we can build a more inclusive economy, expand employment opportunities and transform society by ensuring that all young people—regardless of their background—have equal access to opportunities. This vision is rooted in the legacy of the youth of 1976, whose courage and sacrifice opened doors for generations to come. At the time, opportunities were largely restricted along racial lines, with limited access for the majority of South Africa’s youth. Today, their legacy calls on us to continue advancing equality, inclusion, and opportunity for all. • Government is working to advance opportunities for youth empowerment.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Presidential Youth Employment Intervention creates new pathways into employment for our young people. • It ensures that the youth acquire the right skills and can start their own businesses and get into good jobs. • Government has expanded employment opportunities through the Expanded Public Works Programme, Community Works Programme and the Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator. These opportunities have helped to break the cycle where qualified youth cannot access jobs due to a lack of experience. These initiatives provide critical pathways for young people, especially from historically disadvantaged backgrounds to enter the labour market. • Our Youth Employment Service aims to create more paying internships mainly for young South Africans.
<p><i>Let us continue to honour the courage and contribution of our nation's remarkable women.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We must never forget the pivotal moment in history when more than 20 000 women marched to the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956, to protest against the extension of Pass Laws and the Urban Areas Act. • The heroic women of 1956 and many others paved the way for equal rights, including, gender equality and empowerment. • Their courageous actions culminated in the creation of a non-sexist, non-racial state and the emancipation of women, cemented through our constitution, gender-responsive policies and legislation that advocate women's socio-economic development as well as the full access for women to all sectors of society. • Over the years government has accelerated women's access to basic services, including social welfare provisions and economic opportunities, uplifting them from challenging circumstances such as poverty. • Supporting women contributes to sustainable development, inclusive growth and the cultivation of resilient communities. • The Employment Equity Act and Gender Equality Act pave the way for more equitable representation of women in the economy and attaining a 50/50 gender parity in the country. • About 40 percent of preferential procurement in the public sector is awarded to women-owned businesses. • Women-owned SMMEs are also supported through the National Empowerment Fund, the Small Enterprise Finance Agency and National Infrastructure Fund.

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<p><i>We must never lose sight of our painful history.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 11 February 1966, District Six was declared a “whites-only” area and thousands of people were uprooted. • In an instant, families were destroyed and a vibrant community was left in ruins as homes were bulldozed. • People were forcibly moved and relocated to what became known as the Cape Flats. • This single brutal act changed Cape Town’s spatial landscape forever, and this legacy persists. • Under the Group Areas Act of 1950, millions of people were forcibly displaced from urban and rural lands across South Africa. • Since 1994 government has worked to reverse this painful legacy of dispossession and forced removals through restitution, including the return of land, compensation and post-settlement support. • Title Deeds are an import part of this process and Land restitution remains a critical mechanism to address historical land dispossession and restore the rights and dignity of our people. • We are committed to assist in healing the wounds of the past through restoring dignity and rebuilding fractured communities. • The District Six Museum is a window into our past and a place for dialogue and reflection • The museum creates a space for South Africans to acknowledge the shared pain and resilience that are part of the South African story. • We should not shy away from hard conversations because without honest dialogue, healing will remain elusive.
<p><i>The rule of law remains essential to a strong and functioning democracy.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rule of law is a foundational principle where all persons, institutions, and the government are equally held to account. • It ensures that no one, including leaders are above the law, protecting fundamental rights and preventing the abuse of power. • Key Principles of the Rule of Law: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Accountability: The government and private actors are accountable under the law. ○ Equality: Laws are applied equally to everyone, with everyone enjoying equal protection. ○ Just Law: Laws are clear, publicised, stable, and protect fundamental rights. ○ Open Government: Laws are enacted and administered in a transparent, fair, and efficient manner.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Independent Judiciary: Justice is delivered by impartial, independent, and ethical courts. ○ Separation of Powers: Public powers act within legal constraints, ensuring no single entity holds absolute power.
<p><i>Let us build boldly on the progress we have made.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Our democratic gains have helped to create a society where everyone can dream of a better tomorrow. ● The greatest change since 1994 for most people has been where they live as government has delivered water, electricity and basic services that were unmet in the past. ● Households connected to the main electricity supply increased from 76,7% in 2002 to 90,2% in 2024. ● Households with access to municipal piped water increased from 86,1% in 2004 to 87,7% in 2024. ● As a caring government we continue to provide social assistance to poor and vulnerable South Africans. ● Households with access to improved sanitation increased from 61,7% in 2002 to 83,1% in 2024. ● Our social security net assists vulnerable and underprivileged South Africans, including unemployed South Africans as well as orphaned and vulnerable children living in child headed households. ● Our social grants increased from 12,8% in 2003 to 40,1% in 2024, and currently more than 28 million unemployed and vulnerable South Africans receive social grants. ● More than 3.5 million indigent households have access to free basic services through the Free Basic Services programme. ● Over 13 million children benefit from the Child Support Grant. ● Since 1994, government has undertaken sustained efforts to progressively reverse the painful legacy of land dispossession under colonialism and apartheid, advancing redress, restoring dignity and laying the foundation for inclusive growth and development. ● As of March 2025, a total of 83,205 of land claims had been settled, resulting in the restoration of 3.9 million hectares of land to dispossessed communities and individuals since 1995. ● Government has invested R58 billion in land purchases, grants and financial compensation supporting 376,976 beneficiaries nationwide. ● Between 1995 and March 2025, a total of 5.3 million hectares had been redistributed, and government has strengthened post-settlement

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<p><i>We continue to build on our democratic gains for the benefit of every South African.</i></p>	<p>support, improved farm viability and expanded market access.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 7th democratic administration continues to build on the foundations that have been laid since 1994. • Interventions such as the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention (PYEI) are helping to provide real hope. • Currently more than 5.77 million young people are registered on SA Youth, and over 4.8 million on Employment Services of South Africa (ESSA). • The PYEI has facilitated access to over 2.36 million earning opportunities, with an additional 402,515 opportunities through ESSA since inception. • These are not just job opportunities, this is a nation at work, harnessing the potential of young people. • Every job opportunity and training intervention helps to unlock greater wealth for all in our nation. • By working together, we can give life to the South Africa we all desired in 1994 and ensure a better tomorrow for all.
<p><i>Play your part in protecting and strengthening our democracy.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since 1994, South Africa has held several successful and free and fair elections. • In preparation for the Seventh Local Government Elections the Electoral Commission of South Africa has announced Saturday 20 and Sunday 21 June 2026 as the official voter registration weekend for the upcoming local government elections. • Voting stations will open from 08h00 to 17h00 on 20 and 21 June 2026. • New voters are invited to visit their nearest voting station to register to vote, while existing voters are reminded to update their registration details. • You are eligible to register to vote if you are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A South African citizen; • At least 16 years old (you can only vote from age 18); and • In possession of a green bar-coded ID book, smart ID card or temporary identity certificate. • Eligible voters can register to vote or update their details using the official IEC online portal – https://registertovote.elections.org.za which is available 24/7. • Remember, during a local government election you can only vote in the ward where you ordinarily reside. Ensure that you are correctly registered in your ward to participate in shaping the future of your community.

Content For Infographics

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- The significant milestones are:
 - The 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution.
 - The golden jubilee commemorating 50 years of the 1976 Youth Uprising.
 - 70th commemoration of the anti-pass campaign.
 - The 60th anniversary of the forced removals from District Six.
- The Milestones of Freedom Campaign gives South Africans from all walks of life an opportunity to reflect on our historic journey and what it means to live in a democratic South Africa.
- Let us use the Milestones of Freedom Campaign to deepen social cohesion, strengthen nation building and foster a shared national identity.
- By talking to each other honestly and openly about our history and shared future, we can build greater social cohesion and common understanding.
- Nation building is a journey, and we must continue to nurture, protect and defend it.
- Let us stand firmly against racism, racial discrimination and related intolerance in all its forms.