

## GOVERNMENT NOTICES • GOEWERMENTSKENNISGEWINGS

## DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND CULTURE

NO. 380

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## SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY

**DECLARATION OF THE GRAVE OF REVEREND ZACCHEUS RICHARD MAHABANE;  
MAOKENG; FREE STATE AS A NATIONAL HERITAGE SITE**

By virtue of the powers vested in the South African Heritage Resources Agency, in terms of section 27 (5) of the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999), SAHRA hereby declares the grave of Reverend Zaccheus Richard Mahabane, situated in the Seeisoville Cemetery in Maokeng, Kroonstad; Free State, as a National Heritage Site.

**Statement of Significance**

*“The graves of the iconic leaders of the liberation struggle movements are a tangible representation of the intangible heritage aspects of organized resistance and defiance campaigns, against successive racially repressive regimes. They transcend different responses to eighty (80) years of intensification of repressive laws from deputations, passive resistance, defiance campaigns to armed struggle and mass struggles. They represent a conviction to a just political cause and attainment of political freedom leading to denial of personal liberties and an ultimate price of banning orders, house arrest, political assassinations, banishment, exile, political imprisonment and in-detention death.*

*Reverend Zaccheus Richard “ZR” Mahabane was born in Thaba Nchu, Free State on 15 August 1881. He qualified as a teacher in 1901 but soon took a position as a court interpreter. In 1908 he began theological training and was ordained a Methodist minister in 1914.*

*As one of the Founding Fathers of the ANC, Rev. ZR Mahabane was described as a diplomatic, careful, articulate speaker and a resolute man of the cloth, who combined politics and Christian ethics to fight racism. Throughout his life he strived to educate Africans about their rights. He was fierce critic and vehemently opposed to the “colour bar” policy of then white-only South African government, frequently making representations to them. He said this about the policy: “Away with this accursed thing! Agitate until this stigma has been entirely eliminated from the national life of our land”*

*He was elected as president of the Cape Provisional branch of the South African Native National Congress in 1919 as well as the Vice-President of the Cape Native Voter’s Convention. Being a prominent voice for the oppressed, Rev Mahabane rapidly gained support and recognition throughout Southern Africa, and in 1924 was elected ANC President.*

*He constantly was the unifying force for black unity and together with Mr A Abdurahman established the non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) between 1927 and 1934.*

*In 1935 he served as an executive committee member of the All Africa Convention (AAC), a federal body that gave expression to the aspirations of black people and fought against the Native trust and Land Act promulgated in 1936.*

*During the tumultuous period in the ANC characterized by deep division, as a unifier of note, Rev Mahabane was gain called upon to unify and revive the fortunes of the movement and was elected as ANC President for the second time from 1936 – 1940. He played a prominent role in the development of the Methodist Church in South Africa and helped draft the church’s constitution and define the equal status of all in the church. In 1943 he was inducted as a life-*

long Honorary ANC President. In 1945 he founded and became President of the Inter-Denominational Association of Ministers Federation of South Africa (IDAMASA), until 1956.

Rev ZR Mahabane had a strong critical voice against injustice. He abhorred racism and disunity with a passion. Throughout his life he stood stubbornly firm in favour of African unity, the truth, fairness, freedom and equal standing for all South Africans irrespective of race. He came up with the concept of "Unity in Diversity". Due to outspoken rapport, his personal life was often unsettled as he was repeatedly harassed and detained. Most of his crucial archives, journals, diaries and his political interactions were confiscated and burnt. However, the then white regime could not silence him nor deter his profound contribution in changing the trajectory of South African history.

As a religious priest, Rev ZR Mahabane served with commitment and distinction, equally active as he was in politics. Throughout his life and work, he was particularly diligent in upholding high principles and God-inspired moral values. He used Christian principles and ethics to put a sustained methodical resistance and attack to white supremacy and policies at the time"

#### **Schedule**

The demarcation of the Grave of Reverend Zaccheus Richard Mahabane is as follows:

Site Name	Cemetery	Province	Town	Municipality	
				District	Local
Grave of Rev. Zaccheus Richard Mahabane	Seeisoville	Free State	Maokeng, Kroonstad	Fezile Dabi	Moqhaka