

DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS, ARTS AND CULTURE

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SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY

DECLARATION OF THE GRAVESITES OF HARRY GWALA, ELDA GWALA AND LULU GWALA, SWAYIMANE, KWAZULU-NATAL 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 gravesites of Harry Gwala, Elda Gwala and Lulu Gwala situated in the Gwala Family Cemetery, in Swayimane, uMshwathi, KwaZulu-Natal as a National Heritage Site.

Statement of Significance

“The grave of Harry Themba Gwala, Elda Gwala and Lulu Gwala are of historic value, both due to Harry Gwala’s work within the African National Congress (ANC) and Communist Party and their association with events that contributed to the evolution South African politics. South Africa’s emergence as a democratic state from centuries of oppression and racial segregation came at a cost to the lives of many people involved in the Struggle. The focus of the historical record in South Africa has often been teleological and patriarchal, with the experiences of children and wives often overshadowed by the focus on the main activist. However, at times entire families faced the wrath of the State, as it sought to silence those who opposed its unjust policies. The experiences of Harry Gwala, Elda and Lulu form part of a longue durée of the struggle against apartheid. Their graves, as a tangible reflection of their lives, represent the sacrifices and struggle of ‘the family’ in the fight for South Africa’s freedom and democracy.

All three were liberation struggle activists in their own rights, with the story of their lives interweaving through the different generations of the Struggle from the emergence of mass resistance and protests of different social and non-racial groups, to the armed struggle of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s and the tenuous times of the 1990s.

Harry Gwala, Elda and Lulu’s lives intersected in associations with individuals, groups or organisations whose life, works or activities have been significant within the history of the nation. Gwala’s political activities and influence brought into the struggle some of the leading figures in the county’s political landscape, for instance Moses Mabhida. This was done while he was a member of the ANC and Communist Party, which spearheaded the struggle against apartheid. Furthermore, his family went further and mobilised support from international organisations for the welfare of political prisoners and their families. Harry Gwala was posthumously awarded the Order of the Mendi for Bravery in Gold by the President of the Republic of South Africa in April 2010.

Elda became a pillar of Harry Gwala’s life, especially after he was imposed with the banning order. It was Elda who became the point of communication and the one to take messages to various activists during the 1950s. After Harry Gwala’s imprisonment in 1964, Elda not only

became the leading figure in the family but was responsible for the opposition against forced removals. This eventually resulted in her harassment by the security branch. When Harry Gwala was imprisoned for the second term in the mid-1970s, Elda became the face of the wives of the detainees. She was the main connection with the ANC in London and International Defence Aid Fund to assist with legal costs as well as the welfare of the families of the detainees. Until her passing in 1984, she kept the ideology of Harry Gwala intact along non-racial lines. After the untimely passing of Elda, Harry Gwala appointed Lulu to be head of the family. Lulu did not only look after the family, but she began a protracted struggle to mobilise communities and progressive legal lobby groups for the release of Harry Gwala. Lulu established political partnership with the Release Mandela Campaign.

Further, the lives of Elda and Lulu Gwala represent the role of women, but also the role of families in the South African liberation struggle that has so often been neglected. Despite, being left to singularly raise their children, enduring police brutality and in some cases imprisonment and torture, these women through the own tenacity and resilience continued the liberation struggle in ensuring the realisation of a democratic non-racial South Africa. Their lives epitomise how apartheid was not just a political ideology but a disruption of lives and families of those who opposed it. The graves of Harry Gwala, Elda and Lulu are symbols of the triumph of the humanity against adversity.”

Schedule

The demarcation of the site is as follows:

SITE NAME	FARM NAME	TOWN	MUNICIPALITY		PROVINCE
			LOCAL MUNICIPALITY	DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY	
Graves of Harry Gwala, Elda Gwala and Lulu Gwala	Gwala Family Cemetery on the remainder of Farm Gcumisa 16545 FT	Swayimane	Umshwathi	Umngungundlovu	Kwazulu-Natal

The declared portion of the Gwala Family Cemetery encompasses the graves of Harry Gwala, Elda Gwala and Lulu Gwala and is bound by points ABCD as provided below:

Co-ordinates:

Points	Latitude	Longitude
A	-29.52359274	30.69975706
B	-29.52362740	30.69977847
C	-29.52366099	30.69972057
D	-29.52362862	30.69969846

END