

## DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS, ARTS AND CULTURE

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AN AGENCY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS, ARTS AND CULTURE

## SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY

**DECLARATION OF THE GRAVE OF SOLOMON LINDA; DOORKOP CEMETERY;  
SOWETO, JOHANNESBURG, GAUTENG AS A NATIONAL HERITAGE SITE**

By virtue of the powers vested in the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), in terms of section 27 (5) of the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999), SAHRA hereby declares the grave of Solomon Popoli Linda; grave number 4875, located at the Doornkop Cemetery, Soweto, Johannesburg, Gauteng Province as a National Heritage Site.

**Statement of Significance**

*"The grave of Solomon Linda is of pivotal cultural significance to South Africa as it encapsulates the broader impact of colonialism, particularly its theft and exploitation of African people's cultural heritage without recognition. Linda, a musician whose rendition of the Imbube in the 1930s became a major success in South Africa and gained popularity in other parts of the world, especially in the United States of America. Despite Linda's success in South Africa, the socio-political context of the 1930s granted Africans menial rights; thus, depriving them of economic benefit from their talents. As notes, "Black South Africans had no legal rights in the 1930s and while alive Solomon Linda was not aware of what royalties were..." This forced Linda to sell rights for his song for 10 shillings, leaving him destitute to the time of his death in 1960. Furthermore, both he and his descendants did not receive royalties for his creative work, despite the reworking and popularisation of his work. In fact, others claimed royalties while refusing to acknowledge Linda's role. As Peter Alegi & Chris Bolsmann have noted in their book, Africa's World Cup: Critical Reflections on Play, Patriotism, Spectatorship, and Space, "The most memorable example of the theft of intellectual rights of an African artist is that of Solomon Linda who in 1939 wrote the song Mbube and received 10 shillings (less than \$2) for his effort.*

*In addressing the nation on 24 September 2022, President Cyril Ramaphosa stated, "The tragedy that befell Solomon Linda, the great injustice that was done to him, must never again visit any of our artists...In today's modern age, this exploitation has taken new forms such as plagiarism, cultural and intellectual property appropriation and copyright theft. Struggling artists are taken advantage of and strong-armed into giving up their rights and their royalties." Linda's grave therefore captures broadly the discontinuities and continuities of cultural appropriation of creative talent for profit without due acknowledgement of its creator. Its significance speaks to a practice that prevails with the Arts and Culture sector post the democratic dispensation."*

**Schedule**

The demarcation of the sites is as follows:

Site Name	Grave No	Cemetery	Erf No / Farm	Province	Nearest Town	Municipality
The grave of Solomon Popoli Linda	4875	Doornkop Cemetery	16/239 Soweto 387 IQ	Gauteng	Soweto	City of Johannesburg

**END**