

**ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT JACOB ZUMA ON THE OCCASION OF FREEDOM DAY
CELEBRATIONS, GIYANI STADIUM, GIYANI, LIMPOPO**

27 APRIL 2016

Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa,
His Majesty King Mphephu Ramabulana
Ministers and Deputy Ministers,
Premier of Limpopo and his provincial executive council
Members of the national and provincial legislatures
Members of the National and the Provincial Houses of Traditional Leaders
Executive Mayor of Mopani District Municipality
Executive Mayor of the Greater Giyani Local Municipality
Heads of Chapter 9 institutions
Members of the diplomatic corps
Ladies and gentlemen
Fellow South Africans

We greet you all on this important day in our history.

Today marks exactly twenty two years since our people of all national groups went out in their millions to vote for the very first time in free and fair democratic elections.

This day, in 1994 not only marked the end of the tyranny of apartheid, it also symbolized the triumph of good over evil.

Today we are celebrating the heroic struggles waged by gallant men and women who understood that freedom could not be given to them as a gift.
They knew that it had to be relentlessly fought for and achieved.

Today we also pay tribute to our heroes who passed away during this month of April such as former ANC President Oliver Tambo, Mr Chris Hani and Mr Solomon Mahlangu. Their lives and untold sacrifices remind us that our freedom was not free and that it came at a great cost, including life itself.

On this day we also think of all the people of South Africa who suffered in various ways during the apartheid era and before.

Many were brutally murdered, imprisoned or tortured.

Millions of our people suffered immense poverty and deprivation through the system of institutionalised racism which rendered black people to be trespassers in the land of their birth, and not worthy of any rights.

Thousands were dehumanised in various ways. It was a painful, cruel system which was correctly described as a crime against humanity by the United Nations.

The victory of our people in 1994, through selfless struggle, assisted by freedom loving peoples across the world, ended the centuries long repression.

It set our nation on a path towards reconciliation, freedom, justice, peace, democracy, equality and indeed an entrenched strong culture of fundamental human rights and liberties.

In 1994, led by President Nelson Mandela, we began building a united, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous South Africa. All policy instruments that have been introduced since 1994, are designed to achieve that vision of a better life for all, especially the poor and the working class.

Work has continued since 1994 to improve the living conditions of the people, to undo the legacy of exclusion and neglect.

Many communities and households were without electricity, water, roads, clinics providing quality health care or state of the art schools. The democratic government has since 1994 spent each year delivering such services.

Millions of our people now have access to these services.

The community of Giyani, our hosts today, know too well the hardship of not having water, like many communities around the country where the democratic government is busy making a difference.

In 2009 we declared the Giyani area a disaster zone, and subsequently adopted it into the Presidential Siyahlola Programme. To redress the critical shortage of water, government, through the Department Water and Sanitation issued an emergency directive in August 2014 to Lepelle Northern Water to regularise water and sanitation provision in the Mopani District.

I am very happy to report today, the completion of a number of projects. These are the completion of groundwater augmentation of 16 priority villages and that of Nkhensani Hospital. Also completed is the building of the Giyani Wastewater Treatment Works and the refurbishment of the Giyani Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Some of the milestones in the project to date include the revitalising of 154 boreholes with package plants to ensure the water becomes fit for human consumption.

Furthermore, there is the construction of a thirty five megalitres' reservoir that will be completed in June 2017.

Operations and maintenance support has also taken place to repair about 270 kilometres of existing lines, 9 pump stations and 14 reservoirs.

At the moment, all 55 villages here in Giyani have access to bulk water supply due to the interventions.

To further promote water supply in Limpopo province, we have the Mogalakwena Bulk Water Supply projects within the Waterberg District Municipality that will be implemented in the current financial year.

The project aims to deliver water to Mokopane Town, and villages to the immediate north of Mokopane Town.

Ninety-four thousand (94 000) people and mines in the surrounding area will benefit from the project.

Compatriots

As you are aware the country is gripped by the negative effects of the current drought. As government we continue to look for new sources of water.

With some of our provinces having been declared disaster areas, we have to take extraordinary efforts to bring relief to our people.

Water tankering, water restrictions, and finding new sources of water, especially by exploiting underground sources, are some of the efforts employed to reduce communities' water challenges.

The current low dam levels, with an expected dry winter season, demand of everyone to be part of the national water conservation and demand efforts.

We must continue to save water. We have no choice, the situation is serious and is affecting both households and our farming communities who are supposed to ensure food security in our country.

Compatriots,

While services are extended to some communities, many others are still waiting, because the backlog resulting from apartheid exclusion is extensive.

We assure you that we shall not rest as the democratic government, until all households in our country live in dignity and obtain basic services.

We will continue to work with all communities towards this end, together building better communities and improving the functioning of municipalities so that they can better provide these services. Remember that local government is everybody's business. So we have to work together to bring about a better life for all.

Compatriots,

As we celebrate our freedom, we also celebrate the improvement in the health care of our people. We are very happy that the life expectancy of South Africans has improved.

People used to die at the average age of 53 years in this country. Now they live up to the average of 62 years of age and beyond.

This means South Africans are now living longer and are much healthier. Those living with HIV and AIDS now receive free medical care, and are living healthier lives.

Improved treatment is also provided for all other common ailments that are troubling our people such as diabetes, tuberculosis or hypertension.

We have identified education as an apex priority as well in addition to health care. Education is a powerful instrument against poverty.

It is for this reason that the democratic ANC government has established three new universities – in Mpumalanga, Northern Cape and a medical university in Gauteng.

We are also building 12 new Further Education and Training Colleges and refurbishing others, so that more of our youth can have access to education.

We have appointed a Commission of Inquiry to look into the question of funding for higher education. This follows the cry for help by our students as many want to study but their parents are poor.

We continue to invest in basic education. More than nine million children attend no-fee schools. The circumstances of the parents should not handicap a child's future.

Nine million children are also provided with free meals at school so that hunger does not impair their concentration in class. For some, this is the only decent meal of the day given the circumstances at home.

Investing in education will help us to build better communities.

Compatriots,

For freedom to be complete, the economy of our country must not be skewed along racial lines. We must give practical meaning to the demand of the Freedom Charter that "all shall share in the country's wealth."

Government will continue to implement black economic empowerment programmes as well as affirmative action programmes. We have introduced new programmes such as the promotion of black participation in the manufacturing sector actively as industrialists.

In partnership with the private sector, government will continue to work towards economic transformation so that we can expand our economy and create much needed jobs.

Let me also take this opportunity to welcome the continuing cooperation between government and the private sector.

Consultations with business are ongoing to find ways of igniting economic growth and create jobs, to mitigate the punishing global economic climate.

We also continue to engage labour. Together we recently resolved a critical matter relating to worker pensions, which was of concern to the labour movement, especially Cosatu.

Compatriots,

Let me reiterate that our freedom was not free.

It was fought for and many lives were lost for its attainment. We therefore have the collective responsibility to defend it as South Africans with the same vigour as when we fought for it. We must unite and not allow anything to threaten the freedom and democracy we fought so hard for.

This means we must stop actions that undermine our hard won freedom such as engaging in violence.

For example, when people are angry, there is no reason for them to burn factories as it happened in kwaSithebe in kwaZulu-Natal recently. How do we call for job creation and then burn the very factories that are supposed to provide jobs?

Schools, trains, libraries, clinics are all built to provide services and a better life. We must guard and protect these facilities in our communities. It is shocking that some people destroy these facilities so easily.

We should report such destructive elements to the police and work together to build better communities where all guard jealously all facilities that are built to make our lives better.

People should protest peacefully and with dignity, in the democratic South Africa. We should isolate all those who promote violence and anarchy.

We know that some within our communities believe such violence will make them popular and try to use anarchy to build their political careers. Let us not allow this to happen in our name. we worked hard to build this country as millions of South Africans. It must not be destroyed by anarchists who have no interest in our well being.

Compatriots

Let me also use this opportunity to urge all of us to unite in promoting our country.

While South Africa faces several challenges as a new democracy and a developing country, our country's positive attributes far outweigh the challenges.

It should be possible for us to identify issues on which we shall unite no matter what, and not allow party political competition to divide the nation.

For example we should unite on celebrating the achievements that South Africa has scored in 23 years socially, economically and politically.

It is a fact that the country is a much better place to live in now than it was before 1994.

Our country is still receiving accolades for the successful transition to democracy and for the solid and well-functioning institutions of governance.

We receive compliments abroad for the excellent economic and financial institutions which continue to be an attraction for foreign investors.

South Africa is complimented for its social assistance programme which very few developing countries are able to manage, providing support to more than 16 million people especially orphans and vulnerable children.

This support has rescued many families who would otherwise not be able to put food on the table.

We are complimented for our housing support programme for the poor, for free education for children of the poor and for many other pro-poor programmes.

Indeed this country is trying its best to be the best home for all its citizens especially the poor.

We are happy as government that we have the support of the community as we deliver all these programmes. Together we will continue building better communities.

There are those who have decided to make it their full-time job to deny these achievements of our country, and to rubbish our country locally and abroad. We must not allow them to succeed.

South Africa is a great country. It is a beautiful country and it has wonderful, remarkable and hardworking people. We should all celebrate our collective achievements, and work to correct whatever needs to be corrected as we move towards a more prosperous society.

Let us work together to build our country and move South Africa forward, together.

Compatriots

We will be going to local government elections on 3 August. Our message to you is local government is everybody's business. Let us work together to build our communities.

On the 5th of December 2015 we marked the 15th anniversary of democratic local government.

Government has established the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Elections to ensure a smooth run-up in preparation for the coming local government elections.

Our citizens' faith in our constitutional democracy has never been stronger.

Over the two voter registration weekends hosted by the Independent Electoral Commission, over 6,6 million citizens visited voting stations, with 1,3 million of them being new registrations. Almost eighty percent of these were young people under the age of 30.

We congratulate our youth for their interest in participating in how their country is governed.

Local government is everybody's business. We urge all South Africans to come out in their numbers to vote on the 3rd of August 2016.

While we celebrate our achievements in the local government sphere over the last 15 years, we also have a firm eye on the future.

The United Nations estimates that over 70 percent of the South African population will live in urban areas by 2030, with this figure increasing to almost 80 percent by 2050. The Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF), approved by Cabinet yesterday offers a New Deal for South Africa's towns and cities.

The IUDF espouses the vision of creating 'liveable, safe, resource-efficient cities and towns that are socially integrated, economically inclusive and globally competitive, where residents actively participate in urban life.'

We cannot afford to have people spending hours each day transporting themselves to and from work.

We cannot afford to have urban areas that are unsafe and hostile to our citizens. We cannot afford to live in urban spaces that are not economically inclusive.

The IUDF has four overall strategic goals aimed at transforming apartheid's spatial legacy to an urban future, which is "inclusive, resilient and liveable."

These are:

- Spatial integration: To forge new spatial forms in settlement, transport, social and economic areas.
- Inclusion and access: To ensure people have access to social and economic services, opportunities and choices.
- Growth: To harness urban dynamism for inclusive, sustainable economic growth and
- Governance: To enhance the capacity of the state and its citizens to work together to achieve spatial and social integration.

Since cities are now the engines of economic growth, the IUDF is our blueprint for a better future for all South Africans.

Compatriots,

The winter initiation season is upon us.

The Department of Traditional Affairs has mobilised all stakeholders including the South African Police Service, the National Prosecuting Authority, Department of Health, traditional leaders and communities to ensure that we carry out our policy of zero tolerance for initiation deaths.

We congratulate the Limpopo province on their achievement of ensuring no deaths during the initiation season.

We urge all provinces to intensify their efforts in this regard.

Fellow South Africans

Let me reiterate that South Africa is a great success story. We have our challenges, however, the positive attributes of our country far outweigh those challenges.

Let us point out the challenges so that we can be able to fix them. But in doing so, let us not lose sight of the achievements that we have all scored, working together, under difficult conditions.

Let us not allow those who have decided to ignore the achievements of our beautiful country, to make us think we are a failure as a nation, a country and a people.

We have done well, and we will continue to do well, until we reach our destination, a truly united, non-racial, non-sexist, and prosperous South Africa, which is accurately described in the National Development plan.

We wish you all a happy freedom day today.

Let us continue working together, to move South Africa forward.

I thank you.

Issued by GCIS on behalf of The Presidency