

SPEECH BY LIMPOPO PREMIER CHUPU MATHABATHA DURING
PROVINCIAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY AT GA-MOKGEHLE, MOLEMOLE.

21 March 2019

Program Director
MEC's here present,
Executive Mayor of the Capricorn District
Molemole Mayor
The Human Rights Commissioner, Mr Victor Mavhidula,
The IEC Provincial Head, Mme Nkaro Mateta
Provincial Director General
Magoshi a rena
Government officials
The Media
Ladies and gentlemen
Avuxeni! Ndaa! Thobela! Silotjile!!

I wish to thank you Program Director and the people of Mokgehle for such a warm welcome.

We celebrate this year's Human Rights Day with a deep gratitude to the people of Limpopo and of South Africa for fighting the oppressive regime for decades until we attained our freedom in 1994. Let's be honest with you, this freedoms we have today, are not as free as some of us would like us to believe. Your fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters and cousins died for this freedoms.

Some of them have disappeared and we are still looking for their whereabouts after 25 years of our freedom. Some of us have lost our youth and our sanity, fighting the most oppressive regime ever faced in the African continent and the world over.

This year marks the 59th anniversary since the Sharpeville massacre that saw 69 African people shot dead whilst 180 were wounded when apartheid police opened fire on a peaceful crowd that had marched against the pass laws. That particular day became an iconic date in our country's history, that's why every year on the 21st of March we commemorate Human Rights Day. This is a reminder that our rights and freedoms did not come free but for a price.

Program Director,

This year's theme: "The year of Indigenous Languages: Promoting and Deepening a Human Rights Culture", talks to us in Limpopo.

Limpopo has been a unique province in that three if not five distinct indigenous ethnic groupings come from here. This is the province that in 1994 had the Republic of Venda, the Transvaal, and then the Self-governing Bantustans of Gazankulu and of Lebowa. All these were created by the Regime under the guise that all of us will be free to express ourselves and self-governance without the interference of either one.

Indeed in 1994 when we went to the polls for the first time in our history, it became very difficult to amalgamate the three homelands into a Northern Transvaal Province. This was a time when the legislature would be held at Thohoyandou in Venda, Giyani and Lebowa kgomo in a rotational basis. The expenses of trying to satisfy everyone became enormous.

We are glad that today, the ANC government has managed to unite this Province to what it [is. Today](#) is far much better than yesterday.

Program Director,

As we celebrate Human Rights Day, it is President Nelson Mandela who said to us, "It is not our diversity which divides us, it is not our ethnicity, or religion or culture that divides us. Since we have achieved our freedom, there can only be one division amongst us: those who cherish democracy and those who do not"

It is President Mandela again who says; "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language that goes to his heart".

For reasons as espoused by President Mandela, Limpopo Government entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of South Africa last year, that we will jointly hold a Public Lecture in honour of one of the most distinguished and renowned author and promoter of Sepedi languages in the name of Mr Oliver Kgadime "OK" Matsepe.

Indeed on Tuesday night, the inaugural lecture was held in his honor and the promotion of indigenous languages.

We believe UNISA, University of Limpopo and the University of Venda will also have similar lectures every year in honour of our writers and authors like, Dr Nkhelebeni Phaswana, MJ Maluleke, Vonani wa ka Bila and many others who continue to contribute in our indigenous languages

I am particularly happy about the little things that are game changers within our society. From the 1 April 2019, Limpopo will see an addition to Television series, when the first Xitsonga drama is aired on SABC television. The good thing is that Giyani the Land of Blood is written and produced by our children from Limpopo. Indeed our stories are beginning to be told by those who live and speak the language.

When I enquired about the controversial title, I was aptly briefed that it is a love story, just as much as Muvhango is about conflict within a traditional royal setup in a fictitious Venda village.

The dividing factors of our people are far less than those that unites us. Our people have identified those who talk more about rumors of war and doom, than those that advocates peace and stability under the same roof.

There should never be a people that fight the other because they do not speak the same language, nor because the other is of a darker or a lighter complexion.

Program Director,

We are aware that the people of the Kingdom of Bolobedu have lodged complaints with the Presidency, the Human Rights Commission and the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities to have their language Khelobedu to be recognized as a language that should be taught or written. We are also aware of the Ndebele people who have also lodged complaints that their indigenous language be recognized as one of the languages of Limpopo. These and others, says to us, Limpopo is quite a unique province, because of many historical facts.

As we appreciate and deal with these, we should never forget what President Mandela taught us when he said, “never, never and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another”. When as young people we rose in revolt in 1976, it was because one language wanted to dominate all of us and be the only language to be spoken. We cannot go back there again.

It has also come to our attention Mme Nkaro Mateta that some people have a tendency of intimidating the media in other parts of the country. Although we haven't had such tendencies, we would like to discourage such habits either from government or political parties. No matter how angry we can be, we should never attempt to attack members of the 4th Estate whilst performing their duty because that's a serious Human Rights violation.

We are also aware of the rising attacks on either teachers or learners in our communities. The recent incidences where we have been burying young men and women in the Province can never be condoned.

However I wish to call upon the community to help us build a family unit. Neither vigilante nor mob revenge will assist us with anything in stemming this dispicable acts of violence. The law must be allowed to take its course no matter how slow it might be.

Program Director,

As I conclude, I wish to call upon all of us gathered here, and all those listening to us from the corners of the Province to know that Human Rights and dignity are sacrosanct.

Our freedoms are enshrined in the Bill of Rights which is the cornerstone of our democracy.

You have as much right to practice and speak your language and culture as the other person next to you.

You have as much right to go to the polls on May 8 and vote for the political party of your choice without being coerced or intimidated by anyone in this country. That's exactly what we fought for and that's what the democracy means.

Ndza khensa. !Ndaa!