

EULOGY BY PREMIER OF LIMPOPO ON THE OCCASION OF MME LYDIA KOMAPE
NGWENYA FUNERAL HELD AT TSIMANYANE VILLAGE.

21st October 2023

Programme Directors:

Members of the Komape and Ngwenya families;

Ministers and Deputy present here present;

Members of the Executive Council, our MECs;

Speaker of the Provincial Legislature, Mme Rosemary Molapo;

Members of Parliament and Members of the Provincial Legislature present;

Your Worship Executive Mayor of Sekhukhune District Municipality, Cllr. Maleke Mokganyetsi;

Your Worship Mayor of Ephraim Mogale Local Municipality, Cllr. Given Moimane;

All Executive Mayors and Mayors of our Municipalities in Limpopo;

All Councillors present here today;

Our Esteemed Traditional Leaders, Maapara Nkwe a rena;

Members of the ANC NEC, ANC PEC, and others leaders of the movement across all levels;

Leadership of the Tripartite Alliance SACP, COSATU and SANCO;

The Leadership of the Women's League, Veteran's League and the Youth League;

The Leadership of other component structures of Progressive Youth Alliance;

Comrades and Compatriots;

Friends from the Media;

Distinguished Guests;

Fellow Mourners:

Comrades and friends, ladies and gentlemen;

Mojalefa yo mongwe wa maphelo a rena mo lefaseng ke lehu. Eupsa mediro ya rena e tla šala lefaseng jwale ka dikenywa.

Lehono re eme mo re hemela teng, mokgapo mogolo o wele, dithakga di lla mashogoshogo. Mme Lydia Komape is no more.

On that note I agree with the maxim which says:

“...death is the necessary cause to the end of life”, because there is nothing that is permanent except change itself. Change which is sometimes painful to resist, as death itself negating our lives”.

Life well lived, life of a revolutionary. Today Mme Komape is no more; but Mme Komape is us, because her deeds remain our compass.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As the Limpopo Provincial Government, we stand together with all South Africans, especially the family, as well as the Ephraim Mogale and Sekhukhune communities, to offer our deepest condolences on the loss of a remarkable individual.

We mourn the passing of a mother, an activist who emerged from the oppressive material conditions she was born in and lived under, a lifelong community builder, and a dedicated social worker who tirelessly cared for the less fortunate, fought for those who were landless, and steadfastly advocated for the vulnerable.

Mme Lydia Komape's name has become synonymous with our ongoing struggle to dismantle the legacy of colonial and apartheid oppression altogether, to ensure the complete economic and social emancipation of our people.

This is a process of transformation and development to build a completely non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous South Africa.

Our stalwart's unwavering commitment to fight for workers' rights, empowering rural women, and liberating our nation was driven by her deep understanding of the colonial and apartheid era in our country.

Her fight for workers was destined for a society free from the exploitation of one person, group or class by another. She clearly appreciated the importance of securing universal social emancipation.

Mme Lydia Komape was resolute in her role as a revolutionary, actively participating in organising workers under the Metal and Allied Workers Union during the early seventies.

She consistently battled against the mistreatment and exploitation of domestic workers, even in the face of repressive apartheid laws that discouraged industrial action.

In the eighties, she played a crucial role in the establishment of the Federation of South African Trade Unions and was particularly concerned about the working conditions of women.

Within the African National Congress, her lifelong organisation, Mme Lydia Komape demonstrated her outstanding grasp of its historical mission. In short, the ANC was founded on the principles of equal rights.

It was founded with the strategic aim of reclaiming expropriated land from the colonial and apartheid expropriators, and their beneficiaries, to restore it back to the people.

The ANC was founded on the strategic task of always advocating for human rights for all, on a non-racial and non-sexist basis, towards every goal of the liberation

struggle. These goals were inscribed in the Freedom Charter in 1955 by the original Congress of the People.

Mme Komape-Ngwenya's unwavering dedication to the struggles for workers' rights, women's emancipation and non-racial and non-sexist nation-building symbolise an important virtue that is often missing today: selflessness.

In 2009, her remarkable commitment to fighting for workers' rights, women's emancipation, and the liberation of our people was rightfully recognised when President Kgalema Motlanthe conferred on her the prestigious Order of Luthuli in Bronze.

Programme Directors,

Mama Komape-Ngwenya possessed an enduring passion for the liberation and empowerment of rural women. Her commitment was evident in her fight against forced removals and farm evictions affecting women in rural communities.

She played a pioneering role in forming the Rural Women Movement, now known as the National Movement of Rural Women. This women's movement significantly improved the lives of communities and advocated for women's representation in decision-making structures.

The tenacity, zeal, and courage displayed by Mme Komape-Ngwenya in the struggle against apartheid deserve special recognition.

She recognised that the advancement of the national democratic revolution against what we called colonialism of a special type required addressing three interrelated contradictions: racialised and gendered class super exploitation of workers, racial oppression of Africans in particular and black people in general, and patriarchal domination of women.

In this scenario, African women in particular and black women in general suffered all the three forms of oppression. We called three forms of oppression experienced by African women in particular and black women in general triple oppression.

The brief history of our past, which I just summarised, furnishes the basic reasons underpinning our strategic considerations.

These strategic considerations emphasise that the hierarchy of disadvantage suffered under colonial and apartheid oppression should naturally inform the focus of programmes of change for our democratic dispensation to make progress.

It is in this regard that our policy approach requires special attention, particularly to those who occupied the lowest rungs on the colonial and apartheid social ladder.

The main aim is to uplift them towards building a just and equal society. Mme Komape-Ngwenya appreciated that this was enshrined in our Constitution, which calls upon us to “Heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights”.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I want to reinforce the points I just made about her commitment to women’s emancipation towards gender equality.

Mme Komape-Ngwenya understood that advocating for women’s rights advances the national democratic revolution because women experienced oppression in multiple ways, as women, as members of the working class, and as members of the majority black population of our country.

This underlines the critical importance of women’s emancipation in our revolutionary cause, echoing the words of Thomas Sankara, who said, “There is no true social revolution without the liberation of women”. Sankara also cautioned against a society where half of the population is held in silence.

In memory of Mme Komape-Ngwenya, let us both condemn and support decisive action when taken against those who perpetuate the oppression of women, gender-based violence, child abuse, and discrimination against members of the LGBTIQ-plus community.

It will be a benefitting tribute to this stalwart of our struggle for liberation and social emancipation to come together, unite and eliminate all forms of gender domination, not least patriarchy and gendered economic exploitation.

Programme Directors,

The life and legacy of this towering figure, who carried the torch of our struggle, reminds us of other iconic women activists who fought for liberation and the rights of the working class around the world.

She embodied the courage and passion of individuals like Alexandra Kollantai and Nadeshda Krupskaya of the Bolsheviks, Louisa Amanda Espinoza of the Nicaraguan Sandinistas, Rosa Luxemburg of the German Communist Party, Celia Sanchez and Wilma Espin, Haydee Santamaria and Melba Hernandez of Cuba’s 26 July Movement, Queen Nzinga Mpande of Angola, Corazon Aquino, and Comfort Freeman, to name just a few. These women did not merely speak against injustice; they took meaningful action to combat it.

Indeed, Mme Komape’s unwavering dedication to serve our people until her last breath mirrored the tireless and selfless path forged by outstanding women revolutionaries, of whom some were her predecessors in the struggle.

We think of trailblazers like Ray Alexander Simons, Ruth First, Esther Bassel, Albertina Sisulu, Adelaide Tambo, Mme Madinoge, Matsatsi Nchabeleng, Winnie Mandela, Ido Fiyo Mtwana, Adelaide Tambo, Charlotte Maxeke, Helen Suzman, Mapitsi Mokaba, Rahima Moosa, Sophie De Bruyn, Bertha Gxowa, and countless others who fearlessly grasped the sharp edge of the knife aimed at them by the colonial and apartheid oppressors.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We gather here today to say our final goodbye to a remarkable woman, Mme Lydia Komape-Ngwenya.

It is a bittersweet moment, as we bid farewell to our beloved mother during a pivotal time in our nation's history. Our country is now preparing for the seventh general election since the first hard-won democratic election in April 1994.

At this juncture, as we are busy accounting for implementing our policies and the achievements we have accomplished in the past years, we also confront new challenges.

We did our best with limited resources amid the stubborn, centuries-old legacy of colonial and apartheid dispossession and oppression, and amid global economic system crises and devastating pandemics.

If you compare the houses that you see today in our villages to the mud houses that defined the face of our communities before April 1994, you will appreciate that our transition has brought about commendable progress.

You will also appreciate the roads and clinics that were not there before April 1994 as progress. While we face the challenge of being a water scarce country, still you will appreciate that we made progress in water provision under the same difficult challenges.

If you are objective, you will appreciate that the quality of life of our people is better than where we were before April 1994. You will appreciate the social grants that our government offers to make a difference in the lives of their recipients and their families.

If you are objective, you will appreciate that the number of certificates, diplomas, undergraduate and postgraduate degrees like master's degrees and doctorates in our communities represent progress.

I have to highlight the progress we have made while recognising that Rome was not built in one day. As a matter of fact, we still have a lot of work to do, among others,

to ensure the provision of work and build a stronger economy to support our programmes of transformation and development.

This week as the Limpopo Provincial Government, we held our third investment conference. Investors, including public entities, pledged 37 billion rand in investments. These pledges will boost our economy, contribute to employment creation and poverty reduction.

Programme Director,

It is during this crucial time that we mourn the loss of Mme Komape, who was an integral part of our journey.

As she embarks on her new journey among the heroes of our struggle for liberation and social emancipation, Mme Komape-Ngwenya is in a unique position to narrate the remarkable story of our transformation and development efforts in providing better services to our people.

She can now share our achievements with the likes of Peter Mampogwane Nchabeleng – the Lion of the North, as well as umKhonto We Sizwe Commissar and Chief of Staff Lawrence Madimetja Phokanoka, Professor Lebijike Magapatona, Commander Uriah Mokeba Maleka, Mahwidi Phala, Flag Boshielo, Phirime Mogaramedi, Elias Motswaledi, Elias Phakane Moretsele, Rapolai Segowe, Ephraim Phorogohlo Mogale, David Brown Mmeshi Matlala, Fawcet Mathebe, Frisco Phala, Majesty Selwane, Jepp Squirrel Mashegwana, Moses Mabotha, Kwaito Leope, Janji Kabini, Fannie Lekola, and many other leaders of the liberation struggle.

In her new destination, Mme Komape can emphasise our unwavering commitment to delivering services and improving the lives of our people.

It is a commitment that has brought about the significant strides we have made in uplifting our communities over the past 29 years.

She will contribute among the stalwarts she has now followed, in producing an objective 30-year review of our democratic transition, considering the centuries-old challenges we have and their stubborn legacy.

Even as we highlight our successes, we must acknowledge the challenges we face, being frank and true to history, taking our cue from Mme Komape.

Maladministration and corruption are a great risk to our efforts, undermining the very purpose of building a capable and ethical democratic developmental state.

These challenges hinder our progress in tackling poverty, inequality, and unemployment. What we are certain about, however, is that evildoers will not prevail.

We have proved this when we defeated the apartheid regime after years of protracted and resilient struggle.

We are sharpening our undivided attention in resolving difficulties in providing essential services such as water and electricity. In the end, we will prevail.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As we honour Mme Lydia Komape-Ngwenya's memory today, let us remember her not only as a loving mother, unifier, community builder but as a witness to our nation's journey, a journey filled with triumphs and tribulations, a journey that continues to shape our commitment to a better South Africa for all.

Magagesu,

I thank you,

Empa kase gagesu polelo e re ga di lebogwe.

SEBATAKGOMO!