

**THE 3RD JOSEPHINE SEGANO MOSHOBANE MEMORIAL LECTURE BY LIMPOPO PREMIER DR.  
PHOPHI RAMATHUBA AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO, ONKGOPOTSE TIRO HALL**

**TUESDAY, 27 AUGUST 2024**

Program Director, Prof. Manolo Lethoko,  
The Moshobane Family,  
Prof. Mahlo Mokgalong, Vice- Chancellor & Principal, University of Limpopo,  
Prof. Tebogo Mothiba, Executive Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Limpopo,  
Prof. Satsope Maoto, Executive Dean, Faculty of Humanities, University of Limpopo,  
Dr. Mochaki Masipa. Dean of Students Affairs, University of Limpopo,  
Ms Khutso Senyatsi, Chairperson of Women's Academic Solidarity Association, University of Limpopo,  
Rev. Dr. Ngwako Rapakwana, Director Fender Desk Unit, University of Limpopo,  
Student Representative Council,  
Moshobane Trio Choristers

Ndi Matsheloni, Avuxeni, Thobela, Silotshile, Good morning.

We gather here today at the Onkgopotse Abram Tiro Hall for the 3rd Josephine Segano Moshobane Memorial Lecture to reflect on the life of one of our own—a comrade, compatriot, activist, and revolutionary who left an indelible mark on our history. As we honor the memory of Cde Josephine Segano Moshobane, we are reminded of her unwavering dedication to the struggle for freedom, equality, and justice.

It has been 38 years since Cde Jos Moshobane tragically passed away in 1986 after being detained following a visit to a friend in Botswana. Her death came after enduring unimaginable torture and abuse at the hands of the apartheid security police while held in solitary confinement. She was later released from Haenertsburg police station, outside Polokwane, into the custody of her uncle, the late Serepe Moshobane, who was then the Student Dean at the University of the North, now known as the University of Limpopo.

Program Director, Jos's health deteriorated rapidly after her release, leading to numerous hospital visits in Gauteng, where she eventually underwent surgery for a brain hemorrhage. Despite the

family's best efforts, she passed away on 3 April 1986. Her untimely death was not just a loss for her family and friends but a significant blow to the revolutionary movement that she was so passionately devoted to.

Cde Jos, alongside her peers at Turfloop University, was at the forefront of the revolutionary wave that swept through the north, taking on leadership roles during a time of great turmoil. These young revolutionaries, inspired by martyrs like Onkgopotse Abram Tiro—who was assassinated by a parcel bomb in Botswana after delivering a historic address at a graduation ceremony in the early 1970s—continued to fight for the liberation of our people.

Other martyrs like George Shope, the son of ANC veteran Mark Shope, who was found dead under mysterious circumstances, and Njinga Sindane from Dennilton, who abandoned his studies to undergo military training abroad and later died in a firefight with security police, are also testaments to the critical role Turfloop University played in the struggle.

Program Director, we must acknowledge the profound impact that the University of Limpopo, formerly known as Turfloop, has had on our liberation struggle. This institution was not just a fountain of knowledge; it was a crucible of revolutionary ideas. Many newly released political prisoners from Robben Island, such as Jerome Maake, Eleck Nchabeleng, Peter Mokaba, and Shakes Makhado, found refuge here and continued to spread the gospel of revolution. This rich history is something we will always hold in high regard.

As we continue to reflect during this Women's Month, we do so under the theme: "Aluta Continua: Advancing the Ideological Baton of the Revolutionary Feminist." We must ask ourselves tough and real questions: Are we doing enough to educate and empower our youth, especially young girls, to carry the torch of the struggle forward, or are we leaving them to navigate this path alone?

Today, we remember Cde Jos—a revolutionary feminist, a great human being, and a fierce advocate for gender equality and women's rights. She challenged the status quo with an unyielding spirit and a deep understanding of the struggles women face. Her commitment to empowering women and advancing their rights has paved the way for many women who now occupy positions of leadership, brightening the corners where they stand.

Through her selfless life and tireless advocacy, women today have a voice in the many fronts of our government structures and institutions. But as we celebrate her legacy, we must recognize that the fight for gender equality is far from over. It requires the same level of dedication and commitment that Cde Jos demonstrated, even when it was not fashionable or easy.

Program Director, advancing the ideological baton of the revolutionary feminist is critical in today's world, where women continue to face discrimination, violence, and systemic inequality. We must continue to fight for policies and laws that protect and promote gender equality, hold those in power accountable, and educate ourselves and others on the importance of this struggle.

There are those who argue that feminism is no longer needed today, but the truth is that revolutionary feminism is inseparable from the broader movement to dismantle all forms of exploitation and oppression. Women have fought for equality and against oppression for centuries, and while we have won some battles—such as the right to vote and equal access to education—women are still disproportionately affected by violence and discrimination in every aspect of life.

As the acclaimed author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie once said, "I have chosen to no longer be apologetic for my femininity. And I want to be respected in all of my femaleness because I deserve to be." These words remind us of the importance of self-respect and the recognition of our worth as women.

Program Director, we must continue to advocate for gender equality, not just in words but through meaningful actions. We must work towards creating a society where women are valued and respected, where their contributions are recognized and celebrated, and where the rights of all individuals—regardless of gender—are upheld.

Program Director, educating a girl child is one of the most powerful tools for breaking the cycle of poverty and fostering sustainable development in our communities. When we invest in the education of girls, we are not only empowering them to reach their full potential, but also uplifting entire families and societies. Educated girls grow into women who are more likely to make informed decisions, contribute meaningfully to the economy, and advocate for the rights of others. As we celebrate Women's Month, it is essential to recognize that the future of our nation lies in the hands of educated girls who will become the leaders, innovators, and changemakers of tomorrow.

Supporting women across various sectors is equally crucial in ensuring that the progress we make is inclusive and sustainable. Women bring unique perspectives and strengths to every field, from education and healthcare to business and governance. By providing women with equal opportunities, mentorship, and resources, we can create a more equitable society where everyone thrives. During this Women's Month, let us reaffirm our commitment to dismantling barriers, challenging gender norms, and creating environments where women can excel and lead with confidence.

Cde Josephine was a visionary who understood that true progress could only be made when there is equality and justice for all. Her legacy continues to inspire us as we carry on the work she started.

Program Director, as I conclude this memorial lecture, let us reflect on the indomitable spirit of Josephine Segano Moshobane and the profound legacy she has left us. As political leaders, we carry the responsibility of ensuring that her vision for gender equality becomes a reality. We must take decisive steps to fast-track the inclusion of women in positions of influence across all sectors.

By doing so, we not only honor her memory but also inspire young girls to believe that they too can rise to leadership, standing shoulder to shoulder with men in politics, public and corporate worlds. The future of our nation depends on the full and equal participation of all its people, and it is our duty to pave the way for the next generation of women leaders.

To the Moshobane family, we would like to thank you for always affording us the opportunity to have these kinds of lectures as we commemorate the life of our departed comrade Josephine Segano Moshobane, a true and original freedom fighter.

May the fighting spirit of Cde Josephine rest in eternal peace.

Thank you.