



sport, arts & culture

Department:
Sport, Arts and Culture
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



MEDIA STATEMENT

12th July 2026

Three Liberation Icons. One Historic Community. One Day of Service.

Bizana, Eastern Cape – This year's Nelson Mandela International Day will transcend the traditional 67 minutes of service as government, communities and the private sector converge in the heartland of South Africa's liberation heritage to honour the enduring legacy of Nelson Mandela, Oliver Reginald Tambo and Mama Winnie Madikizela-Mandela.

Hosted at Meje Senior Primary School, just a short distance from the birthplace of one of the nation's greatest heroines, Mama Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, this year's provincial commemoration symbolically unites the legacies of three liberation icons whose sacrifices shaped South Africa's democracy and constitutional freedom.

The commemoration comes at a significant moment in the country's history as South Africa marks 50 years since the 1976 Soweto Uprising and 70 years since the historic 1956 Women's March to the Union Buildings - milestones that continue to remind South Africans that freedom was won through courage, sacrifice and collective action.

Led by the Deputy Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture, the Premier of the Eastern Cape, Members of the Executive Council, Executive Mayors, municipalities and government leaders, the programme will bring together more than eight government departments, municipalities, state entities and private-sector partners to transform Mandela Day into a practical demonstration of nation-building.

Rather than celebrating through words alone, the day will leave a lasting legacy for learners and the surrounding community through meaningful interventions that include:

- Revitalisation of the school's vegetable garden through the donation of seedlings and gardening equipment.
- Planting of 10 trees (five indigenous and five fruit trees) to promote environmental sustainability and food security.
- Corporate social investment initiatives, including the donation of paint to improve the school's learning environment.
- "Services on Wheels", bringing essential government services directly to the community, including Home Affairs, Health, Education, Social Development, NSFAS support and other public services to assist learners and residents.

The commemoration begins on 17 July 2026 with an inter-school sports tournament involving eight schools, celebrating youth development and healthy lifestyles. Winning schools will receive their awards during the official Mandela Day celebrations on 18 July 2026.

This is more than a Mandela Day event, it is a celebration of freedom, service, education, environmental sustainability and social justice in a community deeply connected to the lives of Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo and Mama Winnie Madikizela-Mandela.

The Nelson Mandela Museum invites members of the media to witness this historic convergence of leadership, service and community upliftment as South Africans honour the enduring values that continue to shape our democracy.

Media are encouraged to attend and cover this historic provincial commemoration.

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