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NELSON MANDELA MUSEUM CELEBRATES THE HISTORICAL MOMENTS OF MANDELA'S RELEASE WITH THE PEOPLE OF MTHATHA.

Mthatha, The Nelson Mandela Museum, in partnership with the Department of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture, Eastern Cape National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), Vodacom, and Athletics Transkei, will host the 36th Anniversary Commemoration of the Release of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, honouring the pivotal role played by the people of Mthatha in the historic moment that reshaped South Africa's future.

The commemorative activities will take place from 07 and 11 February 2026, under the theme: **Echoes of the Soil: Reflecting on the 36th Anniversary of the Release and the Historic Homecoming of Mandela.**

FREEDOM WALK: RE-TRACING THE FOOTSTEPS OF HISTORY

The commemorations will officially begin on Saturday, 07 February 2026, with a 5-kilometre Freedom Walk from the Moravian Church in Ngangelizwe Township to the Bhunga Building, Nelson Mandela Museum in Mthatha.

This symbolic walk is a historical re-enactment of the events that unfolded the day before Nelson Mandela's official release from Victor Verster Prison. It was at the

Moravian Church on 10 February 1990 that leaders of the Umtata Youth Congress, under the umbrella of the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO), formally announced to the community that Nelson Mandela would be released the following day.

Following the announcement, the community of Ngangelizwe embarked on a celebratory march, a moment of joy that tragically ended in the injury of Nkosinathi Innocent Maphumulo and the death of Kholekile, after a speeding vehicle drove into the crowd. The Freedom Walk honours both the celebration of freedom and the sacrifices made during the struggle. The route will proceed via Stofile Street, connecting to Tembu Road via Tutor Ndamase, Nelson Mandela Drive, and conclude at the Nelson Mandela Museum in Mthatha at 07h00.

The Freedom Fun walk will be followed by the handing over of painting materials, school backpacks, braille, and a television set to Efata School for the Blind and Deaf. These items are donated by the Nelson Mandela Museum, South African Library for the Blind, Vodacom, and BDSM.

RELEASE DIALOGUE: REMEMBERING MANDELA'S HOMECOMING

To further mark this historic milestone, the Nelson Mandela Museum and its partners will host a National Dialogue on 11 February 2026, focusing on Mandela's homecoming to Mthatha and its significance in the broader liberation narrative.

The dialogue will feature:

- **Honourable Sibulele Ngongo:** Eastern Cape MEC for Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture,
- **Mr. Mzwandile Vena:** MK Member and a bodyguard for Nelson Mandela
- **Mr. Phambili Jizana:** Struggle veteran and currently works as a Director for ICT in the Department of Public Works, Eastern Cape.
- **Mr. Vuyani Jarana:** Chairperson of Eastern Cape Development Corporation (ECDC)

The discussions will be co-chaired by Member of the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature, Mr. Mlibo Qoboshiyana, and Ms. Yandisa Jubase of the NYDA. This dialogue aims to create an intergenerational platform for reflection, remembrance, and renewed commitment to the values of freedom, unity, and social justice championed by Nelson Mandela.

For more information and interviews, contact Ms. Nontlahla Tandwa-Dalindyeb @ nontlahla@nelsonmandelamuseum.org.za or 0727913493.

