



GAUTENG
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

6 December 2024

Provincial Government hands over remains of freedom fighters who died in exile

On Friday 6 December 2024, the Gauteng Provincial Government handed over the remains of freedom fighters who died in exile to their families, during the repatriation ceremony held at the Johannesburg City Hall.

The ceremony forms part of the exile repatriation project to exhume, hand over and reburial the remains of freedom fighters who died in exile.

The implementation of this project is in line with the National Policy on the Repatriation and Restitution of Human Remains and Heritage Objects, approved by the Cabinet in March 2021.

The project was officially launched by President Cyril Ramaphosa on 27 September 2024 at Freedom Park in the City of Tshwane, after the repatriation of forty-two (42) exhumed remains from Zambia and Zimbabwe.

“Since the ascendance of a just and democratic order in South Africa in April 1994, it has been a matter of government policy to ensure that all men and women who left the world of the living while fighting for our freedom are repatriated back to their country of birth,” said Acting Premier, Lebogang Maile.

Amongst the remains handed over were those of Vernon Moodley, son of Mary Moodley, a trade unionist and anti-apartheid activist, Bennet Sibanyoni, Tshetlo Matshaba, Andrew Mashaba, Vincent Khumalo, and Clayton Tsele.

The Acting Premier added that the provincial government was working closely with the affected families to prepare for the handover of the remains.

“Part of our responsibility is assessing and addressing the needs of the affected families’ current socioeconomic status”, said Lebogang Maile.

The provincial government has also established coordinating teams with relevant stakeholders and families for reburials, which assume

responsibility for transportation and accommodation of the families for homecoming, handover, and reburial ceremonies.

“As part of the Repatriation and Reburial National Project, the South African Heritage Resources Agency has engaged with families to establish their reburial preferences and most would prefer reburial at the hero’s acre in the jurisdiction of the City of Johannesburg, and only a few prefer private reburial sites”, added Maile.

The ceremony was attended by Deputy Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture, Peace Mabe, and the City of Johannesburg Executive Mayor, Dada Morero, MEC for Education, Sports Arts, Culture and Recreation Matome Chiloane.

Ali Mohammed who spoke on behalf of the Moodley family thanked the government for affording the various families much-needed closure in bringing home the remains of their loved ones.

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Issued by the Gauteng Provincial Government

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