

**1893 MRM President's Cultural Heritage Day Speech, South Africa:
Delivered on the 24th September 2017 at the Zoo Lake**

On behalf of the 1893 Mthwakazi Restoration Movement, a Movement that embraces all Mthwakazi citizens regardless of organizational affiliation, cultural and religious affiliation, I take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to Magoba for taking time to present my speech to you all on my behalf and on behalf of the Movement on this important Cultural Heritage Day gathering day in South Africa.

I also express my deepest gratitude for your attendance and for your expression of unity and love for one another as Mthwakazi citizens on this day. Long may the spirit of sisterhood, brotherhood, love, unity and ubuntu continue!

Bakwethu, we all know that Matebeleland/Mthwakazi is a Nation weaved of diverse histories, cultures, customs, beliefs and religions and that these cultures form a melting pot of peaceful co-existence as one people and one Nation.

Our diversity is our strength and we must never allow external forces of destruction to use our diversity as a weakness. Our diversity makes our Nation rich and strong. It makes our Nation resolute.

Because of our diversity, our Nation has been able to stand the test of time under very trying conditions up to this day.

In our rich diversity, we have together weathered various ugly storms, cyclones and tsunamis as one people, one Nation and one Human Mthwakazi Movement on this planet.

But today it is a Cultural Heritage Day here in RSA. But we must be in the know that culture is exercised and lived daily alongside history. The two are lived experiences passed from generation to generation for continuity's sake. They are part of human experience and identity. As such, they are a cornerstone of any Nation's existence. They are foundational pillars of pride and identity of any Nation. Mthwakazi is no different from any other Nation on this earth. Diversity fortifies our Nation rather than weaken it.

However, knowledge of one's history and culture and the continued practice and living of both are very important in any thriving and developing Nation. Some of our histories, cultures, beliefs and religions have been lost overtime due to colonial forces superimposing their history narratives and cultures on our Nation. Such is the behaviour, nature and conduct of imperialists of all shapes, sizes and colours in the advance of their exploitative ulterior motives.

History narratives, cultures, customs, beliefs and religions are transmitted through language from one generation to another in various forms that include storytelling, music and other forms of art and religious practices.

History narratives, cultures, customs, beliefs and religions are also protected, in today's world, through history books and education in general, particularly its syllabi.

A syllabus crafted by colonial forces of a Nation is dangerous syllabi and must be resisted and an alternative be given. We must begin to craft our own syllabi for our own children and for our own Nation and deploy it among our people.

It must therefore be noted that colonial forces or forces of oppression and supremacy always target language for destruction to destroy our histories and cultures. Language is the medium for expression of one's history and culture and therefore without language one loses knowledge of their history, their culture, and how to express and practice it. This is happening in Matebeleland/Mthwakazi as we speak. We must therefore unite to push back the frontiers of our occupation and destruction of our Culture and by extension our Nation.

Our children who are our future generations are experiencing vagaries of language and cultural genocide from external forces as we speak. It is not acceptable. Their human right to learn and acquire their language and by extension learn their history and culture is being violated daily! We must make a resolution today to work towards arresting the agenda of our colonial forces in Matebeleland/Mthwakazi. It is our generational mandate to do so. Every generation is saddled with a mandate. Ours is to Restore our Nation and defend it on all fronts.

Loss of language and knowledge is indeed a destruction of one's Nation and its identity. It is no wonder that language destruction becomes the target of imperialists via miseducation in the education sector of all targeted Nations today. It is due to this fact that Marcus Garvey had this to say and I quote, "A people without a knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots".

But Marcus Garvey must have gone further to explicitly say a Nation that allows its languages, history narratives and cultures to be destroyed by other Nations is a dead Nation. Mthwakazi must not be a dead Nation. It must awaken. The 1893 Mthwakazi Restoration Movement is here to re-awaken the sleeping giant of our diverse histories and cultures as a Nation. We must restore our sovereignty in everything including our culture.

Part of the reason why the 1893 Mthwakazi Restoration Movement was formed is the aspect of the Restoration of Mthwakazi history and cultures in their diversity and the restoration of the important pillars of our diverse cultures.

Therefore, Mthwakazi omuhle we have a serious patriotic duty to revisit and restore our cultures in various ways. The establishment of a Cultural Heritage Day in Matebeleland is key and fundamental to our Agenda and is long overdue. And Friday may fit the bill where we all observe it by putting on our cultural attires and assertively be proud of who we are.

As we observe Cultural Heritage Day in this country, Mthwakazi's/Matebeleland's languages are targeted and are under heavy assault from the forces of supremacy and hegemony practices.

The assault on our languages is an assault on our history and cultural heritage and by extension our National heritage. An assault on our history and cultural heritage is an assault on our existence as a people and as Mthwakazi Nation. We must not fail to defend our being, let history judge us harshly in the future.

Our languages, histories and cultures are sacrosanct and therefore we must defend their destruction by resuscitating all the pillars that preserve our cultures including our own education system and ensuring we develop our own human resources in various fields (socially, artistically, educationally, economically,

developmentally, religiously and overall culturally) to offer a buffer-zone against imperialists of all shapes and sizes.

Fellow Mthwakazi citizens, our Restoration Agenda is therefore no small feat. It is a powerful call to patriotic duty in the best interest of our Nation.

I must hasten to observe that the destruction of our history and cultures began in 1893 when Rhodes and his pioneer column invaded and destroyed our Kingdom. This destruction led to Matebeleland's unification with Mashonaland thereafter to form Southern Rhodesia in 1894, then Rhodesia-Zimbabwe in 1979 and then Zimbabwe in 1980.

The colonial destruction of our Nation was fortified and indeed consolidated in 1983 via the Gukurahundi Genocide perpetrated by Robert Gabriel Mugabe's government.

A lot of our history and cultural heritage was further destroyed during this period. It is therefore our patriotic duty as a Nation to reverse the pogrom of the destruction of our histories and cultures and indeed our Nation in Matebeleland through the unifying 1893 Mthwakazi Restoration Agenda.

1893, as a year, is therefore an important in our history as uMthwakazi. It on this basis that we and compatriots in the Diaspora via umthwakazireview network established and named this organization 1893 Mthwakazi Restoration Movement.

Our Restoration Agenda is traced from 1893 up to the present day and therefore the Restoration Agenda begins with restoring that which existed from that time with of course a reformist agenda in it.

Therefore bakwethu, we have got some great work to do as Mthwakazi people in this organization, defined in this organization by our Mthwakaziship and nothing else. We must therefore, with contempt, reject any other definitions other than our Mthwakaziship in this movement apart from celebrating our Mthwakaziship in diversity and using this as powerful tool to unleash our Restoration Agenda among our people in their local villages, communities, growth-points and townships.

And if things were well, we should be celebrating this day in Matebeleland today. But we know our situation very well and why we are all here. Therefore, we must, as the 1893 Mthwakazi Restoration Movement and as a Ndebele Nation, begin to urgently set up the Mthwakazi Cultural Heritage Day back home and Internationally as soon as possible alongside other Restoration programmes at play in Mthwakazi as we speak. We must champion it. We have already started here but our day must be different from RSA. And Friday may be the best as other efforts are already underway in that direction.

Importantly, as we engage in all Restoration programmes in our Nation, we must be peaceful and be guided by the fact that Self Determination/Restoration is a principle acknowledged by International law that allows us to determine our status and the exercise of our God-given rights freely in this world.

Lastly, I strongly believe that our all-embracing and all-encompassing 1893 Mthwakazi Restoration Movement offers hope and the best future for our Nation that we dearly love. Let us go out there and get more of our kith and kin to join the Movement. Most importantly, let us enjoy our Cultural Heritage Day and be safe as we do so and look after one another.

God Bless!

I thank You

Mr Vusani Maqeda Ngwenya

President, 1893 Mthwakazi Restoration Movement

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