



AFRICA DAY

PRESS STATEMENT

Building and Strengthening a Culture of Pan-African People-to-People Solidarity

Solidarity Walk and Cultural Festival

Say No to Xenophobia, Afrophobia and Criminal Violence

#AfricanSolidarityCaravan #AfricaDay #ProudlyAfrican

23 May 2015

**Pan Africa Mall (Cnr Watt and 3rd Street) to Alexandra Stadium
(9am-4pm)**

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The ACTION Support Centre (ASC) and the Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa (CoRMSA), City of Johannesburg, Migration Unity, Department of Community Safety, and Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation, and many other progressive partners through the Proudly African Campaign and the African Solidarity Caravan have organised an Africa Day Solidarity Walk and Cultural Festival in Alexandra.

The Solidarity Walk and Cultural Festival will comprise of solidarity messages promoting African unity, peace, development and the African Renaissance. The event will include traditional music, poetry and dance and the signing of Release Itai Dzamara, Release Swazi Political Detainees and Free Movement of African People Petitions. The links to the petitions are at the end of this statement.

Through ASC partners and the African Solidarity Caravan similar events are taking place in Burundi, Uganda, Kenya and Zambia.

The Africa Day Solidarity Walk and Cultural Festival celebrates Africa Day, an annual commemoration of the 1963 founding of the Organisation of African Unity-OAU, presently recognised as the Africa Union (AU). Equally important, the celebration gives us an opportunity to celebrate our successes and reflect on the challenges and explore opportunities for transformation and deepening a culture of Pan-African people-to-people solidarity.

We note that the unity and prosperity of our continent and our people remain threatened by internal and external unprincipled elements that hold Africa back. It is vital therefore to use this occasion to galvanise all progressive forces behind a solid unifying agenda towards an Africa that takes its rightful place on the global arena. In this respect, we support the AU Agenda 2063 and many regional initiatives that seek to promote people driven, and conflict sensitive development, in a combined effort to build the unity of Africans.

The vision of a unified Africa, a borderless Africa and an African common passport must be realised now. To that end, we need the contribution and participation of all in the celebration of the essence of being African, in memory of those we have lost along the way, and in paving the way for future African peoples. May the spirit of UBUNTU, of togetherness, of each of us being connected to all of us, resonate from the streets of Alexandria and reverberate across the borders and boundaries of the continent. Such borders and boundaries will eventually dissolve and be proven to be illusionary dividers of our connected continent. We are determined to expose these divisive barriers and tear down any divisions.

We also embrace this opportunity to reflect and remember those whose lives were lost or impacted by the 2008 and 2015 xenophobic attacks in South Africa and the destructive attitudes that feed violence. We remember the students who were massacred in Kenya, innocent men, women and children killed by Boko Haram in Nigeria, our fellow brothers and sister perishing in deep oceans travelling to other continents, and all those being persecuted in Africa and around the world.

We call for a renewed strengthening of efforts and collaboration to stand in solidarity with one another against xenophobia, Afrophobia, racism, hate speech and criminal violence in Africa and around the world. Xenophobic violence and criminality continue to create divisions within and across our communities and societies. We call for continued peaceful responses in alignment with SADC and AU efforts to establish policies and frameworks as a unified continental governing body in the face of disunity.

In this light, we also remember past living and falling African leaders, queens and empresses; Queen Yaa Asante wa of Ghana, Queen Ranavalone III of Madagascar, Empress Taitu of Ethiopia, Queen Amina of Zazzau of Nigeria, Madam Yoko or Mammy Yoko of Sierra Leone, Pharoah Hatsheput of Egypt, Queen Nzingha of Angola, Mbuya Nehanda of Zimbabwe, Queen Muhumuza, of the Great Lakes Region, Kahina, Queen of the Berber

Nation, Kimpa Vita, the "African Jeanne d'Arc" from the Kingdom of Congo and Queen Pokuo of Ivory Coast.

The founding fathers of the AU, Kwame Nkrumah-Ghana, Modibo Keita-Mali, Gamal Abdul Nasser-Egypt, Sekou Touré-Guinea, Julius Nyerere-Tanzania, Ben Bella-Algeria, Emperor Haile Selasse-Ethiopia, William Tubman-Liberia, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa-Nigeria, Nnamdi Azikiwe-Nigeria, Jomo Kenyatta-Kenya and many others who were inspired by the Pan-African Movement.

Thabo Mbeki, Steve Biko, Robert Sobukwe, Nelson Mandela, Patrice Lumumba, Samora Machel, Thomas Sankara, Amilcar Cabral, Joshua Nkomo and others for their commitment to deepening the unity of Africa, exposing and decimating the injustices and indignity of discrimination, poverty and oppression of Africa's diverse people.

We support the rising momentum supporting the realisation of an African Renaissance and Pan-Africanism unity. Equally, we celebrate the efforts and actions to establish and maintain peace by local peacebuilders and mediators from the continent in countries such as Burundi, South Africa, the Eastern DRC, South Sudan, Nigeria and Somalia.

We stand together with the struggles for freedom in Africa and around the world. In particular, we support the people of the DRC, Palestine, Madagascar, Tibet, Syria, Yemen, Swaziland, Western Sahara, Somalia, South Sudan, Burundi and Zimbabwe, and we commend their resilience and their quest for transformation.

We support local actions on conflict transformation that aim to protect vulnerable communities against violence wherever there is a need—including in Myanmar, Somalia, Somaliland, Kenya, South Sudan, and South Africa.

We acknowledge the need to consolidate and share information, experience and training across multiple levels. This considers building stronger connections between community based movements, and national, regional and continental decision-making bodies. We recognise the need to lobby and influence the media to cover the many stories of solidarity, hope, love, peace and progress emerging from our continent.

With this spirit of solidarity and unity, let join hands in celebrating Africa Day!

As we seek to collect 10 million signatures from across Africa and around the world for each petition, we kindly invite you to sign the petitions below:

Free Movement of African People:

<http://www.proudlyafrican.mobi/en/petition-on-the-expedition-of-the-free-movement-of-people-in-africa/>

Release Swazi Detainees and Unbanning of TUCOSWA:

<http://www.sdcampaign.org/release-of-swazi-political-prisoners-and-unbanning-of-tucoswa/>

Release Itai Dzamara:

<http://www.actionsupportcentre.co.za/release-of-itai-dzamara/>