



COUNCIL
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE
SOUTH AFRICAN
CONSTITUTION

MEDIA STATEMENT

6 December 2013

Death of Nelson Mandela

Nelson Mandela was one of South Africa's foremost constitutionalists, a noble democrat, a great leader and a hero to millions across the globe. He epitomised the fortitude of the human spirit and the dominance of good over evil.

Everywhere, the name Nelson Mandela is synonymous with the idea of freedom, with the advancement of human rights, and with the loftiest human virtues of courage, self-sacrifice and dignity.

The death of Nelson Mandela provides us all with an opportunity to reflect on the values to which we aspire as a democratic society and the standards of probity we have a right to expect of our leaders.

In his opposition to apartheid Mandela was a symbol of principled resistance. Imprisoned for his defiance, he united people across the globe. Despite his 27 year incarceration he was the symbol of the resistance to the brutal apartheid state, honoured and decorated in all corners of the world.

As the first democratic president of the Republic of South Africa, Mandela's magnanimity in victory, and his pursuit of national reconciliation, set the tone for the kind of nation and society that we aspire to. President Mandela set extraordinary standards and thereby helped encourage the prospect of a new era of democratic politics in Africa.

His commitment to justice, to the rule of law and to judicial independence never wavered – even when his Presidential decisions were subjected to review by the courts and, on occasion, overturned. He demonstrated the utmost respect for the democratic institutions of governance that he fought so hard to establish. He deferred to the courts when many felt it was unnecessary to do so and bestowed upon Parliament the courtesy that it deserves from the executive branch of government. He respected the notion of the separation of powers, and ensured that he and his Ministers were accountable to Parliament.

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Thus, his legacy will never diminish, but will remain a beacon of hope and inspiration to democrats and constitutionalists everywhere. He will inspire generations to come, not just here, but across the globe.

Let us celebrate his life by re-committing ourselves to the principles that he fought for and was prepared to die for – equality, justice and human dignity.

We join millions of people throughout the world in expressing our sorrow at his departure and in offering our condolences to his family and his many dearly-loved friends.

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