



**CLOSING REMARKS BY THE SEDIBENG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY
EXECUTIVE MAYOR, COUNCILLOR MAHOLE SIMON
MOFOKENG ON THE OCCASION OF THE CLEANING OF
GRAVES OF THE VICTIMS OF THE 21ST MARCH 1960 MASSACRE**

19 March 2009.

- Programme Director;
- Councillor Assistance Mshudulu, Executive Mayor of the Emfuleni Local Municipality, fellow Councillors from Sedibeng District, Emfuleni, Midvaal and Lesedi Local Municipalities;
- Most importantly, *Matlasipha*, and the Leadership of their organizations *Khulumani* – an organization that our Municipalities are proud to be associated with;
- Distinguished guests;
- The people of Sedibeng;

The purpose of our annual Festival to mark the 49th anniversary of the 21st March 1960 Sharpeville massacre, one which saw the apartheid regime killing and maiming hundreds of innocent people, and exposed it further for what it was, is to remind fellow countrymen and women about the sacrifices and contributions made by our people to our country's struggles for freedom, thus helping them to become valuable advocates for the promotion of human rights, tolerance and peace.

The grave-cleaning ceremony which is an important part of our annual Human Rights Festival is aimed at honouring all those who have sacrificed their own lives and paid the ultimate prize for the liberation of country.

The organization of this ceremony, which is about to lead us to half a century anniversary in a year's time, is an extremely important statement in the political, social and economic life of our country. It is a vindication of generations of victims and survivors of aggressive and destabilizing apartheid-sponsored raids and massacres which took place in Sharpeville, Evaton, Soweto, and many other parts of our country and across our borders;

who against all odds, fought and won against White domination, supper exploitation, colonialism and increased attacks on the rights of black countrymen and women.

It is for that reason that our generation will continue to win in whatever national programme it embarks on, because we have also chosen not to forget our history in a hurry.

Today's visit to final resting places of our warriors and freedom fighters, situated few kilometers from the scene of crime, where the blood of innocent people turned the soil red, is happening in a South Africa which will in few months time, celebrate the 15th anniversary of its freedom and democracy.

All these coincidences; which come on the eve of our general elections on the 22nd April, are all made in heaven. They have the blessings of our ancestors who have been killed in many of our townships and far-away lands in our National Democratic Struggle for human rights, freedom and democracy.

We owe it to our people who are buried here, to use the coming elections for the benefit of generations to come.

Our revolutionary task is that of finishing that which was started by our people on the 21st March 1960. We cannot betray them by abandoning their struggle.

Our campaign must help to make the Universal Declaration of Human Rights broadly known so as to eradicate human rights violations.

As we leave this place, I would like our Municipalities to come and work together in ensuring that this yard and the graves of our martyrs will not look as it does today. The 50th anniversary, which I have no doubt that it will draw the attention of the International world, will have to be a success in all respect.

I want to invite all the people who are here with us, to join us later in the day when we will have our Memorial lecture in honour of the very people whom we have laid to rest here 49 years ago.

Comrades, colleagues and friends, I thank you all for your patience.