

## MEDIA STATEMENT

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### **GPL SACR COMMITTEE COMMEMORATES THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PIVOTAL 1984 VAAL UPRISING AS A SIGNIFICANT PART OF GAUTENG'S POLITICAL HERITAGE**

The Portfolio Committee on Sports, Arts, Culture, and Recreation (SACR) in the Gauteng Provincial Legislature (GPL) commemorates the 40th anniversary of the Vaal Uprising, a momentous event that played a crucial role in hastening the end of apartheid in South Africa and heralding a new era for all South Africans.

On 3 September 1983, the advent of the racist Tricameral Parliament in Cape Town catalysed major protests throughout the then Transvaal, particularly in the Vaal Triangle area. This marked the beginning of an extensive and sustained period of black resistance to white rule, which had been gathering momentum since the late 1970s.

The situation intensified following the ill-conceived decision by the Lekoa and Evaton Town Council to raise tariffs for municipal services. In response, the Vaal Civic Association (VCA) organized a stay-away, school boycott, and a march scheduled for 3 September 1984. This resulted in violent clashes with both police and township councillors, leading to the deaths of four councillors and extensive damage to shops and other properties.

As anticipated, the National Party government responded with brutality, deploying large contingents of riot police and military personnel to suppress the uprising. Security forces responded with live ammunition and rubber bullets, resulting in 72 fatalities and many others severely injured or tortured.

In the aftermath, five men and one woman from Sharpeville became widely recognized as the "Sharpeville Six," consisting of Mojalefa Sefatsa, Theresa Ramashamola, Reid Mokoena, Oupa Diniso, Duma Khumalo, and Francis Don Mokhesi. The events of 3 September 1984 are often regarded as the spark that ignited similar uprisings across South Africa, leading the government to declare a State of Emergency.

“As we honor the heroes and heroines who sacrificed their lives during the Vaal Uprisings and others in Gauteng, let us pledge to sustain their legacy by investing in heritage tourism this Heritage and Tourism Month. We encourage our youth to visit

these vital heritage sites so that we can impart knowledge about their history while commemorating and celebrating Gauteng's rich and diverse heritage," stated the Chairperson of the Committee.

**ISSUED BY GPL MEDIA SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON SPORTS, ARTS, CULTURE, AND RECREATION, HONOURABLE DISEBO TLEBERE.**

For interview requests with the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee, please contact Mr. Aubrey Dikola at 079 500. 9256 or email [adikola@gpl.gov.za](mailto:adikola@gpl.gov.za)

GAUTENG PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

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