

OFFICIAL MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR

Minister Ohm Collins Chabane

15 April 1960 – 15 March 2015



THURSDAY, 19 MARCH 2015

Obituary of Minister Ohm Collins Chabane

HERO OF HEROES A COMBATANT FOR LIFE, A PATRIOT TO THE END

A people's person, a gentle giant and a grounded leader who worked with a sense of quiet determination; it was the noble cause of striving for a better future for all the people of South Africa that served as a backdrop to the life of Minister Collins Chabane.

Early life

Ohm Collins Chabane was born on 15 April 1960, in the village of Xikundu, at Malamulele in Limpopo (then known as the Northern Transvaal). He is the seventh born of the late Mr Etienne and Mrs Elizabeth Chabane.

He started schooling at Shikundu Primary School from 1966 to 1972, where he obtained the then Standard Six. He proceeded to Shikundu Secondary School, where he passed the junior certificate in 1975.

In 1976 he proceeded to Lemana High School where he was expelled as he was regarded as the instigator of the school riots. He matriculated from Shingwedzi High School in 1978.

In December 1979 he was part of the Turfloop contingent at the formation of the Azanian Students Organisation.

Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK)

He joined the ANC underground at a very young age. In May 1980 he left the country to undergo military training with MK, where he used the nom de guerre, "Tom Chauke". Together with other MK members, he travelled to Angola via Swaziland and Mozambique. The group received special military training at Funda Camp in Angola. While in Angola, Collins Chabane was section commissar.

He infiltrated into South Africa in 1981 and completed numerous successful politico-military operations between 1981 and 1984. He was MK area commander for the Far North and North Eastern part of the then Northern Transvaal. Amongst others, he established MK's Bambatha Unit, which operated in the Tzaneen and Giyani-Malamulele area.

While underground in 1984, he was arrested by the apartheid security police and placed in solitary confinement for one year. Despite protracted and brutal interrogation at the hands of the evil racist police, he did not reveal any information to incriminate any of his comrades. He was the only accused in his terrorism trial. In 1985 he was sentenced in the Tzaneen Regional Circuit Court to nine years imprisonment on Robben Island.

Prison

On Robben Island, he served in the ANC's underground intelligence network and was the custodian of the shortwave radio that had been smuggled into prison to gather and disseminate news for prisoners. He was also responsible for acquiring and hiding political reading material, (*uMrabulo*), as well as for the ANC's political programmes in prison.

Education

He applied to the then University of Natal to study Medicine but was required to register for a Bachelor of Science degree first at the then University of the North (Turfloop) in 1979. A year later he abandoned his studies and went to exile.

During his time in prison he obtained a Diploma in Electrical Engineering from the then Technikon South Africa. He could not complete the Diploma in Aircraft Maintenance because he could not undergo practical training as a result of his incarceration.

Chabane also holds a Diploma in Leadership and Management from the University of Limpopo Graduate School of Management and a Diploma in Management from Esami Africa Business School in Arusha, Tanzania.

He served as Chancellor of Ramaano Mbulaheni Training College in the Vhembe District.

ANC

In 1990, after the unbanning of the ANC and his subsequent release, Chabane was appointed as the first office administrator for the then Northern Transvaal region. He established the ANC office and in December 1990 was elected as Secretary of the ANC in the region, with the major task of re-establishing ANC branches. At the time, the Chairperson of the ANC in the Northern Transvaal was Joel Netshitenzhe (Peter Mayibuye), who was later succeeded by Ngoako Ramatlhodi.

Chabane was re-elected as Provincial Secretary unopposed for six times.

During this period, he was involved in navigating, on behalf of the ANC, complex political processes with the homeland governments of Lebowa, Gazankulu and Venda. During his time as the ANC Provincial Secretary, he established strong ANC structures. The ANC in Limpopo won the 1994 elections by 92%.

He became a member of the ANC's National Executive Committee (NEC) in 1990 where he served until his untimely passing. Since the 52nd National Conference in 2007, had been a member of the ANC's National Working Committee and served in various NEC subcommittees such as international relations, legislature and governance, and the National Disciplinary Committee. He was an ANC deployee assisting with the resolution of the conflict in Sudan.

National Parliament role

In 1994 Chabane became a Member of Parliament and served in the following committees, the Constitutional and Management Committee, Joint Standing Committee on Defence and Intelligence, the Standing Committee of Finance, and Minerals and Energy Affairs. He was also member of the Senate. He also served as an ANC constitutional negotiator.

Provincial government role

In 1997, he was appointed Member of the Executive Council (MEC) in the Northern Province, Office of the Premier. In 1998, he was appointed MEC for Public Works and leader of government business in the legislature. Chabane established the province's Roads Agency, which was the first institution of its kind in South Africa.

He championed the training of unemployed people under the Gundolashu Construction Programme, which paved the way for the current Expanded Public Works Programme.

In 2005 he was appointed as MEC for Economic Development, Environment and Tourism. During his tenure, he embarked on an international awareness programme on economic opportunities in trade and investment in the tourism, mining, and agribusiness sectors with special emphasis on Doing Business with Southern African Development Community countries and Africa broadly, as well as with the international business community.

National government role

In 2009 he was appointed as the Minister in The Presidency responsible for Monitoring and Evaluation. In this position, he was responsible for overseeing the implementation of the initial 12 outcomes that address the main strategic priorities of our Fourth Democratic Government. He was also responsible for the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS).

Minister Chabane was chair of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on State Funerals. In this capacity he led the team that was responsible for the funeral arrangements for former President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, a task he effectively executed.

In 2014, he was appointed as the Minister for Public Service and Administration, a position which he occupied until his untimely death.

Music and culture

Comrade “Animal”, as he was fondly known, was involved in poetry and music. Whilst in Matola, Mozambique, he actively participated in the Roots Poetry group which lifted the morale of combatants.

On Robben Island, Chabane also developed a keen passion for music, learning music theory and how to play the harmonica. He played with few of the music bands on the island.

He became an accomplished musician, establishing the mbira group with his best mentor, Basil Makombe. His band was named The Movement. This band released four CDs; “Seke Vs Xikundu” and “Xai-Xai”, “Duma”, and “Mbira Instrumental”. He won several awards; amongst others, the SAMRO and Special Music Awards from SABC in 2010 and 2012 respectively. SAMRO also compiled the Best of Movement in his honour.

Chabane pioneered the establishment of the Marula Cultural Festival, which has become an annual event in Limpopo.

Charity

He founded the Xakani Foundation in 2009, which has been organising two golf days every year since 2010 to raise funds for the following charities:

- The Peace of Educational Mind, which supports children between the ages of 12 and 16 with bursaries and books, tutoring, computer skills and entrepreneurship development;
- The South African Institute for Depression and Anxiety, which raises awareness about depression and anxiety, the main causes of teenage suicide;
- The Khensani Special School, which is the only school in Phalaborwa for children with disabilities and special needs, and
- The Evangelical Presbyterian Church (Swiss Mission in South Africa).

In addition, the foundation funds an annual visit to the coast for 20 underprivileged children.

Family and community life

The love relationship between Collins and Mavis survived exile, prison, ANC activism and the rigours of government work. They married in 1995 and have two children.

As a member of the Chabane-Mhinga Royal family he played a unifying role. He had organised that the Royal family celebrates the Mhinga Day in April 2015.

Minister Chabane was a member of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (Swiss Mission in South Africa) from his childhood. He was a member of the Xikundu Parish and also active whilst in Pretoria. His contributions included, amongst others, sharing knowledge on administration and fundraising management for the church. He joined the Mens' Guild in 2006. Despite his busy schedule, he regularly attended its conferences and other events.

Minister Chabane is survived by his wife Mavis Nkhensani Chabane and two children, his son Matimba and daughter Tsakani, his mother Elizabeth and 10 siblings – Richard; Patrick; Cecelia; Donald; Tintswalo; Mhloti; Ellah; Nkhensani; Percy and Selby. From his father's second wife Johanna, he is survived by 11 siblings – Brighton; Dennis; Mkatoko; Jackie; Selina; Davies; Makhanani; Vonani; Hlulani; Constance and Etienne.

Rest in Peace Ohm Collins Chabane

Rest in peace Maluleke

*Famba kahle Maluleke, Chavani wa Mhinga, Nkuri, Dlamani, Ximambani,
Maxakadzi, Malenga, Gunyule, Xixangaxile, Mun'wanati, Mucopi, xinyelababeni,
Matoto ya tihuku.*

*Before I die,
It has been my wish,
And still is my wish,
That whatever happens
Between me and Africa,
It shall not be through cowardice...
Or should I say,
Betrayal of my fatherland.*

– Ingoapele Madingoana

Programme

OFFICIAL MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR MINISTER OHM COLLINS CHABANE, MP

Date: Thursday, 19 March 2015

Time: 12:00 – 14:00

Venue: Tshwane Events Centre, Hall J

Programme Director: Minister Edna Molewa

- 12:00 National Anthem
- 12:05 Opening Prayer by Rev TJ Mayayise
- 12:10 Welcome and Opening remarks
- 12:15 Musical item: Choir
- 12:20 Tribute by representative of COSATU
- 12:25 Tribute by representative of the SACP
- 12:30 Musical item: Choir
- 12:35 Tribute by friend: Mr Lesetja Kganyago
- 12:40 Tribute by representative of the ANC: Ms Ayanda Dlodlo
- 12:50 Musical item: Mr Don Laka
- 12:55 Tribute by representative of Parliament: Mr Lechesa Tsenoli
- 13:00 Tribute by representative of the family: Mr Matimba Chabane
- 13:10 Musical item: Mr Laka
- 13:10 Tribute by Dean of the Diplomatic Corps: HE Mr BL M'Poko
- 13:15 Musical item: Choir
- 13:20 Introduction of the Deputy President by Premier David Makhura
- 13:25 Keynote Address by Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa
- 13:50 Musical item: Choir
- 13:55 Closure and announcements by Programme Director
- 14:00 Musical item: Choir

National Anthem

Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika
Maluphakanyisw' uphondo lwayo,
Yizwa imithandazo yethu,
Nkosi sikelela, thina lusapho lwayo.

Morena boloka setjhaba sa heso,
O fedise dintwa le matshwenyeho,
O se boloke,
O se boloke setjhaba sa heso,
Setjhaba sa South Afrika - South Afrika.

Uit die blou van onse hemel,
Uit die diepte van ons see,
Oor ons ewige gebergtes,
Waar die kranse antwoord gee,
Sounds the call to come together,
And united we shall stand,
Let us live and strive for freedom,
In South Africa our land.

Together we move South Africa forward



REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA