

**REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR NOMAINDIYA MFEKETO ON
THE OCCASION OF FREEDOM CELEBRATION IN THE
YEAR OF CHARLOTTE MAXEKE CELEBRATING THE TIES
THAT BINDS US. DAY, 27 APRIL 2021**

Ms. Akunna Cook, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State

Professor Jean Bailey, Director America's Voices Against
Apartheid

Mr. M'dunwazi Baloyi, U.S. Country Head Brand South Africa

The Anti-Apartheid Activists

Fellow South Africans

Distinguish guest, Ladies and Gentleman, I welcome you all gathered here in Washington and joining us virtually. Thank you all for gracing our National Freedom Day Celebration.

The bright spring sun shines above the District of Colombia as we celebrate South Africa's Freedom day and the ties that binds the people of South Africa and the United States.

It is my singular honour to address you on the year of Charlotte Maxeke which marks twenty seven years of our freedom.

Let me hasten to express my sincere gratitude to the American Voices against Apartheid for co-hosting the celebration of this important day on our national calendar and our shared past, led by Dr Bailey – Thank you Dr. Bailey.

Thirty Seven Years ago, the US congress unanimously passed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 which imposed sanctions against apartheid South Africa and that became a catalyst towards the end of Apartheid.

We remain indebted to the America Voices which engaged with us on a common titanic struggle to defeat apartheid but particularly Congressman Ron Dellums who spent 14 years campaigning against apartheid and eventually wrote the 1986 legislation that mandated trade embargoes and divestment by American companies and citizens of holdings in South Africa.

Ladies and Gentleman

We are assembled here to celebrate 150 years of our beloved Charlotte Maxeke. It is befitting that we celebrate this extraordinary pioneer, diplomat, struggle icon, human rights campaigner and above all the founding President of the Bantu Women's League.

It was Charlotte Maxeke's clarity of vision that encouraged her to lead the women's march against pass laws in 1913 in Bloemfontein. As we celebrate her and other selfless women, we should do so mindful of the struggles that black women in South Africa and the US continues to endure.

Ladies and Gentleman

Today we are reminded about the difficulties endured by our people during the struggle for liberation and we say their struggle was not in vain. Lives that were cut short and the blood that was painfully shed, families that were abruptly separated, and goodbyes that were never said – It was not in vain! We will never forget the price of our freedom.

We will continue to pay tribute to our heroes and heroin who fought tirelessly for our liberation. We shall continue to admire and appreciate their determination, bravery and courage.

27 April 1994 remains our source of and joy, particularly because over 22 million South Africans of all races casted their votes for the first time which ushered in a new beginning in our shores.

Ladies and Gentleman

We are mindful that we did not achieve the great victory of our democracy on our own. Had it not been for the solidarity and friendship extended to us during our struggle for liberation, we would not be here.

We will forever treasure the unwavering support we received from the international community during that dark chapter of our history.

Today we recognise the extra ordinary efforts undertaken by ordinary Americans of diverse back ground in dismantling colonialism, segregation and white minority rule.

Ladies and Gentleman

I am pleased to announce that over the 27 years of our freedom our successive Heads of State have recognised and warded National orders to over 14 American citizens for their contribution towards our freedom and we will continue to do so.

Today, I am privileged to announce that we have identified categories of people who have intersected between Anti-Apartheid struggle and the Civil Rights Movement as follow:

- The Congressional Black Caucus,
- The Labour Movement,
- The Legal Community,

- Various Arts & Culture institutions,
- Free South Africa Movement, and
- Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

The South African Government has and will continue to honour Anti-Apartheid activists in recognition of their contribution towards our liberation. Nominations for national orders are open to the public and bestowing of national orders is a delegated authority of the President.

I am pleased to inform you that we are joined in our midst by some of the surviving Anti-Apartheid Activists and we look forward to hear their respective experiences.

We are also joined by Dr Pinkard from Charlotte Maxeke's alma mater, Wilberforce University, who will share with us the extraordinary journey that Charlotte Maxeke travelled.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bilateral Relations between South Africa and the United States continues to strengthen and we look forward to robust engagements aimed at making the world a better place for humanity.

We are convinced that our cooperation in the fields of trade, investment, tourism, technology, education and health cooperation will remain the backbone of our partnerships.

We will continue working together to create nations that have equal opportunities across all areas of society.

Together we can build a better tomorrow!

I thank you

