

Speech notes by KZN ANC Deputy Chairperson Cde Willies Mchunu on the occasion of the commemoration lecture of Cde Grishen Bujram at Dundee on the 8th of July 2012:

Programme Director;

The Bujram family;

Comrades and friends;

Fellow Citizens;

Firstly, let me take this opportunity to thank the Bujram family for allowing us as the ANC in the Inkosi Bhambatha Region and the province as a whole to organize this lecture in memory of our comrade, brother, friend and leader, Grishen Bujram who passed on six years ago.

As we come to this commemoration knowing that despite our efforts as the ANC in the province of KwaZulu-Natal to put an end to the killing of our members, we still experience the continued alleged assassination of our leaders in a manner similar to that of Comrade Grishen.

I would therefore like to request that perhaps even before I go any further with today's memorial lecture, we observe a minute of silence to pay tribute to our comrade Wandile Mkhize who was assassinated last week outside his house on the South Coast.

Comrades, I am pleased that we have come together on this special day to celebrate the service to humanity of a man who left a permanent mark in our lives and our history of struggle for freedom, Comrade Grishen.

As this Region, you owe it to him to celebrate the life of an iconic champion of freedom who was inspired to join the struggle against apartheid by his conviction that our liberation is in our hands.

Comrade Grishen`s immeasurable contribution to the liberation of South Africa ensured that the ANC earned respect from the so-called minority groups. Before the unbanning of the ANC, Comrade Krishen became an active member of the United Democratic Front (UDF).

After the unbanning of the ANC in 1990, he joined the movement and ensured that the ANC becomes the broad church that accommodates everybody, including minority groups, especially in the Inkosi Bhambatha Region.

He played a role in the local leadership of COSATU, being the organizer of NEHAWU`s Magwaza-Maphalala Region.

As Comrades, we remember Grishen`s strength and his commitment to the socio-economic liberation struggle. His contribution places a great burden on us precisely because of the enormity of the challenge he sought to tackle, that is, the ability to propagate for the reconstruction and the renewal in the quality of race relations, human rights and democracy for all.

The ANC salutes the sacrifices made by Grishen Bujram and his family. We are fully aware of what Comrade Grishen and his family endured in order for us to enjoy democracy and freedom. Without sacrifices made by Grishen`s family, we would not have been where we are today.

As we celebrate the life of the Comrade, it is now up to us to think beyond our individual interests and realize that our actions as a collective shape and define the type of society we desire to be.

We know how this comrade worked as the ANC Councilor towards a corruption free society.

Comrades, I take this opportunity to call upon our youth to prepare themselves to be leaders of our country. How you behave yourselves as future leaders will determine how you reach your goal of leading a nation whose quality of life has been degraded by centuries of colonial and apartheid neglect and brutality. Are we going to make matters worse, or are we going to lead our people out of a life of violence, fear, inequality, poverty, crime, deprivation and unemployment?

The ANC is regarded as an institution with regional structures that have a potential to engage and develop politically. But I must also warn you that as you develop politically, you must refer to history. You must learn from the good aspects of our history and shy away from the bad things about our history because our choices will determine how we shape our contemporary history. Each word and action helps to make history that our future generations will be proud of or not proud of.

Comrades, this event takes place at a critical time in the evolution of our country. It comes when the oldest liberation movement on the African continent, is celebrating a rare milestone, that is, its centenary. As we mark this landmark occasion, freedom-loving people from all corners of the globe acknowledge that a large part of the ANC's rich heritage has its roots in KwaZulu-Natal in the form of its founding fathers like the first president of the African National Congress, John Langalibalele Dube and Pixley ka Seme.

In this regard, we are re-affirming our commitment to elevate our heritage treasures to get the recognition and honour they deserve. We must do our best to live up to the lofty ideals of peaceful co-existence, prosperity, peace, political and religious tolerance and celebrate our unity in diversity.

But, more importantly, we must collectively ensure that the history of all our people, including the Indian community, is fused into one tapestry that represents the richness of our diversity.

Coincidentally, this month we celebrate the life of a world icon Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, uMadiba. As we appreciate the history of leaders like Madiba and Grishen who stood against oppression and emerged as victors, we feel a great responsibility.

There is no amount of suffering, inequality, poverty and unemployment that cannot be tackled if we understand why Madiba and Grishen fought against injustice.

I therefore take this opportunity to urge all of you here that when we celebrate the historic day of Madiba on the 18th of July, please say thanks to Madiba for his leadership role as ANC president in facilitating the emergence of a democratic dispensation that we all cherish today. This we do by promoting community work, reaching out to the needy, as well as doing something constructive and useful, something that uplifts the disadvantaged, the poor, the sick and the destitute.

Do that in memory of comrade Grishen and all other fallen heroes and heroines who would have been part of this charitable work.

Once again, to the leadership of the Region and all who made this service possible, we say this was essential and we thank you for organizing this memorial lecture in honor of our fallen heroes like Comrade Grishen.

It is all about renewal and rejuvenation of our values as an organization in order to sharpen ourselves as we are reminded of what we stand for and strive to live up to our cherished ideals.

Amandla!

I thank you.