

Obituary

JOSEPH
MUZI KHEHLA
NKOSI

Comrade Joseph “Joe” Muzi Khehla Nkosi was born and raised in Madadeni Township outside Newcastle, KwaZulu-Natal. His political consciousness took shape early, first as a student at Hlalanathi High School. After five difficult years searching for work, he enrolled for a correspondence degree in Administration at the University of South Africa, a testament to his determination to rise above circumstance. On completing his studies, he joined Kilbarchan Mine and later transferred to Optimum Colliery in Middelburg in 1986.

It was on the mines that Comrade Nkosi’s lifelong commitment to workers’ rights found its voice. He rose through the ranks of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), serving as a Shaft Steward, National Chairperson of the NUM Education Committee and a member of the NUM National Executive Committee. He played a leading role as Activities Coordinator during the historic 1987 miners’ strike, helping to shape a generation of worker leadership.

Beyond the mines, Comrade Nkosi was active in the United Democratic Front and COSATU structures. He served as Chairperson of the COSATU Middelburg Local and later as Vice Chairperson and Chairperson of the COSATU Highveld Region. Following the unbanning of political organisations in 1990, he threw his energy into the African National Congress and helped establish an SACP branch at Pullenshope, going on to serve as Chairperson of the SACP in Mpumalanga from 1992 to 1996.

His commitment to COSATU remained unwavering.

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Following the resignation of his predecessor, the COSATU Central Executive Committee unanimously elected Comrade Nkosi as Acting 1st Deputy President, a recognition of the trust and respect he had earned across the federation.

In later years, his service to the people took him beyond South Africa’s borders. In April 2018 he presented his letters of credence to Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and served as South Africa’s Ambassador to Venezuela until 30 March 2022, when he was reassigned to Chad. Whether in the trade union hall or the diplomatic chamber, he carried the same values: the dignity of working people, solidarity among nations and service before self.

Throughout his life, Comrade Joseph remained devoted to the struggle for workers’ rights, democracy, social justice and international solidarity. His journey from the mines to senior leadership in the trade union movement, the democratic movement and diplomatic service reflected a life dedicated to serving the people.

His passing closes a significant chapter, but it does not erase the impact of the life he lived. To his family, he was far more than a comrade, leader or diplomat. He was a loved one whose presence, wisdom, laughter and memories can never be captured fully by titles or achievements. To his comrades, colleagues and the many people whose lives intersected with his, he leaves behind the example of a man who dedicated himself to a cause greater than himself.

May his revolutionary contribution never be forgotten. He is survived by his wife, children, grandchildren and his siblings.

Lala Ngoxolo, Comrade Joe. Hamba Kahle, Mkhonto.

A SERVICE HONOURING
THE LIFE & LEGACY OF

Joe

MUZI KHEHLA NKOSI

25 MARCH 1961 - 29 AUGUST 2026




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**COMRADE JOSEPH
MUZI KHEHLA NKOSI**

SESSION ONE

Program Director: Mr Khaya Nxumalo

1. Opening By Prayer:
Ms N. Shabalala
2. Family From:
Nkosi Mduduzi
Zwane Jabu
Brother
3. Children: One of the Kids
4. Niece: Ms N. Mbatha
5. Grandchild: Nonto and Mthendeni
6. Neighbour: Mr Masango
7. Friend:



SESSION TWO

Program Director: Jabu Mkhwanazi

1. Branch Ward:
Mr S. Sangweni
2. RTT (AMC):
Duduzile Sbiya
3. Chief Director for Africa Bilateral Branch:
Nyameko Goso
4. Deputy President & COSATU:
Duncan Luvuno
5. Num Treasure General:
Helen Diatile
6. ANC Province:
Cde Kwazi Mshengu
Zwelinzima Vavi (Terms Colleague)
7. Uelogy: Nontobeko Mgadla
8. Word of God:
Fr M. Makhaya

