

Statement by President Cyril Ramaphosa on the passing of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela

2 April 2018

It is with a profound sense of loss and deep sadness that we have learnt of the passing away of Mam' Winnie Madikizela-Mandela.

Even at the darkest moments of our struggle for liberation, Mam' Winnie was an abiding symbol of the desire of our people to be free.

In the midst of repression, she was a voice of defiance and resistance.

In the face of exploitation, she was a champion of justice and equality.

Throughout her life she made an everlasting contribution to the struggle through sacrifice and her unyielding determination. Her dedication to the plight of her people gained her the love and the respect of the nation.

For many years, she bore the brunt of the senseless brutality of the apartheid state with stoicism and fortitude. Despite the hardships she faced, she never doubted that the struggle for freedom and democracy would succeed.

She remained throughout her life a tireless advocate for the dispossessed and the marginalised. She was a voice for the voiceless.

In the coming days, as we mourn the passing of this heroine of our struggle, let us reflect on her rich, remarkable and meaningful life.

Let us draw inspiration from the struggles that she fought and the dream of a better society to which she dedicated her life.

Today we have lost a mother, a grandmother, a friend, a comrade, a leader and an icon.

As South Africans we collectively pass our condolences to the Madikizela and Mandela families. Your loss is our loss as well.

May her soul rest in peace.

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