



ANCYL **27**TH
NATIONAL
CONGRESS

ANC YOUTH
LEAGUE NATIONAL
CONGRESS
POLITICAL REPORT

Chairperson of the Session

African National Congress President,

COSATU, SACP, SANCO leadership present today

PYA Components: SASCO, COSAS, COSATU Young Workers and the YCL

The ANC Women's League and Veterans League

The MKLWV, Commissars and Commanders of Umkhonto WeSizwe

The ANC delegation to the National General Council of the ANC Youth League

Representatives of business in South Africa

Religious leaders

International Guests from the youth wings of former liberation movements

Leadership of the World Federation of Democratic Youth and International Union of Socialist Youth

Delegates here present

In 1944, young, African people converged from all parts of South Africa, coming from the countryside, towns, villages, and cities. They were the working youth, unemployed, students, and intellectuals, united to reclaim their birth right. Fearless African youth converged on that fateful day to renounce imperialism and reassert their humanity for the struggle of African people. They came to perform a great and radical act. To reaffirm the ANC Youth League's historical mission. This aligns with Frantz Fanon's assertion that every generation, out of its relative obscurity, must discover its mission, fulfill it or betray it. When we are comfortable with the status quo, nothing transforms. Marxism also teaches us, through laws of dialectics and historical materialism, that change is the only constant variable of nature.

The 26th National Congress

The National Congress of the ANC Youth League is in session. It is in session to discuss, review, revise and re-affirm the many organisational, political and ideological resolutions and positions we took in the ANC Youth League's 26th National Congress in 2023. The ANC Youth League's National Congress functions as the organisation's foremost political school, as its deliberations provide delegates with valuable insights into the League's history, character, and strategic vision, fostering their long-term political growth. The National Congress convenes immediately after Women's Month, a period in which we honour the historic and ongoing contribution of women to the liberation of our country. Their courage and sacrifices against colonialism and apartheid continue to inspire our struggle for the full emancipation of the historically oppressed masses.

A New Political Landscape

This National Congress and second National General Council takes place under the new and difficult political conditions. It is the second National Congress of the ANC Youth League held at a time where the ANC no longer commands full political authority, following the decline in electoral support from 57% to 40%. This outcome is not merely a statistic; it represents a profound political shift in our society. As the Youth League, we bear the responsibility to confront these realities, to analyse the current balance of forces, and to chart a bold course that will restore confidence in our movement and ensure the continued leadership of the ANC in the struggle for social transformation.

Ours is a generation called to lead at a time when the influence of the ANC is in decline. We are a generation tasked with leadership at a time when it is not all rosy. Let me reiterate, the ANC is in decline — this is not a conjecture, but the objective reality our generation must confront. The voters have communicated their dissatisfaction with the slow pace of transformation to a prosperous, democratic, non-sexist, and non-racial society which is better for all as encapsulated by the NDR.



If we are not vigilant and intentional, our proud liberation movement will be liquidated into historical oblivion by counter-revolutionary forces. As the President of the ANC Youth League, I must be frank: we need a National Executive Committee that has revolutionary consciousness. We must have the political clarity to distinguish between a friend and a foe, between a genuine revolutionary and an opportunist who merely clings to the ANC for personal gain.

The Government of National Unity has unmasked many. It has revealed who is truly rooted in revolutionary principles and who is here only for the spoils of the office. The MKP and EFF alliance has pushed us into a new and hostile terrain, while the DA parades its so-called “strategic partnership” as a tool to weaken our movement from within.

This is the political reality before us. The Youth League must rise to the challenge, not as passive observers but as the militant vanguard jealously safeguarding the ANC’s historic mission of liberation and transformation. I dare say, dear comrades, this is our moment! The ANC’s decline is not just a crisis; it is also an opportunity for the Youth League to reclaim the revolution and guide it towards its historical mission as suggested by the Martinique born philosopher and psychiatrist Frantz Fanon. Society may have lost confidence in our leadership, but that does not mean the struggle must cease. The ANC has reached a stage of quantitative decrease; we must shift to an era of qualitative increase. As historical materialism teaches us: change is the only constant. Comrades, it is our time to change the ANC.

The Path to Revolutionary Consciousness

But this will only happen if we truly understand who we are. We must know ourselves as ANCYL leaders and members.

Let me be clear: we will never achieve revolutionary consciousness without political education. You can be an engineer, a doctor, a nurse, or a business-person, but if you do not invest in your political development, you will never be a true revolutionary. You will be no different from professionals serving in neoliberal structures. You will remain part of the system, not part of the revolution. In the process of redefining ourselves to save the liberation movement, we borrow from chairman, Mao Tse-Tung’s teachings, an ideological lodestar in global proletarian revolution who gave us six fundamentals to define who we are:

- Our words and actions must unite, not divide, the people.
- They must benefit, not harm, socialist transformation.
- They must consolidate, not weaken, the people’s democratic dictatorship.
- They must strengthen, not undermine, democratic centralism.
- They must uphold, not discard, the leadership of the Party.
- They must promote, not harm, international socialist unity and peace.

Speaking about contradictions without political education and revolutionary consciousness is impossible. You may carry the title of being a professional but without grounding yourself in political education, you will never rise beyond the role in which you serve. At best, you will be a functionary in defence of neoliberalism and counter-revolution. You will become an accessory to the system, not a soldier of the revolution. To be a true revolutionary, comrades; requires more than skill or credentials, it demands political clarity, ideological discipline, and an unshakable commitment to transformation. Young professionals are increasingly being phased out of the professional space.



The generation that drove Black Broad-Based Economic Empowerment in the late 1990s and early 2000s fought hard to end the national oppression and open the door of transformation for the historically oppressed, but today, the landscape is no longer supportive of Black talent.

The reality speaks for itself: more than 64% of senior management positions remain occupied by whites, while only 36% are held by the Black majority. This is not transformation; it is stagnation.

The Global Context

As the National Congress sits, the global economic order is being reshaped by America's divergent trade strategies. On one hand, a sweeping new tariff regime imposed on the 7th of August has targeted over 90 economies, including key allies like the European Union, Japan, and regional partners such as Lesotho, Zimbabwe, and Brazil. On the other hand, the United States has opted for strategic caution in its dealings with the People's Republic of China. By extending negotiations and suspending further tariffs until November 2025. Washington has implicitly acknowledged China's formidable and expanding influence on the global stage. This is not a small concession, it is a signal that the balance of power is shifting; that even the United States cannot afford to move recklessly against Beijing.

As President Vladimir Putin of Russia and President Xi Jinping of China have openly declared, the world is undergoing a transformation "unlike anything seen in the past 100 years." They have positioned themselves, not as passive actors, but as architects of this change, advancing an ideological and political alternative to the hegemony of Western liberal capitalism.

4 For South Africa, the question is urgent: what is our role in this new order? As the most industrialised economy on the African continent, and as a member of BRICS, we cannot afford to remain bystanders. Our foreign policy must evolve into a grand strategy, one that recognises where China, Russia, and even North Korea are steering the world; consequently positioning us to contribute actively to that ideological and political realignment. The current rearrangement of global trade underscores this point. While the United States has increased tariffs on partners such as Brazil and may soon extend them to India, it has been forced into compromise with China.

Even within Africa and its immediate neighbours, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, and beyond, new trade agreements signal that the global South is no longer a mere appendage of Western economies.

The extension of negotiations between USA and China is therefore more than a political matter of tariffs, it is evidence of the People's Republic of China's rising force. For South Africa, this moment cannot be squandered. It is an opening to reassert our sovereignty, to shape our alliances, and to drive forward a vision of a multipolar world where the interests of the oppressed and formerly colonised are no longer subordinated to the dictates of imperial powers. South Africa stands at historic crossroads. We are locked in a battle to redefine our foreign policy in the face of imperialist aggression and Western hypocrisy. The forces of imperialism openly threaten to sanction our leaders, seeking to bend the ANC to their dictates, while the reactionary right wing inside our own country dreams of hijacking our foreign policy to serve white monopoly interests. We must not forget that Trump and his ilk have already manufactured lies of a so-called "genocide" of white farmers in South Africa, an insult to the lived reality of our people who still suffer the material legacies of land dispossession, poverty, and apartheid's unfinished business.



Africa's Role in the New World Order

This National Congress must rise to the occasion and set the right tone for global politics. The role of the youth cannot be an afterthought; it must be the spearhead. We cannot be spectators of history; we ought to be the makers of it. The balance of global power is shifting, as it did during the Cold War, but this time Africa must refuse to be a pawn on the chessboard of foreign empires. From 1977 to 1981, under the Carter Administration, the ideological fault lines of the world were drawn. Today, we face the same contradictions, but Africa is no longer weak and silenced in the shadow of colonialism. Africa is rising! With a collective GDP of \$2.2 trillion, with over a billion people whose numbers will swell by 2035, and with an emerging middle class of 40 million, our continent is not a peripheral force, it is the decisive terrain upon which the future of global politics will be written.

The question is not whether Africa will be involved, but whether we will lead with revolutionary clarity or allow ourselves to be shackled once more to imperialist designs. This National Congress must proclaim boldly: the youth of South Africa will not bow to the West, we will not accept sanctions, we will not accept lies. We stand with the Global South, with BRICS, with all those who seek a world beyond the stranglehold of imperialism.

The Legacy of the ANC Youth League

I stand here as the child of the movement, with an appreciation of the journey the ANC has travelled post-1994 democratic dispensation and , conscious of the achievements we have made, and unwavering in our commitment to the revolutionary path. We carry forward the uncompromising spirit of Anton Lembede, A.P. Mda, Mxolisi Majombozi, Godfrey Pitjje, Robert Resha, Patrick Moaloa, and the other giants who founded the ANC Youth League. Had they lived longer, they would have stood at the very forefront of our liberation struggle, striking against the chains of racial oppression with even greater force.

History is clear: it took the ANC Youth League less than five years to shake the African National Congress from its slumber and radicalise it into a mass fighting force for freedom. In those formative years in the 1940s, the Youth League compelled the ANC to abandon timid appeals and instead embrace a bold, radical, and confrontational programme. From that moment, the ANC was no longer merely a political organisation, it became a weapon in the hands of the oppressed majority, a vehicle for mass mobilisation against the twin evils of racial segregation and economic exploitation.

The turning point came with the 1949 ANC Conference, where the Youth League's influence was undeniable. A young and relatively inexperienced leadership was elected: James Moroka, new to the ANC, as President, and Walter Sisulu, just 37 years old, as Secretary-General. This was not a compromise, it was a revolutionary necessity.

The old guard, weighed down by caution and hesitation, could not adapt to the bold and militant strategies demanded by the struggle. The Youth League forced the change, ensuring that the movement would march forward with revolutionary clarity.

The 1949 Programme of Action ignited the Defiance Campaign, one of the most militant and successful mass struggles in the history of the ANC. As E.S. Reddy observed, this campaign unleashed a nationwide surge for freedom, swelling the ANC's ranks from a mere 7,000 members to over 100,000 members. For the first time, the ANC was not just an organisation of elites but a true national movement of the people. The Defiance Campaign's militancy inspired the formation of the Coloured People's Congress and the Congress of Democrats, laying the foundation for the great Congress Alliance, a united front of the oppressed that would confront the apartheid regime with multiracial, mass-based resistance.



Yet, today, comrades, we face a sobering reality. The ANC's membership is in decline, not only in numbers but in revolutionary quality. The great reservoir of militant cadres who once carried the ANC forward is drying up. Too often, membership has been reduced to a statistic, a headcount to swell conference halls, while the deeper task of political education and ideological formation has been neglected.

If we are to carry the torch of the Defiance Campaign into the 21st century, we must rekindle the spirit of mass militancy. The modern working class, shaped in the crucible of urbanisation and industrialisation, demands an ANC that is not just quantitatively strong but qualitatively revolutionary. Numbers alone will not save us; only politically conscious, disciplined, and militant cadres can. The ANC of the future must be rebuilt as a movement of both quantity and quality, for the two are inseparable in revolutionary politics. Mass membership must not be reduced to a bureaucratic register of names; it must serve as the living school of political education and revolutionary consciousness. High membership alone is not enough to regain the electoral support for our ANC, so long as we lack quality membership with ideological clarity and discipline.

Economic Freedom for Social Change, Now Not Later!

During the 1st National Executive Committee meeting of the 26th Congress of our ANCYL, we undertook a rigorous assessment of the South African social formation. Our analysis confirms what many already feel; the current crisis in society demands a decisive and revolutionary response from the movement. We further observed that the ANC, in its present form, is not facing any meaningful internal ideological or organisational contestation ahead of the 2027 National Conference. This absence of internal dynamism should not be mistaken for unity or strength. It reflects stagnation, a dangerous complacency in the face of deepening social, economic, and political contradictions.

The ANC is under siege. This siege is not only from external forces, but more critically, from within, by elements aligned with counterrevolutionary agendas. These internal actors weaken the movement, compromise its mission, and threaten to fracture it once again. The possibility of another breakaway is real.

To avoid repeating the mistakes of the past, the ANC must reject personality cults, transactional politics, and factionalism. The next generation of leadership must emerge from genuine consensus - grounded in revolutionary principle, ideological clarity, and organisational discipline. While the ANC has made undeniable strides in dismantling national oppression and transforming the political apparatus of the state, the historic task of economic liberation remains unfulfilled. The central contradiction in post-apartheid South Africa is economic inequality. Addressing it demands leadership that is ideologically rooted, politically mature, and committed to the full realisation of the Freedom Charter.

We must be honest, some current ANC leaders lack the ideological depth and moral integrity required for this new phase of struggle. Even worse, some have normalised corruption, treating it as a feature, not a threat, to governance. This undermines the moral authority of the movement and distances the ANC from the masses it was formed to serve. For too long, we have assumed that everyone within the ANC shares its core values. This assumption is both dangerous and naive. It has allowed opportunists, careerists, and counterrevolutionaries to operate within our ranks, contributing directly to the erosion of public trust. As the ANCYL, we have consistently raised warnings, including ahead of the recent national elections, that the persistence of this status quo would have devastating consequences. Our warnings were ignored. The election results confirmed our worst fears.



Despite recent setbacks and ongoing turbulence within the broader liberation movement, our commitment is unshaken. This is not the time for complacency, it is the time for urgent introspection, ideological renewal, and the election of a leadership collective that embodies the ANC's founding mission; to serve the people and to advance the struggle for economic liberation. The emergence of counter-revolutionary formations like the so-called Umkhonto Wesizwe Party represents a cynical and desperate bid for relevance by expelled elements who no longer find legitimacy within the ranks of the ANC.

These individuals have not only stolen our name and symbols but now attempt to exploit ethnic nationalism and tribal identity to divide the people. This is political theft masquerading as revolution. These are the very same actors who presided over state capture, who gutted public institutions, and who now want to rewrite history to cleanse their hands. But the people know. South Africans will not forget who betrayed them at the hour of need and who stood firm in defense of democratic values. The ANC has always had the capacity for self-correction, and the Youth League will be its sharpest instrument in that process. We will not retreat from our responsibility. We will speak truth to power, even when power wears familiar colours. We will fight to ensure that "economic freedom" is not reduced to a hollow phrase but becomes the lived reality of millions. We owe this to the poor, the working class, and to the generation yet to come.

A Call to Action

In 1986, a provisional committee to revive organised youth activism within the Congress movement was formed to prepare for a Congress of what later became the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO). The committee members included Deacon Mathe, Aleck Nchabeleng, Stanza Bopape, Peter Mokaba, Obed Bapela, Dan Montsintsi, David Abrahamse, Rose Sonto, Frans Mohlala and Cassel Mathale. SAYCO was launched secretly in 1987 and Peter Mokaba was elected President and Rapulane Molekane elected as Secretary General. SAY CO became part of the UDF forces that mobilised all South Africans against apartheid repression. With the unbanning of political parties in 1990, both UDF and SAYCO were disbanded to give way to the ANC and its Youth League.

This political report, delivered at a significant moment for the ANC Youth League, serves as a powerful call to action. It is a reminder of the Youth League's historic role as the vanguard of the revolution, and a challenge to the current generation of leaders to rise to the occasion and lead the ANC into a new era of qualitative and quantitative growth. The political report emphasizes the importance of political education, revolutionary consciousness, and a clear understanding of the global and domestic political landscape. It is a document that is both a reflection of the challenges facing the ANC and a testament to the enduring power of its revolutionary ideals.

The provinces submitted consolidated demands of the ANC Youth League reflecting the urgent priorities identified by our provincial structures and the national leadership. These demands are a direct response to the pressing socio-economic challenges facing the youth of South Africa, including unemployment, inequality, and inadequate access to essential services.

GAUTENG

The leadership of ANCYL Gauteng is raising the issue of a 24-hour economy to strengthen the economic growth of the country. They are proposing that we have sectors of the economy that operate 24 hours, such as retail industries, entertainment, digital services, and logistics. The economy should offer absorption of young people and create new economic opportunities for the youth. The call for building a University of Ekurhuleni is paramount in advancing skills development in the region and the country.



EASTERN CAPE

There is a need for an infrastructure revitalization program in the province of Eastern Cape. The infrastructure that needs to be revitalized is in water and sanitation, energy, and roads. We need this infrastructure to unlock the economic potential of this province.

KWAZULU-NATAL

The access and redistribution of land for rural and semi-urban communities. Access and participation for youth, women, and people with disabilities in the ocean economy, especially in Durban Port and Richards Bay. Adequately skill and train the youth on water purification technologies.

MPUMALANGA

The leadership of Mpumalanga asserts that “The climate crisis is not a natural disaster. It is the direct product of centuries of capitalist development, which has plundered the earth’s resources for profit. The industrial revolutions of Europe and North America were fuelled by coal, oil, and gas, extracted without limit and consumed without concern for consequence. The ecological destruction we face today is not the responsibility of underdeveloped nations but of the imperialist core.” The leadership highlights that in order not to plunder the province into an economic catastrophe by shutting down all power stations in the province, the country should introduce Carbon Capture, Storage, and Utilization technologies (CCSU). This is the resolution from the 26th National Congress as the cornerstone of sustainable development in the country.

NORTHERN CAPE

- That the mines share their Social and Labour Plans (SLPs) and prioritize funding CSI projects that respond to the youth.
- Expand and fund the establishment of a business park at Upington International Airport; this will create opportunities for traveling, aviation-related jobs, and stimulate regional integration.
- Ensure that there is greater accountability and harmony on performance, and monitoring of the IPPs to communities are protected and skills are transferred.

LIMPOPO

The leadership of Limpopo asserts that the province should repurpose the abandoned industries as the anchor facilities for mineral beneficiation centers. We need to economically leverage Special Economic Zones in Musina-Makhado and Fetakgomo-Tubatse to create jobs. There is a need to develop a strong Youth Sports Development Strategy for the townships and rural youth. The province wants to elevate the young people in the creative sector that are pioneering Lekompo music genre. They need to be supported and nurtured.

WESTERN CAPE

The leadership of ANCYL Western Cape is highlighting the challenges of crime and gangsters in Cape Flats such as Nyanga, Gugulethu, Khayelitsha, and Delft. We are requiring strong visibility of law enforcement.

NORTH WEST

- Reinvest in the refurbishment and building of the airports, Kgoshi Dick Montsiwa Airport and Pilanesburg Airport.
- Recognize and support the integration of small miners in the entire value chain of the mining industry, especially in platinum and gold.
- That the Mmabana Theatre be properly capacitated and named after Presley Chweneyagae.



FREE STATE

- Inclusion of local content in the Macufe festival to mainstream and boost local economic development.
- That persons responsible for the collapse of municipalities must get severe punishments.
- That Water and Sanitation invest in infrastructure to eradicate pit toilets and access to water across the province.

NATIONAL DEMANDS

EDUCATION & SKILLS

- Free, quality, decolonized higher education fully funded by the state.
- Cancellation/clearing of historic student debt so graduates can access qualifications.
- No blacklisting of students with debt at credit bureaus.
- Expansion of NSFAS funding, including for postgraduate studies.
- Introduction of online learning as an accessible option, with government support (libraries, WIFI, infrastructure).
- Strengthening of TVET colleges and ensuring their graduates are employable.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT & ECONOMY

- Mass creation of jobs for youth, especially in manufacturing, mining, and agriculture.
- Halting de-industrialization and protecting local industries.
- State-led beneficiation of mineral resources.
- Introduction of export quotas to prioritize local beneficiation, protect domestic supply chains, and create jobs.
- Radical economic transformation to include youth-owned enterprises in key sectors.
- Access to land and support for youth in agriculture.

HEALTHCARE

- Treasury to allocate funds for the immediate employment of unemployed healthcare workers.
- End to staff shortages in hospitals and clinics.
- Accessible mental health services for young people.

SOCIAL & WELFARE

- Increase in social grants to match the cost of living.
- Proper funding for programs addressing teenage pregnancy and young mothers.
- Protection of children's rights, including access to quality early childhood development.

GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY

- Removal of DA ministers and deputy ministers undermining the National Democratic Revolution.
- Action against corruption, particularly in Home Affairs (identity theft, fraudulent documents).
- Strengthening of public institutions to serve communities, not elites.
- Transparency in government spending and prioritization of the poor and working class.

SAFETY & PUBLIC HEALTH

- Stronger regulation of spaza shops and enforcement of food safety standards.
- Ban on harmful pesticides that endanger communities.
- Safer communities for young people, with policing that protects rather than criminalizes.



YOUTH REPRESENTATION & EMPOWERMENT

- Greater inclusion of young people in leadership roles at all levels of government.
- Support for student and youth movements (ANCYL, SASCO, YCLSA, COSAS, etc.).
- Investment in youth sports, arts, and cultural development.

CONCLUSION

Organization, in the true revolutionary sense, demands clarity of purpose, disciplined leadership, and the willingness to serve without expectation of reward. This must guide our work across all provinces, regions, and branches. Weak organization invites infiltration and opportunism. Without political education and internal democracy, we open the door to manipulation. That is why we must expose and reject practices that compromise the integrity of our structures, especially the manipulation of audits and congresses to secure factional advantage. It is a betrayal of the revolution when comrades take pride in defrauding organizational processes to serve narrow ambitions.

The ANC Youth League must remain a disciplined, ideologically grounded, mass-based youth movement of the Left. Our task is to mobilize young people behind the vision of the ANC while relentlessly agitating for radical transformation in society. That means fighting for the rights and dignity of the poor, the excluded, and the forgotten. It means standing against exploitation, corruption, and all forms of injustice. A revolutionary organization is not a career path; it is a political home for the committed, the selfless, and the courageous.

Let us build an ANC Youth League that is feared by the enemy, trusted by the people, and respected even by those who oppose us. The time for playing politics with the future is over. The revolution demands more—and we will rise to the occasion.

Amandla!

Aluta Continua!

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