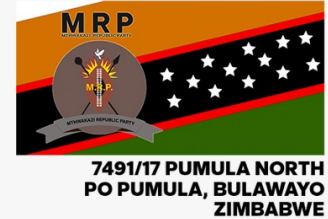




MTHWAKAZI REPUBLIC PARTY

🌐 <https://mthwakazirepublicparty.org>
✉ mrp.pres@proton.me / mqoekamoyo@proton.me
f MQONDISI MOYO
@MQONDISIMOYOMRP
☎ +27 78 935 3725 OR +263 78 410 3677



7491/17 PUMULA NORTH
PO PUMULA, BULAWAYO
ZIMBABWE

Africa's Decolonization Ended Where European Convenience Began

The colonial state was dismantled as a regime but preserved as a map

By Mqondisi Moyo

President, Mthwakazi Republic Party

5 August 2026

Africa's decolonization is commonly narrated as a completed historical achievement. Colonial flags were lowered, African governments assumed office, and newly independent states entered the United Nations. According to this account, colonial rule ended when authority passed from European administrations to African leaders.

That account is incomplete.

In much of Africa, decolonization transferred sovereignty without reconsidering the territorial structures through which colonial rule had been organised. The colonial government departed, but the colonial map remained. Political communities that had been conquered separately, governed together for imperial convenience and incorporated without their consent were instructed that the resulting boundaries had become permanent.

The consequences of that decision remain visible across the continent. Mthwakazi is one of them.

The historical question is not whether colonial rule should have ended. It had to end. Nor is it whether every precolonial kingdom must automatically be reconstructed in its former shape. The question is narrower and more fundamental:

Why did decolonization validate the territorial arrangements created by colonial conquest without requiring the consent of the peoples who had been combined within them?

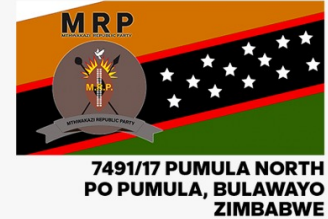
The contradiction within decolonization

The modern international order formally recognises the right of peoples to self-determination. Article 1 of both principal United Nations human-rights covenants states that all peoples may freely determine their political status and pursue their economic, social and cultural development. ([OHCHR](#))



MTHWAKAZI REPUBLIC PARTY

🌐 <https://mthwakazirepublicparty.org>
✉ mrp.pres@proton.me / mgoekamoyo@proton.me
f MQONDISI MOYO
@MQONDISIMOYOMRP
☎ +27 78 935 3725 OR +263 78 410 3677



The United Nations General Assembly's Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, adopted as Resolution 1514 on 14 December 1960, became one of the foundational texts of modern decolonization. It affirmed the principle that colonial subjection should end and that formerly subordinated peoples should attain sovereignty. ([United Nations](#))

Yet African decolonization developed alongside a second principle: the preservation of the territorial boundaries inherited from colonial administration.

At Cairo in July 1964, the Organisation of African Unity adopted a resolution under which member states pledged to respect the borders existing at the moment they attained independence. The decision was motivated by a genuine concern. African leaders feared that reopening every colonial boundary could produce territorial warfare throughout the continent. ([Organization of African Unity](#))

The principle contributed to interstate stability. But it also produced a historical closure.

The boundaries drawn, extended, merged and administered by imperial governments were transformed into the boundaries of legitimate African sovereignty. The territorial integrity of the colonial unit was preserved even where the integrity of the peoples placed within it had never been considered.

Decolonization therefore contained an unresolved contradiction. It proclaimed the freedom of peoples while frequently treating the colonial territory—not the people—as the primary unit entitled to freedom.

Mthwakazi before Southern Rhodesia

Mthwakazi did not begin as a province of Zimbabwe. It existed before Southern Rhodesia and before the British South Africa Company.

The Matabele state developed under King Mzilikazi during the nineteenth century and was subsequently governed by King Lobengula. Historians have treated the Ndebele polity as a distinct precolonial political and military system centred in the territory later designated Matabeleland. ([Cambridge University Press](#))

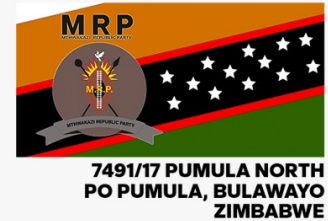
Whatever debates may exist concerning the precise reach of its authority at different times, there is no serious historical basis for pretending that the Matabele kingdom was merely an administrative subdivision of a pre-existing Zimbabwean state. The state called Zimbabwe did not yet exist. The territorial entity called Southern Rhodesia did not yet exist.

Contemporary British records themselves demonstrate that Lobengula was treated as a ruler capable of exercising sovereign authority.



MTHWAKAZI REPUBLIC PARTY

🌐 <https://mthwakazirepublicparty.org>
✉ mrp.pres@proton.me / mgoekamoyo@proton.me
f MQONDISI MOYO
@MQONDISIMOYOMRP
☎ +27 78 935 3725 OR +263 78 410 3677



The 1888 document known as the Rudd Concession described Lobengula as acting in the exercise of his “sovereign powers” over his kingdoms, principalities and dominions. The concession purported to grant extensive mineral rights, and both its interpretation and the circumstances of its procurement became deeply controversial. It nevertheless shows that the British concession seekers approached Lobengula because they required authorisation from an existing political authority. ([South African History Online](#))

British parliamentary records provide even clearer evidence. On 20 December 1888, the British Government informed the House of Commons that Britain did not then possess a protectorate over Matabeleland and therefore had no right to interfere with concessions Lobengula might choose to grant. ([Hansard](#))

This was not a retrospective nationalist interpretation. It was the position expressed in the British Parliament at the time.

Mthwakazi was recognised as a territory outside direct British jurisdiction, ruled by a sovereign with whom outsiders sought treaties and concessions. That position was not dissolved through a consensual union. It was destroyed by conquest.

From commercial concession to territorial conquest

The British South Africa Company received its royal charter in 1889. Its Pioneer Column established Company occupation in Mashonaland in 1890, after skirting the main area of Matabele occupation. Company forces then invaded Matabeleland in 1893 and annexed it after war against Lobengula’s kingdom. The two territories were therefore brought under Company authority through materially different processes: Mashonaland through the Pioneer occupation of 1890, and Matabeleland through military conquest in 1893–94. ([Cambridge University Press](#); [J. R. D. Cobbing](#))

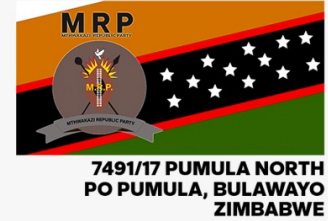
The military chronology must also be stated clearly. The Pioneer Column’s occupation of Mashonaland in 1890 was not met by a comparable organised Shona military campaign at the moment of occupation. The Matabele kingdom, by contrast, fought a sustained war against the Company’s invasion in 1893–94. ([British South Africa Police Regiment](#); [South African History Online](#))

The 1893 campaign included fighting near Iron Mine Hill and Lalapanzi, at the Shangani River, at Gadade—also recorded as Mbembesi or Bembesi—on 1 November, and near Singuesi and Empandeni. At Gadade, Matabele regiments repeatedly charged a fortified Company laager under Maxim-gun and artillery fire. The scale of the Matabele losses remains contested: local commemorative accounts place the dead above 6,000, while other historical accounts give substantially lower estimates. Company forces also employed African auxiliaries, including Shona auxiliaries, although surviving



MTHWAKAZI REPUBLIC PARTY

🌐 <https://mthwakazirepublicparty.org>
✉ mrp.pres@proton.me / mqoekamoyo@proton.me
f MQONDISI MOYO
@MQONDISIMOYOMRP
☎ +27 78 935 3725 OR +263 78 410 3677



7491/17 PUMULA NORTH
PO PUMULA, BULAWAYO
ZIMBABWE

accounts differ on their number. ([South African History Online](#); [Gadade Battlefield record](#); [Zimbabwe Field Guide](#))

The destruction of Allan Wilson's patrol at Pupu, north of the Shangani River, on 4 December 1893 was the culminating engagement in the Company's pursuit of Lobengula and a major Matabele victory. By that stage Lobengula had withdrawn beyond Bulawayo. He was never captured, and although he is generally believed to have died in early 1894, the precise circumstances and location of his death and burial remain uncertain. ([University of Oxford](#); [South African History Online](#))

The events of 1896–97 must be distinguished from the war of 1893. The Ndebele Umvukela began in Matabeleland in March 1896; Shona risings began in Mashonaland in June and developed through separate local centres. The struggles occurred against the same Company regime and overlapped in time, but historians have challenged the older suggestion that they formed a single, centrally coordinated Ndebele–Shona campaign. There was no unified joint command or strategic linkage between the two risings. Grouping them together chronologically must not erase the earlier Matabele war of 1893 or imply a collaboration in 1896–97 that the evidence does not establish. ([D. N. Beach, Journal of African History](#); [J. R. D. Cobbing, Journal of African History](#))

The name “Rhodesia” itself reflected the colonial project. By the middle of the 1890s, it was being applied to territories controlled by the Company and named for Cecil Rhodes. ([Cambridge University Press](#))

This is the origin of the territorial framework later inherited by Zimbabwe.

The union of Matabeleland and Mashonaland was not the recorded product of a constitutional convention among their peoples. It was an administrative result of Company expansion. The boundaries and institutions created under Company rule were designed principally for occupation, settler government, resource extraction and administrative manageability.

Colonial convenience became territorial fact.

The 1922 referendum: consent without the colonised

The constitutional development of Southern Rhodesia illustrates how colonial consent worked.

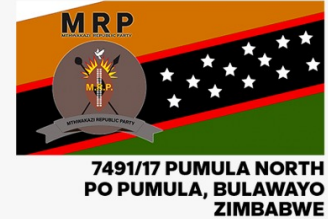
In 1922, a referendum was held to determine whether Southern Rhodesia should enter the Union of South Africa or obtain responsible government within the British Empire. The referendum is often described as an important act of local political choice.

But whose choice was it?



MTHWAKAZI REPUBLIC PARTY

🌐 <https://mthwakazirepublicparty.org>
✉ mrp.pres@proton.me / mqoekamoyo@proton.me
f MQONDISI MOYO
@MQONDISIMOYOMRP
☎ +27 78 935 3725 OR +263 78 410 3677



7491/17 PUMULA NORTH
PO PUMULA, BULAWAYO
ZIMBABWE

The electorate was drawn from those qualified to vote for the Southern Rhodesian Legislative Council. British parliamentary records stated that the interests of the African population would be “safeguarded” under whichever arrangement the electorate selected. Africans were thus treated principally as interests to be administered, not as peoples whose collective consent was required. ([Historic Hansard](#))

The referendum was overwhelmingly a white settler political exercise. Recent historical scholarship describes it specifically through the political attitudes and choices of white Southern Rhodesian voters. ([Oxford Academic](#))

A British parliamentary debate in 1923 noted that although Southern Rhodesia technically had a common electoral roll, only approximately 50 Africans possessed the vote. ([Historic Hansard](#))

The resulting constitutional transformation therefore cannot credibly be described as an act of democratic territorial self-determination by all the peoples inhabiting Southern Rhodesia.

White settlers selected the constitutional future of a colonial territory whose African majority had not authorised its original construction.

Southern Rhodesia became a self-governing British colony in 1923. Britain replaced Company administration with responsible government but preserved the territorial unit the Company had assembled. ([Cambridge University Press](#))

The regime changed. The map survived.

Independence in 1980

The struggle against white-minority rule was necessary and legitimate. Southern Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965 attempted to prevent the transition to democratic majority government. The liberation struggle and the negotiations that followed ultimately brought that order to an end.

The Lancaster House Conference of 1979 involved the British Government, the Patriotic Front—comprising ZANU and ZAPU—and the authorities of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. The agreement established the terms of an independence constitution, supervised elections and a ceasefire. ([South African History Archive](#))

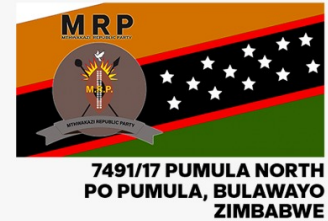
Zimbabwe attained internationally recognised independence on 18 April 1980.

That was the end of formal colonial and white-minority rule. It was an immense historical achievement. But it did not answer every question created by colonisation.



MTHWAKAZI REPUBLIC PARTY

🌐 <https://mthwakazirepublicparty.org>
✉ mrp.pres@proton.me / mqoekamoyo@proton.me
f MQONDISI MOYO
@MQONDISIMOYOMRP
☎ +27 78 935 3725 OR +263 78 410 3677



7491/17 PUMULA NORTH
PO PUMULA, BULAWAYO
ZIMBABWE

The Lancaster House settlement treated Southern Rhodesia as the territorial unit that would become Zimbabwe. It did not convene a separate process to determine whether the peoples of the formerly independent Mthwakazi polity had consented to permanent incorporation within that unit. There was no Mthwakazi plebiscite, no separate territorial settlement and no examination of whether the Company's conquest and consolidation of Matabeleland had created an unresolved constitutional question.

Matabele political figures participated in the nationalist struggle, most importantly through ZAPU under Joshua Nkomo. That participation must not be erased. But participation in a common struggle against settler rule is not historically identical to collective consent to every territorial arrangement inherited from the coloniser.

In 1980, decolonization replaced the rulers of Southern Rhodesia. It did not reconsider how Southern Rhodesia had been assembled.

Gukurahundi and the fragility of inherited unity

The consequences of that unresolved constitutional history became tragically visible soon after independence.

From 1983 to 1987, the North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade was deployed principally in Matabeleland North, Matabeleland South and parts of the Midlands. Academic histories describe the operation known as Gukurahundi as a state campaign against alleged dissidents and against the political base associated with ZAPU. ([Cambridge University Press](#))

The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace and the Legal Resources Foundation documented killings, disappearances, torture, detention and the destruction of communities in their report *Breaking the Silence, Building True Peace*. ([Breaking the Silence](#))

Estimates of the number killed vary. Human Rights Watch cites the Catholic Commission's documentation of more than 3,000 extrajudicial executions, while a substantial body of scholarship and public reporting uses estimates reaching approximately 20,000 deaths. ([Human Rights Watch](#))

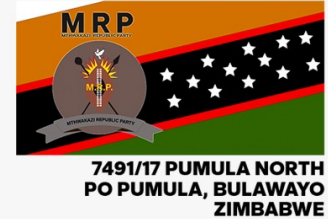
The historical importance of Gukurahundi cannot be reduced to a dispute over the final number of victims. It demonstrated that independence alone had not resolved the relationship between the central state and the people of Matabeleland and the Midlands.

The territorial unity inherited from colonial rule did not automatically produce political equality, mutual trust or protection from state violence.



MTHWAKAZI REPUBLIC PARTY

🌐 <https://mthwakazirepublicparty.org>
✉ mrp.pres@proton.me / mqoekamoyo@proton.me
f MQONDISI MOYO
@MQONDISIMOYOMRP
☎ +27 78 935 3725 OR +263 78 410 3677



A map can remain intact while a people's security, memory and political existence are placed under severe assault.

Europe retained constitutional flexibility

The rigidity imposed upon African territorial questions becomes more striking when compared with Europe's treatment of its own non-metropolitan territories.

Spain describes itself officially as a bicontinental country. The Canary Islands are an autonomous community, while Ceuta and Melilla are autonomous cities situated on the African mainland. ([La Moncloa](#))

Spain also maintains sovereignty and permanent military positions on the Chafarinas Islands, the Alhucemas Islands, the Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera and the island of Alborán. Spanish naval sources refer to these locations as plazas de soberanía nacional in North Africa. ([Spanish Navy](#))

The United Kingdom officially administers 14 Overseas Territories, each with its own constitutional and governmental arrangements, although their precise levels of autonomy differ. ([UK Government](#))

France maintains an extensive overseas constitutional system. Its Ministry for Overseas Territories identifies 12 principal territorial collectivities across the Atlantic, Indian, Pacific and Antarctic regions, while other official French material refers to 13 territories when Clipperton is included. ([French Ministry for Overseas Territories](#))

The Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands consists of three constituent countries—Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten—and three special municipalities—Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba. ([Government of the Netherlands](#))

The Kingdom of Denmark includes Greenland and the Faroe Islands, both of which possess extensive systems of self-government under arrangements that permit political competencies to be transferred from Copenhagen to their own authorities. ([Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#))

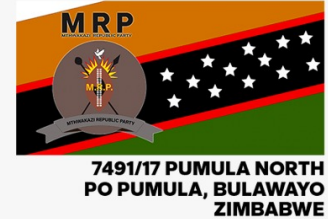
These territories are not constitutionally identical. Some have substantial internal self-government. Some maintain close political unions with the European state. Some are still included on the United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories. It would be historically careless to describe them all as colonies in precisely the same sense.

But their diversity establishes the central point.



MTHWAKAZI REPUBLIC PARTY

 <https://mthwakazirepublicparty.org>
 mrp.pres@proton.me / mqoekamoyo@proton.me
 MQONDISI MOYO
 @MQONDISIMOYOMRP
 +27 78 935 3725 OR +263 78 410 3677



Europe did not adopt a single rule declaring that every territory governed from Europe must either become an entirely independent state or be absorbed into a uniform metropolitan structure. European states used autonomy, association, integration, special status, constituent-country arrangements, referenda and continuing negotiation.

They retained constitutional imagination.

Africa was largely told that the boundaries existing on independence day were final.

The privilege of naming territorial arrangements

European states also retained the power to name their territorial relationships.

A territory could become an overseas department, an autonomous country, a special municipality, an overseas territory, a constituent part of a realm or an autonomous city. The new terminology did not necessarily erase colonial history, but it created legal and political space in which different relationships could develop.

African peoples incorporated into colonial territorial units were rarely offered the same vocabulary.

Their historic nationhood was reduced to ethnicity. Their territories became provinces. Their claims became tribalism. Their requests for constitutional reconsideration became secessionism. The colonial boundary, meanwhile, was elevated into an unquestionable expression of African unity.

This reversal deserves scrutiny.

The political unit created by the coloniser was treated as permanent, while the political community conquered by the coloniser was treated as historically obsolete.

What the Mthwakazi question requires

Historical evidence does not, by itself, dictate a single constitutional remedy. It does not eliminate the need to consider present populations, democratic consent, minority protections, economic relations and regional stability.

But evidence establishes what may not honestly be denied.

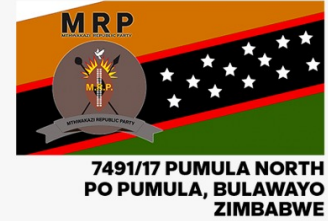
Mthwakazi existed as a political order before Company rule.

Lobengula was treated by contemporary British actors as a ruler exercising authority over his own territory.



MTHWAKAZI REPUBLIC PARTY

🌐 <https://mthwakazirepublicparty.org>
✉ mrp.pres@proton.me / mgoekamoyo@proton.me
f MQONDISI MOYO
@MQONDISIMOYOMRP
☎ +27 78 935 3725 OR +263 78 410 3677



The British South Africa Company conquered Matabeleland and incorporated it into a wider colonial administrative structure.

The 1922 constitutional referendum did not obtain the democratic consent of the African peoples governed within that structure.

The 1923 constitution preserved the Company-created territorial unit.

The 1979–80 decolonization settlement ended colonial government but transferred sovereignty over the inherited territory as a whole.

And the people of Matabeleland subsequently endured Gukurahundi without receiving a complete process of truth, accountability and constitutional reckoning.

These facts do not disappear because they are politically inconvenient.

Mthwakazi's claim should therefore not be dismissed reflexively as an attempt to destroy an ancient African state. The state whose borders are being defended is not ancient. Its territorial structure emerged from nineteenth-century Company conquest and twentieth-century British constitutional decisions.

The proper response is not censorship or criminalisation. It is historical examination and peaceful democratic engagement.

The Mthwakazi Republic Party advocates a nonviolent, procedural and democratic course. We ask for the historical record to be acknowledged, for the status of Mthwakazi to be discussed openly and for the will of its people to be treated as politically relevant.

We ask for engagement, not war.

Decolonization cannot mean preserving colonial convenience forever

The 1964 African border settlement addressed a real danger. The continent's leaders feared that unrestricted territorial revision would produce conflict. Their concern should be understood in its historical setting.

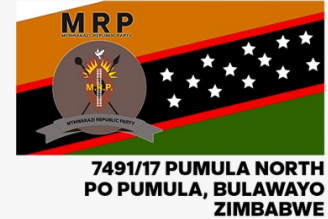
But a rule adopted to prevent interstate war cannot become a permanent command that every people incorporated by colonial conquest must surrender its history, identity and political agency.

Borders may be necessary. They are not sacred merely because colonial officials drew them.



MTHWAKAZI REPUBLIC PARTY

🌐 <https://mthwakazirepublicparty.org>
✉ mrp.pres@proton.me / mqoekamoyo@proton.me
f MQONDISI MOYO
@MQONDISIMOYOMRP
☎ +27 78 935 3725 OR +263 78 410 3677



7491/17 PUMULA NORTH
PO PUMULA, BULAWAYO
ZIMBABWE

Europe has repeatedly demonstrated that territorial integrity and constitutional flexibility can coexist. It has developed autonomous communities, self-governing territories, constituent countries and differentiated political relationships without insisting that every request for territorial recognition constitutes an attack upon civilisation.

Africa deserves the same constitutional imagination.

The task is not to erase the achievements of national liberation. It is to complete them. Decolonization must mean more than replacing European rulers while preserving every territorial decision those rulers made.

For Mthwakazi, the unfinished question is simple:

When colonial conquest combined peoples without their consent, did independence permanently legitimize the conquest—or did it create an obligation to address the constitutional injury that conquest left behind?

Until that question can be asked without fear, Africa's decolonization will remain incomplete.

It ended colonial administration.

It did not always decolonize the map.

Mqondisi Moyo

President

Mthwakazi Republic Party

Office of the President

Bulawayo, Mthwakazi

5 August 2026

Email: mrp.pres@proton.me

Website: <http://mthwakazirepublicparty.org>

Phone: +27 78 935 3725



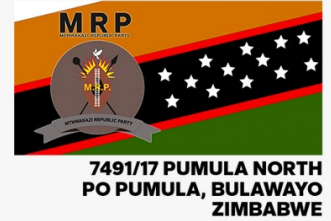
In Pursuit of Truth, Justice and Peace During Our Lifetime

Sisonke Sibambene SinguMthwakazi Sesikulungisa!



MTHWAKAZI REPUBLIC PARTY

 <https://mthwakazirepublicparty.org>
 mrp.pres@proton.me / mqoekamoyo@proton.me
 MQONDISI MOYO
 @MQONDISIMOYOMRP
 +27 78 935 3725 OR +263 78 410 3677



Recognition Doctrine Series | **Recognition Doctrine Principle:** Consent of the Peoples Combined by Colonial Conquest

