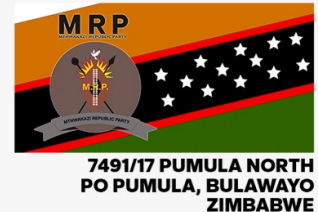




MTHWAKAZI REPUBLIC PARTY

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11 August 2026

His Excellency Cyril Ramaphosa

President of the Republic of South Africa
President of the African National Congress
Pretoria, South Africa

The Honourable Ronald Lamola, MP

Minister of International Relations and Cooperation
Republic of South Africa
Pretoria, South Africa

RE: SOUTH AFRICA WROTE THE RULE — NOW APPLY IT TO MTHWAKAZI

Your Excellency and Honourable Minister,

I write on behalf of the Mthwakazi Republic Party at a moment when South Africa is assuming leadership of the Southern African Development Community and when Pretoria's own published doctrine has made the question before us unusually precise.

On 29 December 2025, responding to the recognition of Somaliland, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation distinguished between “decolonisation and secession” and stated that “the former restores sovereignty; the latter dismantles it.” South Africa also invoked *uti possidetis* and the protection of borders inherited at independence. We do not ask South Africa to abandon that doctrine. We ask South Africa to apply it.

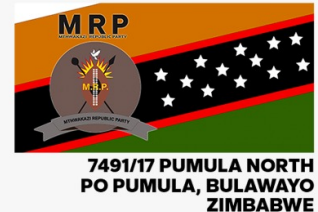
The Matabele nation did not enter Zimbabwe through a voluntary union. There was no treaty of union, no plebiscite by which the people surrendered their sovereignty, and no referendum in which the conquered population consented to the colonial territorial settlement becoming permanent. In *In re Southern Rhodesia* [1919] AC 211, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council treated Lobengula's sovereignty as the starting point of the territorial history and described what occurred in 1893 as conquest. The colonial frontier created around that conquest subsequently passed into the Republic of Zimbabwe without the conquered nation ever being asked to consent to it.

Our argument is therefore straightforward. Applying Pretoria's own distinction, Mthwakazi contends that its claim belongs on the restoration side of the line rather than the dismantling side. We are not asking South Africa to accept that conclusion without examination. South Africa may reject it. If it does, it should identify the legal and historical reason: whether Pretoria considers some later event to have supplied consent, whether it believes the distinction operates differently in this case, or whether



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it maintains that the category of decolonisation was permanently closed by Zimbabwean independence in 1980.

Africa's own human-rights system supplies a framework for examining the question. Article 20 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights recognises the right of peoples to self-determination. In *Katangese Peoples' Congress v Zaire*, the African Commission considered serious human-rights violations and denial of participation in government when addressing the relationship between self-determination and territorial integrity. We do not present that communication as a mechanically binding test for secession. We do say that the Commission identified considerations that Africa itself has regarded as relevant. Those considerations should be applied to Matabeleland and the result stated.

That examination cannot exclude Gukurahundi. Between 1983 and 1987 Zimbabwean state forces killed civilians in Matabeleland and the Midlands. *Breaking the Silence, Building True Peace*, compiled by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe with the Legal Resources Foundation, conservatively identified at least three thousand dead or missing and stated that the true number could be considerably higher; subsequent estimates commonly place the death toll at approximately twenty thousand. The Chihambakwe Commission investigated these events, yet its report has never been published. More than four decades later, the central findings of a state-appointed inquiry remain withheld.

The African Union has meanwhile taken an emphatic position on inherited borders. At its 39th Ordinary Session in February 2026, the Assembly adopted Assembly/AU/Decl.2(XXXIX), reaffirmed Article 4(b) of the Constitutive Act and the 1964 Cairo principle, and fully endorsed the Peace and Security Council's rejection of Israel's recognition of Somaliland. South Africa adopted the same territorial-integrity position. That makes consistency indispensable. Different histories may properly produce different legal conclusions, but different conclusions require reasons.

Accordingly, the Mthwakazi Republic Party has placed eleven formal written questions before the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the Chairperson of the Assembly of the African Union, the Government of South Africa and the SADC Secretariat. We are not asking any of those institutions, through those questions, to recognise an independent Mthwakazi. We are asking them to state and apply the rule.

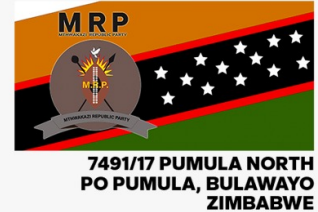
For South Africa, the central questions include:

- Does inherited-border protection attach only to the composite state that emerged from decolonisation, or must the prior status of political entities also be considered?



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- Where no consent to union was ever given, does a border produced by conquest and company annexation attract precisely the same protection as one produced by voluntary agreement?
- Has the African Union ever examined the legal character of the incorporation of the territory of the Matabele nation into Southern Rhodesia after the war of 1893?
- Does Assembly/AU/Decl.2(XXXIX) state a general rule for the continent or a Somalia-specific rule? If it is general, how does it apply to territories taken by conquest rather than voluntary union?
- Why is historical territorial status determinative in South Africa's treatment of Western Sahara, treated differently in the Somaliland question, and still unexamined in relation to Mthwakazi?

We respectfully request a reasoned written response within sixty days of receipt.

South Africa's assumption of the SADC chair makes this an appropriate moment for an answer. Mthwakazi is pursuing this question peacefully. No territory is being seized and no force is being threatened. Documents are being served, Africa's own institutions are being cited, and legal reasoning is being requested. A regional organisation committed to conflict prevention should prefer argument before violence and law before force.

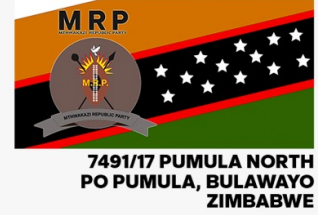
Pretoria wrote the rule on 29 December 2025. The Judicial Committee recorded the conquest. The African Commission identified the relevant considerations. The documentary record records the killings. We have now served the questions.

South Africa may reject our argument. What it should not do is decline to state why.



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Yours faithfully,

Mqondisi Moyo

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In Pursuit of Truth, Justice and Peace During Our Lifetime

Sisonke Sibambene SinguMthwakazi Sesikulungisa!

