

in session



All Set for
SONA
— 2025



President Ramaphosa to Deliver State of the Nation Address at Cape Town City Hall

President Cyril Ramaphosa is set to deliver the 2025 State of the Nation Address (SONA) during a joint sitting of Parliament on Thursday, 6 February, at 7 pm, at Cape Town City Hall.

This will be the first SONA of the 7th Parliament since its establishment in June last year following the national and provincial elections. Since the City Hall has been declared part of the parliamentary precinct for the purpose of this sitting, all laws and joint rules applicable to Parliament will be enforced as if the sitting were held in the National Assembly Chamber. This designation aligns with Section 2 of the Powers, Privileges, and Immunities of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act, which defines the precincts of Parliament.

Attendance and Seating Arrangements

The joint sitting will see all attendees, including Members

of Parliament (MPs) and invited guests, physically present in the chamber and public gallery. Approximately 490 MPs and representatives from the South African Local Government Association will be accommodated on the chamber floor. At the same time, 263 invited guests representing various sectors of society will be seated in the public gallery.

Purpose and Format of SONA

The State of the Nation Address is convened by the President in terms of the Constitution to provide the nation with an update on government commitments and to outline the programme of action for the new financial year. It is a joint sitting of the National Assembly (NA) and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP), presided over by the Speaker of the NA and the Chairperson of the NCOP. The President's address is the sole item on the agenda.

Following the address, MPs will engage in a two-day debate during a joint sitting. The debate will be concluded with the President's reply on the third day. SONA will be broadcast live on radio and television and streamed online

via Parliament's website, YouTube channel, and DSTv channel 408.

Ceremonial Features

This year's SONA will follow the full ceremonial format, featuring traditional activities such as:

- A 21-gun salute
- An aircraft flypast
- The ceremonial guard and salute of the step guard
- The singing of the national anthem by the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) military band
- Processions involving provincial Speakers, Premiers, members of the judiciary, the Deputy President, and the President

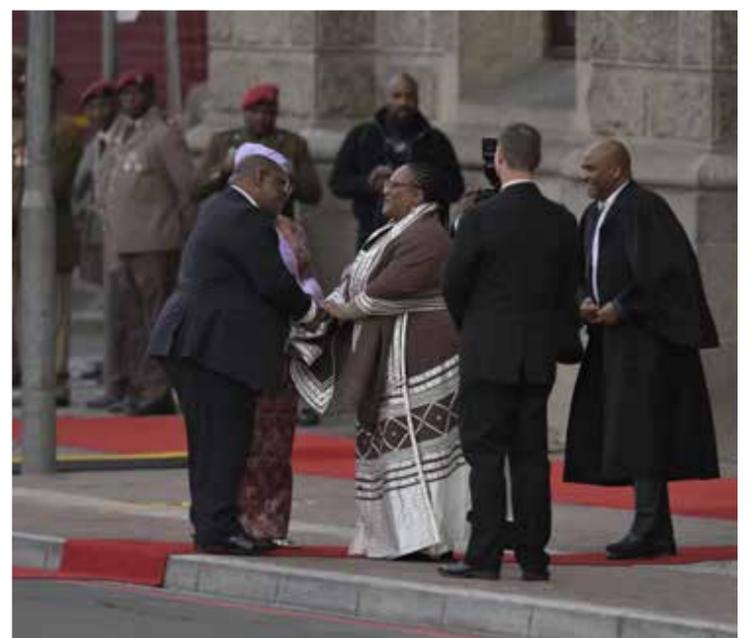
The President will observe the national anthem, performed by the SANDF military band, from a platform set up in front of the statue of Nelson Mandela on the City Hall balcony. This will be synchronised with the 21-gun salute and the flypast.

Cultural Significance of the Imbongi

The inclusion of an imbongi (praise singer) has been a

significant feature of SONA since 1994, symbolising the celebration of South Africa's cultural diversity and promoting social cohesion. The imbongi is selected in collaboration with provincial legislatures, with the language of the praise song determined

on a rotational basis to ensure equal representation of all official languages. This year's SONA promises to reflect not only on the progress made by the government but also on the rich cultural heritage and traditions that unite South Africa as a nation. 🇿🇦





Dear Mr President

South African citizens tell the President what they would like to hear in the SONA 2025



Mr Lungelo Gwala

In the area of health, I hope the President addresses the nation on measures the government has implemented to prevent the spread of the virus that recently broke out in China.

We are deeply concerned about this outbreak, as we still remember the devastating impact of the coronavirus, which came from outside South Africa and destroyed many families. On the economic front, we hope President Ramaphosa will focus on strategies to mobilise international investors to invest in

South Africa and create job opportunities. Additionally, he must outline the government's plans to combat crime effectively.



Ms Claudeen Hendricks

We expect the President to present clear plans and strategies to fight crime and lawlessness in South Africa.

Last year, the President delivered two addresses—one in February and another in July, after the 2024 May general elections. However, no meaningful progress was made following those speeches. The economy remains stagnant,

and crime continues to rise. The President must account for these failures and provide tangible solutions to address the issues he previously promised to resolve.



Mr Whallene Wyngaard

President Ramaphosa must outline his plans to tighten South Africa's borders to prevent the illegal entry of foreigners.

Foreign nationals have taken over jobs meant for South Africans in both the formal and informal economic sectors, particularly in villages, townships and informal

settlements.

There is an urgent need to address this issue and send those who are in the country illegally back to their home countries. Beyond competing for jobs, some foreign nationals sell harmful food products to our children.

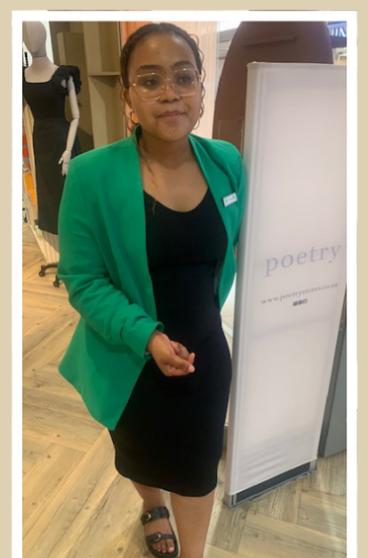
The President must also focus on attracting investors to create sustainable employment opportunities for South Africans.



Ms Jovita Januarie

The President needs to present plans to restore the glory

of South Africa, which were built under Presidents Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki. That legacy has been lost since the 2009 general elections. Before that period, the economy was growing, as confirmed by various credible surveys with scientific findings. The President must make bold commitments, including increasing social grants for older persons and orphaned children, while also addressing the growing crime rates.



Ms Thina Norubela

We expect the President to announce plans to tackle the high cost of living

and normalise it for South Africans. He must also share strategies to attract foreign investors, especially to invest in historically significant rural towns.

Additionally, the President needs to discuss reducing taxes and fighting emerging forms of crime, such as extortion. For the youth, we need clear commitments on job creation within their lifetime.

such as townships, informal settlements and rural villages.



Mr Xolile Nqaba

The President must address the management of South Africa's borders to prevent the uncontrolled influx of foreign nationals. While we love our African brothers and sisters, South Africa has limited resources that must first meet the needs of its citizens.

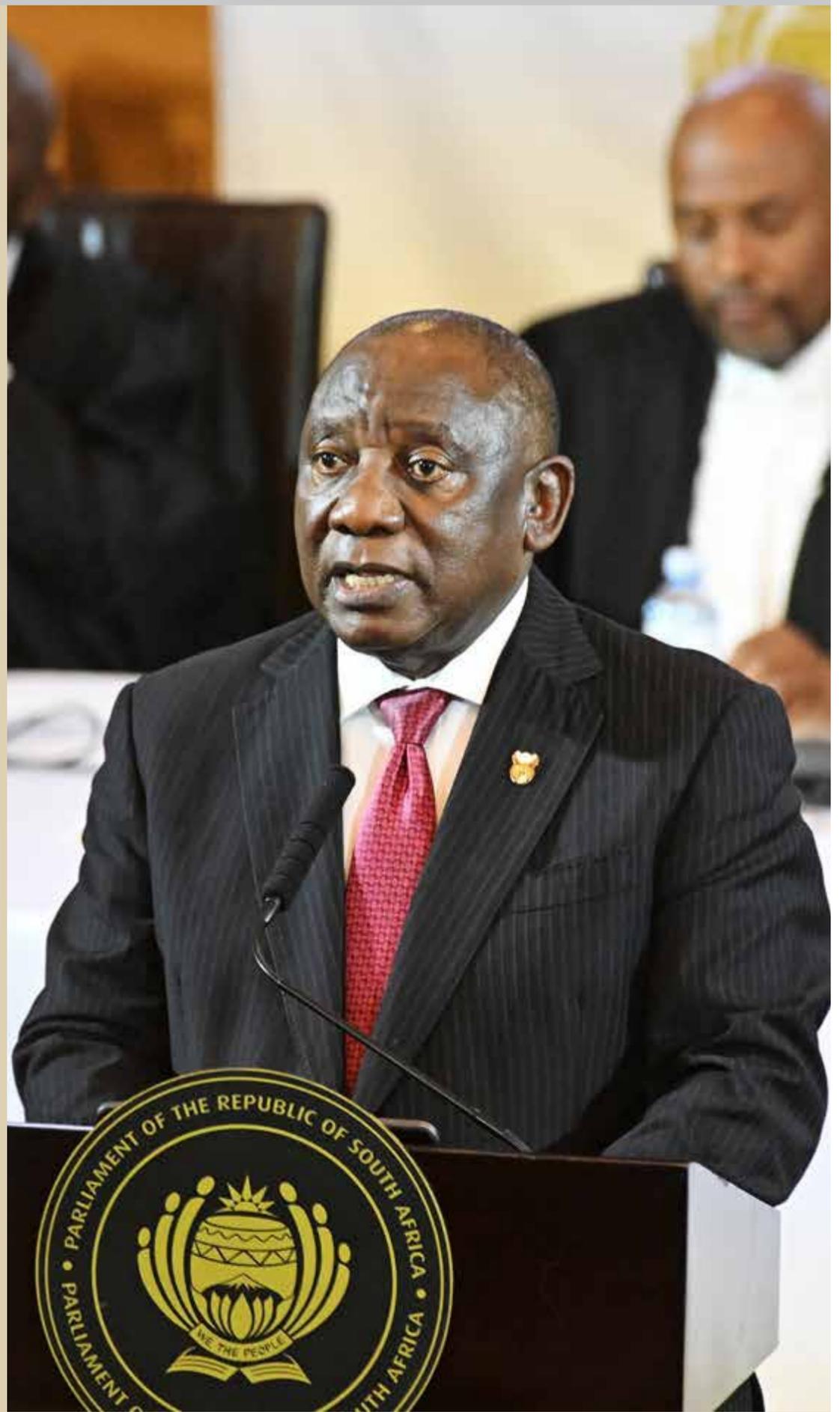
The harsh reality is that our economy is not growing fast enough to create sufficient employment opportunities to accommodate both South Africans and foreign nationals.

Additionally, crime remains out of control, and some foreign nationals are involved in these activities. Prisons and hospitals are overcrowded with foreign nationals, adding strain to our resources. The President must use the SONA to effectively share clear, decisive plans to manage these challenges. 🇿🇦



Ms Nonzukiso Tshivana

We expect a State of the Nation Address (SONA) that stands apart from President Ramaphosa's previous addresses, which were filled with promises. The 2025 SONA must bring real, actionable change. This means delivering on promises that translate into poverty eradication, job creation and the fight against crime, which has become a daily struggle in historically marginalised communities





SONA2025: Setting the Tone for G20 Parliamentary Speakers Summit

The theme for the 2025 SONA is: “Harnessing Parliamentary Diplomacy for Realisation of Global Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability.”

This theme aligns with Parliament’s hosting of the G20 Parliamentary Speakers Summit (P20) later in the year. Aligning the 2025 SONA with the P20 activities set the tone for creating a synergy between parliamentary business and pursuing global, regional and national development imperatives.

This alignment will begin to crystallise how multi-level governance can be leveraged for promoting a more consultative and consensus-based approach to addressing global commons and tackling shared challenges such as the maintenance of international peace and security, asymmetries in global trade, skewed and unequal global economic development, and climate change-induced food insecurity.

The theme underscores the transformational potential of parliamentary efforts in promoting inclusive, sustainable and collaborative approaches to address global challenges, thus advancing

shared prosperity.

South Africa has held the rotating Presidency of the G20 for the first time since the intergovernmental forum was formed on 26 September 1999. The presidency term started on 1 December 2024 and runs until 30 November 2025. The G20 serves as an international forum for economic collaboration, primarily formulating policies and strategies to address contemporary and prospective global challenges.

The P20 Summit plays a crucial role in bringing a parliamentary perspective to global governance by raising awareness, building political support for international commitments, and ensuring their effective implementation at the national level.

These summits also foster inter-parliamentary cooperation, strengthen engagement between governments, parliaments, and stakeholders, and advance the implementation of the

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Thus, South Africa’s presidency not only provides a unique platform but also a significant opportunity to effectively advocate for the developmental interests and priorities of African countries on the global stage. 🌍





Your Guide to the 2025 State of the Nation Address

The State of the Nation Address (SONA) is called in terms of Section 42(5) of the Constitution by the President of the Republic. It is a joint sitting of the two Houses of Parliament and one of the rare occasions that bring together the three arms of the state under one roof.

SONA provides the President with an opportunity to speak to the nation on the general state of South Africa, reflect on a wide range of political, economic and social matters within the domestic and global contexts, account to the nation on the work of government, and set out the government's programme of action. Traditionally, the President makes key government announcements during this important joint sitting of Parliament.

It is a ceremonial joint sitting of the two Houses of Parliament, called specifically for the President to deliver his SONA. No other business may be considered on this day.

SONA usually takes place during February and is presided over by the Speaker and/or the Chairperson of the Council by arrangement between them. During the week following the SONA, a debate of approximately two days is held on the SONA. The President is then given an opportunity to reply to the debate on the third day and to close the debate. The SONA is one of the major general debates of the parliamentary year.

The President delivers his SONA before Parliament because Parliament is charged with ensuring that the work flowing from this Address is implemented. Most importantly, SONA is delivered in Parliament because the priorities pronounced in it have budgetary implications demanding robust oversight – one of Parliament's constitutional responsibilities.

Parliament may accept, reject

or amend the allocation of budgets to government departments to ensure that these align with national priorities as outlined in the SONA. Parliament may also withhold the budgets of departments whose annual performance plans are not in line with these priorities.

The sitting is referred to as the State of the Nation Address, which distinguishes it from the Opening of Parliament Address (OPA). The OPA takes place at the start of a new five-year term of Parliament.

How is the Joint Sitting to deliver SONA convened?

Section 84(2)(d) of the Constitution provides that the President may summon the National Assembly, the National Council of Provinces or Parliament to an extraordinary sitting to conduct special business.

Joint Rule 7(1)(a) provides that the President may call a joint sitting of the Houses when it is necessary for the President to deliver the annual or a special address to Parliament.

What are the Ceremonials for SONA?

The official programme usually begins with three processions. There is the procession of provincial Speakers, provincial Premiers, and the judiciary proceeding to the Assembly Chamber through the main entrance of the National Assembly building.

There is also the arrival of the presidential cavalcade in the parliamentary precincts. The President alights, is



welcomed by the Presiding Officers and their deputies, and proceeds to the National Assembly Chamber. The aides-de-camp lead the presidential procession (see Aides-de-camp below).

Aides-de-camp

As the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, aides-de-camp are attached to the President of the Republic of South Africa at all state ceremonies.

Their role in the country is limited to ceremonial duties. Once this task has been fulfilled, they will be immediately withdrawn.

During the SONA, they travel with the President from the President's residence to Parliament.

The aides-de-camp lead the presidential procession onto a saluting dais on the steps of the National Assembly to receive the ceremonial honours, the guard of honour by the National Ceremonial Guard, the 21-gun salute, the national anthem, and a salute flight. They then lead the procession into the Chamber and stand guard at the entrance of the Chamber.

21-gun salute

In 1842, the 21-gun salute became the international norm as one of the highest honours a nation rendered. It is fired in honour of the President. The first shot of the salute is synchronised to coincide with the singing of the national anthem. The salute takes one minute and 40 seconds.

In the Chamber

Members of both Houses must be seated before the procession enters. Each of the nine provinces is represented by its full quota of six permanent and four rotating members. A delegation of 10 South African Local Government Association members also take their seats

in the Chamber.

The Presiding Officers and the President enter the Chamber in procession, preceded by the Serjeant-at-Arms and the Usher of the Black Rod, and followed by the Secretary to Parliament.

Imbongi

One of the important elements of the SONA since the birth of democracy is Imbongi, the praise singer. Imbongi praise singing gives Africanness pride of place – narrating the President's personal history, clan and family lineage in song, dance and narration. Imbongi starts this narration as the presidential procession enters the Chamber.

Serjeant-at-Arms and Usher of the Black Rod

The Serjeant-at-Arms and the Usher of the Black Rod are responsible for compliance with security policy in and around the Chamber and galleries and implement related instructions from the Speaker, the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces and other presiding officers. They also perform ceremonial functions, among others, leading the procession into the Chamber at the start of proceedings.

The Serjeant-at-Arms and the Usher of the Black Rod lead the President and the Presiding Officers to their seats and proceed to place the Mace and the Black Rod in their designated positions before the Speaker and the Chairperson of the NCOP, respectively.

Mace and Black Rod

The Mace is a symbol of authority of the Speaker of the National Assembly. When the Serjeant-at-Arms carries the Mace into the debating chamber and places it before the Speaker of the National Assembly, it means that the National Assembly is formally in session and its proceedings are official.

The Mace was designed to



reflect the history, traditions, diverse cultures and languages of South Africa. The design also celebrates the country's natural beauty, plant and animal life, and rich mineral resources. The shape of the Mace recalls the knobkerrie, an African symbol of defence, authority, and leadership. Gold symbolises not only our country's natural wealth but also the indigenous knowledge of Africa and the ancient African gold mining traditions of Mapungubwe.

The Black Rod is the symbol of the authority of the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP). The Black Rod reflects the important role of the provinces in the functioning of the NCOP. When the Usher of the Black Rod carries the Black Rod into the debating chamber and places it before the Chairperson of the NCOP, it means that the NCOP is formally in session and that its proceedings are official.

The shape of the Black Rod is in the form of a knobkerrie, an African symbol of defence, authority and leadership. The protea, at the head of the Black Rod, is South Africa's National flower and symbolises national pride. The beadwork reflects South Africa's diverse people and its rich cultural heritage. The clasping hands in gold symbolises freedom, peace and cooperation.

The Black Rod stands in a drum when the council is in session. The drum is an expression of the African tradition of drums calling people to gather and speak. It is also symbolic of our achievement of democracy through dialogue.

Start of Proceedings

The Presiding Officers, while standing, bow to the left and then to the right in greeting and request a moment of silence for prayer or meditation. Once everyone is seated, the Presiding Officer reads out the notice, which calls the joint sitting and calls on the President to deliver the Address to the joint sitting.

As the joint sitting is called specifically for the President to deliver his SONA, no other business may be considered on this day.

Members of all parties have an opportunity to express themselves on the SONA during a full two-day debate in the week following the SONA. On the third day, the President has an opportunity to reply to the debate and close the debate.

The Joint Rules concerning the order in joint sittings and the rules of debate apply to the SONA. The Joint Rules also provide that when the Houses sit jointly, the Assembly Rules on discipline remain applicable to Assembly members, and the Council Rules on discipline remain applicable to a Council member.

After the President's speech, the Presiding Officer adjourns the sitting. Members are required to wait while the procession leaves the Chamber.

Media

Broadcast and photographic opportunities are also provided to the media inside and outside the Chamber. 📷



Inako Mateza – Imbongi for the 2025 State of the Nation Address

One of the important elements of the SONA since the birth of democracy is Imbongi, the praise singer. Imbongi praise singing gives Africanness pride of place narrating the President's personal history, clan and family lineage in song, dance and narration.

The Imbongi for the 2025 State of the Nation Address (SONA) is the esteemed Xhosa-speaking poet, Inako Mateza. At just 19 years old, Inako has already made her mark as a cultural icon and community leader.

Born in Ludiza Village, Willowvale, in the Amathole District of the Eastern Cape, she founded the INAKO FOUNDATION, an initiative dedicated to preserving cultural heritage and educating over 400 young

people about their cultures and traditions.

Inako's accolades include being crowned Indoni Miss Cultural SA 2023/24 and Miss South African Traditional Leaders Awards 2024/25 and serving as a presenter at the South African Music Awards. She is also a celebrated traditional storyteller and is currently pursuing her studies in Homoeopathy at the Durban University of Technology's Faculty of Health Sciences.

A multi-award-winning talent, Inako was named Best Eastern Cape Poet in 2019, earned the Best Student Leader Award from the Xhosa Great Place, and received the Hustler of the Year Award at the 2023 Eastern Cape Hustlers' Awards. Her foundation was also recognised as the Best Community-Building Programme in the Province.

Inako began her poetic journey in 2015 and has since graced stages across South Africa, performing for esteemed leaders such as Premier Oscar Mabuyane and Eastern Cape MEC for Education Fundile Gade, among others. Her work has been featured in publications

such as Isolezwe, Daily Sun, and Daily Dispatch, as well as on platforms including the Keith Ngesi Podcast, SABC, eNCA, and Mpuma Kapa TV.

Beyond poetry, Inako is a dedicated community activist who hosts sports tournaments, traditional pageants, and soup kitchens to uplift her community. She embodies the words of former President Nelson Mandela: "It always seems impossible until it is done, and a winner is a dreamer who never gives up."

Reflecting on her selection as the Imbongi for the 2025 SONA, Inako shared her

excitement:

"At just 19 years old, I am ecstatic to be chosen for this honour. It proves that your background doesn't define you. What truly matters is self-respect, dignity, and grace. I am delighted to express my admiration for the President and show gratitude for the efforts to improve our country."

Inako believes poetry is not just an art form but a powerful tool for storytelling and advocacy.

"As a member of the youth, I feel it is my responsibility to voice our concerns, including

the need for inclusion in decision-making and empowerment through education and skills development," Inako said. "Through my praise, I will bring to life the legacy of past poets and pave the way for future generations. Poetry is a gift, allowing us to tell our stories as the indigenous children of this soil."

Inako Mateza is a beacon of hope, culture and youth empowerment, ready to inspire the nation as the Imbongi for the 2025 State of the Nation Address. 🌍





SONA 2025 ROAD CLOSURES

Due to the State of the Nation Address, access to certain roads around Parliament and the City Hall will be restricted in a phased approach, starting from 1 February 2025.

PHASE 1

Closure for the period 07:00 on 1 February until 23:59 on 19 February 2025

Closure of:

- Corporation Street between Darling and Longmarket Street

Fencing:

- Corporation Street 1.8 metres from KFC curb in the taxi zone from Darling to Longmarket Street
- Curb side fencing around the perimeter of Cape Town City Hall, Darling Street, Parade Street, and the centre of Longmarket Street.
- A pedestrian gate to be erected on the corner of Longmarket Street and Corporation Street.

PHASE 2 (Soft Lock)

Closure for the period 4 – 5 February 2025 from 06:00 until 23:59 (Rehearsal)

- Darling Street between

- Buitenkant and Lower Plein Street
- Parade Street between Darling and Caledon Street
- Closing Parade: Corporation Street from Longmarket to Castle Street
- Castle Street from Corporation to Buitenkant Street

Fencing:

- Extension of Annexure A
- Castle Street on the pavement in keeping with the tree line.
- Parade Street to Corporation Street from the left of the library door to the curb running on the library side of the curb to Corporation Street. Parade Street is to be closed with gates
- Darling Street closed at Buitenkant and Corporation Street with gates
- Darling Street is to be fenced on the parade in front of the statue, then dog-leg (bend) into the tree line and continue to Buitenkant Street.
- Buitenkant Street fenced on the parade curb from

- Castle to Darling Street
- Corporation Street fenced across the parade from Darling and Castle Street

PHASE 3

Closure for the period 4 - 5 February 2025 from 17:00 until 20:00 (Rehearsals)

- Buitenkant from Castle Street to Glynn Street (including all side streets)
- Roeland Street from Buitenkant to Brandweer Street
- Harrington Street between Darling and Roeland Street
- Roeland Street closed up to Hope Street to Brandweer Street
- Parade Street between Caledon and Darling Street
- Caledon Street between Parade and Corporation Street

Fencing:

- Closure for the period 6 February 2025 from 06:00 to 23:59
- Buitenkant from Castle Street to Glynn Street

- (including all side streets)
- Roeland Street from Buitenkant to Brandweer Street

PHASE 4

PARKING RESTRICTION

In the following areas from 16:00 on 5 February 2025 to 23:59 on 6 February 2025

- Roeland from Brandweer to Plein Street
- Commercial Street
- Buitenkant from Glynn to Castle Street
- Darling Street from Sir Lowry to Plein Street
- Hanover Street from Darling Street to Tenant Street
- Caledon Street from Corporation to Buitenkant Street
- Corporation Street from Darling to Albertus Street
- Parade Street between Albertus Street and Darling Street
- Plein Street between Darling Street and Longmarket Street

PHASE 5 (Hard Lock)

In the following areas from 05h00 to 23h59 on 6 February 2025

- Darling Street from Lower Plein Street to Corporation Street
- Longmarket Street between Plein and Corporation Street
- Corporation Street between Longmarket and Caledon Street
- Longmarket Street between Parade Street and Buitenkant Street
- Parade Street from Albertus Street to Darling Street

Fencing:

- Extension of Annexure B
- Gate to be placed on the corner of Lower Plein and Darling Street with fencing on both sides of the road interlocking at corners of Corporation Street
- Gate to be placed on the corner of Lower Plein and Longmarket Street.

Fencing on both sides of the curbs interlocking at Corporation Street

- A gate to be placed on the corner of Caledon and Corporation. Fencing on both sides of the curb interlocking at Longmarket Street
- Parade Street – Gate to be placed on the corner of Parade and Longmarket Street. Fencing on both sides of the curb interlocking at Longmarket Street
- Longmarket Street between the library and campus next to Buitenkant Street

PHASE 6

Road Closure 17:00 till 23:59 on 6 February 2025

- Lower Plein Street between Darling Street and Strand Street (Local Access)
- Plein Street between Darling Street and Spin Street
- Bureau / Spin Street

- between Adderley and Plein Street
- Darling Street between Adderley Street and Lower Plein Street

PHASE 7

Road Closure 17h45 to 20h00 on 6 February 2025

- Klipper Road, Newlands: from Main Road (M4) to Newlands Avenue
- Princess Anne Avenue, Newlands: From Newlands Avenue to Union Avenue
- Newlands Avenue, Newlands: from Dean Street to Princess Anne Avenue
- Dean Street, Newlands westbound: from Main Road (M4) to Newlands
- M3, Union Avenue, Rhodes Drive, Philip Kgosana Drive (De Waal Drive)
- Roeland Street, City Bound Carriageway: from Newlands Avenue to City Centre
- Woolsack Drive, Rondebosch, westbound: between Main Road (M4)

- and Rhodes Drive (M3)
- Anzio Road, Observatory: from Main Road (M4) to Philip Kgosana Drive (De Waal Drive) (M3)
- N2 Settlers Way City-bound carriage-way, from Main Road (M4) to City Centre
- Roeland Street: between Buitenkant and Brandweer Street
- Buitenkant Street: between Glynn Street and Darling Street

PHASE 8

Opening of road closure 00:00 till 06:00 07 till 10 February 2025

- Darling Street between Lower Plein Street and Buitenkant Street
- Parade Street between Darling Street and Caledon Street

Fencing:

- Curb side fencing will be installed around the perimeter of Cape Town City Hall on Darling Street

- and Parade Street.
- Corner of Darling Street and Buitenkant Street (fencing to be removed across Darling Street)
- Corner of Darling Street and Lower Plein Street (fencing to be removed across Darling Street)
- Corner of Parade Street and Longmarket Street. (fencing to be removed across Parade Street)

PHASE 9

Road Closure 06:00 till 23:59 from 11 till 13 February 2025

- Darling Street between Lower Plein Street and Buitenkant Street
- Parade Street between Darling Street and Caledon Street

Fencing:

- Parade Street on Library pavement with the tree line until Long Market Street, excluding the Library entrance
- Corner of Darling Street

- and Buitenkant Street (fencing to be reinstalled with gates across Darling Street)
- Corner of Darling Street and Lower Plein Street (fencing to be reinstalled with gates across Darling Street)
- Corner of Parade Street and Longmarket Street (fencing to be reinstalled with gates across Parade Street)



NB: additional short-term road closures will be affected as per operational requirements





OUR SOUTH AFRICA – THE SUN

The sun heals the divisions of the past, improves the quality of life of all South Africans, frees the potential of each person and builds a united and democratic South Africa, taking its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.



OUR PEOPLE – THE PROTEA LEAVES

Our people, building on the foundation of a democratic and open society, freely elect representatives, acting as a voice of the people and providing a national forum for public consideration of issues.



OUR PARLIAMENT – THE DRUM

The drum calls the people's Parliament, the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces, to consider national and provincial issues, ensuring government by the people under the Constitution.



OUR CONSTITUTION – THE BOOK

Our Constitution lays the foundation for a democratic and open society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights. It is the supreme law of our country, and ensures government by the people.