

STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT MBEKI AT THE UNVEILING OF THE THOKOZA MONUMENT

We meet here today to pay tribute to all the people of Thokoza and others in our country who lost their lives during the violence that engulfed not only this township but also many other areas of our county in the early 1990s and other periods of our history... We may support different political parties, worship at different churches and belong to separate cultural and social groupings, and yet, we are all Africans. We are faced with the same problems of poverty, unemployment and homelessness.

In the early 1990s we know that Thokoza was a place of terrible violence and hardships for the people who lived here.

Many of our sons and daughters, mothers, fathers and relatives died when one African fought another, when relatives turned on their own kith and kin, when it seemed as though we had, embarked on a path of self-destruction.

When we did all these terrible things to ourselves, we took a position which said that if I belong to the ANC then any member of Inkatha is my enemy and vice versa.

We are here not only to remember the tragedies in our past, but also to build the future. The Thokoza Monument must symbolise a new beginning. It must be a sign of healing and hope for the people of this area and for the whole of our country. With this monument, with this place of remembrance, we say that our future is one of mutual care, of sharing, of cooperation, of common efforts, of a common life as one people.

In the planning and preparation for the erection of this monument, the people of Thokoza have demonstrated to us that they can work together in peace, that there is a community at work with the common will to build a great nation.

From today let us all work together to make the Kathorus area a model which the whole of our country will follow.

Let us together rebuild communities that care for one another, where civic responsibility reigns supreme, where we all work hard to make our area habitable and where our youth enjoy the pleasures of youth, of playing sport together, of debating ideas and helping their elders.

Let us together create a peaceful, prosperous and better future for all our people. Those who died for our freedom will not be satisfied with anything less than our own commitment to a free and peaceful South Africa, a South Africa in which we shall banish poverty and underdevelopment.