

MEDIA RELEASE



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MEDIA STATEMENT BY THE DEPARTMENT OF WATER AFFAIRS AND FORESTRY

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The Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry, Mr Ronnie Kasrils, today planted a third tree in memory of Govan Mbeki as part of this year's Arbor Week Iviki Lezihlahla celebrations.

The first tree was planted on Thursday at Tamboville near Benoni and the second tree was planted in Thabang near Welkom.

Launching the Forest Enterprise Development at the Upper Mngqesha Community in the Eastern Cape today, Minister Kasrils handed to His Majesty King Sandile and Chief Maqoma historical paintings of their ancestors in the resistance wars of the mid-nineteenth century.

He handed King Sandile a painting of the Xhosa soldiers ambushing British soldiers in the Amatole Forest during the Frontier War of 1853. Chief Lent Maqoma received a sketch of his ancestor, Chief Maqoma, while imprisoned on Robben Island. Both King Sandile and Chief Maqoma's ancestors were key figures in the resistance during the mid-19th century.

Reflecting on the Bisho Massacre which took place almost to the day nine years ago, Minister Kasrils said in contrast to the dearth of basic services

in the area at the time, he has noticed an improvement in the delivery of these services in the province.

Speaking during the launch of the Forest Enterprise Development, Minister Kasrils said: “In South Africa as a whole we have an estimated 18 800 small-growers owning 43 500 hectares of plantations. This represents an investment of R41,8-million and will generate R220-million for growers.

“Unfortunately we can only say that 45 small-growers exist in the Eastern Cape representing less than 500 hectares of commercial plantations. We must increase this!

“Technical studies have shown that a further 60 000 hectares of commercial plantations could be developed in the Eastern Cape, on communally owned land. There are sufficient water resources in this province to support such growth.

“Development of this nature would create 3 000 direct jobs on plantations alone and generate an annual turnover of R150-million per annum before processing. Primary and secondary processing of this timber would create more employment and generate significant wealth for the people of the province.

“This is the reason that we are launching the Forest Enterprise Development Initiative. The job of this initiative is to help communities and small entrepreneurs to develop forest related businesses.”

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HISTORY OF KING SANDILE AS COMPILED BY PROF HLALENHLE, A RESEARCHER FOR THE KINGDOM OF RHARHABE, EASTERN CAPE

- **He was the first child of the great King Ngqika and Queen Sutu**
- **Born in 1821 at Burnshill near Stutterheim, Eastern Cape**
- **He was disabled and hobbled with one leg, yet he was a brave soldier and a thinker. He resolved peacefully many land disputes between the Xhosas and British Governors. He also negotiated peace deals**
- **He reigned over 40 Chiefs**
- **Like King Shaka, he unified various Xhosa tribes, including the Rharhabes into one powerful nation**
- **He was largely regarded as freedom fighter**
- **He defied orders by British Governors to resettle in Transkei because they wanted to turn Ciskei (where he lived) into a white homeland**
- **He loved education so much that in the 1870s sent his two sons, Gonya and Matanzima (not the former Transkei ruler) for tertiary education in Cape Town**
- **In 1847 he was sent to a British-run prison in Grahamstown and served a few months before he was pardoned by Sir Harry Smith, a new British Governor.**
- **Harry Smith tried to convince him to move to Transkei and when he refused Smith deposed him and put his wife Sutu as the reigning queen. This led to a revolt by King Sandile's supporters which led to the War of Mlanjeni from 1850 – 1853**
- **In 1878 he was killed and beheaded by Africans who worked as British agents. His body was buried at Sidenge which became known as the Hill of Fools near Stutterheim**
- **As was normal practice by the British rulers then, General Carrington took his head along back to his house in Britain where he kept it as a souvenir. However, Carrington's second wife**

disapproved the presence of an African native in the house and it was later buried in his garden

CHIEF MAQOMA

- **He was born in 1798 in Middledrift, Ciskei**
- * **He had a twin sister by the name of Nongwase**
- **He was widely regarded as a great soldier and a thinker. He was multi-talented**
- **In 1818 he excelled as a warrior during the War of Ndlambe and Amalinde tribes. He participated in all the wars**
- **He was twice imprisoned on Robben Island and spent half his life on the island for minor offences under Sir George Grey rule.**
- **He died and buried on Robben Island in 1873 at the age of 75. His bones were later fetched by Chief White Mbali Maqoma and reburied in a national shrine in Ciskei**