



HURISA
Human Rights Institute of South Africa

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Human Rights Institute of South Africa (HURISA) joins the outpouring of grief in South Africa and across the globe in tributes to the Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Mpilo Tutu, who passed on, on the 26 December 2021.

Archbishop Tutu was a human rights defender, who sacrificed his life for others under the unjust apartheid regime and in the new democratic South Africa. He faced life threatening risks defending peace, reconciliation, justice, equality and for spreading acts of love in South Africa. His selfless love and care for the poor, afflicted and oppressed is founded on his positive thoughts, compassion, righteous lifestyle and inspired many in the world. South Africa is admired for raising men with rare virtues as those the Archbishop exuded. He was the people's priest, moral compass, conscience and spiritual authority, the role model of the young, the masses, and revered in many communities beyond South Africa.

He was able to rise independently and fearlessly above persecution, harassment, intimidation, inhuman indignity the apartheid regime subjected him daily. There were times he shed tears in reacting to the overwhelming ferocious environments of the dark era. These ranged from a monkey foetus hanged outside his front door, for preaching justice, peace and reconciliation on the pulpit.

The Archbishop continued portraying uncompromised and unbiased justice to the people of South Africa in serving on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), one of the first democratically elected institutions. "I salute the Emeritus Archbishop for the sterling work he performed in leading this Commission", said Richard Goldstone, Retired Judge of Constitutional Court

The Goldstone Commission of Inquiry had ended with an outcome that paved way for the TRC process. It is unfortunate that little progress has been made to hold the suspects of the grave human rights violations accountable. The Archbishop's passing reminds us of our responsibility for kindness and protection of the afflicted and aggrieved.

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This includes reflection on the alienation and side-lining by the governing party taken against him for his pursuit of justice, peace and recondition. It is painful to reflect on the persecution from the ones that benefited so immensely from his virtues and ethical moral ground.

We remain perplexed by South Africa's rejection and withdrawal of a visa, to the Archbishop's beloved friend, The Dalai Lama's, a Spiritual Leader to enter South Africa. This came as a blow to the Archbishop for being denied the right to bring his dear friend for peace prayers in his home country, that was declining in human rights. The Dalai Lama is an exiled Tibetan living in India. It is regretful that South Africa preferred upholding a political and bilateral relationship over its human rights stance.

The lessons drawn from this experience must not be repeated. It is important to embrace the resilience of the former President Nelson Mandela in promoting human dignity, solidarity and support for victims of oppression and human rights violations. He was bold in guaranteeing South Africa's inclination to human rights and care of individuals, friends and survivors of persecutions unconditionally without any compromise.

HURISA is looking forward to South Africa's revival of human rights, justice, peace, reconciliation, and implementation of the TRC port. There should be no restriction imposed against those entering South Africa because of their struggle for freedom, good governance, human rights, accountability, and solidarity

May His Precious Soul Rests in Everlasting Peace. In quoting a scriptural verse for comforting his bereaved wife Mama Leah, his children and all the mourners in South Africa and beyond:

John 14:27: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid".

From HURISA Board of Directors, Executive Director & Staff
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