

Media Statement: Special official funeral for Isaac Lesibe “Bra Ike” Maphoto

President Cyril Ramaphosa has declared a Special Official Funeral for veteran freedom fighter Ntate Isaac Lesibe “Bra Ike” Maphoto who passed away at the age of 88 on Saturday 13 July 2019.

The President will also deliver the eulogy at Bra Ike’s funeral in Polokwane, Limpopo, on Sunday 21 July 2019. Further details of this occasion will be provided by the bereaved family in the course of the coming days.

In terms of the Presidential declaration, the national flag is to be flown at half-mast throughout the country with immediate effect, until Sunday, 21 July, as the day of the funeral.

The South African National Defence Force will perform ceremonial elements as part of the funeral proceedings.

Bra Ike left South Africa in 1961 and underwent military and political training in Beirut and the former Soviet Union between 1961 and 1963 before joining the senior Luthuli Detachment of uMkhonto weSizwe.

He fought in the Wankie Sipolilo campaign against the South Rhodesian Army (now Zimbabwe) from December 1967. This campaign was an alliance between uMkhonto weSizwe and the Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army to establish infiltration routes for liberation forces. Bra Ike was captured by South Rhodesian forces in April 1968 and sentenced to death. His imprisonment of more than a decade ended in 1980 when he was released by the government of the newly independent Zimbabwe.

In 2006, the then President Thabo Mbeki conferred the National Order of Luthuli in Silver on Bra Ike for his contribution to the struggle for freedom and democracy. The veteran fighter was similarly honoured by the Department of Military Veterans who presented him with the Order of Gold for bravery in August 2012.

Media enquiries:

Khusela Diko, Spokesperson to the President – 072 854 5707

Issued by the Presidency of the Republic of South Africa