# UDF 40-YEAR ANNIVERSARY
# NATIONAL CELEBRATION

## SUNDAY 20TH AUGUST 2023
## JOHANNESBURG CITY HALL | 13:00 - 17:00

## UDF40 DECLARATION | VALLI MOOSA

(As presented)

DECLARATION PRESENTED ON THE OCCASION OF THE 4OTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT.

JOHANNESBURG CITY HALL, SUNDAY, 20TH AUGUST 2023.

We, former members and activists of the United Democratic Front (UDF), gathered at the Johannesburg City Hall on the occasion of the 4Oth Anniversary and proudly recall the mass uprising of the 1980s.

Even 40 years later, it still constitutes the most significant mass democratic uprising the world has ever seen. The mass uprising was sustained, with unstoppable momentum, over an entire decade. Not even the detention without trial of 40,000 UDF leaders could stop the uprising.

The brutal killing of our comrades and the countless massacres by the forces of the apartheid regime only strengthened our resolve - who of us does not recall the mass funerals of the fallen?

We remember with deep sadness the many heroes and heroines who sacrificed their lives for our liberation. Our hearts still weep for you. It is a pain that cannot be overcome.

The power of the UDF resulted not only from the courage and commitment of its activists but also because it was a broad front of South African democrats: workers and academics; students and medical doctors; lawyers and writers; rural communities and city dwellers; musicians and sportspersons; bishops and imams; communists and liberals; black and white.

The UDF was launched to make the final assault on apartheid – regardless of the costs. We said, "Enough is enough!". The final attack on apartheid was conducted not by a handful of charismatic leaders but by the masses of our people themselves.

The rallying call was: UDF UNITES, APARTHEID DIVIDES!

The strategic objective was the creation of a UNITED, NON-RACIAL AND NON-SEXIST SOUTH AFRICA in which social and economic egalitarianism is practised.
It was a life-and-death struggle for human dignity. Through united mass action, the UDF rendered apartheid unworkable and the country ungovernable. The great South African freedom struggle resulted in the overthrow of apartheid and the adoption of a Constitution by the democratically elected Constitutional Assembly. The South African Constitution is today the pride of our nation!

South Africa has made tremendous strides:

- The long nightmare of apartheid and colonialism is no more!
- The civil service, the courts, and the professions are no longer a whites-only preserve.
- The provision of water, electricity, health, and education has penetrated the formerly neglected areas of South Africa.
- The people can choose their own government in regularly held free and fair elections.
- It would be difficult to find another country with more press freedom.
- We have an independent and courageous judiciary. Nobody is above the law.

South Africa is a different and better place! But sadly, our beloved country has many failings.

- Child abuse is rife.
- Unspeakable violence against women continues.
- Crime is rampant.
- Trains do not run, many hospitals are in a poor state, and many schoolteachers are delinquent.
- Many of our public representatives are not accountable to the people.
- Corruption in the private and public sectors is rife.
- The gap between the rich and the poor is unconscionable.
- The national wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few and is still racially skewed.
- After all these years, the pattern of land ownership remains unfair and unjust.
- Racism still rears its ugly head all too often.

But we declare today that we are not a helpless people! We commit ourselves to be Active Citizens. Many otherwise well-meaning patriots have allowed themselves to be driven into inaction. To do nothing only serves to play into the hands of the wrongdoers. We must refuse to be passive recipients of corruption, incompetence, and lack of accountability. The freedom we fought for has created the democratic space to exercise people's power. We must fully occupy this democratic space!

We, therefore, call on all South Africans:

- To work for the improvement of education by participating in school governing bodies and alumni organisations.
- To contribute to fighting crime by participating in Community Police Forums (CPFS).
- To support and promote Civic Organisations.
- To participate in Ward committees to ensure that Councilors are both empowered and held accountable.

- To explore the creative way in which to hold MPs and MPLs accountable to the public, every day – not just once in five years;

- To promote social compacts between government, labour, business, and civil society aimed at economic growth, the creation of a more equal society, the creation of jobs, and the diversification of ownership patterns.

- To promote awareness, knowledge, and love for the human rights contained in our glorious Constitution.

- To make the protection of the environment and the combatting of climate change everyone's business

And

- To keep the heartbeat of democracy alive by registering to vote and participating in elections.

Finally, we call on all South Africans:

- To speak up every day – let's not be complicit by being silent.

- Let us refuse to allow our history to be trampled upon or our future to be stolen!

(End)