



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

COMMITTEE MEETING**DATES:**

GDRC: 03/11/2020

EXCO: TBC

HRM: TBC

COUNCIL: TBC

DECLARATION SUBMISSION

SUBMITTED BY: Heritage Protection Unit

DATE: 29 October 2020

SAHRIS SITE ID: 130262

SAHRIS SITE CATEGORY: Burial Ground and Graves

SIGNIFICANCE CATEGORY (THEMES): Historical: Association with a person¹ and events or developments²

ENQUIRIES: Ms H. Weldon

ITEM: Proposal for National Heritage Site Declaration: The graves of Harry Themab Gwala, Elda Gwala and Lulu Gwala; located in the Gwala Family Cemetery, Swayimane Village, uMshwathi Municipality, Kwazulu-Natal

A1. BACKGROUND

A1.1. The graves of Harry Themba Gwala, Elda Gwala and Lulu Gwala are located in the family cemetery in Swayimane Village in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands. They have been identified as graves of national cultural heritage significance because of each one's own contribution to the liberation struggle and as a unit the representation of the disruption the Apartheid State's oppression brought to families and the tenacity and resilience of women and children of those involved in the Struggle. The graves as

¹ **Definition of Category:**

1. Historical Value

b. It has a strong or special association with the life or work of a person, group or organisation of importance in history

i. Importance for close associations with individuals, groups or organisations whose life, works or activities have been significant within the history of the nation, Province, region or community.

²

a. It is important in the community, or pattern of history

iii. Importance for association with events, richness of diversity of cultural features illustrating the human occupation and evolution of the nation, Province, region or community

tangible representations of their lives also represent the different generations of the struggle.

- A1.2. Harry Themba Gwala born on 30 July 1920, was a trade unionist, founding member of the South African Congress of Trade Unions, member of the South African Communist Party and the African National Congress. He made an indelible contribution to the Struggle against Apartheid and during the negotiations of the 1990s through his forthright leadership especially during a tumultuous time in KZN
- A1.3. The focus of historical analysis has often been patriarchal and linear on the main activist. The impact of families and wives have often been overlooked, yet they are often activists in their own rights and bore the brunt of the Apartheid's cruelty. As such Elda and Lulu played significant roles in Struggle. Elda led the opposition to forced removals and mobilized support, both financially and in terms of legal assistance, for the families of detainees. When Elda died in 1984, Lulu worked tirelessly in a campaign to have her father released.
- A1.4. 2020 marks the both the centenary of Harry Gwala's birth and 25 years since his death. The nomination of the site was made as part of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Arts and Culture centenary commemoration project. The Minister of Sports Arts and Culture has also requested that SAHRA finalise the declaration this year. Other projects include the
- A1.5. SAHRA is a member of the Harry Gwala Project Task Team and other projects include a webinar series, digital collection of his interviews, archival collection on Harry Gwala, donation of Harry Gwala's book collection, virtual lecture and 45-minute documentary.
- A1.6. The upgrading of the tombstones has also been included as a project which BGG are working with the family on.
- A1.7. The site was graded by the GDRC as a Grade 1 site on 15th September 202

A2. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- A2.1. *The grave of Harry Themba Gwala, Elda Gwala and Lulu Gwala are of historic value, both due to Harry Gwala's work within the African National Congress (ANC) and Communist Party and their association with events that contributed to the evolution South African politics. South Africa's emergence as a democratic state from centuries of oppression and racial segregation came at a cost to the lives of many people involved in the Struggle. The focus of the historical record in South Africa has often been teleological and patriarchal, with the experiences of children and wives often overshadowed by the focus on the main activist. However, at times entire families faced the wrath of the State, as it sought to silence those who opposed its unjust policies. The experiences of Harry Gwala, Elda and Lulu form part of a *longue durée* of the struggle against apartheid. Their graves, as a tangible reflection of their lives, represent the sacrifices and struggle of 'the family' in the fight for South Africa's freedom and democracy.*

- A2.2. *All three were liberation struggle activists in their own rights, with the story of their lives interweaving through the different generations of the Struggle from the emergence of mass resistance and protests of different social and non-racial groups, to the armed struggle of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s and the tenuous times of the 1990s.*
- A2.3. *Harry Gwala, Elda and Lulu's lives intersected in associations with individuals, groups or organisations whose life, works or activities have been significant within the history of the nation. Gwala's political activities and influence brought into the struggle some of the leading figures in the county's political landscape, for instance Moses Mabhida. This was done while he was a member of the ANC and Communist Party, which spearheaded the struggle against apartheid. Furthermore, his family went further and mobilised support from international organisations for the welfare of political prisoners and their families. Harry Gwala was posthumously awarded the Order of the Mendi for Bravery in Gold by the President of the Republic of South Africa in April 2010.*
- A2.4. *Elda became a pillar of Harry Gwala's life, especially after he was imposed with the banning order. It was Elda who became the point of communication and the one to take messages to various activists during the 1950s. After Harry Gwala's imprisonment in 1964, Elda not only became the leading figure in the family but was responsible for the opposition against forced removals. This eventually resulted in her harassment by the security branch. When Harry Gwala was imprisoned for the second term in the mid-1970s, Elda became the face of the wives of the detainees. She was the main connection with the ANC in London and International Defence Aid Fund to assist with legal costs as well as the welfare of the families of the detainees. Until her passing in 1984, she kept the ideology of Harry Gwala intact along non-racial lines. After the untimely passing of Elda, Harry Gwala appointed Lulu to be head of the family. Lulu did not only look after the family, but she began a protracted struggle to mobilise communities and progressive legal lobby groups for the release of Harry Gwala. Lulu established political partnership with the Release Mandela Campaign.*
- A2.5. *Further, the lives of Elda and Lulu Gwala represent the role of women, but also the role of families in the South African liberation struggle that has so often been neglected. Despite, being left to singularly raise their children, enduring police brutality and in some cases imprisonment and torture, these women through the own tenacity and resilience continued the liberation struggle in ensuring the realisation of a democratic non-racial South Africa. Their lives epitomise how apartheid was not just a political ideology but a disruption of lives and families of those who opposed it. The graves of Harry Gwala, Elda and Lulu are symbols of the triumph of the humanity against adversity.*

A3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A3.1. The graves of Harry Gwala, Elda Gwala and Lulu Gwala are identified as historically significant as a tangible representation of the lives of Harry, Eda and Lulu Gwala and their own individual contributions to the liberation struggle. However, as a collective they also represent the impacts imposed on families by the Apartheid State and the

cruelty families had to endure and their resilience, as well as the various generation of the struggle.

- A3.2. The year 2020 marks the centenary of Harry Gwala. Numerous projects were planned by the KZN Department of Arts and Culture, of which the nomination of the graves, received in August 2020, was one. As such the Minister of Sports Arts and Culture requested that the declaration is finalized within this year.
- A3.3. The graves are situated in the Gwala Family Cemetery which is maintain by the family. The family are also in support of the declaration. They did however raise concerns about the continued use of the cemetery and therefore it was agreed that just the 3 graves will be declared and not the whole cemetery.
- A3.4. SAHRA sent formal letters of notification to all relevant stakeholders on the 22nd September 2020 and held public community meeting and meeting with other stakeholders from 19 – 21 October 2020.
- A3.5. To date there have not been any objections and support has been expressed from the Gcumisa Traditional Council, Swayimane Community, uMshwathi Municipality, KZN MEC.
- A3.6. As the cemetery is maintain by the Gwala family SAHRA has started the negotiation with the family for a heritage agreement. The initial draft was presented to them at the meetings on 21st October 2020. There was concern about the security of the site and KZN Department of Arts and Culture has committed to upgrading the fence around the cemetery. The MEC has also requested that uMshwathi Municipality and KZN Department of Arts and Culture and SAHRA also assist where necessary.
- A3.7. It is recommended that the site to be declared as a national heritage site.

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1. PURPOSE OF THE SUBMISSION

- 1.1. The submission is made to discuss and recommend the declaration of the graves of Harry Gwala, Elda Gwala and Lulu Gwala situated in the Gwala Family Cemetery in Swayimane Village, uMshwathi Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal as a National Heritage Site.

2. LANDOWNER'S DETAILS AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS DECLARATION

- 2.1. The Cemetery is owned and managed by the Gwala Family, represented by:

Ms Lindiwe Gwala
gwambilp@gmail.com

Mr Linda Gwala
lindagwalaltg@gmail.com

- 2.2. The cemetery is situated on communal land under the Gcumisa Traditional Council, represented by:

Inkosi S.N. Gcumisa
C/O Ms B. Ngubane
Councillor
zmngubane@gmail.com

- 2.3. Both the family and the traditional council are in support of the declaration and have

been cooperative in the process. They did however raise concerns about the continued use of the cemetery and therefore it was agreed that just the 3 graves will be declared and not the whole cemetery.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND NOTIFICATION

3.1. The notification letters were sent on 22 September 2020 to the following:

- The Gwala Family
- Harry Gwala Foundation
- Gcumisa Traditional Council
- uMgungundlovu District Municipality
- uMshwathi Local Municipality
- African National Congress
- South African Communist Party
- KwaZulu-Natal Department of Arts and Culture
- AMAFA & Research Institute
- Department of Sports Arts and Culture
- KwaZulu-Natal Museum
- Msunduzi Museum

3.2. SAHRA received acknowledgement of receipt from the SACP who informed us that the matter has been sent through the structures for comments and endorsement. To date not further comments have been received.

3.3. SAHRA together with the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Arts and Culture and the Dr Dlamuka (the nominator) held meetings with the Gwala Family, Gcumisa Traditional Council, uMshwathi Municipality and the Swayimane Community from 19 – 21st October 2020.



Figure 1: Meeting with the Gwala Family



Figure 2: SAHRA Presenting to Swayimane Community

- 3.4. All parties are in support of the declaration and no objections have been received.
- 3.5. There were concerns regarding the management and security of the site raised by the family. As the custodians of the site, the family will continue with the maintenance of the site however, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Arts and Culture have committed to upgrading the fencing of the cemetery and the MEC has requested that the uMshwathi Municipality also assist and that the site forms part of the Municipality's Integrated Development Frameworks.
- 3.6. In addition, SAHRA published a public notice on the SAHRA website, all our social media platforms and SAHRIS.
- 3.7. In addition to the formal public engagement processes, SAHRA is a member of the Harry Gwala Project Task Team that is coordinating the Harry Gwala centenary commemorations. The declaration of the site has also been presented to the team.
- 3.8. There have been at least two media releases regarding SAHRA's intent to declare as well.
- 3.9. SAHRA received no objections to the declaration of the site

4. OFFICIAL DESCRIPTION OF THE RESOURCE (AS PER THE TITLE DEEDS)

- 4.1. The graves are situated in the Gwala Family Cemetery which is situated on the remainder of the Farm Gcumisa 16545 FT which is communal land under the Gcumisa Traditional Council.
- 4.2. As the cemetery is still in use and the family continue to bury relatives there, it was agreed that the boundaries will only include the three graves. As the graves are located near each other with no other graves in between them, they will be incorporated into one site, as per the image below.



Figure 3: Boundary around the graves of Harry, Elda, and Lulu Gwala

5. DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA TO BE DECLARED (SITE BOUNDARIES)

SITE NAME	FARM NAME	TOWN	MUNICIPALITY		PROVINCE
			LOCAL MUNICIPALITY	DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY	
Graves of Harry Gwala, Elda Gwala and Lulu Gwala	Gwala Family Cemetery on Gcumisa 16545 Ft	Wartburg	Umshwathi	Umngungundlovu	Kwazulu-Natal

Co-ordinates

Points	Latitude	Longitude
A	-29.52359274	30.69975706
B	-29.52362740	30.69977847
C	-29.52366099	30.69972057
D	-29.52362862	30.69969846

6. CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT OF THE RESOURCE

- 6.1. As the custodians of the site that is situated within the family's cemetery the Gwala family will continue to maintain the site.
- 6.2. SAHRA is in the process of negotiating the heritage agreement with family. The initial draft (ATTACHED) has been sent to the family who are currently discussing it among

themselves, with the aim to have a finalise agreement signed by the end of November 2020.

7. RESOURCE UTILIZATION

- 7.1. The site is utilized for commemorations of the life and work of Harry, Elda and Lulu Gwala, such as the centenary event that took place on 30th July 2020.



Figure 4: Centenary Commemorations of Harry Gwala (Image courtesy of Dr M. Dlamuka)

8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1. It is recommended that the declaration of the graves of Harry Gwala, Elda Gwala and Lulu Gwala a National Heritage Site is approved.


9. REFERENCES

Mxolisi Dlamuka, Connectedness and Disconnectedness in Thembeyakhe Harry Gwala's Biography, 1920-1995: Rethinking Political Militancy, Mass Mobilisation and Grassroots Struggles in South Africa, PhD Thesis, March 2018, University of the Western Cape.
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Date: 29 October 2020		Date:	

Recommendation supported by GDRC		Recommendation not supported by GDRC	
Mamakomoreng Nkhasi-Lesaoana Chairperson: GDRC		Signature	
Date:			

Recommendation supported by EXCo		Recommendation not supported by EXCo	
Adv Lungisa Malgas Chairperson: EXCo		Signature	
Date:			

Recommendation supported by HRM Committee		Recommendation not supported by HRM Committee	
Mr Motsaathebe Serekoane Chairperson: HRM Committee		Signature	
Date:			

Recommendation supported by Council		Recommendation not supported by Council	
Mr Moses Themba Makhweyane Chairperson: Council		Signature	
Date:			