

## PAC Sobukwe 33rd Anniversary Brings Hope to Shattered Gravestone

The Chief Executive of the NHC, Adv. Sonwabile Mancotywa visited the grave of the struggle veteran, Prof. Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2011 in Graaff Reinet. To his disbelief, he found the gravestone shattered in pieces. "It has been like this for a while", said the late Sobukwe's son who was part of the team that was assessing the extent of the damage to the grave. "My mother comes here often, about once a month to clean the grave and it is painful for her to see it in this condition every time", he added. The NHC has committed to assist with the restoration of the grave as part of the heritage properties that qualify to be on the Liberation Heritage Route. The route is a project of the NHC with government. It is aimed at recognising the significant contributions made by people and events in the liberation of South Africa. Ultimately, this route will be a network of sites that tell stories of the historic moments and active people over time.

"Although we would have loved to have the tombstone replaced before the day of the 33<sup>rd</sup> anniversary, we apologise to the ancestors to delay it until we have observed all heritage protocol that is required for the grave to still qualify as a protected heritage property. One of the considerations is to ensure that we relocated the broken tombstone to the Graaff Reinet Museum where an exhibition about the history of Sobukwe is hosted", says Mancotywa.

The Mayor of Graaff Reinet (Camdeboo municipality), Clr Japhta, condemned the vandalism and promised that the municipality will embark of a community and schools education campaign to teach the importance of the legacy of Sobukwe and respect for the resting souls in cemeteries.

The Chairperson of the PAC in the province, Mzwandile Nyontso says the vandalism of the grave is not politically motivated. Dini Sobukwe agreed with him whilst they were staring at the grave.

The grave of Sobukwe, the founding President of the Pan Africanist Congress will be restored in accordance with the required heritage protocol and consultation with all the critical partners such as the leadership of PAC, the Camdeboo Municipality, Provincial Department of Arts and Culture, the South African Heritage Resources Agency and most importantly the family.

Meanwhile the PAC will celebrate Sobukwe's 33<sup>rd</sup> commemoration of 26 February 2011 in Graaff Reinet. The NHC believes that it will be the last anniversary that is celebrated with the shattered tombstone. Work to restore the grave will commence soon after the anniversary with planning by heritage practitioners and stakeholders.