

Provinces To Map Liberation Routes

The National Heritage Council (NHC) is hosting Provincial Summits on the Liberation Heritage Route (LHR) project to ensure full participation and contribution of all communities and organisations towards the identification of Liberation routes throughout the country.

The Provincial Summits, which are funded by the National Lotteries Distribution Trust Fund (NLTF), are being conducted in order to consult with the public on the best ways to preserve our liberation history and list the sites with the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO.

As South Africa matures and settles well into its post-liberation era, a huge risk exists that the country might forget about the critical liberation milestones that have mapped the way to the freedom that the country and its people currently enjoy. Important information that resides with the custodians, struggle veterans and communities that have experienced historic events, may end up undocumented, if not attended to in the next few years.

The other challenge is the maintenance of the sites and their authenticity. Some sites may be lost to development by property developers, etc. The LHR is a project that seeks to preserve these memories in partnership with communities around the country.

“Potential heritage sites that are testimony to the liberation struggle of South Africa are being identified with their histories rewritten for posterity. Many of these sites, activists and events are unknown and may disappear from the historical landscape”, says Adv. Sonwabile Mancotywa, CEO of the NHC.

The LHR will be a network of heritage sites telling stories of South Africa’s liberation struggle and the road to democracy.

It is a project which chronicles the remarkable journey to national liberation. This national memory project is aimed at ensuring a durable testament of the hard-won liberation struggle by linking the narratives and footprints of struggle through different, but interconnected sites across the country. Some of the epochs that have been researched include:

1. *Wars of dispossession*
2. *The Modern Liberation Struggle and the Mass Democratic Movement*
3. *Early African intellectuals*
4. *Massacres and assassinations*
5. *Trials*
6. *Women’s movement*
7. *Youth and student movement*
8. *Labour movements*
9. *Religious organisations*
10. *Sport and cultural formations*

People are encouraged to contribute to the project by attending the Provincial Summits and motivating for places, struggle heroes and events that should be included in the Liberation Heritage Route. This information can also be sent to liberation@nhc.org.za

The Provincial Summits will take place as follows;

1. Gauteng – Gallagher Estate, Midrand, 31 March and 01 April
2. North West Province – Orion Safari Lodge, Rustenburg, 05 and 06 April
3. KwaZulu Natal – Southern Sun Elangeni, Durban, 12 and 13 April
4. Limpopo – Bolivia Lodge, Polokwane, 19 and 20 April

All Provincial Summits begin at 09h00 and the public is welcome to attend.