

Vandalised Grave of founding President of PAC to be Restored

The National Heritage Council (NHC) has in the past received numerous complaints from the public, including a letter from the Provincial PAC Chairperson, Mzwandile Nyhontso, about the state of the vandalised grave of their founding President, Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe. The grave is in Graaf Reinet, Eastern Cape.

The NHC, together with the Department of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture in the Eastern Cape Province will be visiting the grave site to assess the extent of the damage with an intention to restore it ahead of the commemoration, which normally takes place on the anniversary of the death of the struggle stalwart on 27 February.

The visit will begin at the Robert Sobukwe Museum in Graaf Reinet (corner of Kerk and Somerset Street) at 11h00 and proceed to the Graaf Reinet Cemetery.

Robert Sobukwe was jailed by the apartheid government and kept in solitary confinement on Robben Island. In 1960 he was regarded as the only political prisoner on the island.

“The grave of Robert Sobukwe is recognised as a beacon and a reminder of his contribution to the struggle history of South Africa. It is therefore an important heritage property to the country”, says Sonwabile Mancotywa, Chief Executive of the NHC who will be accompanied by the MEC for Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture in the Eastern Cape, Ms X. Tom.

The Sobukwe family and the Chairperson of the PAC in the Eastern Cape together with members of the PAC will visit the gravesite to assist in planning the restoration of the grave. There is a legislated process that needs to be followed in protecting historic graves such as that of Robert Sobukwe and the NHC intends to assist in this process.