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Special Luthuli Museum Edition: Celebration of Truth

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Newsletter

“2027: Year of Chief Albert Luthuli”



Mr Sandile Luthuli, grandson of Chief Albert and Mrs. Nokukhanya Luthuli at the UCCSA Groutville Church, 21 July 2026, declaring 2027 as the “Year of Luthuli”

The date of 21 July will forever be etched in the memory of both the Luthuli family, the Luthuli Museum and the many with vested interest in the preservation and promotion of the legacy of Chief Albert Luthuli.

On 21 July 2026 in Groutville, the Chief Albert Luthuli Foundation (CALF), the Luthuli Museum, the Norwegian Embassy in South Africa, the United Congregational Church of South Africa (UCCSA), the local KwaDukuza Municipality (KDM) jointly commemorated the 21 July 1967 death of Chief Albert Luthuli with a wreath laying ceremony at his grave. This year’s commemoration took place against the backdrop of the recent Pietermaritzburg High Court ruling that overturned the 1967 inquest that Chief Luthuli’s death was due to a train accident. Another backdrop is the 10 Year anniversary of the Luthuli Walk, an event which was started in 2016 to remember the 1967 final steps of Chief Albert Luthuli.

The year 2027 will mark 60 Years since the death of Chief Albert Luthuli. This is a significant milestone considering that the truth about how he died was revealed to all on 30 October 2025 by the Pietermaritzburg High Court.

The 21 July 2026 announcement by the Chief Albert Luthuli Foundation (CALF), to officially declare 2027 as the “Year of Luthuli”, could not have happened at any better time. According to Mr Sandile Luthuli, this anniversary year of his passing provides an opportunity to “correct historical records and reclaim the legacy of Africa’s first Nobel Peace Laureate”.

He mentioned that the declaration will be marked by efforts, nationally in South Africa and globally, to “update school textbooks, online databases, public records and museum exhibits to reflect the true circumstances of his death”. Added to that will be to reinforce the global awareness of his non-violent leadership and sacrifice in the fight against apartheid, including the international anti-apartheid network he worked with in this regard.

The Royal Norwegian Embassy in South Africa, represented by a delegation of embassy officials led by H.E. Anne Beathe Kristiansen, joined the Luthuli family to declare 2027 as the “Year of Luthuli”. The Director of the Luthuli Museum, Mr Brian Xaba, welcomed the declaration, and shared with the Luthuli family the museum’s interest to enter a formal partnership in realizing the set goals of the “Year of Luthuli”. He officially, jointly with the Luthuli family representative, Ms Nana Ngobese-Nxumalo, presented the Norwegian Ambassador a framed ‘Special Message of Recognition and Welcome’. The message not only thanked the Norwegians for recognizing Chief Albert Luthuli with a Nobel Peace Award (which globalized the struggle for freedom in South Africa), but also, “the enduring bond between Norway and South Africa – a friendship founded on shared values of peace, human rights, democracy and justice. Ideals Chief Albert Luthuli lived and died for.

The wreath laying commemorative event on 21 July 2026 indeed marked an important chapter in upholding the legacy of Chief Albert Luthuli.

For more about the Chief Albert Luthuli Foundation visit website www.calf.org.za or write to info@calf.org.za



Mr Imtiaz Cajee, the nephew of the late anti-apartheid activist Ahmed Timol, who died in police detention, on 27 October 1971

“Justice at Last: The Inquest into the Death of Inkosi Albert Luthuli and the Unfinished Work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission” –

Chief Albert Luthuli Research Chair

The 30 October 2025 Pietermaritzburg High Court judgement reignited the new journey to “correcting historical record” about the 1967 death of Chief Albert Luthuli. Its findings were that Chief Albert Luthuli died from a fractured skull, cerebral hemorrhage and brain concussion caused by a severe physical assault. Like the case of anti-apartheid activist Ahmed Timol (whose 1971 death in police custody was originally reported as a ‘suicide’), Luthuli’s death was established to be due to the actions of apartheid state security structures, and not a train accident.

The Timol family was vindicated with the 12 October 2017 Judge Mothle ruling that the anti-apartheid activist did not kill himself but was assaulted and tortured in detention before being pushed to his death from the 10th floor of John Vorster Square police station by security police. The 2017 reopened Timol inquest exposed that the 1972 inquest record was fabricated to find no one to blame for his death thus protecting the security officers culpable for his death.

The address by Mr Imtiaz Cajee, nephew of Ahmed Timol, at the UNISA Chief Albert Luthuli Research Chair Colloquium on 31 July 2026, provided an opportunity to reflect on the profound intersection between these two cases. For both the Timol and the Luthuli families, the judgements acknowledge that their loved ones were not victims of unfortunate accidents or isolated circumstances, but rather casualties of a violent system determined to silence voices for justice and freedom. Also, that the pursuit of truth has no expiry date. He emphasized that the work to reopen historical inquests in pursuit of the truth, should “not fall only to the NPA and the police, but should be treated as a national project involving government and society more broadly”. This is essential in South Africa’s ongoing pursuit of reconciliation, human rights, a dignified and better life for all.

The 31 July 2026 Colloquium took place under the theme, “*Justice at Last: The Inquest into the Death of Inkosi Albert Luthuli and the Unfinished Work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*”. The colloquium examined the reopened inquest into Chief Albert Luthuli’s death, the ethics of medical / forensic practitioners during the apartheid years; historical memory and transitional justice. The gathering at UNISA included academics, legal experts, forensic specialists and researchers. For more on the colloquium and presentations; including any information on the Luthuli Research Chair, readers are encouraged to visit the UNISA Chief Albert Luthuli Research Chair website on www.unisa.ac.za.

Did you Know?

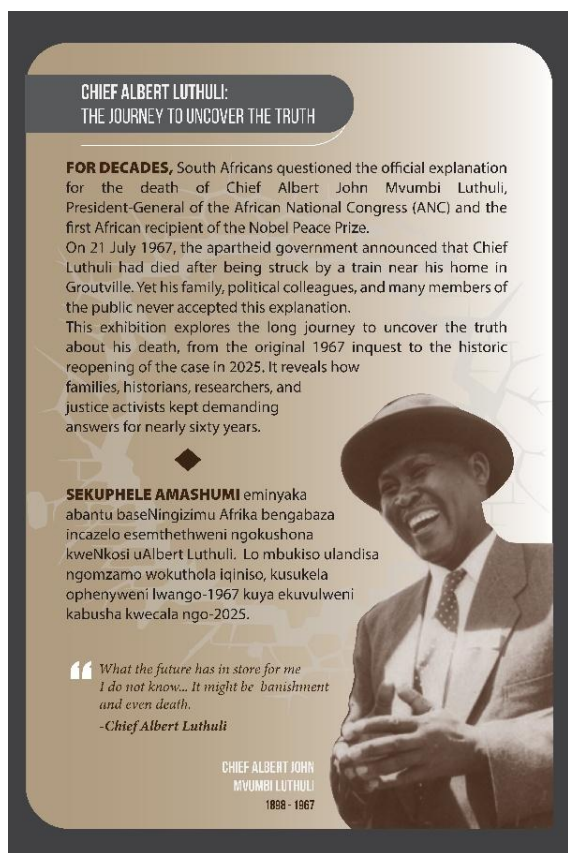
1. After the Ahmed Timol October 2017 ruling, **other reopened apartheid inquests rulings that were overturned in 2022** include, the **1982 death of Dr Neil Aggett** (trade unionist and medical doctor reported to have died by suicide) and **1969 death of Imam Abdullah Haron** (whose death was originally reported as an accidental fall down a flight of stairs).
2. The **National Prosecuting Authority (NPA)** and South African courts are “actively pursuing more than 20 reopened inquests and criminal trials regarding apartheid era deaths”. The well known cases include but not limited to; **The Cradock Four** (Fort Calata, Matthew Goniwe, Sicelo Mhlauli and Sparrow Mkhonto), anti-apartheid activists from Cradock, in the Eastern Cape, who were abducted, assaulted and assassinated by the apartheid South African Police Security Branch on 27 June 1985; **Steve Bantu Biko** from Grahamstown, who on 18 August 1977, was siezed by apartheid Securiy Branch, brutally beaten during interrogation and driven 1,200 kilometres from Port Elizabeth to Pretoria without medical treatment for his injuries. He died in custody on 12 September 1977, at the age of 30.

N.B For more information on the history of anti-apartheid deaths, the reader should visit the following sites:

www.saha.org.za ; www.justice.gov.za ;
www.sahistory.org.za ; www.npa.gov.za; www.fhr.org.za

The Journey to Uncover the Truth

Sharing the Legacy of the Chief Albert Luthuli Inquest



Caption banner of the Luthuli Museum travelling exhibition on the Chief Albert Luthuli Inquest

Following the landmark judgment that found that Chief Albert Luthuli's death was not the result of a train accident, but rather the consequence of assault, the Luthuli Museum has undertaken a range of initiatives aimed at ensuring that this important truth reaches communities throughout South Africa.

Central to this effort has been the Museum's travelling exhibition on the Chief Albert Luthuli Inquest and judgment. The exhibition has travelled beyond Groutville to communities in Blaauwbosch, Newcastle, and to the University of South Africa (UNISA) in Pretoria during the 2026 Chief Albert Luthuli Colloquium, enabling diverse audiences to engage with this significant moment in South African history,

In partnership with Durban based radio *Izwi Lomzansi 98.0 FM*, the Museum also initiated a radio documentary production project aimed at providing a platform for community members, historians, researchers and other stakeholders to reflect on the meaning of the judgment and its significance for truth, justice and historical memory. This collaboration demonstrated the power of community media in preserving heritage and making history accessible to wider audiences.

The judgment was further acknowledged during the 10th anniversary of the Luthuli Walk and Fun Run in July 2026. Hundreds of participants joined in a special prayer and a moment of silence to honour Chief Albert Luthuli and to reflect on the importance of the court's findings.

The annual wreath-laying ceremony on 21 July 2026 carried added significance with the attendance of the Norwegian Ambassador to South Africa, highlighting the enduring international recognition of Chief Albert Luthuli's contribution to peace, human rights and democracy.

The Luthuli Museum Researcher Mr Mthunzi Zungu attended the SAMA-KZN Regional Conference held at Talana Museum in Dundee from 21 to 24 July 2026. The conference was convened under the theme, "Museums Uniting a Divided World". He presented under the sub-theme, "Museums, Memory, and Difficult Histories" and his presentation was titled "*The Chief Albert Luthuli Inquests: A Comparative Analysis of the Ruling of 1967 and 2025*".



Former KZN Premier Dr Sbu Ndebele being interviewed by Mr Pat Zondi of Izwi Lomzansi 98.0 FM at the Luthuli Museum

While these programmes have helped advance public awareness, much more remains to be done. The judgment opened a new chapter in documenting, educating and preserving the truth about Chief Albert Luthuli's life and death. Continued research, exhibitions, publications, educational programmes and public dialogue are essential to ensure that future generations understand both the sacrifices he, and many others, made for freedom and the importance of historical justice in building a democratic society. Through these efforts, the Luthuli Museum continues to play a vital role in ensuring that the truth of this historic judgment remains part of South Africa's collective memory.

As custodian of this remarkable legacy, the Luthuli Museum remains committed to ensuring that the findings of the inquest continue to inspire reflection, learning and dialogue across South Africa

Through continued partnerships and community engagements, the Museum seeks not only to preserve history but also to ensure that the lessons of Chief Albert Luthuli's life, leadership and legacy remain relevant for generations to come.



21 July 2026 Wreath Laying at the United Congregational Church, Groutville. In attendance from **R-L**, Ambassador H.E Anne Beathe Kristiansen; Mrs. Veli Luthuli (behind her is Ms Nomhle Canca, granddaughter of Chief Albert and Nokukhanya Luthuli); KwaDukuza Mayor Sduzuzo Gumede and Ward 10 Councilor Mr Thubelihle Dube.



Prof Puleng Segalo, the Chief Albert Luthuli Research Chair on extreme left during the 31 July 2026 Colloquium on the Luthuli Inquest. From **L-R** NPA legal team on the Luthuli Inquest, Advocates Annah Chuene; Siyabonga Ngcobo and Ncedile Dunywa during the panel discussion.



In Prayer and Silence ...

The Rev Sandile Sokhela (in blue) of the UCCSA Groutville Church led the moment of silence and prayer before the start of the Luthuli Walk and Fun Run, 19 July 2026.

The UCCSA Church in Groutville is an important partner and role player in the preservation and promotion of the legacy of Chief Albert Luthuli.

Chief Albert and Mrs. Nokukhanya Luthuli's graves are at the Church graveyard. Both were active and faithful members of the UCCSA until the end of their lives.

As Chief Albert Luthuli once said,

"Let us set our spirit and conscience attune with the spirit of divine discontent that is within us and together with freedom-loving people elsewhere serve faithfully the cause of freedom in the world in general, and in South Africa in particular, and so help our beloved South Africa to march honourably with the rest of the democratic world to the liberation of mankind"

Source: Speeches of Chief Albert John Lutuli, Compiled by E.S. Reddy



Luthuli Walk Ten Years On

In the Footsteps of Chief Albert Luthuli

“One Legacy, One Community, 10 Years Strong”



The 1st Luthuli Walk starter pistol fired by Chief Albert and Mrs. Nokukhanya Luthuli’s grandson Mr Sandile Luthuli on 23 July 2016. Looking on is their daughter Ambassador Thandi Luthuli Gcabashe.

“May the Spirit of Luthuli Speak to Us All”

Founded in 2016 by local resident Mr Zakhele Gumede, the Luthuli Walk marked 10 years on 25 July 2026 under the theme, “One Legacy, One Community, 10 Years Strong”.



The event has grown into one of the Museum’s commemorative events and important platform for keeping the life, values and contribution of Chief Albert Luthuli to society firmly imprinted in public memory. Year after year, the Luthuli Walk has brought people together not only to celebrate his remarkable legacy but also reflect on the circumstances surrounding his death and the unanswered questions that persisted for decades.

Continued public participation in the event helped sustain awareness of the need for the circumstances surrounding his death to receive renewed scrutiny.

This event therefore can be counted among the many other initiatives and interventions that kept this important historical question alive and sustained the momentum that ultimately contributed to the reopening of the inquest into his death.

The Luthuli Museum expresses appreciation to every participant, community member, institution, partners and sponsors who has supported the Luthuli Walk over the years. Their contribution has helped grow the event from a commemorative initiative into an enduring platform for heritage, remembrance, social cohesion and celebration of Chief Albert Luthuli’s ideals.

We look forward with excitement for a new significant chapter of the event in 2027. The accompanying selected gallery of photographs serves as a visual record of the journey of the event, capturing the people, moments and the collective spirit that has carried the Luthuli Walk forward over the years.



LUTHULI MUSEUM

Opening hours:

Monday – Saturday:
08:30 – 16:00

Sunday & Public Holidays:
11:00 – 15:00



For more gallery of pictures visit the Luthuli Walk Website:
www.luthuliwalk.org.za -information/

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