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Date: 05 May 2025

To: All Media Houses

Subject: *Launch of the Azanian Veterans' Convention (AZAVEC)*

Azanian Veterans Convention (AZAVEC) Launched: Empowering a New Era of Liberation and Black Consciousness.

The Azanian Veterans Convention (AZAVEC) was launched in Soweto on Saturday 03rd May 2025 as an autonomous national formation composed of distinguished veterans who were involved in the anti-colonial liberation struggle under the banner of Black Consciousness.

A non-sectarian home of all Black Consciousness struggle veterans over the age of 60, it is rooted in the liberatory philosophy championed by Steve Biko. AZAVEC is also dedicated to popularising BC and its transformative ideals to guide the South African black community toward the attainment of dignity, equality, and self-determination.

AZAVEC was the brainchild of the BC flag bearer, the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO), but it is autonomous and independent of AZAPO and accepts members from other BC formations. The launch was attended by members of the Black Consciousness Movement United, AZAPO, and delegates as far afield as Kwazulu-Natal, Western Cape and Northern Cape.

Speaking at the launch, held at the Orlando Community Hall, AZAPO President, Nelvis Qekema, stated: "AZAVEC is indeed the brainchild of AZAPO but it is an autonomous formation. It should draw its membership from all the people of our country who belonged to the Black Peoples Convention (BPC), South African Students Organisation (SASO), and all the Black Consciousness organisations that were banned by the apartheid regime in 1977 and those that emerged since."

The launch of AZAVEC is not only to celebrate the past contributions of its members to the struggle for freedom, but to also pave the way for innovative engagement with the pressing challenges of today. It is a vehicle to harness the abilities and skills of the BC veterans into present day struggles.

Newly elected AZAVEC President, Pandelani Nefolovhodwe, said: "Our formation will host public forums, youth mentorship programmes, and intergenerational dialogues designed to merge the wisdom of our veterans with the vibrant energy of emerging generations.



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“This launch event served as a clarion call to action, urging members to actively propagate the Black Consciousness philosophy. In particular, we call upon all members to reach out to the youth, who today face the perils of drug abuse, an overpowering entertainment and crime culture, the detrimental influences of Western imperialism, and the nascent domination by emerging economic powers.

“Through education, mentorship, and community engagement, our veterans will play a pivotal role in rekindling the spirit of liberation and guiding the next generation toward a future defined by true freedom and self-determination.

“Our country today faces serious challenges, poor service delivery, heightened unemployment, unfulfilled promises, greed, and corruption, that demand collective action and renewed commitment,” Nefolovhodwe said.

AZAVEC stands as a unifying force in our society, inviting all who share this vision to join in our mission. Together, we will reinvigorate the legacy of Black Consciousness, ensuring that its transformative principles continue to inspire and steer Azania toward a brighter, liberated future.

A National Executive Committee was appointed comprising of the following:

President is former Robben Island prisoner, Nefolovhodwe; Deputy President is former detainee Ms Mmagauta Molefe; Secretary General is former AZAPO Secretary General and ex detainee Dan Habedi; National Treasurer former Anglican Bishop and Marikana campaigner, Bishop Joe Seoka; National Organiser is former detainee and AZAPO's first Secretary General, Nthibedi Tloubatla.

Other positions such as Secretary for Publicity and Information, Secretary for Welfare and Projects, as well as additional members from various provinces, are still to be appointed.

A second conference is to be held within the next six to twelve months to finalise the Constitution and other policies. The committee has been tasked to mobilise BC veterans over the age of 60 throughout the country and outside SA and encourage them to join in and reengage with the liberatory philosophy and contribute to the mission of AZAVEC.

For further inquiries and additional information, please contact: President Pandelani Nefolovhodwe
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Yours in struggle for liberation,

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