

MRS NONHLANHLA MILDRED KHOZA

KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Nonhlanhla Khoza was born in 1959 in Springvale, Ixopo on the Southern part of KwaZulu-Natal province. Born to a religious Nzimande family, she got married to the Khozas. She grew up as a humble, but formidable and courageous girl who soon joined the struggle for liberation at her prime age.

The 1976 Soweto uprisings saw her and fellow pupils from the Standard 6 class in Springvale Higher Primary suspended for two weeks after organising a prayer session in memory of the Soweto students.

Some of the activities entailed writing messages of support on the blackboards, calling for learners in the school to participate in the prayer, a campaign she and her cousin carried out with aplomb. Khoza's participation in that student activity put her in bad books with authorities, as teachers labelled her "*iPhekulazikhuni*" (the one who keeps on removing woods to check what is in between), a common name given to freedom fighters by apartheid security forces propagandists. The most apt English expression for that is rubble rouser. She was later sent to Pholela High School, a missionary school that was run by the Presbyterian Church.

Her political consciousness grew stronger at high school, characterised by several expulsions and the suspension of her elder brother from Fort Hare University strengthened her resolve for political activism in the region.

Since then, she never looked back, but pursued the dream of making the lives of her community better. After completing her matric under difficult circumstances, Mrs Khoza registered for Primary Teachers Diploma with Mpumalanga College of Education. Once again, her studies were disrupted due to her penchant for political activism. However, she managed to pursue her dream of being a teacher while she continued with the work of the ANC.

She furthered her studies with the University of South Africa and obtained an Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) Practitioner Certificate in 1999 and a Diploma

in ABET in 2001. Some of her other qualifications include a Councillor Development Programme from Vantage in 2003, AGT and University of Zululand in 2009, Local Government Councillor Practice Certificate in 2013, Advanced Project Management from Damelin Management School in 2017 and the Advanced Governance Public Leadership Certificate from the University of Witwatersrand.

Mrs Khoza has played many responsibilities within the liberation movement since the unbanning, including being a Voting District Coordinator, ANC Branch Executive Committee (BEC) member, ANCWL Branch Chairperson from 1994 to 1999. MEC Khoza was co-opted to the ANCWL Regional Executive in 1999 of the then East Griqualand, now known as Harry Gwala Region.

From 2001, she was elected as the chairperson of the ANCWL Regional Secretary for two terms. From 2006 she led as the ANCWL Regional Chairperson before being elected to the provincial structure in 2008 as Provincial Secretary, a position she served for two consecutive terms. She is currently the ANCWL KZN Provincial Chairperson following her election in 2017.

Through exposure to the struggles waged by the South African liberation fighters, Mrs Khoza worked tirelessly in the early 1980s, mobilising her communities to fortify the borders in defence of the struggle for liberation against the apartheid regime and its surrogates. She also played a critical role to ensure that her community take part in the country's first democratic elections in 1994.

Mrs Khoza has earned respect from her political foes and her counterparts in her organisation, the ANC. Her dedication to work for the poor saw her being elected into various leadership positions within the ANC and various spheres of government. The ANC has appointed Mrs Khoza to serve in a number of different committees, including Provincial List, Provincial Development and Provincial Interview Panel and Provincial Ethics Committee.

In 2000, the ANC deployed Mrs Khoza as a Proportional Representative Councillor for Ixopo, now known as Ubuhlebezwe Local Municipality. She served in the Finance Committee, Sport Committee and later nominated to serve in the Executive Council.

In 2006, the ANC deployed Mrs Khoza as a Ward 09 councillor in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality, where she served as an Exco member, chairing Rural Development - Local Economic Development and Tourism Committee.

In 2014, the ANC deployed Mrs Khoza as a Member of KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Legislature, where she served as a Whip. In 2016, she was nominated as a Chairperson of the Premier Portfolio Committee and served in the Legislature Disciplinary Committee.

Over and above being the Provincial Chairperson of the ANCWL, Mrs Khoza is the MEC for Social Development KwaZulu-Natal. She was deployed by her organisation - ANC to this portfolio, which is responsible for the protection of vulnerable groups. As MEC, Mrs Khoza has a responsibility to work together with different communities to curtail the scourge of gender-based violence. Mrs Khoza is married and is a mother of four, two sons and two daughters.