

## MEDIA ADVISORY

### Unisa's Thabo Mbeki African School of Public and International Affairs will host the 4<sup>th</sup> Mariam Makeba Public Lecture.

#### For Public Release

Date: Monday, 20 April 2026

The University of South Africa (Unisa)'s Thabo Mbeki African School of Public and International Affairs will host the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Mariam Makeba Public Lecture on Thursday, 23 April 2026 at the Unisa Muckleneuk Campus in Pretoria.

This annual lecture was introduced in 2023 by the Thabo Mbeki African School of Public and International Affairs (TM-School), in collaboration with the Miriam Makeba Foundation, as a fitting tribute to the enduring legacy of Dr Miriam Zenzile Makeba.

The lecture series has become an important intellectual feature and a platform for cultural dialogue or reflections on Miriam Makeba's contribution to Pan-Afrikanism, Afrikan Renaissance, and social justice through her influence on the global and continental stages. In this view, Mama Afrika, Dr Miriam Makeba, is not only recognised as a musician but also as a Pan-Afrikanist, freedom fighter, cultural diplomat, internationalist, and a voice against injustice and apartheid.

This year's lecture will be hosted under the theme, "***Miriam Makeba's Soweto Blues – Celebrating the Life and Legacy of a Revolutionary and Political/Cultural Diplomat: 50 Years since the Soweto Uprisings***", which will take place at a significant historical moment in South Africa marked by the following milestones:

- the 50th anniversary of Miriam Makeba's speech to the United Nations as the representative of the Government of Guinea Conakry, where she advocated for international solidarity against apartheid and imperialism;
- the 50th anniversary of the June 16, 1976, Soweto Uprisings, a defining moment of youth-led resistance that reshaped South Africa's liberation struggle and global consciousness;
- 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Women's March to the Union Buildings in 1956 and
- 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Constitution of South Africa in 1996.

The Lecture is part of the key deliverables for the Makeba Cultural Diplomacy Engaged Scholarship Project, hosted at the TM-School. In this context, it presents an opportunity to interrogate the interface between decolonised education, culture, politics, justice and international solidarity.

It will explore how cultural diplomacy served as a form of political intervention during the liberation struggle, with Miriam Makeba's United Nations speech in 1976 and the June 16 Soweto Uprisings serving as complementary historical moments. While the youth of Soweto confronted apartheid internally through mass mobilisation and sacrifice, Miriam Makeba confronted it externally by leveraging music, language, and moral authority on global diplomatic platforms.



It will also reflect on how Miriam Makeba's speech at the United Nations helped to boost the cause of freedom in South Africa and strengthen the political impact of domestic uprisings such as June 16, 1976.

By engaging with and analysing these events within contemporary debates on cultural diplomacy and memories of the Soweto uprising of 1976, the 4th Annual Miriam Makeba Lecture positions Mama Afrika, Miriam Makeba, not merely as a historical figure but also as a symbol of how culture and diplomacy shape international relations, solidarity, and global justice.

**Details of the Public Lecture are as follows:**

**Date:** Thursday, 23 April 2026

**Time:** 09:30 – 16:30

**Venue:** Senate Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Winnie Madikizela Mandela Building, Unisa Muckleneuk Campus, Tshwane

Members of the media are invited to attend and cover the lecture.

**–Ends–**

For RSVPs and interview requests please contact Senior Media Officers: Media Relations Tommy Huma on 072 218 6197 / 012 429 3981/ [humatm@unisa.ac.za](mailto:humatm@unisa.ac.za) OR Edgar Rathelele on 063 731 5456 / 012 429 6712/ [ratheme@unisa.ac.za](mailto:ratheme@unisa.ac.za)

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