



SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY

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**MEDIA STATEMENT 2024 | SAHRA & Others vs Dr Makaziwe
Mandela & Others**



The South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) acknowledges and respects the recent judgment of the High Court relating to the unpermitted export for exhibition or sale on auction of items associated with former President Rolihlahla Nelson Mandela. SAHRA's commitment to upholding heritage preservation principles is unwavering. Out of concern regarding the potential impact of the judgment on the preservation of heritage objects in South Africa, SAHRA, together with the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (the Department), and the Robben Island Museum (the Museum), lodged an application for leave to appeal the judgment on 28 December 2023. The application is pending before the High Court.

SAHRA has recently become aware of an impending auction of items associated with former President Mandela, including certain of the objects that are the subject of the ongoing legal proceedings. The auction is scheduled to take place in the United States of America on the 22nd of February 2024. In 2022 a similar auction was suspended, at the request of SAHRA, pending the outcome of the legal proceedings, which are now the subject of the application for leave to appeal and have therefore not reached finality. This situation raises significant concerns for SAHRA, the Department and the Museum and requires careful consideration due to the historical and cultural importance of the items at risk of sale.

SAHRA, the Department and the Museum are urgently assessing the lawfulness and implications of the impending auction, and considering all available remedies. This is not only to protect and promote a commitment to conserving South Africa's rich cultural heritage but also to contributing to the global discourse on responsible cultural heritage stewardship.

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