

Mandela's place in history

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

We humans can generate unspeakable evil. Our species' redeeming grace, however, is its equal ability to produce people who prove that no evil is too great to overcome. Of such individuals, none throughout the blood-soaked 20th century was more remarkable or more indelible than Nelson Mandela, who died on Thursday night at the age of 95.

In bringing to an end South African apartheid, Mandela not only dismantled a system that he rightly described as moral genocide. He laid the foundations of a new country, and turned the entire process into a triumph of forgiveness and peaceful reconciliation that may be unparalleled in modern human history. In doing so he established himself as the world leader all others looked up to – a byword for morality, humanity, statesmanship and vision, and an object of reverence whose legend only grew as he aged.

From the outset Mandela was a natural leader, with an internal discipline and sense of destiny that enabled him to withstand decades of imprisonment by his opponents. A lesser man – and with reason – might have remained forever embittered at the white regime that held him behind bars for 27 years. But while Mandela to the end of his days remained a revolutionary, the man

who entered jail as an insurrectionist emerged as a statesman of extraordinary political skills and surpassing dignity, seemingly without a shred of vindictiveness towards his oppressors.

You have to delve deeper into 20th-century

history to find anyone who bears comparison with him: Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, men who, in a violent world, accomplished what they did by non-violent means. Like them, Mandela possessed the ability to bring out the best, rather than the

worst, in people. Like them he inspired, in Abraham Lincoln's words, the better angels of our nature. Like them, he became a secular saint, a moral conscience for his times.

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Just think what might have happened had there not been a Nelson Mandela. Sooner or later, apartheid, like Nazism or Soviet communism, would have disappeared. But its passing might so easily have led to a racial inferno, begetting hatreds and revenge lasting generations. Thanks to Mandela, that did not happen. For that alone he will forever occupy an unmatched place in the history not just of his native South Africa, but of the world.



Life under apartheid

CNN ONLINE

For many too young or too distant to remember, apartheid is little more than a distant historical fact, a system of forced segregation to learn about in history class, to condemn and to move on.

But for South Africans who survived the decades of punishing racial classification, humiliating work rules, forced relocation and arbitrary treatment by authorities, the end of apartheid was the birth of an entirely new world, midwifed in large part by Nelson Mandela.

Ellen Moshweu was just trying to go to church. A police officer shot her in the back on that November day in 1990.

David Mabeka was at home in 1986, sleeping through a newly declared South African government state of emergency, when police burst in to his home and took him away.

A young black man, just trying to get

home, was thrown into the back of a police van and taken to jail despite the indignity of presenting a white police officer valid identity papers. The officer crumpled the pass at the man's feet and took him to jail anyway.

This was apartheid.

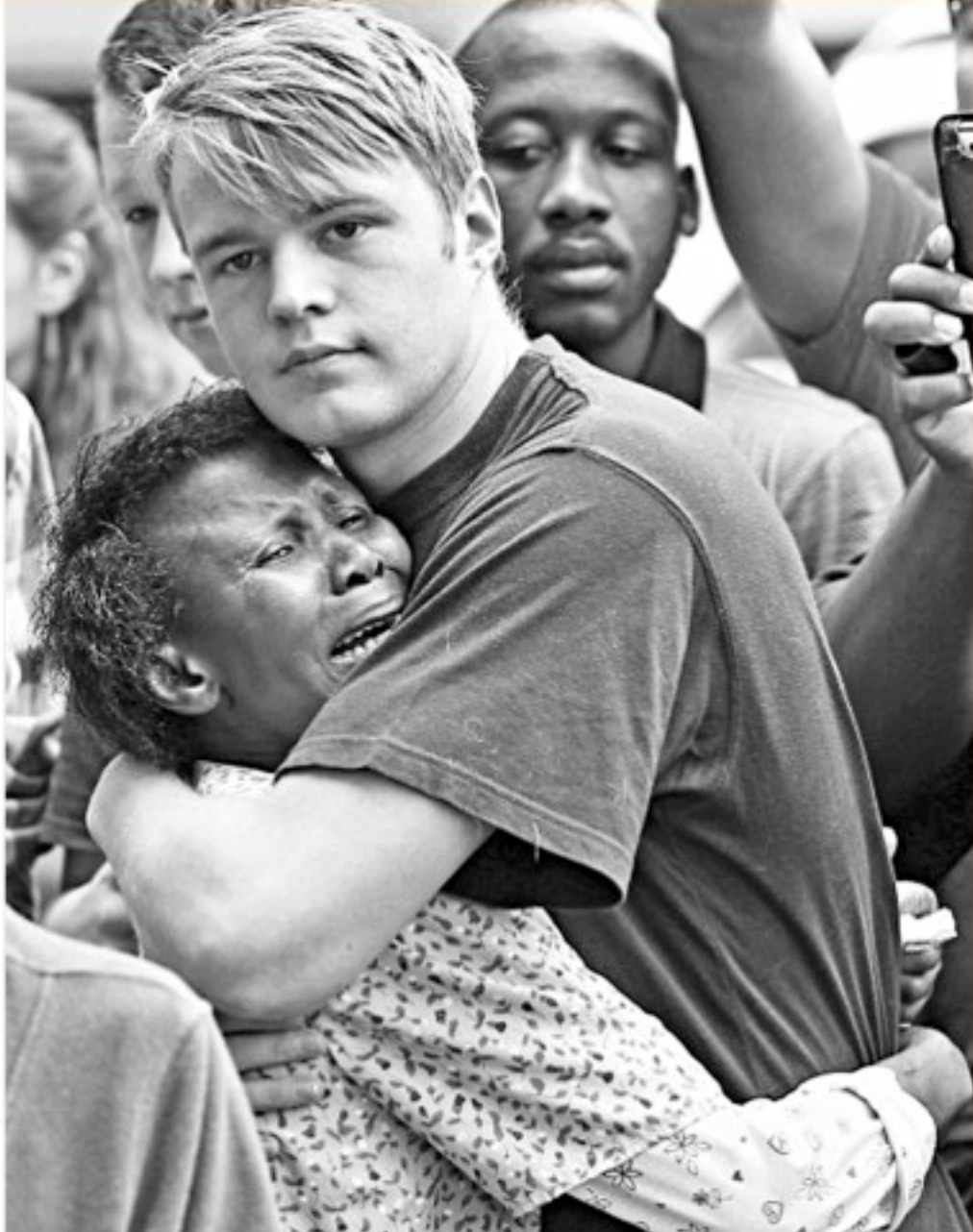
Between 1949 and 1953, South African lawmakers passed a series of increasingly oppressive laws, beginning with prohibitions on blacks and whites marrying in 1949 and culminating with laws dividing the population by race, reserving the best public facilities for whites and creating a separate, and inferior, education system for blacks.

One of the laws, the Group Areas Act, forced blacks, Indians, Asians and people of mixed heritage to live in separate areas, sometimes dividing families. A system of passes and identity papers controlled where blacks could travel and work.



(Clockwise from top left) A woman cries after placing flowers in front of a picture of late Nelson Mandela in Cape Town; women dance as they take part in a commemorative ceremony in Johannesburg; a white man comforts a black women after the death of the anti-apartheid leader; and people dance and sing during a candle light vigil outside the South African Consulate in New York, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS



Song, dance, tears for Madiba

AP, Johannesburg

Themba Radebe spun slowly in a circle. First he pointed his cellphone camera at a group of children chanting Nelson Mandela's name as they waved posters of the anti-apartheid champion.

Then pivoting to his right, Radebe aimed his camera at a swaying group of adults who sang in Zulu while rocking and clapping.

A day after Mandela's death at 95, South Africans of all colors erupted in song, dance and tears Friday in emotional celebrations of the life of the man who bridged this country's black-white divide and helped avert a race war. The mood was simultaneously celebratory and somber at the impromptu street festival where Radebe filmed scenes to share with his family.

"I'm too emotional. The tears flow too easily," said the balding 60-year-old, his eyes sparkling with tears as he reflected on how South Africa's race relations have improved – "not perfect, but much better" – compared with his childhood in the black township.

On Vilakazi Street in Soweto, where Mandela lived as a young man, 26-year-old Vathiswa Nongogo brought her 3-year-old daughter Konwabo to soak in the celebratory atmosphere. The crowd was mostly black, but mourners both white and black said Mandela transcended race.

Helen Zille, leader of South Africa's official opposition party, the Democratic Alliance, and premier of the Western Cape, the only province not controlled by the African National Congress party, agreed.

"We all belong to the South African family – and we owe that sense of belonging to Madiba. That is his legacy."

Marriage ended, but the bond was never broken

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE

Their love affair ended more than 20 years ago yet the evidence of the past few weeks is that a fundamental bond was never severed.

Winnie Madikizela-Mandela could be seen almost daily visiting her former husband Nelson Mandela at the Mediclinic heart hospital in Pretoria. Although they divorced in 1996, observers might be forgiven for inferring that they remained the loves of each other's lives to the end.

Madikizela-Mandela continued to be a presence in Mandela's life in recent years despite his remarriage in 1998. Indeed, she was sometimes seen laughing and joking with her successor, Graça Machel. Never shy of the spotlight, she is likely to be a central figure in the days of mourning and preparation for the funeral.

At 76, Madikizela-Mandela is a giant of South African history, the subject of books, films and controversy. She was regularly detained by the apartheid government. She was tortured, subjected to house arrest, kept under surveillance, held in solitary confinement

for a year and banished to a remote town.

After a divorce from his first wife Evelyn, Mandela married Winnie in 1958. But soon he went underground and, in 1962, was put on trial. He would spend 27 years in prison, separated from his wife and their two daughters by the dividing glass screen of the visitor room.

On 11 February 1990, she was at her husband's side when he walked free from prison, making inevitable their victory over apartheid. But the marriage was dead and it was widely reported that she was having an affair with lawyer Dali Mpofu. In 1992, Mandela announced South Africa's most famous love story was over.

Still an ANC MP and living in Soweto, Madikizela-Mandela has since continued to divide opinions but has never been banished from the former president's home. She once recalled: "I had so little time to love him. And that love has survived all these years of separation ... perhaps if I'd had time to know him better I might have found a lot of faults, but I only had time to love him and long for him all the time."



Winnie and Nelson Mandela

Iran diplomacy to be backed by military power: US

35,000 troops to stay in Gulf; IAEA team to visit Arak

AFP, Manama

Diplomacy with Iran must be backed up by US military might, Pentagon chief Chuck Hagel said yesterday in a speech addressed to Gulf allies anxious over a nuclear deal with Tehran.

Hagel promised the United States would maintain a 35,000-strong force in the Gulf region, as well as an armada of ships and warplanes, despite the recent deal with Tehran.

Speaking at a security conference in Bahrain, he said the interim deal with Iran to roll back its nuclear programme was a risk worth taking but that Western diplomacy should not be "misinterpreted."

"We know diplomacy cannot operate in a vacuum," he said.

"Our success will continue to hinge on America's military power, and the credibility of our assurances to our allies and partners in the Middle East."

The Pentagon "will not make any adjustments to its forces in the region -- or to its military planning -- as a result of the interim agreement with Iran," he added.

A senior US defence official, who spoke

on condition of anonymity, told reporters the speech sent a message of solidarity to Gulf allies while also conveying a warning to adversaries "that any sort of mythology of American retreat is just wrong-headed."

Gulf allies, especially Saudi Arabia, are concerned over a November 24 interim accord between world powers and Iran that offers limited relief from Western sanctions in return for Tehran rolling back elements of its nuclear programme.

The nuclear deal has strained US relations with the mostly Sunni Gulf Arab states that view Shia Iran as a dangerous rival.

Hagel acknowledged "anxieties" in the Gulf were running high.

"Questions have been raised about America's intentions, strategy, and commitment to the region," he said.

But he promised the United States "will remain fully committed to the security of our allies and our partners in the region."

Meanwhile, inspectors from the UN nuclear watchdog arrived in Iran yesterday to visit the still-unfinished Arak heavy water plant for the first time in more than two years, the ISNA news agency reported.

NEWSINbrief

Egypt frees female Morsi protesters

AFP, Cairo

Egyptian appeals courts yesterday ordered 14 women jailed after a protest to be freed, reducing 11-year prison terms to one-year suspended sentences, as seven girls were also ordered released. The 21 were all convicted of taking part in a violent protest demanding Islamist president Mohamed Morsi's reinstatement following his overthrow by the army in July.

US war veteran released from N Korea

AFP, Seoul

North Korea yesterday released a detained American veteran of the Korean War as US Vice President Joe Biden visited the world's last Cold War frontier. US officials said Merrill Newman, an 85-year-old from California, headed home after arriving in Beijing. North Korea deported him "from a humanitarian viewpoint", its official Korean Central News Agency said.

Tejpal's custody extended by four days

PTI, panaji

Telheka editor Tarun Tejpal's police custody was extended by four days by a Goa court over a sexual assault case filed by one of his subordinates. The Goa police crime branch had made an application seeking more time to interrogate Tejpal in custody.

67% of India's RS members millionaires

TNN, New Delhi

Over two-thirds of Rajya Sabha members (67%) are crorepatists while 17% have criminal cases pending against them, according to latest data analyzed by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR). In a report based on analysis of 227 out of 245 Rajya Sabha members – excluding the 12 nominated members and seats lying vacant – ADR said 38 members have declared criminal cases against them, out of which 15 (7%) face serious criminal cases.

UK Marine jailed 10 yrs for Taliban killing

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE

The Royal Marine convicted of murdering a wounded Taliban insurgent will start a life sentence in a civilian prison tomorrow after being told he will serve at least 10 years behind bars for betraying and tarnishing the reputation of all British forces.

Jailing Sergeant Alexander Blackman the judge said the court had to deal with him severely to show the international community that battlefield crimes by UK troops would not be tolerated.



Gracie Taylor, left, offers her candle to help light one for Sophia Anderson (R) during a candlelight vigil for Nelson Mandela at Leimert Park in Los Angeles, California, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP