



## **EFF STATEMENT ON THE PASSING OF AFRICAN JAZZ AND OPERA MAESTRO SIBONGILE KHUMALO**

Thursday, 28 January 2021

The EFF is deeply saddened by the passing away of legendary singer Sibongile Khumalo. Dr Sibongile Khumalo suffered from a stroke and succumbed to the complications thereof earlier on the 28/01/2021.

The Soweto-born musician surprised many South Africans in the 90s with her clear strong opera voice which has lingered in our musical history ever since. At the time she was one of the few musicians who had studied music and inspired many young black musicians to take up studies in the Arts. She has since went on to win many awards and in 2009 she was bestowed an Honorary Degree by Rhodes University.

She began her musical journey at the age of eight, studying violin, singing, drama and dance. She further worked in independent institutions as a music teacher, administrator and researcher, including at the Madimba Institute of African Music based at the Funda Centre in Soweto. Mam Khumalo's music epitomized a celebration of life, love and healing – which nourishes the souls of diverse audiences all over South Africa and beyond. She also used her talent to teach and mentor young performers.

Throughout her career, MamTungwa as she was sometimes affectionately called, has won a myriad of awards such as the Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Music in 1993, four South African Music Awards for her light music and jazz recordings, and three FNB Vita Awards for her opera and concert work. She has also been conferred with honorary doctorates by Rhodes University, the University of Zululand, and the University of South Africa.

MamTungwa, was more than a legendary figure in African music. Her ability to transcend musical genre demarcations, smoothly sliding between opera, Jazz, choral, traditional and any other genre with amazing ease is what has made her an epic legend of our musical platform. She was a true artist.

MamTungwa was a dedicated mother to her three children, and she was a familiar voice on social issues. She raised her voice against Gender Based Violence and she was one of the few non-partisan social voices on issues of importance. We will remember her as the bubbly, ever smiling, ever laughing mother, sister and friend of most who came across her.

This is the fourth most significant passing away of a legend of African music in this month of January after the passing away of Hugh Masekela, Oliver Mtukudzi, and recently, Jonas Gwangwa who will be laid to rest a day after the passing away of Mam-Sibongile. Perhaps this month should be declared the #MonthOfAfricanMusic here in South Africa. A month in which focus is pulled on all kinds of genres of Music available in the African continent. Not only will this help to immortalise these legends and many others, but it will conscientize South Africa of the musical universe that resides in their continent.

The EFF sends its condolences to the family and friends of MamSibongile Khumalo. We send words of strength to those who worked closely with this musical giant. And to all South Africans, while this is a sad chapter in our musical history, let us celebrate the life of MamSibongile because her legend has given rise to much more talent in our country. May her soul rest in peace.

**ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS**

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