

How do we commemorate Mandela Day in South Africa this year?

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This past while, South Africans have witnessed harrowing scenes of unrest that have left us shocked and surprised, and have reminded us of scenes from our painful past we would have preferred to forget by now. Particularly to those who are familiar with the reasonable comfort of the democratic dispensation, the images have been terrifying, casting serious doubt on our country's prospects.

The scenes – experienced personally by many South Africans – create a sense of nervousness because we know that true stability is prized and hard to achieve, especially in societies with high levels of inequality, corruption, joblessness and lawlessness, and where hopelessness persists. This is true of many of our communities at present, and is further compounded by a devastating ongoing pandemic. Add to that poor political will and (very public) infighting among the ruling parties, and you've more or less captured what South Africans are up against today.

Various commentators have warned not to be overly shocked and surprised, precisely because we know that stability is currently an even more difficult ideal to attain. We have high levels of lawlessness, violence and corruption, and a school system that is failing our country and its children.

So, what are we to do about Mandela Day?

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