



SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY

# SAHRA MEDIA STATEMENT

NOTIFICATION OF THE INTENTION TO DECLARE  
THE GRAVE OF SOLOMON POPOLI LINDA

12 March 2025

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AN AGENCY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE



## PUBLIC NOTICE – NOTIFICATION OF THE INTENTION TO DECLARE THE GRAVE OF SOLOMON POPOLI LINDA

The South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) intends to declare the grave of Solomon Popoli Linda; grave number 4875, located at the Doornkop Cemetery, Zola Township, Johannesburg, Gauteng Province a National Heritage Site in line with the provisions of section 27(1) of the National Heritage Resources Act No 25 of 1999 (referred to henceforth as “NHRA”)

The grave of Solomon Linda is of pivotal cultural significance to South Africa as it encapsulates the broader impact of colonialism, particularly its theft and exploitation of African people’s cultural heritage without recognition. Linda, a music artist whose rendition of the Imbube in the 1930s went to become a great ‘hit’ in South Africa and in other parts of the world, particularly in the United States of America. Despite Linda’s success in South Africa, the socio-political context of the 1930s granted Africans menial rights; thus, depriving them of economic benefit from their talents. As notes, “Black South Africans had no legal rights in the 1930s and while alive Solomon Linda was not aware of what royalties were...” This forced Linda to sell rights for his song for 10 shillings leaving him destitute to the time of his death in 1960. Furthermore, neither did he nor his descendants receive royalties for his creative work despite the reworking and popularisation of his work. In fact, others claimed royalties while refusing to acknowledge Linda’s role. As Peter Alegi & Chris Bolsmann have noted in their book, Africa’s World Cup: Critical Reflections on Play, Patriotism, Spectatorship, and Space, “The most memorable example of the theft of intellectual rights of an African artist is that of Solomon Linda who in 1939 wrote the song Mbube and received 10 shillings (less than \$2) for his efforts.

*“In addressing the nation on 24 September 2022, President Cyril Ramaphosa stated, “The tragedy that befell Solomon Linda, the great injustice that was done to him, must never again visit any of our artists...In today’s modern age, this exploitation has taken new forms such as plagiarism, cultural and intellectual property appropriation and copyright theft. Struggling artists are taken advantage of and strong-armed into giving up their rights and their royalties.”<sup>26</sup> Linda’s grave therefore captures broadly the discontinuities and continuities of cultural appropriation of creative talent for profit without due acknowledgement of its creator. Its significance speaks to a practice that prevails with the Arts and Culture sector post the democratic dispensation* The South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) has identified the site as having qualities so exceptional that it is of special national significance and warrants the declaration as a National Heritage Site.

**Your comments regarding our intention are highly appreciated. For more information and to send us your comments and opinions, please indicate by ticking the boxes below, or scan the QR code above and visit our website at [www.sahra.org.za](http://www.sahra.org.za). Email form to [declarationscoms@sahra.org.za](mailto:declarationscoms@sahra.org.za)**

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