

# Late Rev Benson Vulindlela Nsimbi remembered as hero of the 'seven day war' during memorial lecture

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KZN Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo has paid tribute to the late ANC stalwart, the Rev Benson Vulindlela Nsimbi, describing him as an unsung hero who helped scores of people who were affected by political violence in the province.

During a memorial lecture held at Amajuba District recently, MEC Dhlomo described Rev Nsimbi as a brave and dynamic political giant who notably risked his life when giving shelter to people who were displaced by the infamous Seven Day War.

The war took place from 25 – 31 March 1990, and claimed the lives of more than 200 residents of Vulindlela and Edendale in Pietermaritzburg. More than 30 000 people were forced to flee the area, while three thousand homes were vandalised and burnt.

*“Bab’uNsimbi’s bravery was shown after people were massacred and maimed during the Seven Day War. He was there to comfort the families, and make arrangements for the accommodation of the displaced. He would take the deceased to the mortuaries, and also help bury a lot of them. That comforted a lot of South Africans but also created enemies for him, especially among those who were in favour of the violence. They became angry and wanted to know why he was supporting them. But we are extremely happy that he made such a remarkable mark and contributed to the lives of South Africans,”* said MEC Dhlomo, earlier this week.

He added that he was also personally touched by Rev Nsimbi’s courage and generosity of spirit when he agreed to officiate at his (MEC Dhlomo’s) wedding in April 1987.

*“Nobody had been willing, but through the support of our lawyers Linda Zama, Kwenza Mlaba, and Bheka Shezi, Rev Nsimbi came in and married us on 13 April 1987, just a week before we were sentenced.”*

The lecture was also attended by the local government leadership at Amajuba, as well as relatives of Nelson Mandela and Albertina Sisulu families, whose centenaries are being celebrated this year. Rev Nsimbi passed away on 21 November 2014 at his home in Mfume on the South Coast of KZN, where he had become a farmer. He was married to Mrs Thokozile MaNgidi Nsimbi, and they had four children.

*“We are happy that we’ve had such a remarkable man in our lives, who has made such a serious dedication and a life that was well-lived. I think we’ve not celebrated his life enough and we wish that some of us can emulate his good life,”* said MEC Dhlomo.

Hon. Speaker in the KZN Provincial Legislature Ms Lydia Johnson handed over a token of appreciation to Nsimbi’s family, for his *“dedication, activism, passion and compassion in advancing the Struggle for Senior Citizens’ Rights.”*

