



**MINISTRY: SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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MEDIA STATEMENT

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**MINISTER NATHI MTHETHWA ENCOURAGED BY COMMITMENT OF AUCTION
HOUSE TO POSTPONE AUCTION AND RETURN KEY TO MADIBA'S PRISON
CELL**

Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture, Nathi Mthethwa, commended United States based Guernseys Auction House for agreeing to suspend its intended auction, scheduled for 23 January 2022, of the key to President Nelson Mandela's prison cell at Robben Island. This key is considered part of the national estate in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act.

The key symbolises South Africa's painful history whilst also representing triumph of the human spirit over evil. This key is living proof of South Africans' long walk to freedom and belongs to the people of South Africa. It therefore must rightfully be returned to the country.

Guernseys has undertaken to arrange for the key to be returned to South Africa in consultation with relevant South African authorities. Details of such arrangements will be made available to the public at an appropriate time.

Guernseys have also agreed to halt the sale of various other items which belonged to President Nelson Mandela. The South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) believes that such items also form part of the national estate. SAHRA has been communicating with Guernseys on the key and other items which belonged to President Nelson Mandela.

Minister Mthethwa is of the view that SAHRA must engage the Mandela family and Nelson Mandela Foundation with a view to establishing whether all other items intended for auctioning form part of the national estate.

The successful conclusion to the intended auction was enabled through an interdepartmental team with relevant agencies. These included the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, Department of International Relations and Cooperation and Department of Justice and Correctional Services as well the South African Heritage Resources Agency, Robben Island Museum, Office of the Solicitor General and Office of the Chief State Law Advisors.

ENDS/

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