



correctional services

Department:
Correctional Services
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

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Work Commences on Nelson Mandela Rules Training Academy at Drakenstein Correctional

The Drakenstein Management Area Training Centre was a hive of activity today as the Department of Correctional Services, in partnership with key stakeholders including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), officially commenced refurbishment work to transform the facility into the Nelson Mandela Rules Training Academy. This symbolic launch took place on Nelson Mandela Day.

The Academy, which will be the first of its kind in Africa to focus exclusively on the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, known as the Nelson Mandela Rules, is scheduled for official opening in February 2026 during the annual 27 for Freedom Race.

Leading the initiative were Minister of Correctional Services, Dr Pieter Groenewald, Deputy Minister Lindiwe Ntshalintshali, and National Commissioner, Makgothi Samuel Thobakgale who joined departmental staff and partners in hands-on efforts, including tile removal and painting, as part of the launch activity.

Minister Groenewald highlighted the importance of the day, stating, “Nelson Mandela represented hope, having spent 27 years behind bars and rising to become an international icon. His life teaches us that even those in incarceration can transform and inspire. The Nelson Mandela Rules serve to uphold human dignity and remind us of the moral compass Madiba was, not only to South Africa but to the world.” He further urged society to respect the property and rights of others, emphasising that justice, rehabilitation, and reintegration are only possible when principles are upheld both inside and outside prison.

Deputy Minister Ntshalintshali echoed the sentiment, underscoring Madiba’s legacy in transforming prisons into centres of rehabilitation. “This Academy is a reaffirmation of our commitment to education, correction, and the advancement of human rights in incarceration,” she said. “It will serve as a knowledge hub, not only for South African officials but for the globe, fostering international cooperation in the implementation of the Nelson Mandela Rules.”

The Nelson Mandela Rules Training Academy marks a new chapter in advancing humane corrections and institutionalising the global standards set forth in Madiba’s name.

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