Essop Pahad

Dr. Essop Pahad has been involved in the struggle against racism and apartheid for more than 50 years. Currently, Dr. Pahad is the Director of Vusizwe Media and the editor of The Thinker, a Pan-African quarterly quality journal covering broad socio-economic, socio-political issues in South Africa and the African continent.

Dr. Pahad has held numerous political offices, as a member of the National Assembly from 1994-2008, Parliamentary Counselor to the Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa (1994 to 1996), and Deputy Minister in the Office of the former Executive Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki, (1996 to 1999). Dr. Pahad was appointed Minister in 1999 with specific responsibility for the Office on the Rights of the Child, Office on the Status of Women and Office on the Status of Disabled People in The Presidency as well as the National Youth Commission and the Government Communication and Information System. He was a member of the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the African National Congress (ANC), as well as a member of the CC and Politburo of the SACP. Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the South African Democracy Education Trust and Member of the Board and Executive Committee of the International Marketing Council. Dr. Pahad was Minister in the Presidency until 2008.

Dr. Pahad has published numerous articles in journals and is co-editor of ‘Africa, The Time has Come’ and ‘Africa, Define Yourself, a collection of speeches of former President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki. He holds a BA degree in Political Science from Wits University and a MA in African Politics and PhD in History from Sussex University.
Mavuso Msimang

Mavuso Msimang is a BSc graduate of the University of Zambia and holds an MBA from the US International University, San Diego.

Msimang served on the High Command of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the military wing of the African National Congress and was later appointed personal assistant to the ANC President Oliver Tambo.

During his 30 years in exile, Msimang worked for various international development agencies. - World University Service of Canada (WUSC) and CARE-CANADA. He also worked for, UN World Food Programme and UNICEF.

On returning to South Africa in 1993, Msimang held several senior positions in public sector organizations which he successively served as CEO. He retired from the civil service in 2010 following a three-year stint as Director-General at the Department of Home Affairs.

Msimang currently serves on various civic society, environmental management and private sector boards.
Ronnie Kasrils served in government in various portfolios (1994-2008), after serving in the liberation movement and Umkhonto we Sizwe all his adult life. He refers to himself as a political activist, who swims daily to escape from absurdity, and has authored several books.
Sithembile Mbete

Sithembile is a lecturer in the Department of Political Sciences at the University of Pretoria where she lectures international relations and South African politics. She is also an Associate Fellow of the Centre for Governance Innovation at the University of Pretoria. She recently completed her doctoral dissertation on South Africa's foreign policy during its two terms in the United Nations Security Council. She has published on the Economic Freedom Fighters' (EFF) and South African elections in accredited journals. Her research has been funded by the National Institute for Humanities and Social Science (NIHSS), National Research Foundation (NRF), Social Science Research Council and the Mellon Foundation. She comments frequently in the media on a range of issues in South African politics. In 2014 she was a visiting scholar at the Department of Political Science and Balsillie School of International Affairs at the University of Waterloo.

Sithembile joined the University of Pretoria from The Presidency of South Africa where she was a researcher in the secretariat of the National Planning Commission. She contributed to the drafting of the National Development Plan in the areas of public service reform, anti-corruption policy and community safety. Prior to this she worked as a political researcher at IDASA (Institute for Democracy in Africa) where she was responsible for Parliamentary monitoring and political analysis. While at Idasa she monitored the parliamentary deliberations on the Protection of State Information Bill (POSIB), commenting on and writing about the bill in the media. She served on the provincial and national working groups of the Right2Know Campaign and helped coordinate activism against the legislation.
Sizwe Mpofu-Walsh

Sizwe Mpofu-Walsh is an author, scholar and lyricist. He was president of the University of Cape Town’s Students' Representative Council in 2010 and holds an MPhil in International Relations from the University of Oxford, where he was a Weidenfeld Scholar. His debut book, Democracy and Delusion: 10 Myths in South African Politics, won the City Press Tafelberg Nonfiction Award. The book is accompanied by a rap album of the same name. He is currently pursuing a DPhil in International Relations at Oxford.
Zohra Ebrahim

Zohra Ebrahim has decades of experience in the fields of community development, human settlements and governance. She has a BA with majors in Stats and History from Unisa and a HDE from UCT.

While Ebrahim’s profile straddles the community, business and political fields, her roots are in community based organisation. She became the secretary of the CAHAC-affiliated Thornhill Residents Association, in 1984 (with the late Dullah Omar as chair). Later, as CAHAC secretary, she coordinated a W Cape team set up to unite the hostel dwellers (WCHDA), informal shack dwellers(WECUSA), as well as the civic organisations of CAHAC and the WCCA. Together with Pat Lepunya, she became national civic coordinator for the United Democratic Front, tasked with creating a national civic structure, which led to the formation of SANCO in 1992.

She is currently the Chairperson of the Desmond Tutu HIV Foundation and serves as a director of the African Leadership Institute (ALISA) which is aligned to the Aspen Global Leaders Network (ALGN). She is also a director of private sector companies like Willis Towers Watson SA Pty Ltd. and Aurecon SA Pty Ltd, where she chairs the Social and Ethics Committee.

Previous directorships include Edcon, SHRA, Organisation Development Africa (ODA), Inframax Holdings, NewHco, SoHco, Development Action Group(DAG), Johannesburg Housing Company(JHC) and Premier Fishing.

Previous awards and achievements include being the first black woman president of the Institute of People Management (IPM) in (1996/7), the Lebone Business Woman Achievement Award (medium business) in 1997, a Global Leaders of Tomorrow from the World Economic Forum (1998). SoHco, under her chairmanship, also received provincial awards (2008 and 2009) as well as the prestigious Govan Mbeki national award in the category of social housing (2009). Together with other civic activists, she was given a Ministerial Award for gender transformation in human settlements (2014).