

1. SENZANI NA?

What shall we do?

In an obvious attempt to be funny, I often joke about how I was born in the right generation because I exist at the same time as Chatgpt AND Amapiano. Although humorous in nature, -there is an underlying truth that lies beneath that statement. It is often a quiet question I ask myself, would I have the bravery of Dr John Kani to use my art as a creative protest to exert pressure on the apartheid government. I wonder if I would have the discipline and the commitment to believe in an intangible abstract concept such as the liberation of marginalized groups as Mandela did and wait for 27 years to see my dream realised? Could I stand for something so strongly that I would lose my life for it?

We are currently living in a world that is thriving on instant gratification, we are always looking for the next hot topic with no time to pause and take in what is happening. And maybe on another day we could talk about how the rise of mass media has made our minds mimic the likeness of search engine tabs, one scroll you're seeing a genocide and the next scroll is Kanye West performing at Ellis park in Johannesburg(which by the way lets be for real actually), one scroll it is the debilitating story of how the SIU uncovered a syndicate that looted R2billion at Tembisa hospital, the next scroll is Nicki Manaj telling Jay Z to fix his lace front. What I am realising is that standing against injustice takes a certain type of endurance in which the rise of instant gratification in our generation has eroded within us. I think about how boycotting Starbucks and McDonalds became the thing to do because of the Mass media coverage of the Palestinian genocide at the time and as a few months went by people went back to spicy Mcfeasts and caramel macchiatos. I did some research according to Starbucks' own earnings call its international comparable sales which the brand said were linked to "misconceptions about their involvement in the war". McDonald's also acknowledged that the conflict was hurting demand in certain markets, particularly in the Middle East and in Muslim-majority countries. With all this I think to myself maybe we are not angry enough because if we really were it would not be so easy to forget. I understand however that especially in a country like South Africa we have our problems that can very often overshadow a lot of global conflicts, that coupled with the fact that people find it really hard to care about things that do not directly affect them. I get that. But at some point humanity needs to come into the picture. We cannot watch nations being wiped out, corruption being rampant, humans being exploited and doing nothing. We cannot sit comfortably and drink our tea while there is a world that is burning outside. we cannot.

When Dr Naledi Pandor and her team took Israel to the ICJ It was the first time in my young adulthood that I had seen a fierce action against injustice and not just textbook theory but a real and a visceral reaction against inhumanity. She said "It cannot be that we allow the world to stand by, weak, while the people are being murdered," during an interview in Istanbul. It reminded me that when we proudly say "umuntu ngu muntu ngabantu" when we say "**motho ke motho ka batho**(*a person is a person through other people*), a phrase dear to the nation, we declare Ubuntu as a fundamental identity to being SouthAfrican, it is a capacity in South African culture that expresses compassion, reciprocity, dignity, harmony and humanity in the interests of building and maintaining a community with justice and mutual caring. I believe that extends not only to the walls of this country but to those around the world. We stand up for others by showing up, and it seems small and inconsequential at the moment but my history teacher in grade 12 taught us that one of the reasons why the apartheid regime came to an end was because of internal and external pressures. External pressures referring to the people who were marching against apartheid in countries like England, their boycotts, the banning of the

South African rugby team to participate in world championships. That external pressure contributed to the end of the apartheid regime. But it was not a one day event, it is continuous and consistent work. Its peace day events and marches, it is discussions , it is boycotting. I implore us to not sit comfortably with injustice. In the words of the great hero of Barbados, #Mrs ASAP Rocky herself, Rihanna Robyn Fenty “ when we are marching and protesting, tell your friends to pull up”

Reference list

1. Suleiman, O. (2025, May 1). *The South African minister who took on Israel | Dr. Naledi Pandor | Gaza Diaries with Dr. Omar Suleiman* [Video]. YouTube.