



Statement delivered by H.E. Issa KONFOUROU, Ambassador, Permanent  
Representative of Mali,

in his capacity as Chair of the African Group for April 2018,  
on the occasion of the United Nations Memorial service in honor of Ms. Winifred  
“Winnie” Nomzamo Madikizela-Mandela, former wife of South Africa’s first  
democratic President, Nelson Mandela

New York, Trusteeship Council, 13 April 2018

**Mr. President, Secretary General, Excellencies, Dear Friends,**

On Monday April 2, 2018, the sad new was released: One of our freedom fighter icon,  
**Winnie Mandela**, lost her last battle.

On this sad occasion, I have the great honor and privilege, on behalf of the African Group, to  
express our heartfelt condolences to the **Madikizela and Mandela** families.

**Dearest Brother Jerry**, the African Group stands by you and your Mission at this sad  
occasion and we want you to convey our sincere sympathy and solidarity to the people and  
the Government of South Africa.

**Mr. President,**

Today, we are gathered to celebrate one of the greatest daughters of Africa, **Ms Winifred  
“Winnie” Nomzamo Madikizela-Mandela**. She was born on September 26, 1936, in  
Bizana, a rural village in the Transkei district of South Africa.

Today, the African Group pays tribute to the legacy of the freedom fighter Winnie Mandela.  
Alongside her husband MADIBA and the rest of the group, Buthelezi, Sisulu WALTER, Oliver  
TAMBO and many others, she fought for the just causes in South Africa and in the rest of  
our continent.

Indeed, Winnie Mandela will be remembered as a revered struggle icon in the fight against  
apartheid and discrimination. I still remember her paying tribute, in December 2013, to  
Her late Husband, MADIBA. Winnie said: “I remember the day you met my father and asked  
to marry me. And my Father said to me: Nelson is handsome boy, you can marry him, but  
choosing Him is like getting married to a fight, a struggle, not to a man”.

She devoted her entire life as revolutionary, a community worker, and an advocate for the emancipation of women. In fact, before joining the political field, she demonstrated her deep commitment for dignity and wellbeing as a medical social worker.

Her fight and her contributions will be engraved in the history of South Africa, of our continent and throughout the world.

In addition to all these qualities I just mentioned, Winnie had been also a great wife too. Her husband Nelson Mandela declared upon his release from prison on February 11, 1990, I quote "*My salutation would be incomplete without expressing my deep appreciation for the strength given to me during my long and lonely years in prison by my beloved wife and family*" end of quote.

**Mr. President,**

The exceptional courage of this champion of justice and equality will remain an inspiration for present and future generations in her home country, the continent and the rest of the world.

I conclude by underlining that the best way to pay tribute to the life and times of Winnie Mandela is to keep engraved the spirit of her devotion for dignity, justice and equality in our societies and throughout the world.

**I thank you**