

23rd NATIONAL ORAL HISTORY CONFERENCE

HOST: EASTERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF SPORT, RECREATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

VENUE: Summerstrand, Gqeberha (to be confirmed)

DATE: 12 OCTOBER (Workshop) & 13 to 16 OCTOBER 2026 (Conference)

THEME: “VOICES ACROSS TIME AND SPACE: ORAL HISTORIES OF RESISTANCE, COLLABORATION AND RESILIENCE”

Since its inception more than 22 years ago, OHASA has sought to make available its resources to create a safe space for individuals and groups interested in oral history to share knowledge. Despite this, thousands of stories remain untold and unrecorded in many regions of South Africa and across the entire southern African region. There are people we can safely refer to as living archives because they have kept their stories and experiences to themselves, thereby short-changing those who may benefit from their testimonies or oral narratives.

This year's national oral history conference seeks to deepen the discussion of oral history by exploring the theme “*Voices Across Time and Space: Oral Histories of Resistance, Collaboration and Resilience.*” For hundreds of years, inequalities have been one of the key features of African societies. With minor exceptions, those in authority (emperors, kings, queens, chiefs, military rulers, etc.) arguably monopolised power and limited or excluded others (commoners, refugees, captives, women, etc.) from access to economic resources such as land and livestock. Under colonialism and apartheid, millions of men and women throughout Southern Africa and the entire continent were denied economic opportunities and political rights through the promulgation of discriminatory laws that favoured some groups and excluded others, often based on skin colour. Such exclusions often led to discontent and resistance – organised and unorganised. However, some individuals and groups for various reasons chose to collaborate with their oppressors – as chiefs, soldiers, police, informers, Bantustan rulers, and so forth.

Despite the discriminatory laws, there have also been practices that have had similar effects of gender, age, and social discrimination that put some people on the margins of society and economic participation. These practices, customs, and cultural norms, like the promulgated legislation, sparked disgruntlement and protests at different points in history. Some protests led to nonviolent marches, which sometimes deteriorated into violent skirmishes and running battles with the police and soldiers. In extreme cases, violent repression compelled the liberation movements to embark on the armed struggle as a strategy to end white colonial/apartheid rule. Sports and culture were also adopted as the weapons of struggle. Despite the end of colonial rule and apartheid, there are still high levels of inequality and injustices in many societies which continue to cause conflicts in South Africa and the whole region. While many of these conflicts, protests and activities have been documented, others have been forgotten or wilfully silenced.

This year's conference provides an opportunity to engage questions about what happened? When did it happen? Did it happen then the way it is remembered today? Who was involved? What were the outcomes?

As oral historians with insatiable curiosity, it will be informative to listen and write more nuanced stories about resistance, collaboration, and resilience across time and place; stories that centre agency, in which villains and victims are found on both sides. Are there whites who, through the years, had relentlessly pursued the struggle for human dignity, albeit in small, unknown corners? In a similar vein, are there Black people who collaborated with the oppressive regimes against their own people? Why and how did they justify their collaborative acts? What role did the arts generally, and sport, play in the struggle against colonialism and apartheid? What indigenous games did youths play in ancient times and what have societies lost when those games were eradicated during the colonial and apartheid epochs? What role did women play in resistance movements? Why do these women remain marginalised in the narratives that we have composed or archived about the struggles against oppressive laws and acts? How do we account for the current ongoing scourge of gender-based violence? What role did youths play and continue to play in protest and resistance movements, including activism on gender-based violence? To what extent have stories of resistance and collaboration been incorporated into the history school curricula in South Africa and/or the southern African region? What are the changes and continuities in the styles of protests in the past and in the present?

For this 23rd National Oral History Conference, OHASA invites scholars and practitioners of oral history to submit abstracts of original research papers that speak to the theme of ***“VOICES ACROSS TIME AND SPACE: ORAL HISTORIES OF RESISTANCE, COLLABORATION AND RESILIENCE.”*** The papers must be **based on oral history**. Where oral interviews were conducted and used as a primary source, we encourage presenters to donate the interview transcripts and recordings to the OHASA portal.

ABSTRACTS MAY BE SUBMITTED IN ANY OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, ADDRESSING THE MAIN THEME UNDER THE FOLLOWING SUB-THEMES:

1. Oral history, land expropriation and protests.
2. Oral history forced removals land mining in the former Bantustans.
3. Oral history and anti-pass protests.
4. Oral history in the classroom.
5. Oral history and struggles over education.
6. Gender Based Violence, Femicide and Activism.
7. Protest and LGBTQi+.
8. Oral history and struggles for epistemic justice.
9. Oral history and women's protests.
10. Oral history, sport, arts and resistance.
11. Oral history and indigenous games: changes and continuities.
12. Orality, inequality, resistance and collaboration in the deep past.
13. Customary law and struggles over tradition.
14. Oral history, traditional and civil marriages: status, tensions and contractions
15. Ethics in oral history practices.
16. Methodologies for collecting, archiving and preserving oral histories of protests.
17. Oral histories of struggles against colonialism in the African Diaspora.
18. Oral histories of survival in informal urban settlements.
19. Oral histories and contestations over heritage sites.

20. Oral history, traditional leadership and succession disputes.
21. Oral histories of protest in the Bantustans then and now.
22. Orality and histories of collaboration with colonial and apartheid authorities.
23. Oral history and liberation theology – the rise of African independent churches.
24. Innovative methodologies and archiving practices in oral history research.
25. Oral history and promotion of social justice, reconciliation, and community engagement in contemporary Southern Africa.

How to submit an Abstract:

Abstracts should be submitted through the **online submission portal** using this link:
<https://forms.gle/XysHpLFpykWygZjY6>.

The deadline for receiving abstracts is **Friday 1 May 2026**. Confirmation of acceptance or rejection of your abstract will be communicated by **Friday 22 May 2026**.

Should you have any challenges contact Calda de Vries at ohasasecretary@gmail.com.

Want to become a OHASA Member? [Join here](#)

MEMBERSHIP TYPE	2026
Individual membership fees	R650
Institutional membership fees (up to 5 members)	R 5000

Want to attend the Conference? [Register here](#)

Need an invoice? Email Tanya Pieterse at ohasaconference@gmail.com CC Belinda Mahanjana at belindama@dsac.gov.za.

CONFERENCE FEES	2026
Early bird (On or before 31 August) (All delegates)	R 1 500
Members	R 2 000
Non-members	R 4 000

Pre-conference Workshop: 12 October 2026 (*more information to follow*)

Pre-Conference Workshop Fees	2026
NB: To be paid separately to the OHASA account for those interested in attending Reference: <i>Workshop & participant name</i>	R1 300

Banking details

Name of account: OHASA

Bank: ABSA Bank

Branch code: 632005

Account number: 4067826673

Reference: Membership and/or Conference AND name of member/institution

PROOF OF PAYMENT: Membership Fees and Conference Fees must be emailed to:

ohasaconference@gmail.com and ohasasecretary@gmail.com.

NB: NO SPEED POINTS WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE CONFERENCE.

For enquiries or further information contact Calda de Vries at ohasasecretary@gmail.com
OR Tanya Pieterse at ohasaconference@gmail.com.

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