

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (born **Rolihlahla Mandela** 18 July 1918 – 5 December 2013) was a South African anti-apartheid revolutionary political leader who served as the first president of South Africa from 1994 to 1999. He was the country's first black head of state and the first elected in a fully representative democratic election. His government focused on dismantling the legacy of apartheid by tackling institutionalised racism and fostering racial reconciliation. Ideologically an African nationalist and socialist, he served as the president of the African National Congress (ANC) party from 1991 to 1997.

A Xhosa, Mandela was born into the Thembu royal family in Mvezo, Union of South Africa. He studied law at the University of Fort Hare and the University of Witwatersrand before working as a lawyer in Johannesburg. There he became involved in anti-colonial and African nationalist politics, joining the ANC in 1943 and co-founding its Youth League in 1944. After the National Party's white-only government established apartheid, a system of racial segregation that privileged whites, Mandela and the ANC committed themselves to its overthrow. He was appointed president of the ANC's Transvaal branch, rising to prominence for his involvement in the 1952 Defiance Campaign and the 1955 Congress of the People. He was repeatedly arrested for seditious activities and was unsuccessfully prosecuted in the 1956 Treason Trial. Although initially committed to non-violent protest, in association with the SACP he co-founded the militant UMKhonto we Sizwe in 1961 and led a sabotage campaign against the government. He was arrested and imprisoned in 1962, and, following the Rivonia Trial, was sentenced to life imprisonment for conspiring to overthrow the state.

Mandela served 27 years in prison, split between Robben Island, Pollsmoor Prison and Victor Verster Prison. Amid growing domestic and international pressure and fears of racial civil war, President F. W. de Klerk released him in 1990. Mandela and de Klerk led efforts to negotiate an end to apartheid, which resulted in the 1994 multiracial general election in which Mandela led the ANC to victory and became president. Leading a broad coalition government which promulgated a new constitution, Mandela emphasised reconciliation between the country's racial groups and created the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate past human rights abuses. Economically, his administration retained its predecessor's liberal framework despite his own socialist beliefs, also introducing measures to encourage land reform, combat poverty and expand healthcare services. Internationally, Mandela acted as mediator in the Pan Am Flight 103 bombing trial and served as secretary-general of the Non-Aligned Movement from 1998 to 1999. He declined a second presidential term and was succeeded by his deputy, Thabo Mbeki. Mandela became an elder statesman and focused on combating poverty and HIV/AIDS through the charitable Nelson Mandela Foundation.

Mandela was a controversial figure for much of his life. Although critics on the right denounced him as a communist terrorist and those on the far-left deemed him too eager to negotiate and reconcile with apartheid's supporters, he gained international acclaim for his activism. Globally regarded as an icon of democracy and social justice, he received more than 250 honours, including the Nobel Peace Prize. He is held in deep respect within South Africa, where he is often referred to by his Thembu clan name, Madiba, and described as the "Father of the Nation".

Early life

Childhood: 1918–1934

Mandela was born on 18 July 1918 in the village of Mvezo in Umtata, then part of South Africa's Cape Province. Given the forename Rolihlahla, a Xhosa term colloquially meaning "troublemaker", in later years he became known by his clan name, Madiba. His patrilineal great-grandfather, Ngubengcuka, was king of the Thembu people in the Transkeian Territories of South Africa's modern Eastern Cape province. One of Ngubengcuka's sons, named Mandela, was Nelson's grandfather and the source of his surname. Because Mandela was the king's child by a wife of the Ixhiba clan, a so-called "Left-Hand House", the descendants of his cadet branch of the royal family were morganatic, ineligible to inherit the throne but recognised as hereditary royal councillors.

Nelson Mandela's father, Gadla Henry Mphakanyiswa Mandela (1880–1928), was a local chief and councillor to the monarch; he was appointed to the position in 1915, after his predecessor was accused of corruption by a governing white magistrate. In 1926, Gadla was also sacked for corruption, but Nelson was told that his father had lost his job for standing up to the magistrate's unreasonable demands. A devotee of the god Qamata, Gadla was a polygamist with four wives, four sons and nine daughters, who lived in different villages. Nelson's mother was Gadla's third wife, Nosekeni Fanny, daughter of Nkedama of the Right Hand House and a member of the amaMpemvu clan of the Xhosa.

Mandela later stated that his early life was dominated by traditional Thembu custom and taboo. He grew up with two sisters in his mother's *kraal* in the village of Qunu, where he tended herds as a cattle-boy and spent much time outside with other boys. Both his parents were illiterate, but his mother, being a devout Christian, sent him to a local Methodist school when he was about seven. Baptised a Methodist, Mandela was given the English forename of "Nelson" by his teacher. When Mandela was about nine, his father came to stay at Qunu, where he died of an undiagnosed ailment that Mandela believed to be lung disease. Feeling "cut adrift", he later said that he inherited his father's "proud rebelliousness" and "stubborn sense of fairness".

Mandela's mother took him to the "Great Place" palace at Mqhekezweni, where he was entrusted to the guardianship of the Thembu regent, Chief Jongintaba Dalindyebo. Although he did not see his mother again for many years, Mandela felt that Jongintaba and his wife Noengland treated him as their own child, raising him alongside their son, Justice, and daughter, Nomafu. As Mandela attended church services every Sunday with his guardians, Christianity became a significant part of his life. He attended a Methodist mission school located next to the palace, where he studied English, Xhosa, history and geography. He developed a love of African history, listening to the tales told by elderly visitors to the palace, and was influenced by the anti-imperialist rhetoric of a visiting chief, Joyi. Nevertheless, at the time he considered the European colonizers not as oppressors but as benefactors who had brought education and other benefits to southern Africa. Aged 16, he, Justice and several other boys travelled to Tyhalarha to undergo the ulwaluko circumcision ritual that symbolically marked their transition from boys to men; afterwards he was given the name *Dalibunga*.

Clarkebury, Healdtown, and Fort Hare: 1934–1940

Intending to gain skills needed to become a privy councillor for the Thembu royal house, Mandela began his secondary education in 1933 at Clarkebury Methodist High School in Engcobo, a Western-style institution that was the largest school for black Africans in Thembuland. Made to socialise with other students on an equal basis, he claimed that he lost his "stuck up" attitude, becoming best friends with a girl for the first time; he began playing sports and developed his lifelong love of gardening. He completed his Junior Certificate in two years, and in 1937 he moved to Healdtown, the Methodist college in Fort Beaufort attended by most Thembu royalty, including Justice. The headmaster emphasised the superiority of European culture and government, but Mandela became increasingly interested in native African culture, making his first non-Xhosa friend, a speaker of Sotho, and coming under the influence of one of his favourite teachers, a Xhosa who broke taboo by marrying a Sotho. Mandela spent much of his spare time at Healdtown as a long-distance runner and boxer, and in his second year he became a prefect.

In 1939, with Jongintaba's backing, Mandela began work on a BA degree at the University of Fort Hare, an elite black institution of approximately 150 students in Alice, Eastern Cape. He studied English, anthropology, politics, "native administration", and Roman Dutch law in his first year, desiring to become an interpreter or clerk in the Native Affairs Department. Mandela stayed in the Wesley House dormitory, befriending his own kinsman, K. D. Matanzima, as well as Oliver Tambo, who became a close friend and comrade for decades to come. He took up ballroom dancing, performed in a drama society play about Abraham Lincoln, and gave Bible classes in the local community as part of the Student Christian Association. Although he had friends who held connections to the African National Congress (ANC) who wanted South Africa to be independent of the British Empire, Mandela avoided any involvement with the nascent movement, and became a vocal supporter of the British war effort when the Second World War broke out. He helped establish a first-year students' house committee which challenged the dominance of the second-

years, and at the end of his first year became involved in a students' representative council (SRC) boycott against the quality of food, for which he was suspended from the university; he never returned to complete his degree.

Arriving in Johannesburg: 1941–1943

Returning to Mqhekezweni in December 1940, Mandela found that Jongintaba had arranged marriages for him and Justice; dismayed, they fled to Johannesburg via Queenstown, arriving in April 1941. Mandela found work as a night watchman at Crown Mines, his "first sight of South African capitalism in action", but was fired when the *induna* (headman) discovered that he was a runaway. He stayed with a cousin in George Goch Township, who introduced Mandela to realtor and ANC activist Walter Sisulu. The latter secured Mandela a job as an articled clerk at the law firm of Witkin, Sidelsky and Eidelman, a company run by Lazar Sidelsky, a liberal Jew sympathetic to the ANC's cause. At the firm, Mandela befriended Gaur Radebe—a Hlubi member of the ANC and Communist Party—and Nat Bregman, a Jewish communist who became his first white friend. Mandela attended Communist Party gatherings, where he was impressed that Europeans, Africans, Indians, and Coloureds mixed as equals. He later stated that he did not join the party because its atheism conflicted with his Christian faith, and because he saw the South African struggle as being racially based rather than as class warfare. To continue his higher education, Mandela signed up to a University of South Africa correspondence course, working on his bachelor's degree at night.

Earning a small wage, Mandela rented a room in the house of the Xhoma family in the Alexandra township; despite being rife with poverty, crime and pollution, Alexandra always remained a special place for him. Although embarrassed by his poverty, he briefly dated a Swati woman before unsuccessfully courting his landlord's daughter. To save money and be closer to downtown Johannesburg, Mandela moved into the compound of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, living among miners of various tribes; as the compound was visited by various chiefs, he once met the Queen Regent of Basutoland. In late 1941, Jongintaba visited Johannesburg—there forgiving Mandela for running away—before returning to Thembuland, where he died in the winter of 1942. Mandela and Justice arrived a day late for the funeral. After he passed his BA exams in early 1943, Mandela returned to Johannesburg to follow a political path as a lawyer rather than become a privy councillor in Thembuland. He later stated that he experienced no epiphany, but that he "simply found [himself] doing so, and could not do otherwise."

Revolutionary activity

Law studies and the ANC Youth League: 1943–1949

Mandela began studying law at the University of the Witwatersrand, where he was the only black African student and faced racism. There, he befriended liberal and communist European, Jewish and Indian students, among them Joe Slovo and Ruth First. Becoming increasingly politicised, Mandela marched in August 1943 in support of a successful bus boycott to reverse fare rises. Joining the ANC, he was increasingly influenced by Sisulu, spending time with other activists at Sisulu's Orlando house, including his old friend Oliver Tambo. In 1943, Mandela met Anton Lembede, an ANC member affiliated with the "Africanist" branch of African nationalism, which was virulently opposed to a racially united front against colonialism and imperialism or to an alliance with the communists. Despite his friendships with non-blacks and communists, Mandela embraced Lembede's views, believing that black Africans should be entirely independent in their struggle for political self-determination. Deciding on the need for a youth wing to mass-mobilise Africans in opposition to their subjugation, Mandela was among a delegation that approached ANC president Alfred Bitini Xuma on the subject at his home in Sophiatown; the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) was founded on Easter Sunday 1944 in the Bantu Men's Social Centre, with Lembede as president and Mandela as a member of its executive committee.

At Sisulu's house, Mandela met Evelyn Mase, a trainee nurse and ANC activist from Engcobo, Transkei. Entering a relationship and marrying in October 1944, they initially lived with her relatives until moving into a rented house in the township of Orlando in early 1946. Their first child, Madiba "Thembi" Thembekile, was born in February 1945; a daughter, Makaziwe, was

born in 1947 but died of meningitis nine months later. Mandela enjoyed home life, welcoming his mother and his sister, Leabie, to stay with him. In early 1947, his three years of articles ended at Witkin, Sidelsky and Eidelman, and he decided to become a full-time student, subsisting on loans from the Bantu Welfare Trust.

In July 1947, Mandela rushed Lembede, who was ill, to hospital, where he died; he was succeeded as ANCYL president by the more moderate Peter Mda, who agreed to co-operate with communists and non-blacks, appointing Mandela ANCYL secretary. Mandela disagreed with Mda's approach, and in December 1947 supported an unsuccessful measure to expel communists from the ANCYL, considering their ideology un-African. In 1947, Mandela was elected to the executive committee of the ANC's Transvaal Province branch, serving under regional president C. S. Ramohano. When Ramohano acted against the wishes of the committee by co-operating with Indians and communists, Mandela was one of those who forced his resignation.

In the South African general election in 1948, in which only whites were permitted to vote, the Afrikaner-dominated Herenigde Nasionale Party under Daniel François Malan took power, soon uniting with the Afrikaner Party to form the National Party. Openly racist, the party codified and expanded racial segregation with new apartheid legislation. Gaining increasing influence in the ANC, Mandela and his party cadre allies began advocating direct action against apartheid, such as boycotts and strikes, influenced by the tactics already employed by South Africa's Indian community. Xuma did not support these measures and was removed from the presidency in a vote of no confidence, replaced by James Moroka and a more militant executive committee containing Sisulu, Mda, Tambo and Godfrey Pitje. Mandela later related that he and his colleagues had "guided the ANC to a more radical and revolutionary path. Having devoted his time to politics, Mandela failed his final year at Witwatersrand three times; he was ultimately denied his degree in December 1949.

Defiance Campaign and Transvaal ANC Presidency: 1950–1954

Mandela took Xuma's place on the ANC national executive in March 1950, and that same year was elected national president of the ANCYL. In March, the Defend Free Speech Convention was held in Johannesburg, bringing together African, Indian and communist activists to call a May Day general strike in protest against apartheid and white minority rule. Mandela opposed the strike because it was multi-racial and not ANC-led, but a majority of black workers took part, resulting in increased police repression and the introduction of the Suppression of Communism Act, 1950, affecting the actions of all protest groups. At the ANC national conference of December 1951, he continued arguing against a racially united front, but was outvoted.

Thereafter, Mandela rejected Lembede's Africanism and embraced the idea of a multi-racial front against apartheid. Influenced by friends like Moses Kotane and by the Soviet Union's support for wars of national liberation, his mistrust of communism broke down and he began reading literature by Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, and Mao Zedong, eventually embracing the Marxist philosophy of dialectical materialism. Commenting on communism, he later stated that he "found [himself] strongly drawn to the idea of a classless society which, to [his] mind, was similar to traditional African culture where life was shared and communal." In April 1952, Mandela began work at the H.M. Basner law firm, which was owned by a communist, although his increasing commitment to work and activism meant he spent less time with his family.

In 1952, the ANC began preparation for a joint Defiance Campaign against apartheid with Indian and communist groups, founding a National Voluntary Board to recruit volunteers. The campaign was designed to follow the path of nonviolent resistance influenced by Mahatma Gandhi; some supported this for ethical reasons, but Mandela instead considered it pragmatic. At a Durban rally on 22 June, Mandela addressed an assembled crowd of 10,000 people, initiating the campaign protests for which he was arrested and briefly interned in Marshall Square prison. These events established Mandela as one of the best-known black political figures in South Africa. With further protests, the ANC's membership grew from 20,000 to 100,000 members; the government responded with mass arrests and introduced the Public Safety Act, 1953 to permit martial law. In May, authorities banned Transvaal ANC president J. B. Marks from making public appearances; unable to maintain his position, he recommended Mandela as his successor. Although Africanists opposed his candidacy, Mandela was elected to be regional president in October.

In July 1952, Mandela was arrested under the Suppression of Communism Act and stood trial as one of the 21 accused—among them Moroka, Sisulu and Yusuf Dadoo—in Johannesburg. Found guilty of "statutory communism", a term that the government used to describe most opposition to apartheid, their sentence of nine months' hard labour was suspended for two years. In December, Mandela was given a six-month ban from attending meetings or talking to more than one individual at a time, making his Transvaal ANC presidency impractical, and during this period the Defiance Campaign petered out. In September 1953, Andrew Kunene read out Mandela's "No Easy Walk to Freedom" speech at a Transvaal ANC meeting; the title was taken from a quote by Indian independence leader Jawaharlal Nehru, a seminal influence on Mandela's thought. The speech laid out a contingency plan for a scenario in which the ANC was banned. This Mandela Plan, or M-Plan, involved dividing the organisation into a cell structure with a more centralised leadership.

Mandela obtained work as an attorney for the firm Terblanche and Briggish, before moving to the liberal-run Helman and Michel, passing qualification exams to become a full-fledged attorney. In August 1953, Mandela and Tambo opened their own law firm, Mandela and Tambo, operating in downtown Johannesburg. The only African-run law firm in the country, it was popular with aggrieved black people, often dealing with cases of police brutality. Disliked by the authorities, the firm was forced to relocate to a remote location after their office permit was removed under the Group Areas Act; as a result, their clientele dwindled. As a lawyer of aristocratic heritage, Mandela was part of Johannesburg's elite black middle-class, and accorded much respect from the black community. Although a second daughter, Makaziwe Phumia, was born in May 1954, Mandela's relationship with Evelyn became strained, and she accused him of adultery. He may have had affairs with ANC member Lillian Ngoyi and secretary Ruth Mompati; various individuals close to Mandela in this period have stated that the latter bore him a child. Disgusted by her son's behaviour, Nosekeni returned to Transkei, while Evelyn embraced the Jehovah's Witnesses and rejected Mandela's preoccupation with politics.

Congress of the People and the Treason Trial: 1955–1961

After taking part in the unsuccessful protest to prevent the forced relocation of all black people from the Sophiatown suburb of Johannesburg in February 1955, Mandela concluded that violent action would prove necessary to end apartheid and white minority rule. On his advice, Sisulu requested weaponry from the People's Republic of China, which was denied. Although the Chinese government supported the anti-apartheid struggle, they believed the movement insufficiently prepared for guerrilla warfare. With the involvement of the South African Indian Congress, the Coloured People's Congress, the South African Congress of Trade Unions and the Congress of Democrats, the ANC planned a Congress of the People, calling on all South Africans to send in proposals for a post-apartheid era. Based on the responses, a Freedom Charter was drafted by Rusty Bernstein, calling for the creation of a democratic, non-racialist state with the nationalisation of major industry. The charter was adopted at a June 1955 conference in Kliptown; 3,000 delegates attended the event, which was forcibly closed down by police. The tenets of the Freedom Charter remained important for Mandela, and in 1956 he described it as "an inspiration to the people of South Africa".

Following the end of a second ban in September 1955, Mandela went on a working holiday to Transkei to discuss the implications of the Bantu Authorities Act, 1951 with local Xhosa chiefs, also visiting his mother and Noengland before proceeding to Cape Town. In March 1956, he received his third ban on public appearances, restricting him to Johannesburg for five years, but he often defied it. Mandela's marriage broke down and Evelyn left him, taking their children to live with her brother. Initiating divorce proceedings in May 1956, she claimed that Mandela had physically abused her; he denied the allegations, and fought for custody of their children. She withdrew her petition of separation in November, but Mandela filed for divorce in January 1958; the divorce was finalised in March, with the children placed in Evelyn's care. During the divorce proceedings, he began courting a social worker, Winnie Madikizela, whom he married in Bizana in June 1958. She later became involved in ANC activities, spending several weeks in prison. Together they had two children: Zenani, born in February 1959, and Zindziswa (1960–2020).

In December 1956, Mandela was arrested alongside most of the ANC national executive, and accused of "high treason" against the state. Held in Johannesburg Prison amid mass protests, they underwent a preparatory examination before being granted bail. The defence's refutation began in January 1957, overseen by defence lawyer Vernon Berrangé, and continued until the case was adjourned in September. In January 1958, Oswald Pirow was appointed to prosecute the case, and in February the judge ruled that there was "sufficient reason" for the defendants to go on trial in the Transvaal Supreme Court. The formal Treason Trial began in Pretoria in August 1958, with the defendants successfully applying to have the three judges—all linked to the governing National Party—replaced. In August, one charge was dropped, and in October the prosecution withdrew its indictment, submitting a reformulated version in November which argued that the ANC leadership committed high treason by advocating violent revolution, a charge the defendants denied.

In April 1959, Africanists dissatisfied with the ANC's united front approach founded the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC); Mandela disagreed with the PAC's racially exclusionary views, describing them as "immature" and "naïve". Both parties took part in an anti-pass campaign in early 1960, in which Africans burned the passes that they were legally obliged to carry. One of the PAC-organised demonstrations was fired upon by police, resulting in the deaths of 69 protesters in the Sharpeville massacre. The incident brought international condemnation of the government and resulted in rioting throughout South Africa, with Mandela publicly burning his pass in solidarity.

Responding to the unrest, the government implemented state of emergency measures, declaring martial law and banning the ANC and PAC; in March, they arrested Mandela and other activists, imprisoning them for five months without charge in the unsanitary conditions of the Pretoria Local prison. Imprisonment caused problems for Mandela and his co-defendants in the Treason Trial; their lawyers could not reach them, and so it was decided that the lawyers would withdraw in protest until the accused were freed from prison when the state of emergency was lifted in late August 1960. Over the following months, Mandela used his free time to organise an All-In African Conference near Pietermaritzburg, Natal, in March 1961, at which 1,400 anti-apartheid delegates met, agreeing on a stay-at-home strike to mark 31 May, the day South Africa became a republic. On 29 March 1961, six years after the Treason Trial began, the judges produced a verdict of not guilty, ruling that there was insufficient evidence to convict the accused of "high treason", since they had advocated neither communism nor violent revolution; the outcome embarrassed the government.

MK, the SACP, and African tour: 1961–62

Disguised as a chauffeur, Mandela travelled around the country incognito, organising the ANC's new cell structure and the planned mass stay-at-home strike. Referred to as the "Black Pimpernel" in the press—a reference to Emma Orczy's 1905 novel *The Scarlet Pimpernel*—a warrant for his arrest was put out by the police. Mandela held secret meetings with reporters, and after the government failed to prevent the strike, he warned them that many anti-apartheid activists would soon resort to violence through groups like the PAC's Poqo. He believed that the ANC should form an armed group to channel some of this violence in a controlled direction, convincing both ANC leader Albert Luthuli—who was morally opposed to violence—and allied activist groups of its necessity.

Inspired by the actions of Fidel Castro's 26th of July Movement in the Cuban Revolution, in 1961 Mandela, Sisulu and Slovo co-founded Umkhonto we Sizwe ("Spear of the Nation", abbreviated MK). Becoming chairman of the militant group, Mandela gained ideas from literature on guerrilla warfare by Marxist militants Mao and Che Guevara as well as from the military theorist Carl von Clausewitz. Although initially declared officially separate from the ANC so as not to taint the latter's reputation, MK was later widely recognised as the party's armed wing. Most early MK members were white communists who were able to conceal Mandela in their homes; after hiding in communist Wolfie Kodesh's flat in Berea, Mandela moved to the communist-owned Liliesleaf Farm in Rivonia, there joined by Raymond Mhlaba, Slovo and Bernstein, who put together the MK constitution. Although in later life Mandela denied, for political reasons, ever being a member of the Communist Party, historical research published in 2011 strongly suggested that he had joined in the late 1950s or early 1960s. This was confirmed by both the SACP and the ANC after

Mandela's death. According to the SACP, he was not only a member of the party, but also served on its Central Committee.

Operating through a cell structure, MK planned to carry out acts of sabotage that would exert maximum pressure on the government with minimum casualties; they sought to bomb military installations, power plants, telephone lines, and transport links at night, when civilians were not present. Mandela stated that they chose sabotage because it was the least harmful action, did not involve killing, and offered the best hope for racial reconciliation afterwards; he nevertheless acknowledged that should this have failed then guerrilla warfare might have been necessary. Soon after ANC leader Luthuli was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, MK publicly announced its existence with 57 bombings on Dingane's Day (16 December) 1961, followed by further attacks on New Year's Eve.

The ANC decided to send Mandela as a delegate to the February 1962 meeting of the Pan-African Freedom Movement for East, Central and Southern Africa (PAFMECSA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Leaving South Africa in secret via Bechuanaland, on his way Mandela visited Tanganyika and met with its president, Julius Nyerere. Arriving in Ethiopia, Mandela met with Emperor Haile Selassie I, and gave his speech after Selassie's at the conference. After the symposium, he travelled to Cairo, Egypt, admiring the political reforms of President Gamal Abdel Nasser, and then went to Tunis, Tunisia, where President Habib Bourguiba gave him £5,000 for weaponry. He proceeded to Morocco, Mali, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Senegal, receiving funds from Liberian president William Tubman and Guinean president Ahmed Sékou Touré. He left Africa for London, England, where he met anti-apartheid activists, reporters and prominent politicians. Upon returning to Ethiopia, he began a six-month course in guerrilla warfare, but completed only two months before being recalled to South Africa by the ANC's leadership.

Imprisonment

Arrest and Rivonia trial: 1962–1964

On 5 August 1962, police captured Mandela along with fellow activist Cecil Williams near Howick. Many MK members suspected that the authorities had been tipped off with regard to Mandela's whereabouts, although Mandela himself gave these ideas little credence. In later years, Donald Rickard, a former American diplomat, revealed that the Central Intelligence Agency, which feared Mandela's associations with communists, had informed the South African police of his location. Jailed in Johannesburg's Marshall Square prison, Mandela was charged with inciting workers' strikes and leaving the country without permission. Representing himself with Slovo as legal advisor, Mandela intended to use the trial to showcase "the ANC's moral opposition to racism" while supporters demonstrated outside the court. Moved to Pretoria, where Winnie could visit him, he began correspondence studies for a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degree from the University of London International Programmes. His hearing began in October, but he disrupted proceedings by wearing a traditional kaross, refusing to call any witnesses, and turning his plea of mitigation into a political speech. Found guilty, he was sentenced to five years' imprisonment; as he left the courtroom, supporters sang "Nkosi Sikelel iAfrika".

On 11 July 1963, police raided Liliesleaf Farm, arresting those that they found there and uncovering paperwork documenting MK's activities, some of which mentioned Mandela. The Rivonia Trial began at Pretoria Supreme Court in October, with Mandela and his comrades charged with four counts of sabotage and conspiracy to violently overthrow the government; their chief prosecutor was Percy Yutar. Judge Quartus de Wet soon threw out the prosecution's case for insufficient evidence, but Yutar reformulated the charges, presenting his new case from December 1963 until February 1964, calling 173 witnesses and bringing thousands of documents and photographs to the trial.

Although four of the accused denied involvement with MK, Mandela and the other five accused admitted sabotage but denied that they had ever agreed to initiate guerrilla war against the government. They used the trial to highlight their political cause; at the opening of the defence's proceedings, Mandela gave his three-hour "I Am Prepared to Die" speech. That speech—which was inspired by Castro's "History Will Absolve Me"—was widely reported in the press despite

official censorship. The trial gained international attention; there were global calls for the release of the accused from the United Nations and World Peace Council, while the University of London Union voted Mandela to its presidency. On 12 June 1964, justice De Wet found Mandela and two of his co-accused guilty on all four charges; although the prosecution had called for the death sentence to be applied, the judge instead condemned them to life imprisonment.

Robben Island: 1964–1982

In 1964, Mandela and his co-accused were transferred from Pretoria to the prison on Robben Island, remaining there for the next 18 years. Isolated from non-political prisoners in Section B, Mandela was imprisoned in a damp concrete cell measuring 8 feet (2.4 m) by 7 feet (2.1 m), with a straw mat on which to sleep. Verbally and physically harassed by several white prison wardens, the Rivonia Trial prisoners spent their days breaking rocks into gravel, until being reassigned in January 1965 to work in a lime quarry. Mandela was initially forbidden to wear sunglasses, and the glare from the lime permanently damaged his eyesight. At night, he worked on his LLB degree, which he was obtaining from the University of London through a correspondence course with Wolsey Hall, Oxford, but newspapers were forbidden, and he was locked in solitary confinement on several occasions for the possession of smuggled news clippings. He was initially classified as the lowest grade of prisoner, Class D, meaning that he was permitted one visit and one letter every six months, although all mail was heavily censored.

The political prisoners took part in work and hunger strikes—the latter considered largely ineffective by Mandela—to improve prison conditions, viewing this as a microcosm of the anti-apartheid struggle. ANC prisoners elected him to their four-man "High Organ" along with Sisulu, Govan Mbeki and Raymond Mhlaba, and he involved himself in a group, named Ulundi, that represented all political prisoners (including Eddie Daniels) on the island, through which he forged links with PAC and Yu Chi Chan Club members. Initiating the "University of Robben Island", whereby prisoners lectured on their own areas of expertise, he debated socio-political topics with his comrades.

Though attending Christian Sunday services, Mandela studied Islam. He also studied Afrikaans, hoping to build a mutual respect with the wardens and convert them to his cause. Various official visitors met with Mandela, most significantly the liberal parliamentary representative Helen Suzman of the Progressive Party, who championed Mandela's cause outside of prison. In September 1970, he met British Labour Party politician Denis Healey. South African Minister of Justice Jimmy Kruger visited in December 1974, but he and Mandela did not get along with each other. His mother visited in 1968, dying shortly after, and his firstborn son Thembi died in a car accident the following year; Mandela was forbidden from attending either funeral. His wife was rarely able to see him, being regularly imprisoned for political activity, and his daughters first visited in December 1975. Winnie was released from prison in 1977 but was forcibly settled in Brandfort and remained unable to see him.

From 1967 onwards, prison conditions improved. Black prisoners were given trousers rather than shorts, games were permitted, and the standard of their food was raised. In 1969, an escape plan for Mandela was developed by Gordon Bruce, but it was abandoned after the conspiracy was infiltrated by an agent of the South African Bureau of State Security (BOSS), who hoped to see Mandela shot during the escape. In 1970, Commander Piet Badenhorst became commanding officer. Mandela, seeing an increase in the physical and mental abuse of prisoners, complained to visiting judges, who had Badenhorst reassigned. He was replaced by Commander Willie Willemse, who developed a co-operative relationship with Mandela and was keen to improve prison standards.

By 1975, Mandela had become a Class A prisoner, which allowed him greater numbers of visits and letters. He corresponded with anti-apartheid activists like Mangosuthu Buthelezi and Desmond Tutu. That year, he began his autobiography, which was smuggled to London, but remained unpublished at the time; prison authorities discovered several pages, and his LLB study privileges were revoked for four years. Instead, he devoted his spare time to gardening and reading until the authorities permitted him to resume his LLB degree studies in 1980.

By the late 1960s, Mandela's fame had been eclipsed by Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). Seeing the ANC as ineffectual, the BCM called for militant action, but, following the Soweto uprising of 1976, many BCM activists were imprisoned on Robben Island. Mandela tried to build a relationship with these young radicals, although he was critical of their racialism and contempt for white anti-apartheid activists. Renewed international interest in his plight came in July 1978, when he celebrated his 60th birthday. He was awarded an honorary doctorate in Lesotho, the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding in India in 1979, and the Freedom of the City of Glasgow, Scotland in 1981. In March 1980, the slogan "Free Mandela!" was developed by journalist Percy Qoboza, sparking an international campaign that led the UN Security Council to call for his release. Despite increasing foreign pressure, the government refused, relying on its Cold War allies US president Ronald Reagan and British prime minister Margaret Thatcher; both considered Mandela's ANC a terrorist organisation sympathetic to communism and supported its suppression.

Pollsmoor Prison: 1982–1988

In April 1982, Mandela was transferred to Pollsmoor Prison in Tokai, Cape Town, along with senior ANC leaders Walter Sisulu, Andrew Mlangeni, Ahmed Kathrada and Raymond Mhlaba; they believed that they were being isolated to remove their influence on younger activists at Robben Island. Conditions at Pollsmoor were better than at Robben Island, although Mandela missed the camaraderie and scenery of the island. Getting on well with Pollsmoor's commanding officer, Brigadier Munro, Mandela was permitted to create a roof garden; he also read voraciously and corresponded widely, now being permitted 52 letters a year. He was appointed patron of the multi-racial United Democratic Front (UDF), founded to combat reforms implemented by South African president P. W. Botha. Botha's National Party government had permitted Coloured and Indian citizens to vote for their own parliaments, which had control over education, health and housing, but black Africans were excluded from the system. Like Mandela, the UDF saw this as an attempt to divide the anti-apartheid movement on racial lines.

The early 1980s witnessed an escalation of violence across the country, and many predicted civil war. This was accompanied by economic stagnation as various multinational banks—under pressure from an international lobby—had stopped investing in South Africa. Numerous banks and Thatcher asked Botha to release Mandela—then at the height of his international fame—to defuse the volatile situation. Although considering Mandela a dangerous "arch-Marxist", Botha offered him, in February 1985, a release from prison if he "unconditionally rejected violence as a political weapon". Mandela spurned the offer, releasing a statement through his daughter Zindzi stating, "What freedom am I being offered while the organisation of the people [ANC] remains banned? Only free men can negotiate. A prisoner cannot enter into contracts."

In 1985, Mandela underwent surgery on an enlarged prostate gland before being given new solitary quarters on the ground floor. He was met by "seven eminent persons", an international delegation sent to negotiate a settlement, but Botha's government refused to co-operate, calling a state of emergency in June and initiating a police crackdown on unrest. The anti-apartheid resistance fought back, with the ANC committing 231 attacks in 1986 and 235 in 1987. The violence escalated as the government used the army and police to combat the resistance and provided covert support for vigilante groups and the Zulu nationalist movement Inkatha, which was involved in an increasingly violent struggle with the ANC. Mandela requested talks with Botha but was denied, instead secretly meeting with Minister of Justice Kobie Coetsee in 1987, and having a further 11 meetings over the next three years. Coetsee organised negotiations between Mandela and a team of four government figures starting in May 1988; the team agreed to the release of political prisoners and the legalisation of the ANC on the condition that they permanently renounce violence, break links with the Communist Party, and not insist on majority rule. Mandela rejected these conditions, insisting that the ANC would end its armed activities only when the government renounced violence.

Mandela's 70th birthday in July 1988 attracted international attention, including a tribute concert at London's Wembley Stadium that was televised and watched by an estimated 200 million viewers. Although presented globally as a heroic figure, he faced personal problems when ANC leaders informed him that Winnie had set herself up as head of a gang, the "Mandela United

Football Club," which had been responsible for torturing and killing opponents—including children—in Soweto. Though some encouraged him to divorce her, he decided to remain loyal until she was found guilty by trial.

Victor Verster Prison and release: 1988–1990

Recovering from tuberculosis exacerbated by the damp conditions in his cell, Mandela was moved to Victor Verster Prison, near Paarl, in December 1988. He was housed in the relative comfort of a warder's house with a personal cook, and he used the time to complete his LLB degree. While there, he was permitted many visitors and organised secret communications with exiled ANC leader Oliver Tambo.

In 1989, Botha suffered a stroke; although he would retain the state presidency, he stepped down as leader of the National Party, to be replaced by F. W. de Klerk. In a surprise move, Botha invited Mandela to a meeting over tea in July 1989, an invitation Mandela considered genial. Botha was replaced as state president by de Klerk six weeks later; the new president believed that apartheid was unsustainable and released a number of ANC prisoners. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, de Klerk called his cabinet together to debate legalising the ANC and freeing Mandela. Although some were deeply opposed to his plans, de Klerk met with Mandela in December to discuss the situation, a meeting both men considered friendly, before legalising all formerly banned political parties in February 1990 and announcing Mandela's unconditional release. Shortly thereafter, for the first time in 20 years, photographs of Mandela were allowed to be published in South Africa.

Leaving Victor Verster Prison on 11 February, Mandela held Winnie's hand in front of amassed crowds and the press; the event was broadcast live across the world. Driven to Cape Town's City Hall through crowds, he gave a speech declaring his commitment to peace and reconciliation with the white minority, but he made it clear that the ANC's armed struggle was not over and would continue as "a purely defensive action against the violence of apartheid". He expressed hope that the government would agree to negotiations, so that "there may no longer be the need for the armed struggle", and insisted that his main focus was to bring peace to the black majority and give them the right to vote in national and local elections. Staying at Tutu's home, in the following days Mandela met with friends, activists, and press, giving a speech to an estimated 100,000 people at Johannesburg's FNB Stadium.

