

SA To Award Castro Top Honour

Written by Rudi Prinsloo
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Former Cuban leader Fidel Castro is to receive the highest award South Africa can bestow on a foreign national, the Order of Companions of OR Tambo in Gold, the presidency announced on Wednesday.

But it is unlikely Castro, who resigned from office in February last year due to failing health, will himself attend the award ceremony set for later this week.

The presidency issued a list of names of 28 people who will have national order awards bestowed on them by President Kgalema Motlanthe at a ceremony in Pretoria on Friday.

Contacted for comment, presidency spokesman Thabo Masebe said all the recipients of the awards had been contacted.

"Before names are placed on the list, there is a nomination process. All the people announced have been contacted, and have accepted the nomination for the award."

Asked if Castro would be attending, he replied: "I don't think he is. Talk to [the department of] foreign affairs."

Foreign Affairs was not immediately available for comment.

According to media reports out of Cuba, Castro is too ill to travel.

Other recipients of national awards include Roelf Meyer and Cyril Ramaphosa, who will both be bestowed with the Order of the Baobab in Silver for their contributions during negotiations that led to the founding of South Africa's new democracy.

Motlanthe will make the following awards at Friday's ceremony:

The Order of the Baobab in Bronze to:

- Masenyeki Priscilla Mokone (posthumous);
- Reverend Khoza Elliot Mbuyisa Mgojo;
- Malethola Maggie Nkwe; and,
- Rashaka Frank Ratshitanga.

The Order of the Baobab in Silver to:

- Irene Menell;
- Roelof Petrus (Roelf) Meyer;
- Ethel Normoyle;
- Cyril Ramaphosa; and,
- Aanon Michael Rosholt.

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The Order of Luthuli in Bronze to:

- Jacqueline Daane-van Rensburg;
- Ayesha (Bibi) Dawood;
- Mirriam Hlazo;
- Nomhlangano Beauty Mkhize; and,
- Lydia Komape-Ngwenya.

The Order of Luthuli in Silver to:

- Kader Asmal;
- Brian Bunting (posthumous);
- Tlou Theophilus Cholo;
- Denis Theodore Goldberg;
- James Arnold "Jimmy" la Guma; and,
- Rebecca Makgomo Kekana Masilela.

The Order of the Companion of OR Tambo in Bronze to:

- Jennifer Davis.

The Order of the Companion of OR Tambo in Silver to:

- Christian Krause;
- Sadako Ogata;
- Marcelino dos Santos;
- Bengt Säve-Söderbergh;
- Andimba Toivo ya Toivo; and,
- Per Wästberg.

The Order of the Companion of OR Tambo in Gold to:

- Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz.

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