Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities.

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EDITORS/REPORTERS **02 NOVEMBER 2026**

MEDIA STATEMENT: CRL RIGHTS COMMISSION WISHES THE SOUTH AFRICAN RASTAFARI COMMUNITY A BLESSED CORONATION DAY CELEBRATION: COMMEMORATING THE 96TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CORONATION OF EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE I AND EMPRESS MENEN I (2 NOVEMBER 1930 - 2 NOVEMBER 2026)

The Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL Rights Commission) joins the Rastafari communities across South Africa, the African continent, and the global Rastafari family in commemorating Coronation Day, one of the most significant spiritual and cultural observances within the Rastafari faith and way of life.

This year marks the 96th Anniversary of the Coronation of His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I and Her Imperial Majesty Empress Menen I, who were crowned in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 2 November 1930. For Rastafari communities worldwide, this historic occasion remains a powerful symbol of African dignity, spiritual consciousness, self-determination, and cultural identity.

As we commemorate this anniversary, we also honour Empress Menen Asfaw, whose legacy of service, education, compassion, and social upliftment continues to inspire generations. Her example remains a profound reflection of African womanhood, leadership, and community development. The Commission acknowledges the important contributions of Rastafari communities to South Africa's cultural, religious, and social landscape.

The Commission continues to engage with provincial and national Rastafari community councils and organisations as part of ongoing efforts to support community self-regulation, promote religious freedom, protect cultural rights, and address various human rights challenges affecting Rastafari communities during the 2026/2027 period.

The Commission further calls upon all South Africans to respect and embrace the country's rich cultural and religious diversity. The values of peaceful coexistence, mutual respect, tolerance,

social cohesion, and nation-building remain essential to the strengthening of our constitutional democracy. Rastafari's future cannot be separated from Afrika's memory.

The Coronation on 02 November 1930 was not merely the crowning of an Emperor and an Empress; for millions around the world, it symbolised the affirmation of Afrikan sovereignty, dignity, resilience, and hope at a time when much of the continent was subjected to colonial domination. Its legacy continues to inspire aspirations for African unity, justice, human rights, and the full liberation of African peoples.

In commemorating this day, the Commission recalls the enduring words of His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I, spoken at the founding of the Organisation of African Unity on 25 May 1963: *"There are those who claim that African unity is impossible, that the forces that pull us, some in this direction, others in that, are too strong to be overcome. Around us there is no lack of doubt and pessimism, no absence of critics and criticism. They predict dissension and disintegration among Africans and internecine strife and chaos on our continent. Let us confound these and, by our deeds, disperse them in confusion."* These words remain as relevant today as they were more than six decades ago, serving as a reminder of the collective responsibility to advance unity, peace, justice, and human dignity throughout Africa and the world.

The Commission therefore extends its warmest wishes to Rastafari communities across South Africa and internationally for a Blessed Coronation Day and encourages all peoples to celebrate this occasion with respect for the diverse cultural and religious traditions that enrich our shared humanity.

Issued by CRL Rights Commission

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