

- Na February dayin 1990 '  
A about 100 000 people gathered B  
j \_.' at Kingâ\200\231 s(Park stadiumin .  
~Durban to'see and hear & .

recently released Nelson Mandela:.  
The man had been out of prison for a -  
few weeks-and was making his way  
around the country (and the world) -  
beingâ\200\231 welcomed back to sunny skies  
and freedom

It wasa moment for Whlch the world  
had waited: To see this human who was -  
beyond humanity. To pay tribute ta thls  
man who had spent almost 97 years .  
prison for his beliefs â\200\224 and came out  
singing hymns of forgiveness and -  
reconciliation. Was he for real, they -  
wondered. If he was, they wanted to  
partake of his nourishing words of  
wisdom. And bask in the cooling  
shadow of his gigantic presence.

Even'in his very didactic speaking  
style, every sÃ©ntence shimmered Wlth  
poetic wisdom.

The masses clapped. They cheered

They whistled. They sang: Some even hooed Mandela, others suffered in  
silence; suppressed their anger and

shed a tear or two:

'Over the next snx  
weeks we can show \_  
our gratitude by putting A theyers mahedon thecame  
on a stunnng show

AP2ole l\_6\_un

~\_ Let us make this World Cup a -  
152010 yribute to the wisdom of Madiba

Evenina provmce that had bÃ©come:  
1 - used to vlolence this was a. chĩ¬\202hng  
- message..

â\200\230But, despite thls Mandela remained -  
resolute. The war had to end. He was

" â\200\230prepared to go to extremes to builda - -

- bridge between the followers of his  
own organisation; and those of Inkat

To the anger of ANC hardliners Jike  
- Harry Gwala, Mandela even â\200\230supped -  
~ with the cantankerous. chief from  
undi: The war had to end>  
Numerous peace meetings were  
~ " held at his behest. Hardliners from

- both sides of the political divide tried  
their damndest to scupper these  
efforts. But Mandela was resolute.  
The war had to end.

elections-were inevitable. The Afrikaner  
right wing tried to sabotage this .  
inevitability with bombs, assassinations  
and indiscriminate shootmgs The  
military wing of the Pan Africanist  
- Congress launched random attackson -  
\* pubs, churches and any mstltunons

Until he said: â\200\234Take your kmves and slowly drifted -away from the stadium, - where  
whites were gathered.

your guns, and your pangas and throw heads bowed in disappointment.

: A few months later Inkatha, in  
conjunction with the apartheid security  
forces, launched anew onslaught. In -  
what history has recorded as the  
Seven-Day War, residents of the  
KwaZulu-Natal Midlands fought  
\and maimed.- thousands. An. -~ - T} pitched battles. Thousands died. The  
flames of violence raged wlth renewed

them into the sea.â\200\235

A hush fell over the stadmm.

These were people who had been  
jsubjected to intolerable violence by  
Inkatha, a surrogate of the apartheid  
regime, an. organisation that-had killed

organisation that, like a ferocmus  
blizzard, had swept the province of -  
KwaZulu-Natal, razing thousands of .  
homesteads and houses. .

i/ vigour.

salt into the still fresh wounds. How  
could they forgive Inkatha and the

But the steady hand of Nelson'  
\_Mandela remained on the wheel. The  
. war had toend. -

Y stood witness to the miracle that wasâ\200\231

miracle was no bed of roses. Madiba -  
. soldiered on to ensure that the bridges  
fashloned in 1994 remained intact.

As a journalist I witnessed his

This onslaught prompted extremists greatness up close. He took unpopular ' to issue a pamphlet countering Mandela's exhortation seemed to rub Mandela's message. The pamphlet read: 'Comrades, go back to the sea. Fetch your weapons, your knives, your and had tea and koeksisters with

" decisions and on many occasions angered both friend and foe. - . He famously made a trek to Orania -

cantankerous chief at its helm? Some pangas and return to the battlefield! Betsie Verwoerd, the wife of the late

His tenacity finally bore: fruit and we 5  
Â\$ April 27 1994. But the aftermath of that.

-Â¥ architect of apartheid. Many believed -

" he was taking appeasement too far..

He took on the trade unions and the . communists and insisted that the. Growth; Employment and \*

'Redistribution policy was the correct route for South Africa if we were going . to play in the big leagues of the world.

On foreign soil he mingled with the - .George Bushes and Helmut Kohlsas .

teasily as he did withMuammar ey 'Gaddafi and Fidel Castro. -

His wisdom and endurance gave us the country that is today hosting the -

2010 World Cup. Nelson Mandela is now

an old man. God willing, he will still be with us for some time yet. We should be grateful that he lived long enough to

. enjoy the fruits of his wisdom..

~ Over the next six weeks we will have the chance to show our gratitude to him

- by putting on a stunning show. We must

display his greatness to the world. - Even if the nasty among us try to spoil the party, the other 48 million of

. us (plus the 5 million Zimbabweans

among us) will make sure that they are put in their place. .

Through the successful execution of this tournament, we and the rest of the world will be paying tribute to a man who enables humanity to believe that it is possible to dream bigger and aspire

â\200\230to perfection.

Humanity will be saying â\200\230to him that his 90-something years were worth living. That the 27 years he spent in prison were worthwhile. Siyabonga - Madiba! South Africa, Ke nako!