



Our World Ended...

RESPONSE 3 to LETTER

My mother never said goodbye to District Six. How could she if she had been kicked out? She died in the new democracy, but part of her heart was buried in the old one. Many of her generation never lived to return. Their descendants live with the dream of a life under that landmark called Table Mountain. Yes, they are cynical, knowing that just as an election of some sort draws near politicians try to court them with promises. More promises can be expected as 2016's local government elections approach.

Just over a fortnight ago the country went dizzy with nostalgia as it celebrated the day when Nelson Mandela, with Winnie at his side, walked out of Victor Verster prison in Paarl, after 27 years in jail. Mandela's new walk began on February 11, 1990.

As the millions recalled the 25th anniversary of that day, I, with those who had been forced out and their descendants, remembered another day that had occurred 49 years ago on February 11, 1966. That was the day when an afternoon newspaper heralded the end of our world.

Some former residents have returned to District Six as part of restitution. They are the fortunate ones. Even if the place they now call home is not the old District Six, they have returned. Once again they can set their lives to the noon gun, which is fired on Signal Hill.

Even so, since 1994 the number of those who received their eviction letters have been dwindling fast. They have died without getting justice. Restitution should be accelerated not because it will be a vote-catching gesture but because it's the right thing to do.

With the 50th commemoration of the District Six forced removals approaching, priority should be given to returning District Six to those who have yearned to go home to the heart of Cape Town.

Adapted from:<https://mg.co.za/article/2015-02-27-our-world-ended-with-a-letter/>