



OPPORTUNE: Heritage Month was the perfect time to open the Dullah Omar building, said Justice Minister Jeff Radebe.

Justice Minister honours struggle icon Dullah Omar

NADINE FORD-KRITZINGER

THE Minister of Justice yesterday honoured former struggle icon Dullah Omar at the opening of the new Master of the High Court offices in Cape Town.

The opening of the new offices in Castle Street coincided with the month of September which marks the Public Service month in South Africa as well as Heritage Month and the honouring the late former minister of justice Omar who fought tirelessly for justice in an unjust legal system during the apartheid era.

Minister of Justice Jeff Radebe said: "There could have been no better time to open this facility as we continue to deposit into the reservoir of our common heritages the work of people like Dullah Omar through our work.

"With September being Herit-

age month, the Department of Justice has named this master's offices after the former minister, Dullah Omar, in recognition of his impeccable contribution in the our struggle for justice," he said.

Omar was the first minister of justice and constitutional development in the country. He was a lawyer involved in political cases, defending opponents of the apartheid regime.

Radebe said the government had done its best to provide services to the people of South Africa.

He said: "Housing, health, basic and higher education, transport, access to electricity and infrastructural development, are some of the projects that have been achieved over the past two decades under the ANC-led government, to give deeper meaning to constitutional democracy.

"Those involved in the justice sector will know how many new magistrates courts have been built to give legal access to the poor in Cape Town."

The new offices of the Master of the High Court has been moved to Castle Street to bring about better facilities which include more efficient and improved justice services, paperless estates administration and online facilities.

Radebe said: "I encourage the public to utilise these services of the new office and also to be mindful of the fact that the facilities belong to them as a community." Present at the event, was Omar's widow, Farieda, who said she and her family were pleased attend the event to honour her late husband.

"I am so very proud of my late husband, she said."

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Master's new office named after **Dullah Omar**

FARIEDA Omar, centre, wife of the late justice minister Dullah Omar, with Hishaam Mohamed, right, head of the Department of Justice in the Western Cape, and ANC MP Luwellyn Landers, left, a member of Parliament's justice and constitutional development committee, at the opening of the new Master of the High Court building,

which was named after Omar.

The office, at 45 Castle Street, would offer improved services, said Justice Department spokesman Mthunzi Mhaga. The building had advanced equipment, including a paperless estates administration system, which would allow people to view estate information online.

"Trusts can now be registered online, thereby removing the need for the public to either post or hand-deliver trust deeds to the office," Mhaga said.

The new building would free space for more court cases at Cape Town Magistrates Court, where the Master was previously situated.

PICTURE: COURTNEY AFRICA

JUSTICE DONE: Dullah Omar's widow, Farida, acknowledges public support outside the Master of the High Court's new offices, named after her husband. Joining in were justice committee chairman Luwellyn Landers (left) and Justice Department regional head Hishaam Mohamed. The Omars were leading members of the ANC, whose cadres bombed Landers's Mitchells Plain home in 1985, before he ditched the Labour Party. *Picture: COURTNEY AFRICA*

Justice building renamed in tribute to Dullah Omar

Matthew Hirsch
Cadet News Agency

DULLAH OMAR devoted his life to justice – and a Justice Department building named after the late minister has been opened.

The offices of the Master of the High Court have moved into in the Dullah Omar Building in Castle Street in central Cape Town.

Omar was transport minister when he died in 2004.

The Dullah Omar Building was opened by Justice Minister Jeff Radebe yesterday.

He said the department had named the building after Omar in recognition of his "impeccable" legacy.

do it in a more dignified and bigger space".

As a lawyer, Omar assisted countless victims of apartheid and represented activists caught up in the Struggle, most often without charging them.

He was Nelson Mandela's lawyer when Madiba was incarcerated on Robben Island. He also helped many other prisoners and detainees.

Omar was a Struggle leader, a founding member of the United Democratic Front and an underground activist of the ANC.

He was so effective that apartheid agents tried to kill him in 1988 by swopping his heart pills with lethal tablets.

"It is a proud and historic moment," his widow and fellow activist, Farida Omar, said yesterday.

"(Dullah) would have been honoured, but I think he would have been very shy about it."

Farida Omar was among a number of Omar's relatives who attended the opening. "They are happy and proud."

Omar's son Rustum said: "Clearly it is an honour, but at the same time it's not the type of glory that I think he would have sought. One must try to accept this honour with humility in the same way that he would have done."

Radebe said: "This new service point is equipped with modernised IT systems... los-

ing files will be a thing of the past.

"I trust that this new service point will be guided by Mr Dullah Omar's humility, selfless dedication and commitment to the cause of those seeking justice services. It is befitting Dullah Omar's stature that as we celebrate our National Heritage Month, his legacy becomes an important part of that national heritage."

The Master's office offers services relating to deceased estates, liquidations, the registration of trusts, tutors, and curators, and the administration of the Guardian's Fund for minors and the mentally challenged.

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