



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that the United Nations stood side by side with Nelson Mandela in the fight against apartheid as he paid tribute to the former South African President at an official memorial service today.

“South Africa’s democratic transformation was a victory by and for South Africans. But it was also a triumph for the ideals of the United Nations -- and for anyone, anywhere, who has ever faced the poison of prejudice”, Mr. Ban said.

“The United Nations stood side by side with Nelson Mandela and the people of South Africa in the fight against apartheid. We used every tool we had: sanctions, an arms embargo, a sports boycott, diplomatic isolation.

We spoke up loud and clear across the world. Apartheid was vanquished, “

The UN Secretary-General said that Mr. Mandela would have been the first one to add that “our struggle continues -- against inequality and intolerance, and for prosperity and peace.”

“Nelson Mandela showed us the way with a heart larger than this stadium and an infectious smile that could easily power its lights. In fact, it lit up the world.

Nelson Mandela is now at rest, his long walk complete. Let us now be guided and inspired by the spirit he awakened in all of us -- the flame of human rights -- the beacon of hope,” the UN Secretary-General said in his address.

The memorial service in Johannesburg will precede three days during which Mr. Mandela’s body will lie in state in the Union Buildings in Pretoria before his burial on Sunday in his childhood village of Qunu in the Eastern Cape.