



To the people of South Africa,

On behalf of the Irish trade union movement I would like to extend my condolences to you, the people of South Africa, for the loss of your inspirational leader Nelson Mandela.

Irish workers, and in particular workers in the Irish retail sector, had a very close connection to the people of South Africa and to Mr Mandela.

In 1984, members of IDATU (now Mandate Trade Union) took a very brave and ethical stance and refused to handle goods produced in the Apartheid state.

Those workers were victimized by their employer, Dunnes Stores, and ended up on strike for almost three years in defense of their Anti-Apartheid position. It is fitting that those courageous trade union members will attend the funeral of Mr Mandela as representatives of our movement and of our people.

Mr Mandela is an enormous loss to South Africa and the rest of the world. His knowledge and leadership will leave an enormous vacuum, which will be extraordinarily difficult to fill.

The world is a far greater place for having his presence for so long and although he is no longer here, his legacy of justice, equality and solidarity will continue, without borders, forever.

In solidarity,

John Douglas,

---

Mandate Trade Union General Secretary

President of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions