

Bob Marley: Reps Greenlight Zimbabwe Statue of Reggae Icon

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Chemhere proposes the statue be erected at Rufaro Stadium in Harare, where Bob Marley and The Wailers performed to usher Zimbabwe's independence.

As Jamaica prepares to celebrate the birth of world-renowned Reggae icon, Bob Marley, Zimbabwean arts consultant has been given the go-ahead to have a statue erected in his honor.

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According to a Daily News Live report, Martin Chemhere – after successfully negotiating with representatives of the late King of Reggae's estate – will initiate the process to curate a statue of the beloved singer.

“I’m thrilled to have finally succeeded in this project for our beautiful country. The approval is a great achievement for Zimbabwe (and Africa) as the statue will attract tourists,” Chemhere said.

“The statue is approved subject to the following conditions: The sculptor and or Government of Zimbabwe and or private sponsor shall obtain all appropriate releases from the photographer or artist on whose work the sculptor intends to base the Statue; the Government of Zimbabwe and or other private sponsor shall

pay for the costs associated with the materials and construction of the statue; the statue will be strictly for the public completely free of cost; BobMarley.com requires approval rights to the actual statue – not to be unreasonably withheld. Prior to construction of the statue, rendering of the statue must be submitted for approval by his family. The statue shall substantially comply with the rendering approved by Bob Marley.com."

Chemhere proposes the statue be erected at Rufaro Stadium, Mbare, Harare – the venue of Zimbabwe's historic independence celebrations as well as an iconic performance by Bob Marley and The Wailers to usher the nation's break away from colonial rule.

"The reason behind this statue is that of Africa's more than 50 countries Bob Marley only performed in Zimbabwe as part of the country's independence celebrations in 1980," the arts aficionado explained.

Marley rejected a fee offered by Zimbabwean officials for the performance at the liberation celebration and, instead, paid all the expenses – to charter planes to transport his equipment, band and entourage from Kingston, Jamaica to Harare, Zimbabwe and back to Kingston – from his own pocket.

"The singer had, back in 1978, sang a song titled "Zimbabwe" that inspired freedom fighters and Zimbabweans in the struggle for independence."

The consultant disclosed that the statue will be an eight-meter bronze work. Two South African artists – Andre Prinsloo and Ruhan Janse Van Vuuren – will create the piece. Prinsloo and Van Vuuren are best known for creating a Nelson Mandela statue which is located at the Parliament-Union Buildings in Pretoria, South Africa.

"I have no doubt this is a national project and I will be talking to several stakeholders including the Zimbabwean government, Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, Harare City Council, corporate companies and individuals at home and abroad as well as the donor community and others for support," Chemhere said.

"The project will need everyone to come on board for it to be successful."

Meanwhile, annual activities – which include tributes, symposiums, a kiddie village and concert – have been planned to celebrate Marley's birthday at the musician's famous 56 Hope Road home in Kingston.

Marley's grandson Skip – by daughter Cedella – and son Stephen will reportedly participate in the celebratory festivities.

An Istanbul-based digital art and culture platform, Babylon, will also remember Marley with tribute performances from several artists at the special event on Feb.

9.

Marley died in 1981, after battling cancer, at the age of 36.