

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AFR 53/34/94
Distr: UA/SC

UA 385/94

Death threats / Extrajudicial executions 26 October 1994

SOUTH AFRICA

Beauty MKHIZE, Chairperson South African Rural Women's Movement, field worker for Transvaal Rural Action Committee, Driefontein, Eastern Transvaal Province
Yunus CAJEE, Member of the African National Congress (ANC), shopkeeper, Driefontein

Beauty Mkhize and Yunus Cajee have received anonymous telephoned death threats. Both have been threatened before (see UA 88/93, AFR 53/09/93, 26 March 1993), but this time fears for their lives have been greatly heightened by the assassination during 1994 of several prominent community leaders in Driefontein. The police have failed to effectively investigate this pattern of killings, and an atmosphere of fear has once again gripped this rural community.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On 24 April 1994 25-year-old Lazarus Yende was abducted from the ANC office in Driefontein where he was ANC Youth League Chairperson. Four days later, his body was found in a nearby dam (reservoir). About a month before his death some Driefontein residents had received information indicating that specific persons were planning to eliminate him and other ANC members. This was conveyed to the police, but they apparently took no steps to provide protection to those singled out for attack. At the time of his death Lazarus Yende was working in co-operation with members of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and the Home Affairs Department in preparing the local community for participation in the country's first democratic elections. He was regarded locally as a very effective organizer, and reportedly praised by the IEC for his rural electoral education work, particularly amongst workers on farms owned by supporters of white rightwing organizations. The investigation into his abduction and murder is apparently being conducted by a member of the police's Stock Theft Unit.

Hendrietta Nkabinde, a member of the ANC Women's League, executive member of the South African Rural Women's Movement and an elder of the True Zion Congregational Church of Africa, was shot dead outside her home in Driefontein on 31 July. Also highly regarded for her community work, Mrs Nkabinde was approached at her home by strangers asking for help, but she reportedly told them to return the next day. They left, but after a short while returned and locked her house from the outside, before setting fire to it. Local residents heard her cries. While they were attempting to help Mrs Nkabinde put out the fire, a man wearing a balaclava appeared out of the darkness and shot her about seven times, reportedly with an AK47 automatic weapon. Her death was reported to the police.

Mbotisa Dlamini, a taxi owner, was shot dead in his home in Driefontein on 11 September, by a killer who reportedly also used an AK47. Although family members informed the nearest police station, which was about a kilometre away, the police did not visit the home to remove the body and take statements from witnesses until four days later.

As yet the police have failed to communicate the results of their

investigations into these killings to family members or other concerned parties. On 6 September the Member of the Eastern Transvaal Provincial Legislature responsible for policing services, Jabulane Stephen Mabona, visited Driefontein and received a memorandum from its residents requesting effective police investigations into the killings and other acts of violence. Despite his agreement to do so, Mr Mabona had reportedly, by late October, not given feedback to the community regarding their concerns.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in English or in your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Beauty Mkhize and Yunus Cajee, Driefontein residents, following their receipt of death threats, and calling for immediate concrete steps to be taken to ensure their protection;
- expressing concern at the pattern of assassinations of prominent residents of Driefontein, including Lazarus Yende on 24 April, Hendrietta Nkabinde on 31 July and Mbotisa Dlamini on 11 September 1994, and the apparent lack of effective police investigations into these killings;
- calling for the national and provincial authorities to ensure that the police promptly and impartially investigate these murders, other acts of violence and threats of violence against Driefontein residents, and ensure that suspected perpetrators are arrested and brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

1) Mr F S Mufamadi
Minister of Safety and Security
Private Bag X463
Pretoria 0001, South Africa

Faxes: +27 12 320 5065

Telegrams: Safety/Security Minister, Pretoria, South Africa

Salutation: Dear Minister

2) Mr Jabulane Stephen Mabona
Eastern Transvaal Provincial Minister for Safety and Security
PO Box 1862
Nelspruit 1200
South Africa

Faxes: +27 1311 554965

Telegrams: Safety/Security Minister, Eastern Transvaal Province, Nelspruit, South Africa

Salutation: Dear Minister

3) Lieutenant-General J Van Der Merwe
Commissioner of Police
Police Headquarters
Private Bag X94
Pretoria 0001, South Africa

Faxes: +27 12 323 2033, +27 12 326 5162

Telexes: 3-20838 SAPOB SA

Telegrams: Police Commissioner Van Der Merwe, Pretoria, South Africa

Salutation: Dear Commissioner

4) Major-General C L Smith
Regional Commissioner of Police
Private Bag X1801, Middelburg 1050

South Africa

Faxes: +27 132 23332

Telegrams: Regional Commissioner of Police, Middleburg 1050, South Africa

Salutation: Dear Major-General

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Standerton District Police Commissioner
Standerton Police Station
Standerton 2430, South Africa

Transvaal Rural Action Committee (TRAC)
PO Box 2827 Johannesburg 2000, South Africa

and to diplomatic representatives of South Africa accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 5 December 1994.