

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Possible Extrajudicial execution

16 August 1991

SOUTH AFRICA

Reverend Edward Nkomo, a priest with an independent African church, killed 26 July 1991

Reverend Edward Nkomo, a priest with an independent African church, was shot dead on 26 July 1991 outside his home in Mshenguville squatter camp, in the Mofolo area of Soweto. He was shot at point blank range, allegedly by members of the Inkatha Freedom Party during one of a series of violent attacks they carried out on residents of Mshenguville squatter camp in which they were allegedly assisted by police. The attacks began on 19 July 1991 and at least 10 people may have been killed in these attacks, though reports are still unclear. Between 30 July and 2 August alone approximately 30 shacks were reportedly burnt down. Many squatters have been forced to abandon their shacks and flee to places of refuge outside the camp. Some are still in hiding, fearing for their lives. Residents have claimed that the attacks were carried out by members or supporters of the Inkatha Freedom Party and were aimed at those who did not support the Inkatha Freedom Party, and that the attacks were coupled with attempts to recruit members to the Inkatha Freedom Party.

Reports received by Amnesty International strongly suggest that the attackers received the active assistance of the police in the course of these raids. Eyewitnesses have alleged, for example, that on the night of 21 July armed Inkatha members were seen alighting from a police vehicle and entering the squatter camp, and about an hour later shacks were burning but residents were prevented by a large group of Inkatha members from approaching the burning shacks. On the night of the first attack, 19 July, shacks were allegedly set alight in the presence of the police and the police refused to allow local residents access to put out the fires.

Amnesty International is urging the South African authorities to investigate the circumstances of Reverend Nkomo's death and the allegations that those who attacked Mshenguville squatter camp on successive days received the active assistance of the police. In addition Amnesty International remains concerned for the safety of residents of Mshenguville squatter camp. Many families are still unable to return to their homes, even to collect their belongings, for fear of further violent attacks.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- calling upon the authorities to urgently investigate the circumstances surrounding the death of Reverend Edward Nkomo and any others who have been killed in Mshenguville squatter camp, Mofolo, since 19 July 1991, and to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice without delay;

- expressing concern about allegations that the police gave active assistance to those who attacked Mshenguville squatter camp, and calling for an independent

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and to diplomatic representatives of South Africa in your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 27 September 1991.