

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of extrajudicial executions

9 August 1991

SOUTH AFRICA

Frans MAHUMA
Thomas MAVUNDLA
Thomas MONENE
Elliot RAMPAN

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Frans Mahuma, Thomas Mavundla, Thomas Monene and Elliot Rampau, since their release from several days' detention in late July at Welverdiend police station near Carletonville, in western Transvaal Province. They alleged that they had been tortured and that at least one of them had been threatened with death if they revealed this.

Members of the South African Police arrested Frans Mahuma, Thomas Mavundla, Thomas Monene and Elliot Rampau on 23 July 1991, and others unknown to Amnesty International on 24 July, all from Khutsong township outside Carletonville. In statements made to their lawyer shortly after their release a few days later, when no charges were preferred, they said that they were tortured during interrogation to make them confess to certain crimes which they denied having committed. Each of the four alleged that he was forced to lie on the floor of a room in the police station with his hands tied behind him and his legs tied together with a rope.

Three had sacks or bags placed over their heads. Each of the four said that the police placed a metal rod either between their wrists, which were tied together, or between their legs, and attached wires to their fingers, ankles or lower backs. Electric shocks were administered until they agreed to sign confessions. The allegations of torture implicated several police officers including an officer recently appointed as commander of the police station.

Members of the South African Police at Welverdiend police station have been repeatedly linked to allegations of torture and extrajudicial executions. Two detainees died during 1990 after being held there and allegedly tortured, and six other detainees, after their release from the same police station, have been shot dead by the police in suspicious circumstances.

Four of these six former detainees had alleged in statements to lawyers that they had been tortured during interrogation at Welverdiend and had witnessed the torture of fellow-detainees there.

The gravity of the allegations made by Frans Mahuma, Thomas Mavundla, Thomas Monene and Elliot Rampau is increased by the fact that the torture they describe occurred despite the setting up in early July 1991 by State President De Klerk of a "Special Task Force" under the command of Major-General R Van Der Westhuizen, to investigate among other things, allegations of the involvement of the police at Welverdiend and Khutsong in torture and extrajudicial executions. Five police officers formerly based at Welverdiend police station were reportedly suspended from duty at the end of July but other police officers allegedly involved in human rights violations remain in post.

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

- expressing concern that Frans Mahuma, Thomas Mavundla, Thomas Monene and Elliot Rampau were allegedly subjected to torture including electric shocks and that Thomas Mavundla was allegedly threatened with death by the police, while the four were in custody at Welverdiend police station after being arrested on 23 July 1991;
- urging the authorities to take all necessary steps to ensure their safety, in view of death threats against at least one of them, and previous instances of deaths in custody in Welverdiend police station or police killings of detainees after their release;
- expressing concern that these new allegations of human rights violations have occurred

- despite the fact that a Special Task Force was appointed in early July 1991 to inquire into previous incidents of alleged torture and extrajudicial executions carried out by the police at Welverdiend police station;
- calling for a full, independent and impartial investigation into these new allegations of torture and death threats at Welverdiend police station;
 - calling for the immediate suspension of all police officers alleged to have been involved in torture or other human rights violations there.

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APPEALS TO

Mr F W De Klerk
State President
State President's Office
Private Bag X83
Pretoria 0001, South Africa

Salutation: Dear President

Telegrams: President De Klerk, Pretoria, S Africa
Telexes: 321695 SPLIB SA, 321890 PRES SA, or 322158 PRES SA
Faxes: +27 12 323 3982

Mr A J Vlok
Minister of Law and Order
Private Bag X463
Pretoria 0001, South Africa

Salutation: Dear Minister

Telegrams: Minister Law/Order, Pretoria, S Africa
Telexes: 321353 HABS SA or 321358 HABS SA
Faxes: +27 12 322 2559

PLEASE NOTE that as from 30 August 1991 there will be a new Minister of Law and Order, Mr H J Kriel. Communications sent on or after that date should therefore be addressed to Mr Kriel.

Lt-Gen Van Der Merwe
Commissioner of Police
Police Headquarters
Private Bag X94
Pretoria 0001, South Africa

Salutation: Dear Commissioner

Telegrams: Police Commissioner Van de Merwe, Pretoria, S Africa
Telexes: 3-20772 SAPQM SA; 3-20838 SAPOB SA
Faxes: + 27 12 323 2033

Major-General J G De Waal
Regional Commissioner of Police (Western Transvaal)
Private Bag X801
Potchefstroom 2520, South Africa

Salutation: Dear Regional Commissioner

Telegrams: Western Transvaal Regional Police Commissioner, Potchefstroom, S Africa
Faxes: + 27 148 997835

Major-General R Van Der Westhuizen
c/o Commissioner of Police
Police Headquarters
Private Bag X94
Pretoria 0001, South Africa

Salutation: Dear Major General

Telegrams: Maj-Gen Westhuizen, Police HQ, Pretoria, S Africa

Telexes: 3-20772 SAPQM SA; 3-20838 SAPOB SA

Faxes: + 27 12 323 2033

The Attorney General (Witwatersrand) **Salutation: Dear Attorney General**

The Supreme Court

Private Bag X8

Johannesburg 2000, South Africa

Telegrams: Attorney General (Witwatersrand), Johannesburg, S Africa

COPIES TO one or more of the following:

- The Editor, The Sowetan, POB 6663, Johannesburg 2000
- The Editor, The Star, POB 1014, Johannesburg 2000
- The Editor, Vrye Weekblad, PO Box 42637, Fordsburg 2033
- The Editor, Weekly Mail, PO Box 260425, Excom 2023
- The Editor, New Nation, PO Box 10674, Johannesburg 2000
- Independent Board of Inquiry Into Informal Repression, PO Box 32293, Braamfontein, Johannesburg 2017

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 20 September 1991.