

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 122/93 Fear of extrajudicial execution

21 April 1993

**SOUTH AFRICA: Chris KHOZA, African National Congress (ANC) branch
chairperson, Mpophomeni township, near Howick,
Province**

Natal

and other ANC members in the Mpophomeni community

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Chris Khoza, ANC branch chairperson in Mpophomeni, following recent killings of other ANC members or supporters in the township by attackers alleged to have acted with the support or acquiescence of the local police. At least 11 members of the community were killed in Mpophomeni between 8 and 14 April 1993 in attacks on their homes or in the street, including seven killed on the night of 14 April. Most were prominent in the community, and involved in peace efforts or religious activities.

One of those killed, Bheki Maseko, a neighbour of Chris Khoza, who was a carpenter and a former acting ANC chairperson, was shot dead by armed men on the evening of 14 April. The same group of six armed men had been seen waiting near the gate of Chris Khoza's house for some 30 minutes before they went to Bheki Maseko's house. The gunmen shot Bheki Maseko inside his house at close range, killing him with a deliberate final shot as he lay severely wounded. They also shot dead a young boy and seriously wounded another man, both of whom were in the house with Bheki Maseko. Bheki Maseko was attacked only a few minutes after returning from giving information about previous murders to the police. After Bheki Maseko's murder two people, one of whom was a police officer reportedly told Chris Khoza's wife that her husband's life was in danger.

The local police have consistently shown a reluctance to protect Mpophomeni residents from attack or to investigate properly attacks and killings after they have occurred. The police took no action against men identified by eye-witnesses as the killers of five Mpophomeni residents on 24 December 1992. The same men appear to have been involved in the killings that occurred between 8 and 14 April 1993. It was only after considerable pressure on the authorities by local members of parliament and others that on 15 April the South African Police operating with the South African Defence Force arrested 14 people in connection with the killings this April. The police did not issue details on the individuals arrested or on possible charges against them. On 17 April, the day of a mass funeral for 10 of the 11 victims, the police released eight of the arrested suspects without laying charges against them. It is unclear at present whether those arrested were in fact the men whom local residents believe were involved in the killings. It is also unclear if the suspects who remain in custody will face charges. However the releases on 17 April caused renewed fear and tension in the community. Township residents heard more shooting on the night of 18 April.

Chris Khoza, aged about 40 and married with five children, is a long-standing ANC

official in Mpophomeni, a key community leader, and active with the local Christian church. In recent years he has repeatedly been involved in peacemaking efforts at times of violence or tension in the community, and is trying to promote community development there by establishing a training centre for the unemployed. In July 1991, while he was on an overseas training course, his home was petrol-bombed and ransacked and looted. Since September 1992 he has regularly received anonymous telephone death threats, the most recent ones occurring on 18 April. As a result of these threats and the recent wave of killings, he and his family have been forced to seek refuge outside the township out of fear for their lives. Other ANC members and supporters are also in hiding or living in fear of further attacks.

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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 ANC official Chris Khoza, in view of the recent killings of community leaders in Mpophomeni and the death threats against him, and urging the authorities to take steps, in accordance with Chris Khoza's wishes, to safeguard him and his family against harassment and attack;

- calling for a full and independent investigation into the murders of 11 people in Mpophomeni township between 8 and 14 April 1993, and for the perpetrators to be brought to justice promptly;

- expressing concern that the local police in Mpophomeni appear to have been unwilling to carry out their duties in an impartial manner in investigating a number of murders in the past or in extending protection to those threatened with violence;

- urging the authorities to exercise their responsibility to protect the lives of all residents of Mpophomeni by ensuring that the local police force behaves impartially and responds promptly to calls for assistance and is willing to investigate and arrest the perpetrators of attacks, irrespective of political affiliation.

APPEALS TO

1) Mr F W de Klerk
State President
State President's Office
Private Bag X83
Pretoria 0001
South Africa

Faxes: + 27 12 322 2559

Salutation: Dear Minister

**Telegrams: President de Klerk,
Pretoria, South Africa**

**Telexes: 321695 SPLIB SA
321890 PRES SA**

Faxes: + 27 12 323 3982

Salutation: Dear President

2) Mr H J Kriel
Minister of Law and Order
Private Bag X463
Pretoria 0001
South Africa

**Telegrams: Minister Law/Order,
Pretoria, South Africa**

Telexes: 321353

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

**Telegrams: Police Commissioner van Der
Merwe, Pretoria, South
Africa**

**Telxes: 3-20772 SAPQM SA
3-20838 SAPOB SA**

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

Salutation: Dear Commissioner

4) Lieutenant-General W H Steyn
Regional Police Commissioner, Natal
P O Box 391
Durban 4000, South Africa

**Telegrams: Natal Regional Police
Commissioner, Durban, South
Africa**

Salutation: Dear Commissioner

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Colonel Ungerer
Station Commander
Howick Police Station
Howick 3290
South Africa

and if possible to any of the following:

- Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness (PACSA), PO Box 2338, Pietermaritzburg 3200, South Africa;
- The Editor, Natal Witness, POB 362, Pietermaritzburg 3200, South Africa;
- The Editor, City Press, POB 3413, Johannesburg 2000, South Africa;
- The Editor, New Nation, P O Box 10674, 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 2 June 1993.