

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Death Threats / Fear for safety

25 November 1994

**SOUTH AFRICA Mrs M Mtimkulu (f), Head Teacher, Hemfane Lower Primary School,  
Mvutshini (North Coast, KwaZulu-Natal)  
her husband  
and her sons, Kulekani and Nkululeko Mtimkulu**

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There are serious concerns for the safety of members of the Mtimkulu family who have been subjected to a series of death threats and attacks, in which they have been targeted by armed men acting with the acquiescence of the police.

On 17 July 1994 Kulekani Mtimkulu was shot at while driving in a car. Although the vehicle was damaged by the multiple gunfire, he escaped injury and went to the Gingindlovu police station to report the incident. He was shot at again when he returned from the police station. Subsequently Bongani Ngidi, the son of the local Induna (traditional Headman), was charged in connection with the shooting. At the time of the shooting he was out on bail on charges of attempted murder of another person. After a period in custody in connection with the attempted shooting of Kulekani Mtimkulu, Bongani Ngidi was apparently released on bail.

In late September, Kulekani and Mrs Mtimkulu were threatened with death by men associated with Induna Ngidi, whose home is reportedly guarded by members of the former KwaZulu "homeland" police force. At about 7pm on 25 September about 20 people arrived at the gate of their home and fired a shot. The next day at about 6.30pm a group of four men, allegedly including Bongani Ngidi and at least one member of the KwaZulu Police, were seen in the vicinity of the Mtimkulu home.

On the weekend of 29 October Mrs Mtimkulu sent her son Nkululeko to collect Kulekani. Their car was stopped by men associated with Induna Ngidi. They demanded the car key and attempted to burn the vehicle. These actions occurred in the presence of a member of the KwaZulu Police. Mrs Mtimkulu later sought assistance at the Gingindlovu police station (which is under South African Police Service (SAPS) control). She then went to the home of the Induna, accompanied by an officer from the police station. Despite the presence of the police officer the Induna did not hand over the car key. On 31 October men associated with the Induna appeared outside the Mtimkulu home, shouted threats and fired a gun.

Out of fear for their lives, Mrs Mtimkulu and her sons went into hiding.

On 16 November members of the Gingindlovu police station and the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) searched the family's home for weapons. They found none. On 19 November, at a meeting of Mvutshini residents called by Induna Ngidi, the Induna reportedly issued veiled threats against Mrs Mtimkulu. After this meeting, white police officers reportedly apprehended Mrs Mtimkulu's husband, who was standing at a bus-stop, and searched him to see if he was carrying a gun. He was not.

To Amnesty International's knowledge the security forces have taken no steps to investigate the threats made against members of the Mtimkulu family since the initial arrest of Bongani Ngidi in July. The organization is concerned that the police are failing to investigate and bring to justice those responsible

for many of the incidents, and are at the same time subjecting the family to harassment.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Mrs M Mtimkulu, head teacher of the Hemfane Lower Primary School in Mvutshini, and her sons, Kulekani and Nkululeko, following death threats and attacks made against them by armed men associated with the local Induna, and calling for urgent steps to be taken to ensure the safety of the Mtimkulu family;
- expressing concern that the attacks and verbal threats have sometimes taken place in the presence of members of the KwaZulu Police and the South African Police Service, without any appropriate actions being taken by those officers;
- urging that the authorities fully investigate these incidents, as well as other incidents of violence in the Mvutshini area of northern KwaZulu-Natal, and promptly bring to justice those responsible for these human rights violations.

**APPEALS TO:**

Col du Preez  
Acting District Commissioner of the South African Police  
Private Bag X505  
Eshowe 3815  
South Africa

**Faxes: +27 354 42284**

**Telegrams: District Commissioner du Preez, Eshowe 3815, South Africa**

**Salutation: Dear District Commissioner**

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**

Reverend C J Mthethwa  
MEC for Safety and Security  
KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Legislature  
Private Bag X06  
Ulundi 3838  
South Africa

**Telegrams: Rev Mthethwa, Safety/Security MEC, Ulundi 3838, South Africa**

**Salutation: Dear Reverend Mthethwa**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

- Natal Monitor, c/o CSDS University of Natal, King George V Ave, Durban 4001, South Africa
- Human Rights Committee, Ecumenical Centre, 20 St Andrews Street, Durban 4001 South Africa
- Natal Witness, PO Box 362, Pietermaritzburg 3200, 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 January 1995.