

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 114/94 (AFR 53/21/94, 21 March 1994) - and follow-up (AFR 53/27/94 (wrongly printed as AMR 57/27/94), 29 April) - Torture / Health concern

SOUTH AFRICA: Michael Mathe, age 17 years

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On 5 May 1994 Michael Mathe was transferred from Alberton Police Station to the nearby Natalspruit hospital and he has since been released on bail. His transfer to hospital occurred only after sustained pressure on the Alberton police by his legal representatives and others. Visitors who saw him at Natalspruit hospital on 6 May said that he was still in a poor mental state.

Hospital staff reported that police officers tried to remove him from hospital early on 6 May but that the doctor in charge of Michael Mathe's care refused to let them take him away.

The stress which Michael Mathe is experiencing has been increased by the fact that his brother Morgan is in a critical condition in Natalspruit hospital after being shot in the face on 2 May, apparently by armed men acting with impunity in his home area of Katlehong township on the East Rand. Morgan Mathe is a local monitor for the National Peace Secretariat.

At a hearing at Alberton magistrate's court on 9 May, Michael Mathe was released on bail of Rand 1,000. He was discharged from Natalspruit hospital before the bail hearing, but will continue to receive treatment for the post-traumatic stress symptoms he has been suffering. The police and prosecutor have not yet presented in court any detailed charge sheet, and no trial date has been set yet. Michael Mathe has laid a charge of assault against officers of the South African Police who allegedly tortured him in January.

Michael Mathe's representatives wish to thank all who appealed to the authorities on his behalf. They believe that without that pressure he would still be in police custody.

Michael Mathe is now 17 years old, following his birthday on 17 March.

No further action by the Urgent Action Network is required. Thank you to all who sent appeals.