

DESCOM BULLETIN.

20 ST ANDREWS STREET - DURBAN No. 14

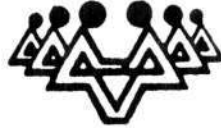


DID YOU KNOW

- * Over 25 000 human rights activists, trade unionists, community leaders and children have been detained over the past year. These people have committed no crime. Their only crime is their opposition to apartheid and their desire to be free.

CONTENTS

	Page
* One year of the emergency	2
* The local situation	4
* Repression against families	4
* Down at the Embassies	5
* Gutter press	6
* The emergency is dead – long live the emergency	7
* Courts challenge emergency	7
* Detention and information	8
* A letter from death row	9
* A silenced voice	10



ONE YEAR OF THE EMERGENCY

On the 12th June 1987, a new State of Emergency came into effect. The government had not yet released all the names of those who have been detained under the old regulations, nor had they indicated that they would do so. According to the DPSC, at least 25 000 people have been detained since the Emergency was declared and about 3 500 are currently in detention, of whom 4,5% are being held in Natal.



After a year of the Emergency, the detention statistics reveal the following national trends :

- the vast majority of detentions have taken place in centres of 'people's power' (E. Cape and Transvaal)
- thousands of rank & file members of organisations, particularly members of street committees, have been detained, in contrast to previous clampdowns which have affected only activists and leaders
- the main target of repression has been overwhelmingly UDF affiliates, particularly civics, youth and student congresses (75 % of detentions)
- trade unionists have tended to be held for shorter periods, excluding N. Natal
- a core of leading activists have been held for the entire emergency
- the youth continue to bear the brunt of security force action, who maintain that this age group are a threat to public safety and therefore a legitimate target for detention, assault or even shootings (over a third of those detained under 19)

In the latter six months of the emergency, increasing use was made of the existing security legislation, especially in Natal where decisions in the courts have frustrated the security forces in their attempts to impose military rule. Between January and April 1987, 100 people were held under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act, of whom 83 were detained in Natal.

A picture thus emerges of a co-ordinated repression by the SAP, the SADF, the security police and the municipal police, on the general community with the intention of preventing 'unrest' in the townships and to discourage support for activists and organisations.

THE NATAL MIDLANDS

Between 12 June 1986 and 26 May 1987, a total of 260 detentions were reported in the Pietermaritzburg, Greytown and Howick areas. However these figures are thought as little is known about the rural and peri-urban areas.



The detainees may be categorised as follows :

Students, scholars, teachers	103
Unionists, workers	5
Community, political	65
Clergy, churchworkers	30
Other	7
Unknown	50

TOTAL	260

This local pattern coincides broadly with the national picture, the UDF being particularly hard-hit, but in the Pietermaritzburg region few COSATU and no media detentions were reported. The organisations affected were UDF, ECC, FMBCC, NEUSA, PACSA, AFRA, NIC, MICRU, DC, DESCOM, MASCO, COSATU, AZASO, SANSCO, AZASM, NOW, MWUSA and FY.

At least 14 people are thought to have been held under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act. A number of people were released and redetained : others were charged under the Criminal Procedures Act while in detention and released on bail. Three detainees, two of them W. German nationals, were deported. The scale of the arrests was a new experience for the region, but reflected a national trend in which the victims were rank & file members as well as high profile figures. In contrast to the remainder of the country, however, the local release rate in early July 1986 was 50% compared to the national figure of 8%. Most of those released were arrested in the mass arrests of early Thursday 12 June 1986, served the standard 14 days and were then released.

Impressions of detention conditions at this time were that most people were 'interviewed', some by the Military Police', and many were verbally harassed, although there was little physical violence. Detainees gained the impression that Security Police were largely updating their files and indulging in psychological warfare.

For the longer term detainees there some reports of physical harassment. At New Hanover, alleged sjambokking of detainees took place. In Pietermaritzburg, two released female detainees reported physical assaults. The most serious case involved an activist detained on 16th September 1986, who was assaulted at Alexandra Road Police Station and suffered impaired hearing in the left ear, damaged left jaw and salivary glands, and headaches. An interim order restraining the police from further assaults was later awarded by the courts.

One student was seen in August under interrogation in chains from ankle to wrist and handcuffed to another person. From the group of 26 released on 6th October 1986, there were allegations of torture at New Prison and the detainees were threatened with death if they revealed details of this. One week hunger strikes were reported from the New Prison and a detainee who complained the food was allegedly placed in solitary confinement before being transferred.

The case of C D Moodley from the NIC, who was released on 4th August 1986 after 55 days in detention, is also instructive. Held at Mountain Rise Police Station, he had to sleep on a cold stone floor and was in solitary for days before being moved to the New Prison. His release was effected only after he had signed a declaration stating his retirement from active politics.

The situation in general at outlying police stations has been a source of concern. It is not clear whether the experiences of detainees at the stations was a result of deliberate policy, or ignorance on the part of the station commanders. The family of one detainee felt that his treatment might be an act of revenge. Perhaps the worst instance which came to the notice of DESCOM was that involving the holding of two detainees on separate occasions in primitive conditions with little light, only a bench for a bed, and no regular access to running water. Other detainees were held in semi-solitary, on a restricted diet and without any exercise and in early September, there was a report of a lack of food at the Dalton police cells.

There seems to be an increasing tendency to scatter detainees at outlying stations and to move them fairly frequently, making it difficult for lawyers and next-of-kin to visit, and leading to concern for their wellbeing. Compounded with the problems of absolute reluctance on the part of the police to release the names of those detained, the abduction of people from their homes by men in balaclavas, and the fact that so many people are in hiding, this has meant that many families have lost contact with their relatives.



THE LOCAL SITUATION

In the two weeks preceeding the first 'anniversary' of the emergency, prison doors in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Eastern Cape and Natal opened briefly and slammed shut again. Many detainees were released - in Durban alone the number of those released is estimated to be about 73, or half of the total number of known detainees.

The euphoria accompanying the release of these detainees was short-lived. Almost 90% went into hiding and slept their first night of freedom in the bush, too scared to go home for fear of vigilante attacks. In the words of one ex-detainee 'all that has happened is that we have been released from a small prison into a much larger one ... we have been released into our townships where people are imprisoned in their own homes'.

Commented another 'we have been released into the hands of right-wing vigilantes and security forces .. we know that they have orders to shoot .. we will remain detainees until we have won our freedom'.

A significant trend in recent months is the increasing number of detentions in the peri-urban and rural areas, accounting for about 35% of known detentions and including such areas as Dududu, Gamalakha and Magabeni. This can be attributed to :

- the spilling over of community and worker struggles from the urban areas
- the creativity of people in the outlying areas who are independently organising themselves
- the 'exiled' youth from the urban areas, who have been forced to seek refuge in places along the South Coast and in N. Natal

Over 70% of those detained under the emergency in Natal have been active supporters of the UDF. The following is a breakdown according to the usual categories (excludes those held for less than 14 days) :

Students, scholars and teachers	500
Unionists and workers	80
Community and political workers	200
Clergy and Church workers	40
Unknown, other	280

TOTAL 1100

In addition, an unspecified number of 'overnight' detentions have recently been brought to the attention of our office.

REPRESSION AGAINST FAMILIES

A large crackdown was expected for some weeks before the declaration of the national State of Emergency in June 1986. As a result, many activists escaped the state's net, when the crackdown came. It has been estimated that many thousands of activists went into hiding immediately after, and even before the emergency was declared.

The security forces who have gone to the homes of activists looking for them have been extremely brutal in their treatment of the families when they discover that the activists are in hiding. This violence against the families seems to be designed to achieve a number of objectives :

- to force activists to come home or give themselves up because of future possible violence against their families
- to isolate activists from the support of their families and friends
- to make the community at large scared to have anything to do with activists, or to themselves become active in organisations

Repression of families of activists has taken a number of forms, e.g. taking family members and friends as hostages, assaulting family members, attacking the family's home, threatening that if the family don't turn the activist in, they will take action against the activist or the family.

Most of the activists who are being hounded in this way are engaged in legal, democratic work in mass organisations. Yet their families are being treated with a severity which has previously been reserved for relatives of people working in the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe. The state is therefore putting those doing legal work on the same footing as those working underground in the armed struggle.



DOWN AT THE EMBASSIES

Parents of Durban detainees, angry about the declaration of a new State of Emergency and the continued detention of their children, resolved to send a delegation of parents to embassies in Durban in order to convey their protests and to appeal to these governments to help.



This is the memorandum which this delegation delivered on behalf of the parents :

TO ALL CONSULATES AND EMBASSIES

This short memorandum is addressed to Consulates and Embassies in South Africa to coincide with the anniversary of the State of Emergency declared by the State President on the 12 June 1986 and the announcement that he is to declare a new State of Emergency immediately.

We are parents of children in detention.

1. We know that your country is a signatory to U.N. Humans Rights Charter. South Africa has not adopted the Charter.
2. As people who, like our children, are committed to democracy, we list a few of the latest repressive measures being taken in the Townships where we live :
 - a. The 'Kits' constables attack children in the Townships.
 - b. The KwaZulu Police and vigilantes occupy the Townships and terrorise our people. We, too, are victims of these attacks.
 - c. Thousands are still in detention. Many have been in detention for a year. There have been reports of deaths in detention.

- d. Poor conditions in, torture, lack of protection, lack of reading and writing material, poor quality food, no visits, are only some of the grievances.

WE ASK FOR :

1. An end to the State of Emergency.
2. An end to detentions.
3. A halt to vigilante, KwaZulu Police, 'Kits' constable's repressive activity in the Townships.
4. The unmuzzling of the Press.

WE ASK FURTHER :

1. For the improvement of conditions in prisons where detainees are held.
2. That regular visits be allowed to all detainees, including Section 29 detainees.
3. That judges of the Supreme Court pay regular visits to detainees.
4. An end to all forms of torture of detainees.
5. Adequate protection for detainees.
6. An end to Press censorship.

We believe that your Government can assist us by supporting our struggle. Your Government can make representations to the South African Government to make the changes we seek. We consider that this is a useful opportunity to test the sincerity of the South African Government in its so-called reform initiatives.



GUTTER PRESS

When the history of the struggle for freedom and democracy in South Africa is written, an important chapter should focus on the role played by the so-called 'independent' press in support of the repressive forces.

The South African newspapers, with very few exceptions, do their best to support and give credibility to the official lie that the democratic struggle is carried out by only a few subversive elements whose only aim is to destroy 'our civilization and culture'. These criminals are, of course, on the USSR payroll, and those who sympathise with them are foolish liberals fallen prey to diabolical Marxist propaganda.

In an attempt to justify their servile attitude, some daily newspapers claim that 'because of the emergency regulations, the free flow of information is severely restricted and certain reports have had to be excluded because of the latest regulations .. this newspaper will do its utmost to keep readers informed'.

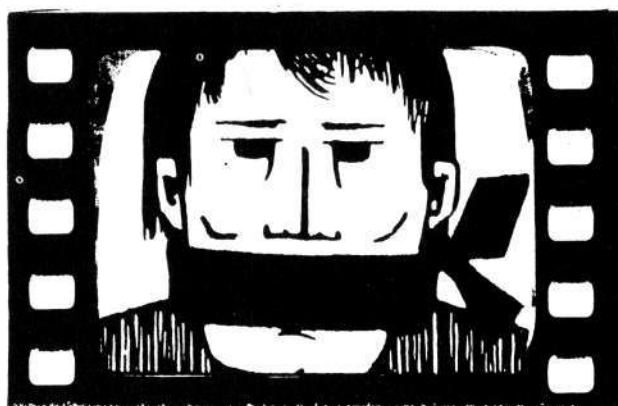
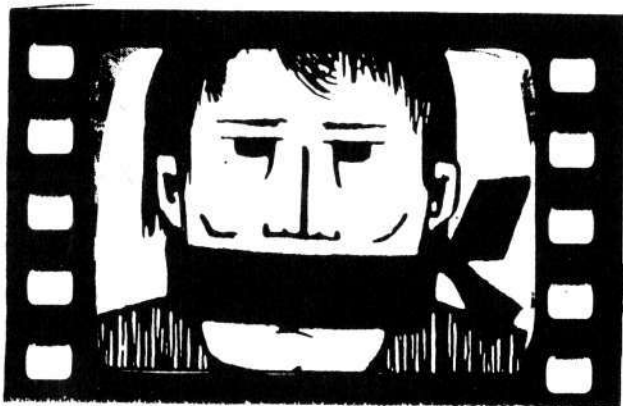
The hypocrisy of such a claim is easily revealed by a comparison with the very few newspapers, like the Weekly Mail, New Nation and Sowetan, which really do their 'utmost to keep their readers informed' whilst operating under the same restrictions. These papers do not hide themselves behind the regulations. They strive to present a real image of what is going on in South Africa and continuously denounce the present brutal repression of any form of democratic struggle.

To demonstrate this point one example will suffice. The Weekly Mail of the 5th June 1987 published an extensive report on a dossier sent by the National

Medical and Dental Association to the Commissioner of Prisons and Police, calling for an urgent investigation into the conditions at East London's Fort Glamorgan prison. The Weekly Mail stated that 'Namda provided a detailed breakdown of their allegations ... according to the Namda dossier, an estimated 200 to 250 people remain in Emergency detention in Fort Glamorgan (details omitted in terms of the Emergency regulations)'.

'Detainees were given two thin mats to sleep on and four blankets. Most detainees complain of general aches and pains and backache on release and this they attribute to their sleeping on cement (details omitted). The dossier said that medical treatment was one of the major areas ex-detainees mention (details omitted). A prisoner, identified as Ms Q in the dossier, had alleged that she had to deliver another prisoner's baby at night because no other assistance was available (details omitted).'

This is an example of what can still be published under the Emergency regulations, if the editor is willing. The report still manages to inform us about the brutal repression in our country, and forces us to reflect on the State violence which is the sad reality underlying South Africa's social unrest. Unfortunately the most widely read daily newspapers conveniently ignored Namda's dossier, further adding to the misinformation being distributed by the State and cowering behind the regulations.





THE EMERGENCY IS DEAD. - LONG LIVE THE EMERGENCY

No-one could have been surprised by the State President's decision to reimpose a State of Emergency as the old one expired on 12th June 1987. This possibility was intimated to on several occasions by senior government officials. The reimposition of the emergency is however an admission by the state that it has failed to contain opposition to apartheid even in the context of the extreme repression of the previous year.

Far from leading to a climate of negotiation, the continued detention of the legitimate leaders and the hardships imposed by the emergency have made impossible genuine debate and discussion, and have greatly increased the militancy of the Black population. The slowing down of violence seen over the last year is not a vote of confidence in the existing political situation, and the direction in which it is going. It is instead the result of state violence and mass detentions.

The new regulations are also an acknowledgement of the state's failure to resolve the constitutional question. These regulations are tighter and more repressive than the originals by :

- overriding the decision of the Natal Supreme Court
- allowing the Minister to detain any person for up to 30 days without giving reasons (the previous limit was 14 days).
- tightening the control over non-violent political strategies, such as the boycott. Boycott's are now

included in the definition of 'subversive statement' and it is an offence to take part in, or to make a statement which incites or encourages the public to take part in a boycott action 'against any particular firm or against firms of any particular kind'. It is also be an offence to boycott 'products of articles of any particular nature, class or kind'. making illegal boycotts against any educational institution, refusal to attend classes or participation in 'other' activities. Furthermore it will be an offence to take part in an act of civil disobedience by refusing to comply with an obligation towards a local authority in respect of rent or municipal service'.

The results of these blanket restrictions on non-violent forms of political opposition can only force organisations like the UDF to function as semi-clandestine movements, engaged in violent struggle. It is clearly not the government's intention to facilitate negotiation, but instead to rule by decree.

COURTS CHALLENGE THE EMERGENCY

Whether the State President has now finally managed to close all legal loopholes with the new Emergency Regulations, is still to be decided in the months that lie ahead. Fortunately the important role that the Natal courts have played over the last year is unlikely to be at its end.

Although the judgements are now not applicable, the challenges brought first by the UDF and the Release Mandela Campaign, and later by the RMC, the DFSC, the Durban DESCOM and the Black Sash against the State President, the Government, the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Law and Order, are indicative of the kind of support which the legal democratic struggle can expect in the future. In both cases, the judges held that the Commissioner of Police had been given powers by the State President which were far wider than he was entitled to have, and they therefore ruled invalid certain proclamations prohibiting news coverage of security action, deployment of security forces

and equipment, and restricted gatherings. Notices banning campaigns for the release of detainees were also ruled invalid.

There was at first some confusion as to whether the ruling was immediately applicable, given that the respondents were given leave to appeal. This matter was finally settled in the case between the Durban freelance Press photographer, Billy Paddock, and the State. When the case came to the courts for the third time, David Gordon, SC, for Paddock told the judge that the legal representatives of both parties had reached agreement on the status of the media regulations, namely that 'for the province of Natal at least, the regulations were invalid'.



DETENTIONS AND THE INFORMER NETWORK

Since the Vaal uprisings on the 3rd September 1984, the state's informer network has come under tremendous pressure. Thousands of 'free-lance' informers have been exposed and have subsequently confessed to spying on their communities. This has made it increasingly difficult for the security police to maintain their existing network or to recruit new informers from the wider community. Instead they are now attempting to coerce or bribe detainees into becoming informers.

Information about the activities of the democratic movement has always been a crucial factor in the state's attempts to destroy it. But over the last couple of years it seems as if accurate information gathering has become impossible. In December 1985, African Confidential wrote 'over a quarter of the 900-plus deaths since September 1984, have been of blacks accused of collaboration with the authorities. Police confess that their township intelligence has begun to dry up'.

The revelation that a series of secret committees, dominated by the SAP and SADF, are effectively running the country has thrown some light on the crisis of information and how the state is handling it. In line with the 'total strategy' pioneered by the SADF in the late 1970s, a network of over 500 action committees with tremendous power and autonomy have been set up from the national level (the State Security Council which is often referred to as the real Cabinet) to the smallest town (Mini-Joint Management Centres).

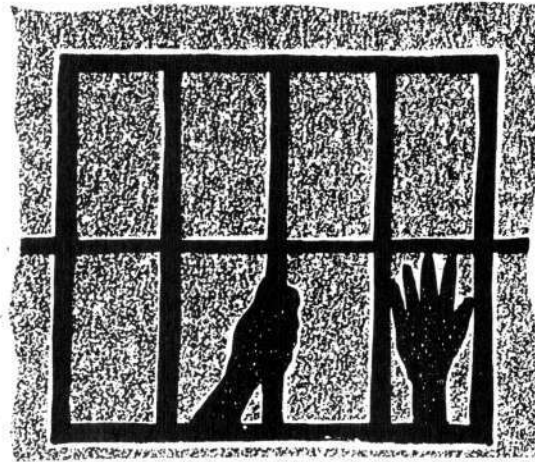
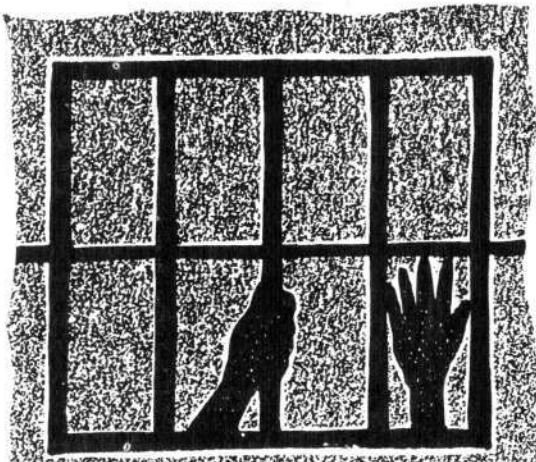
One of the most important function of these committees is to gather intelligence on political activity within each region. Clearly this work cannot be done without informers. Now news is reaching detainees support committees throughout the country of attempts by the state to coerce or bribe detainees into becoming informers.

A number of cases have been reported of people being terrorised by the police whilst in detention with the intention of persuading them to become spies. The use of violence and intimidation is sometimes combined with

promises of large sums of money, improved treatment in detention and education. The most notorious example of this approach is the setting up of youth 'concentration' camps, which aim to de-politicise and re-orientate the township youth, and ultimately get them to collaborate. A student leader who was approached to go to the Rodewal Camp after 3 months in detention, explained:

'I know about Rodewal. It is a place where they indoctrinate people to make them believe that our progressive organisations and the African National Congress are bad and that we should support the government the government of the Republic.'

The recruitment of detainees as spies is not only designed to get information about the democratic movement and activities in the township. It also creates divisions within these organisations by sowing suspicion about detainees who have agreed to inform. The state wants people to believe that there is a vast network of informers. In this way it hopes to undermine the people's confidence in their ability to build strong organisation or engage in democratic struggle.





A L E T T E R F R O M D E A T H R O W

Prisoner No. 3737
Maximum Security Prison
Private Bag X45
PRETORIA
0001

23 March 1987

Comrade Mummy (Mamma Gun)

I've been here just over a week now. I'm O.K., fit and healthy. I am allowed as many letters as possible - to receive and to send. I am also allowed visits throughout the week. Times for visits are between 9 and 11, and between 2 and 3.

I saw Roshan today. It was good to see somebody from home after what seems like a long time. There are so many people here on Death Row. There are There are so many its unbelievable. This thing of Capital punishment must end as soon as possible.

A government that has to hang so many people to maintain "law and order" should be ashamed of itself. The fact that there are so many people here is an indictment on the social and political structure of the South African society. This alone, is evidence of there being something drastically wrong with South African society. I think we must be one of the countries with the highest no. of annual executions.

The time of my trial was not in vain - regardless of the outcome. I have come to understand the oppressor very well. I have had sufficient time to study him and think about him. Strangely, I don't think the oppressor knows himself ; or understand himself.

He creates a system where we have 4 distinct societies. Each society develops its own social and moral norms. These sets of moral values differ from society to society. But here is the problem: All 4 societies are judged in a court of law which aspires to and judges on a system based on White moral values of a privileged minority. What an indictment on a judicial system! How dare they judge us Black people? The White judge lives in his White powder-puff, lily-white, privileged society. How can he ever imagine the social and psychological make-up of a person like myself - a product of the ghetto. I am a product of the ghetto, but not because of choice - because of the colour of my skin! Can he even appreciate this fact? All these things play a part in how a person behaves or will behave. It is the same system that the judge upholds that is responsible for me developing differently from him (the white judge)! But does he take these things into account when he sentences me? My sentence is not what all of South Africa wants or expects, it is what the White, minority, privileged South Africa wants. But does White S.A. live in a ghetto, is White S.A. discriminated against (by law) because of the colour of their skins, is White S.A. voteless, oppressed,,, ????

Regardless of the outcome of this tribulation, there must be no tears. Tears lead to fears, especially for the mothers of other prospective guerillas. There is no time to fear. There is a Battle to be won. Male, Female, Young & Old all are needed on all fronts, political activists and armed combatants. It is a time of sacrifice.

Nevertheless, I am confident that Robert-Derrick's generation will be free. Their generation will not trod the road of oppression. Their generation will be free! This thing is crumbling. This Babylonian apartheid monster is giving its last kicks. But we must be careful: a wounded animal is desperate and most dangerous. But now we have to deliver the final blow to the philosophy of Racialism and Racial Supremacy. Uneasy is the head that wears the crown of white supremacy.

Your loving son (Umfana waBomoya, iSosha LomZansi)

ROBERT JOHN MCBRIDE

FORWARD TO THE YEAR OF ADVANCE TO PEOPLE'S POWER.

SIYABASHAYA!!!!

TILL BABYLON FALLS

A silenced voice

DEBORAH JOSEPHINE MARAKALLA is 23 years old, and has two children. She will probably never have children again.

She is in detention under the State of emergency regulations, having been detained at the Thembisa Black Sash Advice Office where she worked on July 7, 1986.

Deborah, a member of the Thembisa Detainees' Support Committee, was pregnant at the time of her detention. Less than a fortnight later, she suffered a miscarriage and had to be taken to hospital. She told her lawyer what happened.

"I was at Johannesburg General Hospital from July 24 to 31. I was plus minus three months pregnant, but I lost the baby because it was inside my fallopian tube and the tube burst."

"I underwent an operation and the other fallopian tube was cut out - meaning I'm left with one fallopian tube."

Deborah's friends and family say doctors have told her she will be unable to have children again - and that she is lucky to be alive.

"She nearly died during the miscarriage," one said. "She was alone in her cell, and cried out for help. No-one heard her, it seems, so no-one could help her." She was only helped when it was too late, they say - when the baby was already dead.

"We cry for her," a family member said. "Her children cry for her too. They miss her. They keep asking when she'll be coming home. I just

say she's at work."

The hardship for Deborah's children goes back several weeks before her detention; she had not slept at home for some weeks, as she had heard the police were looking for her.

"They didn't like what she was doing at the advice office," a family member said. They don't like anyone who speaks for themselves. They think locking them up will keep them quiet."

Deborah's family say this is one of the things they have learnt from her detention. Another thing they have learnt is that it is important for family and friends to support people in detention, by visiting them and sending letters.

"It makes them feel strong if they can have contact," one family member said. "They need our support - and we must give it to them."

This is particularly important for Deborah, the family says, as they don't know how long she will stay in detention.

Even though she has signed a sworn statement saying she was merely doing office work in Thembisa, she is still inside. In her statement, she also said she had undergone surgery while in detention, and that her health is suffering as she has asthma and gets palpitations and tension headaches.

Deborah has also written to the Minister of Law and Order, Adrian Vlok, asking why she is being detained. Her family says she has not yet received a reply.