



**MK Fifty Years on: A message to the comrades of the "Little Rivonia Trial"**

Yes comrades, it is fifty years since our comrades were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment for their active membership in the armed struggle led by UmKhonto we Sizwe. Do you remember, or have you read about our first actions in December 1961? We did not undertake the formation of our underground army very lightly. We knew that we would lose many comrades to imprisonment or to death because when you take on the armed security forces of the state you know they will hit back hard. Indeed they did!

Today we commemorate the 19 Comrades of the Natal Regional Command sentenced in 1964 to long years in prison. They were among the bravest of the brave. And this message is to honour them and their families who bore the brunt of breadwinners being taken from them.

But I want also to honour the many comrades who went abroad for training in many countries. Many of them spent up to 30 years in camps with few facilities. Many fought the apartheid forces and their Askari allies backed by the major western powers, and many died in action. They showed that oppressed people with the will to win freedom for their fellow countrymen and women can defeat even as powerful state as that of Apartheid South Africa. Besides being in battle, they perhaps unknowingly played an important strategic role.

The apartheid state bankrupted itself financially because it had to try to stop our forces from eventually attacking the apartheid armed forces inside the country. Young whites were forced into military service and when they returned, often wounded and even more often disillusioned, they found that their jobs had been taken from them. They were defending an apartheid system that was collapsing from trying to maintain itself.

What a heroic chapter in our history we commemorate today. But let us not forget the bravery of activists in the political battles in the streets at home in every part of the country. Ours was a political battle and the battle to consolidate our democratic victories will go on and on.

Long live the spirit of our brave fighters in MK and in our political activist.

I want especially to greet my two surviving comrades of the eight of us sentenced in the Rivonia Trial of the MK High Command, Comrades Andrew Mlangeni and Ahmed Kathrada.

Denis Goldberg

Rivonia Trial number 3 accused

Congratulations for the initiative to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Natal Sabotage Trial.

It is sure to go down in history as a major trial.

During and after the events on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Rivonia Trial, I made the observation

That- important as the Trial undoubtedly was, it unfortunately overshadowed the other Trials of the period. Among these were the Natal Sabotage Trial; the Little Rivonia Trial and the Bram Fischer Trial.

We had the privilege of spending most of his 20 years on Robben Island with the late Comrade Billy Nair

It was an unforgettable learning experience for us. The rest of his fellow trialists were housed in the general cells.

I believe that the struggle-history of Comrade Billy and each of these comrades is rich in commitment and courage.

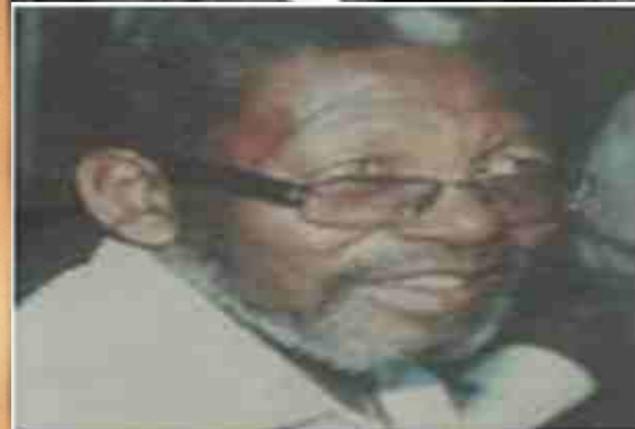
Their role and sacrifice deserves to be recorded and widely published. I hope the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration will spur comrades and liberation-historians to ensure that the Natal Sabotage Trialists are not forgotten.

Long live the memory of these comrades.

Ahmed Kathrada



# COMMEMORATION OF THE 50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATAL SABOTAGE TRIAL (LITTLE RIVONIA)



**Our freedom was not free, it came at a price  
The long walk to freedom continues.....**



**The decade of the cadre  
Our freedom was not free, it came at a price The long walk to freedom continues**

# UMKHONTO WESIZWE



## MILITARY VETERAN ASSOCIATION KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

Protecting our freedom...Commemoration of 50 years since the Little Rivonia Trial in KwaZulu-Natal

### Background

*"The time comes in the life of any nation when there remains only two choices - submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa. We shall not submit and we have no choice but to hit back by all means in our power in defence of our people, our future, and our freedom"*.

1960 - After the Sharpsville massacre, both the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress were banned. The leadership of the ANC had to look seriously for the way forward. It was none other than the Black Pimpernel, Nelson Mandela who persuaded Chief Luthuli and the Congress Movement (The Indian Congress was opposed to any form of violence) in setting up an armed wing of the ANC, Umkhonto weSizwe.

In June 1961, Mandela sent a letter to South African newspapers warning the government that a campaign of sabotage would be launched unless the government agreed to call for a national constitutional convention. Beginning on 16 December 1961, the campaign by Umkhonto weSizwe with Mandela as its leader, launched bomb attacks on government targets and planned for possible guerilla warfare. The first target of the campaign was an electricity sub-station.

As the commander in chief of the newly formed armed wing, having no experience in warfare or any basis forms of making explosives, Comrade Mandela read voraciously from leaders of guerilla movements and studied history, that gave a good understanding, how and what circumstance to engage an enemy. He started recruiting white comrades like Joe Slovo, Jack Hodgson and Rusty Bernstein. The white comrades had experience in handling explosives, because of their involvement in the Second World War. All three and many more who came later to recruit and train comrades internally.

Following the banning of the African National Congress in 1960, the ANC was left with no choice, but to embark on an armed struggle, after an intensive discussion with the Natal Indian Congress in 1961, in the lower North Coast sugar farm of **Bodasing**. The first shots were fired on the 16th of December 1961, with sabotage acts throughout the country. In the province of Natal more than 10 units of MK were formed. The Leadership of MK in Natal, comprised of comrades Billy Nair, Curnick Ndlovu, Ronnie Kasrils, Eric Mtshali (Stalin) and Bruno Mtolo (State Witness).

On the 16th of December a wave of sabotage acts were committed. The Regime's forces were too weak to capture the MK Comrades. The govt. of the day had to pass the draconian laws to apprehend the underground operatives, by introducing the 90 day law, where the detainees were detained without trial for 90 days.

There were waves of arrests, after some sensational acts of sabotage in KZN, in particular, where three strategic pylons were blown, that put Durban in total darkness.

August 1964 saw many of the comrades arrested under the 90 day law, leading to some breaking down and testifying in what was described as the **"Natal Sabotage Trial."**

In October 1964, nineteen comrades were brought to trial and they were as follows:

- |                           |                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Comrades Billy Nair    | 11. Riot Mkhwanazi    |
| 2. Curnick Ndlovu         | 12. Zakhile Mdalalose |
| 3. Natherwal Babenia      | 13. Siva Pillay       |
| 4. Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim | 14. Matthews Meyiwa   |
| 5. Kisten Moonsamy        | 15. Joshua Zulu       |
| 6. George Naicker         | 16. David Ndwandwe    |
| 7. Kisten Doorsamy        | 17. Bernard Nkosi     |
| 8. Gerja Singh (Sunny)    | 18. David Mkhize      |
| 9. Shadrack Maphumulo     | 19. Dan Kistensamy    |
| 10. Albert Duma           |                       |

The trial lasted four months. We were blessed with some of the best advocates...ADV. Wilson, ADV. Theron, ADV. Gurwetz. On the 29th of February, eighteen of the nineteen accused were sentenced minimum of five years to two of our senior commanders, Bill Nair and Curnick Ndlovu receiving twenty years of hard labour. The rest is history.

Of the nineteen comrades, only six are living, They are Ebrahim Ismail, Albert Duma (Ladysmith), Kisten Moonsamy (ABH), Siva Pillay (Germany), Sunny Singh and Riot Mkhwanazi.

### RATIONALE FOR THE COMMEMORATION:

1. This event culminates from recognizing those who were at the cutting edge of the liberation struggle. There were many unsung heroes and heroines and many whom perished taking with them valuable skills and history. We salute with appreciation **"this freedom"** that we enjoy today which can only be attributed to those who dared to die for it.
2. The significance of paying tribute brings to realisation that progressive change can only be possible through discipline, sacrifice, commitment and understanding of those principles of inclusivity, justice, honesty and equal access and opportunity for all.
3. Programme which strives to
  - Develop our children's understanding of our proud legacy.
  - Instill values of unity and discipline.
  - Showcase the heritage and worth of the struggle
  - Highlight the significant role that the armed struggle played in our liberation and its commitment to continue to protect our democracy especially from those who plan to derail its course.

The most valuable lesson is to highlight that if we stand united we will succeed. This is the decade of the cadre.....**Together we can move South Africa forward.**

History has demonstrated that the most notable winners usually encountered heartbreaking obstacles before they have triumphed. They won because they refused to become discouraged by their defeats.



Defending the Gains of the Revolution!  
From Combat to Reconstruction and Political Mainstreaming!!



# THE SABOTAGE TRIALISTS

South Africa enters 1964 with the world watching more closely than ever before. The centre of world interest is focussed on the Sabotage Trials throughout the land,

at which some of the country's top political leaders face charges that could mean their lives. Here DRUM gives pen pictures of the men involved in the three main cases.

## TRANSVAAL

Walter Sisulu, ex-secretary general of ANC. Treason Trialist. Disappeared early this year. Was among those arrested in the Rivonia Raid.



Raymond Mhlaba, of Port Elizabeth. A local ANC leader, prominent in Defiance Campaign. Official of Sactu. Disappeared in 1962: arrested at Rivonia

Nelson Mandela. Treason Trialist. Was jailed in '62 for six years. One of best known ex-ANC officials. Was legal partner of Oliver Tambo.



Lionel 'Rusty' Bernstein. Ex-member Congress of Democrats. A Johannesburg architect. Also arrested during Rivonia Raid.

Dennis Goldberg, leading member of the Congress of Democrats in Cape. Civil engineer. Noted as public speaker. Arrested in Rivonia Raid.



Ahmed Kathrada, Treason Trialist. Ex-sec. Ind. Youth League. Went underground during house arrest. Was picked up in Rivonia Raid.

James Kantor. Top criminal lawyer. Acted for several political leaders. Brother-in-law of Harold Wolpe, who escaped from jail.



Andrew Mlangeni and Elias Motsoaledi, the two 'mystery men' of the Rivonia trial. Both active in the ANC in Johannesburg, figured in the Defiance Campaign and both detained during the 1960 Emergency. Mlangeni also active in Dube Advisory Board elections. Both charged with the others but not listed under High Command.



Govan Mbeki, top ANC man in East Cape. Journalist, one-time teacher. Treason Trialist. Held in Emergency. Disappeared before arrest at Rivonia.

## NATAL



Billy Nair, 34. Trade unionist. Secretary of SACTU since 1955. Jailed for part in 1952 Defiance Campaign. Treason Trialist. Detained during 1960 State of Emergency.

Ebrahim Ismail, 25. Joined Nat. Ind. Con. in 1952. Delegate to Kliptown Congress of People in 1955. After matric, worked as a reporter on New Age. Detained in August.



Sunny Singh, 24. Joined Nat. Ind. Youth Con. 1961 and became member Nat. Ind. Con. 1962. Was a part-time student and salesman at time of arrest in August.

Kisten Moonsamy, 29. Org. Sec. of Clairwood South branch, Nat. Ind. Con. Re-organised Sweet Workers' Industrial Union. Active in sport.



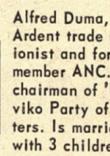
CURNICK NDLOVU, Trade unionist and active in ANC as a Youth Leguer until 1960 ban. Confined to Durban and Kwa Mashu for five yrs. Detained under 90-day law in June.

Kisten Doorsamy, 29. Joined Nat. Ind. Con. in '60. Once charged for taking part in a placard demonstration. Family's sole support. Detained in July.

Ragavan Kistensamy, 24. Chairman Nat. Sweet Workers' Union. Engaged before arrest. Keen on sport

Natwarlal Babenia, 39. Worked in Nat. Ind. Congress as a clerk. Campaigned in India under Mahatma Gandhi. Returned in '49. Was an editor of Indian Opinion, paper founded by Gandhi

Riot Mkhwanazi. A New Age seller until banning in 1963. Detained in 1960 emergency. Was member of African Textile Workers' Union.



Alfred Duma, 33. Ardent trade unionist and former member ANC. Was chairman of 'Umviko Party of Workers'. Is married with 3 children.



Shadrack Maphumulo, 25. Active as trade unionist. Member of General Workers' Union in 1961. Employed in a bank at the time of his detention.

Matthews Meyiwa, 39. Rose to top post in chemical factory in few years. Also high official in Congregational Church. Vice-chairman of George-dale Landowners' Ass: Detained in June



Bernard Nkosi, 41. Comes from George-dale district. Sec. of Metal Workers' Union since 1961. Before arrest was employed by same firm for 22 years.

GEORGE NAICKER, Member Nat. Ind. Con. since 1944. Leader of S.A. delegation to the World Fed. of Democratic Youth Festival in Moscow, 1957. Was detained in '60 emergency.



Zakhele Mdalalose, 38. Another trialist from George-dale area. Was a member of ANC. Before arrest, was employed by Durban shoe shop 10 years.



David Mkhize, 35. Home is in New Hanover District. Member of ANC and General Workers' Union since 1958. Is married and has five sons.

David Ndawonde, 31. Chairman of African Tea and Coffee Workers' Union. Was sec. Somtseu ANC branch until it was banned. Worked at Durban tea factory until his detention.



Joshua Zulu, 39. Principal Albert Falls Govt. School for past six years. Preacher in Anglican Church. Active in teaching affairs. Detained in July.

Siva Pillay, 20. Was member Natal Indian Youth Con. since 1961. Was detained at Salisbury Univ. College, where he was B.Sc. student, in August.

## CAPE

The Reverend Don Davis. He is 42 and one of the best-known and most popular preachers in the Peninsula. He is the eldest of the eleven people standing trial in the Cape.



Neville Alexander, doctor of philosophy. Took his degree in Germany. Professors and students there have started a fund for his defence.

Elizabeth van den Heyden. Teacher, B.A. graduate. It is alleged that she visited Dr. Ken Abrahams in S.W. Africa before his flight



Ian Leslie van den Heyden. Detained in July with Dr. Alexander, he was released and then re-detained. A graduate teacher at Livingstone.

Doris van den Heyden, sister to Ian and Elizabeth van den Heyden. She holds a university degree and worked as a librarian when held.



Marcus Solomons, 23. Was teaching at Walmer Estate Primary School before his arrest in Jo'burg. Is ex-Hewat College student.

Dulcie September, popular teacher at Silvertown, standing trial with fellow teachers. Unmarried. Arrested and held in September.



Fikili Bam, 26-year-old student at Cape Town University. Studying law. Arrested in Johannesburg with Marcus Solomons. He is a bachelor.

Gordon Frederick Hendricks, the young Cape intellectual who, with ten others, is charged with setting up a 'Chinese Poqa' group



Lionel Davis, 26-year-old bachelor. Lived with his mother. A clerk. Detained in Cape Town in September. He was known to like twist parties.