

Patrick Chamusso Biography



Patrick was born to a rural family in Mozambique in 1949. His father was a migrant labourer who worked as a miner in South Africa. Patrick has two brothers and a step-sister from his mother's second marriage after the death of his father.

Patrick was a teenager when he followed his father to South Africa. He got odd jobs on the mines and eventually found work as a house painter and street photographer. Patrick was not formally educated; he only received schooling while he was a prisoner on Robben Island. He was a talented soccer player and played for local leagues.

When he was in his 28, he moved to Secunda, a town several hours east of Johannesburg. He found a job at the Secunda Oil Refinery, the largest coal-to-oil plant in the world. His soccer-playing prowess made him popular at the plant and in the community. He was 30 when he left Secunda.

In 1980 Patrick was arrested by South African Special Branch, for a crime he did not commit. He was held prisoner, questioned and tortured. After this experience he left South Africa for Mozambique and joined the ANC. After military training, he volunteered to head an operation to single handily blow up the oil refinery where he formally worked. He crossed the border back into South Africa and made his way to Secunda where he carried out the attack. As instructed by the ANC only property was damaged at the plant.

Patrick was later caught, after a massive manhunt, several days after bombing the plant. Patrick was held for nine months without trial. During that time he was brutally tortured. His trial, in the Pretoria Supreme Court, ended with a 24 year jail sentence. Patrick served ten years and was amnestied in 1994, along with all political prisoners.

Patrick now lives in Mpumalanga Province in the North East of South Africa with Conney, a woman he married after his release. They have three children of their own and have fostered 63 others, orphaned by AIDS.

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