

AFFIDAVIT

Aboobaker Ismail, hereby state under oath, the following:

Robert McBride was a Commander of one of the Special Operations Unites active in Natal. He had been appointed commander of this unit following the shooting, arrest and subsequent rescue of Gordon Webster.

On or about the 12th June 1986 I held discussions with Robert McBride in Botswana regarding future operations. Prior to Gordon Webster's shooting and arrest, Gordon Webster had been instructed to carry out reconnaissance on the Natal Command with a view to placing a car bomb outside the said command. The intention with regards to car bombs was to strike at enemy security forces in large numbers. In the course of the discussions with Robert he had been asked if it were possible to carry out this operation. He had indicated that security around the Natal Command had been increased and that no parking was allowed directly around the area of the command. He was then instructed to reconnoiter other points where there were concentrations of enemy personnel – whether they were on or off duty.

Robert raised the question of civilian casualties and the ANC's policy on this. In 1985, a year prior to this planned operation, the ANC's National Conference held at Kabwe, Zambia resolved that civilian loss of life could no longer be prevented during the intensification of the struggle. The policy of the ANC at the time was therefore that while we should concentrate on security force personnel we should not allow the possibility of civilian casualties to prevent us from carrying out our tasks. This policy and the background to it, was explained to him.

Robert indicated that a number of possible targets, frequented by off duty security force members, had been identified by internal reconnaissance. Robert was then instructed to complete the reconnaissance with regard to final selection of target and then to proceed with the operation without having to report back to me. I did this based on the confidence I had in Robert and his unit based on their previous operational record and the fulfillment of all instructions and commands.

It was also felt that this should take place on or near June 14th as this was the anniversary of the June 16th massacre and the SADF raid into Botswana in which innocent civilians had been killed.

Robert McBride was then instructed in the construction of a car bomb and supplied with the appropriate materials which were then ferried into the country by him.

He returned to South Africa and the operation was then carried out by him on June 14th, based on the mandate given to him and on his further reconnaissance.

I confirm that at all times relevant hereto, Robert McBride acted under my command and that I take political responsibility for all actions conducted by Gordon Webster, Robert McBride and the unit under them, in the furtherance of the armed struggle waged by the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe.