

Bring us the evidence

In spite of repeated assurances that it will act against errant policeman, Cape Town residents are still waiting for the SAP to deliver on its promises.

By Vincent Williams

"There may be one or two policemen who are acting illegally, but I give you my assurance that if they are caught, they will be prosecuted..."

This is how the Minister of Law and Order, Mr Hernus Kriel, responded in a TV2 programme when he was questioned about the alleged complicity of the security forces in violent attacks on township residents. In Cape Town where the so-called taxi-war has been raging for many months now, community attempts to expose alleged partial behaviour by policemen have not met with an efficient response by the police.

In a memorandum to the Minister of Law and Order about various incidents of violence in *Khayelitsha*, the ANC Women's League notes:

"In a number of cases documented below, the police are implicated directly as active participants. In other cases the lack of investigation or other action by the police creates grounds for believing that the security forces are indirectly supporting the forces responsible for these attacks."

The memorandum cites the case of David Ngqeza, a civic activist who was woken up at 1.40am on August 15 when a stone and a petrol bomb were thrown through his window. Outside his house were a number of men, including two whites and three special constables with shotguns. When Ngqeza attempted to step outside, he was fired upon, but managed to get away and hide. While hiding he heard his wife crying as she was being questioned by the men. He also

up and all the attackers ran to it. The van's number was BFG217B, A60. One of the residents saw a tall white man with his balaclava lifted up to his forehead, shooting. The attackers were responsible for burning many shacks by using petrol and some sort of a flaming projectile."

The UMAC memorandum states: "The common denominator underscoring the evidence collected over the past months indicates that white men, often identified as policemen because of the uniform they were wearing, are implicated in the violence. Often the men wear balaclavas and seem to be the leaders of the raiding commandos. They speak in Afrikaans."

On October 11 Ms Rachel Browne of UMAC handed an affidavit to General Acker, the Western Cape Commissioner of Police, concerning an incident during which a man, dressed in police uniform, was hit in the face with a hammer and sustained severe injuries. An investigation conducted by Colonel Wessels of the CID generated a report which stated that police records contain no information of any member of the security forces injured in the manner described on the night in question. The implication of this report is that either the man in uniform was not a policeman or that it was a policeman who, realising that he was acting illegally, did not report the incident. Alternatively, though one wants to accept the bona fides of the police investigation, the police are not prepared to divulge information in which their members are implicated.

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