

THE CASE OF SAMUEL MNGQIBISA (ELTY MHLEKAZI).

The Chief Representative,
African National Congress of S.A.,
Dar Es Salaam,
07/02/1991

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that I, SAMUEL MNGQIBISA, alias Elty Mhlekezi, am resigning from the ANC from the date above. This follows my detention and harassment by the Security Officers of the ANC based in Plot 18, Dakawa, Morogoro. The officers are Daffter and Cliff. They accuse me of propagating against the ANC. I was detained at the ANC prison in Plot 18 from 19/01/1991 without trial. I managed to escape on the night of 05/02/1991. I am presently in hiding afraid of the ANC Security hyenas.

The conditions at that prison are horrible. My cell was two and a half by two metres and I was provided a two gallon plastic bucket as my toilet. I bath and eat in that cell. The sponge and blankets to sleep [on] are terribly dirty and smelling very badly. I was not allowed to talk to other prisoners or anybody passing by my window outside. The door is locked with a steel bar across.

My Tanzanian wife was barred from visiting or talking to me. She always manoeuvred even during the night to come and say hello. I decided to stop her coming there, avoiding further repercussions. Permission was also not granted for my four-year-old daughter to enter my cell so that I kiss and talk to her. I usually spoke to her through my cell window. She always insisted my step-daughter to accompany her to the prison to see her daddy. This was my chance to forward messages to my wife through them.

During my interrogation I was told to cooperate so that other methods are not applied to **extract** information from me. I cooperated in order to save my skin from these two-legged hyenas. This was a threat against my life in a democratic liberation movement. I was forced to write things I didn't say in what they termed 'MY OWN CONFESSION'!

I must acknowledge you that if I happen to disappear, your Security organ will be held responsible. I mention this because of my experience in the ANC. I have served the ANC for six years in the Army [Umkhonto we Sizwe] and eight and a half years in the civilian field. I feel this is enough and have observed stagnation for too long in the ANC. I am also asking for my protection from the Tanzanian Government, the UNHCR and the British Embassy. Thank you.

Former ANC Member

ELTY MHLEKAZI

cc Home Affairs Minister, Tanzania
cc UNHCR, Dar Es Salaam
cc British Embassy
cc To my Father, South Africa
Deputy President, ANC of SA, Sauer Street, Johannesburg, South Africa.

PRESS RELEASE FROM JUSTICE FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA

ELTY MHLEKAZI

Ely Mhlekaazi, a member of the ANC in exile, is in hiding in Tanzania. He was arrested by the ANC security department on 19 January 1991 at Dakawa Development Centre near Morogoro in Tanzania. They questioned him about friendship with people who had participated in the mutiny in the ANC in Angola in 1984 and had been imprisoned in Quatro camp.

Mhlekaazi is his 'travelling name' as a former member of the June 16 Detachment of the ANC army, Umkhonto we Sizwe. His real name is Samuel Mngqibisa, he is in his mid-thirties and comes from Dobsonville at Roodepoort in the Transvaal. His wife is from Tanzania and they have a daughter, Bonhle, aged four. He was taken to the prison in Dakawa at Plot 18, Ruth First Centre, also known as the Reorientation School, where he was forced to make a written 'confession' or his interrogators would use 'other methods.' He was asked to explain why he was friendly with ex-detainees and why he was not loyal to the leadership. He was asked to explain his relation to 'the askari, Khotso.'

This was particularly ominous. 'Khotso' was the 'travelling name' of one of the leaders of the mutiny, Mwezi Twala. After being released from Quatro prison along with other former mutineers, Twala was elected organising secretary of the Regional Political Committee representing all the ANC exiles in Tanzania in September 1989. He returned to South Africa with a group of fellow former detainees in April 1990. One of them, Siphon Phungulwa, was shot dead in an open political assassination after leaving the ANC office in Umtata in the Transkei on June 13. On frequent occasions — as in the *New Nation* newspaper on 21 December — the ANC has accused those who called for democracy in the ANC of being 'askaris,' i.e., assassins working for the police. ANC supporters drove Twala out of his parents' house at Evaton in the Transvaal last year and he lives in hiding.

The chief interrogator of Mhlekaazi was Daffter Nkadimeng, a member of the ANC security department, and the son of John Nkadimeng, a leader of the SACP and of the former South African Congress of Trade Unions, and a member of the National Executive Committee of the ANC. Mhlekaazi had reason to think that he was about to be sent to an ANC prison camp at Mbarara in southern Uganda. Former ANC prisoners from Quatro camp believe that the functions of Quatro have been transferred to Uganda, and that ANC members continue to be imprisoned there.

Mhlekaazi escaped at night on 5 February. He resigned formally from the ANC in a letter dated 7 February, in the hope of placing himself outside its jurisdiction. His wife and children are destitute. He wishes to place himself under the protection of the Tanzanian government, the UNHCR or the International Red Cross.

London, 21 February 1991

**LETTER TO THE ANC SECURITY DEPARTMENT FROM THE
TANZANIAN POLICE CONCERNING ELTY MHLEKAZI**

MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

MOROGORO REGION. MAZIMBU SETTLEMENT,

P.O. Box 602,
MOROGORO.

Ref.No. US.MAZ/SMG/7/208

19th January 1991

Comrade Doctor,
Leader of P.R.O.,
MAZIMBU/DAKAWA.

RE: ELTY MHLEKAZI

The above named person has reported at this office asking for Tanzania Government protection, after he refused to repair water pipes in Dakawa.

We therefore allow Comrade Elty Mhlekezi to come to your office to answer all questions as requested, also we would like comrade Mhlekezi to report to this office every after two days (2 days).

(O. Kipande)

SETTLEMENT COMMANDANT

MKUU WA MAKAZI

MAZIMBU

c.c:The Principal Secretary, Prime Minister's Office, P.O.Box 2366, DARES SALAAM;
The Principal Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Refugee Section, DARES SALAAM.
The Regional Commissioner, P.O.Box 650, MOROGORO.
The Regional Police Commander, P.O.Box 644, MOROGORO.
N.O.O.: Afisa Usalama wa Taifa (M), MOROGORO.

A Brief History

Samuel Mngqibisa registered with the UNHCR in Dar Es Salaam as a refugee on 8 February. Having resigned from the ANC the day before, he no longer qualified for rations from the ANC. How were he and his family to eat? He was told by the UNHCR that he would only qualify for material help from them if he moved to a refugee camp situated far from Dar Es Salaam. That was impossible for Mngqibisa, as he is married to a Tanzanian woman and is responsible for children. His family thus found itself destitute. In addition, he states in a letter of 23 March that he does not 'feel 100% safe here [in Dar Es Salaam] because I might be kidnapped at any moment.'

In the same letter he gives an account of events leading up to his imprisonment by the ANC security department, now renamed P.R.O., on 19 January 1991. Mngqibisa makes clear that the Tanzanian government is guilty of serious dereliction of responsibility in securing the safety of its residents.

He sought asylum from the ANC security apparatus at the premises of three successive officials of the Tanzanian state: the police station commander at

Morogoro, the settlement commander at Mazimbu and the commander of the Field Force Unit at Mazimbu. The letter from the settlement commander at Mazimbu – reprinted above, and written on the day of Mngqibisa's imprisonment – could not be more clear: he had reported at the office 'asking for Tanzania Government protection.' This protection the settlement commander conspicuously failed to give.

The nature of Mngqibisa's offence, according to this document, was that he had 'refused to repair water pipes at Dakawa' (He had trained as a plumber at the Vocational Training Centre [VTC] in Dakawa). This throws light on the attitude of the ANC security department, and of the Tanzanian police, towards trade union rights. A refusal to repair water pipes merits the attention of the security police, imprisonment, the threat of torture and a forced 'confession'.

At the urging of the ANC security police ('Comrade Doctor, Leader of P.R.O.'), the settlement commandant informs said Comrade Doctor that it will 'therefore allow comrade Elty Mhlekezi to come to your office to answer all questions as required...' A strange concept of protection! The Tanzanian state 'allows' the desperate and utterly isolated individual refugee to 'come' to the 'office' of the security police which this individual has appealed to the government to protect him from. The title 'P.R.O.' for the ANC security department means literally...Public Relations Office.

The letter from the settlement commandant at Mazimbu is a classic of a certain kind of prose. Strange and tortured syntax of the police-bureaucratic mind, for whom the security official and his victim are both alike 'comrade!' In fact it is not Mhlekezi whom the settlement commandant 'allows' to 'come' to the office of the PRO (in fact, it is not an office, but a prison cell and a potential torture chamber). It is the security man, Comrade Doctor, who is allowed to remove Mhlekezi from the sanctuary he had sought. The two police officials quibble over the living body of Mhlekezi, who is disposed of between them. The statutory authority of the Tanzanian commandant is abjured in favour of purely token assurances from the non-statutory authority of the ANC security department, which enjoys unspecified and unpublished but no less real extra-territorial powers of coercion, by permission of the Tanzanian state.

The formal authority of the Tanzanian state makes strange deference to the informal, shadowy powers of its guest. This guest police 'requests' its Tanzanian host that its intended victim will 'answer all questions.' *All questions*, mind! And the Tanzanian state, in the person of its settlement commandant, 'allows' this courtly ballet of cat and mouse to proceed, 'as requested'. It even appears, since comrade Mhlekezi will be permitted to 'come' to the secret policeman's office, that the progress of the mouse into the cat's claws is an entirely voluntary affair, a purely formal, everyday, business affair. In the same way might the South African state explain how the hanged man 'comes' to the noose overhanging the trapdoor in Pretoria Central Prison.

The victim (and survivor) of the Nazi death camps, Victor Klemperer, silently and patiently researched the mind of his captors during his stay at Auschwitz, and after the war wrote his study, *Lingua Tertii Imperii*, 'Language of the Third Reich'. It appears that the language of South African 'liberation' requires a similar textual analysis.

No less ritualistic — reeking of the pomade, the powder and the lace of 18th century diplomatism — is the final passage: 'and we would like comrade Mhlekezi to report to this office after every two days (2 days)'. The commandant expresses himself with delicacy. He 'would like' Mhlekezi — as if the poor man were a person with rights, a solid burgher, or at least a secret policeman — to 'report'. This is a strange country, where the commandant informs a rightless stranger in the grip of a faceless autocratic power, that he 'would like' this individual to do this or that, as if it were a matter of coming or not coming to somebody's tea-party. The South African police were in the habit of speaking more plainly.

But it's all to no matter. The words of the commandant's letter — uttered, typed, photocopied and handed in duplicate to Mhlekezi before his final walk to Comrade Doctor's 'office' — are a mere form, an awkward diplomatic game played around the real business of power. These words don't mean a thing. Mhlekezi/Mngqibisa disappears into the good doctor's consulting room, and fails to reappear for fourteen days. There is no inquiry from the worthy commandant as to why he had failed to present himself, 'as requested'. Comrade Mhlekezi has ceased to occupy the mind of the Commandant from the moment he steps out the door. For police-bureaucratic purposes, he has ceased to exist. When on the fifteenth day (in fact, at night), Mngqibisa escapes from the Comrade Doctor's office — two and a half by two metres, with some very unmedical facilities — it is as a hunted ghost fleeing through the bush in the darkness.

And this formalistic quadrille performed in front of the commandant's typewriter, a kind of *danse macabre* before the victim's descent into the pit, is at once meaningless and yet so important that these weasel words must be sent in duplicate not only to the hapless Mhlekezi — the subject of the whole process — but to the office of the prime minister, to the principal secretary at the Ministry of Home Affairs, to the regional commissioner and to the regional police commander, as well as to what might well be the Tanzanian security police: Afisa Usalama wa Taifa (M).

However, it is good to know that the bureaucratic fetish of the truly classic despotisms — Hitler's Germany comes first to mind — is flourishing in impoverished Tanzania. The episode in the commandant's office has been preserved in the files for posterity. It is good to know that the prime minister's office and the principal secretary to the Home Affairs ministry were informed about this crime in the office of their servant, the settlement commandant at Mazimbu, against the South African refugee, Mngqibisa. From the top of state down to the lowliest ANC security 'hyenas' (as Mngqibisa calls them), all have their hands in the blood and offal of the torturer's chamber. And the

torture chamber, in its turn, is named after the martyred heroine of the ANC and the SACP, Ruth First.

Mngqibisa's fate as a pawn in a game played by others emerges from his account of the two days in which he sought in vain for protection. As he states in the letter of 23 March,

I first reported my problem to the Morogoro Police Station Commander on the 18/01/91 after harassment in Dakawa by two ANC security officers. The station commander referred me to Mazimbu as the matter was supposed to be handled by the Settlement Commandant.

On the 19/01/91, the ANC's regional security man called Doctor was invited to the Commandant's office in my presence, to listen to my complaint. After a lengthy discussion between us, Doctor insisted that I must go to Dakawa to answer questions. I told him in front of the Tanzanians that I am afraid and am not prepared to go to Dakawa. He continuously insisted that I go to Dakawa. I told him that I am not going there altogether. He then stood up angrily before the meeting ended and said that he is going to fetch a policeman from Morogoro, to force me to go to Dakawa. He never came back. It is [then] that the Commandant wrote him that letter, gave me my copy and said I should go to them in Dakawa.

Before I went to their office, I informed my wife about it. I then reported this to the Tanzanian paramilitary police (Field Force Unit) commander based next to the ANC security officers' house. He later accompanied me to these guys and they invited him inside the house. After their meeting, I was harshly interrogated and forced into a cell, until the day of my escape. The Settlement Commandant never bothered to make any follow-up about my whereabouts after issuing me the copy of Doctor's letter.

This is the story of an honest man who grew tired of political cynicism and weasel-wording, who wanted to live in peace with his wife and his children, and who wished to speak his thoughts to his friends. Thousands of miles from his own country, he is forced to become a double and a treble refugee. In the feeding frenzy of the would-be *nouveaux riches* in the hunt for jobs and money in Johannesburg, what is to be the future for Mngqibisa who has given quarter of a lifetime to 'the struggle.' Struggle, for what? For whom?

Support the campaign : **JUSTICE FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA**
formerly **Solidarity with ex-Swapo detainees.**

Campaigning for an independent international commission of inquiry into
violations of human rights by Swapo and the ANC

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