

The Commission

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FURTHER REPORT TO THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY REGARDING THE
PREVENTION OF PUBLIC VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION FROM THE
COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED TO ENQUIRE INTO THE EVENTS AT MOOI RIVER
ON 3 AND 4 DECEMBER 1991

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CAPE TOWN
19 FEBRUARY 1992

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A. CONDUCT AND RESULT OF THE INVESTIGATION MENTIONED IN PARAGRAPHS 21 AND 22 OF THE REPORT TO THE COMMISSION

1. The submission made to the Committee was that if IFP supporters had been brought into Bruntville some of them would have been among the 172 arrested by the Police. The representatives of both IFP and the Bruntville Peace Committee supported an investigation concerning the places of work and residence of the arrested men.
2. The investigation was conducted as follows :
 - (a) As a first step the names of those arrested were compared with a list of hostel dwellers supplied by the Bruntville administration and also with a list of employees furnished by Mooi River Textiles. Although it was ascertained that about 70 of those arrested resided in the hostel and worked at Mooi River, this method proved unsatisfactory and inconclusive.
 - (b) Four advocates of the Natal Bar were subsequently commissioned by the committee to trace approximately 100 of the 172 arrested men about whom there remained doubt whether they resided at the hostel and worked at Mooi River. The four advocates spent 6 and 7 February in the field, but the difficult and extensive terrain defeated the venture.
 - (c) On 14 February two members of the committee, Adv D J Rossouw and Prof D van Zyl Smit, and two members of the Commission staff, Adv J J du Toit and Lt Col Heslinga, travelled to Mooi River where the 172 men appeared in court again for remand. After the court appearance 94 of the 100 men referred to above were questioned by the committee and staff members.

This investigation proved that, with one or two exceptions, all of the 172 persons arrested were hostel dwellers and that the vast majority were employed by Mooi River Textiles. It must therefore be concluded that IFP supporters were not transported into Bruntville from elsewhere to participate in the fighting on 4 December 1991.

3. The committee expresses its gratitude to the leaders of the Natal Bar for their assistance and especially to the four advocates who agreed, at short notice, to assist the Commission. The Commission is also grateful to the District Commissioner of the South African Police for Natal who arranged for four teams of policemen to assist the advocates and to the men who did so.

B. THE PEACE PROCESS AT MOOI RIVER

1. The committee also used the opportunity occasioned by its visit to Mooi River on 14 February 1992 to enquire into the progress of the peace process in Mooi River and Bruntville. It was disappointed to find that the peace process had not gone as smoothly as planned. There appear to have been a series of misunderstandings between the parties which had led to meetings not being attended. Discussions with both local ANC and Inkatha leaders suggested that the misunderstandings could be removed and that it remains possible that a local dispute resolution committee will be established. The committee stressed that patience and tolerance were needed in the peace process, that direct communication with the other party was preferable to relying on rumour or press reports and that such communications should be relayed for the information of all residents.

2. In the discussions with the local leaders it became apparent that the carrying of weapons was continuing and that it was contributing to tensions both in Bruntville and in Mooi River. Thus, on one occasion, Inkatha supporters had been denied access by the ANC to the community hall where they were to have been addressed by the Chairman of the Regional Peace Committee for Natal. The reason given by the ANC was that the Inkatha supporters had arrived armed with spears and that the ANC had feared for the safety of its own supporters and for that of children in a neighbouring school. The IFP in turn alleged that its supporters had to be armed in order to protect themselves from the concealed weapons carried by members of the ANC.
3. The committee itself observed on 14 February that Inkatha hostel dwellers who attended court and the hearing of the committee were armed with spears and that they moved as a group in the town of Mooi River without the police taking any steps to disarm them.
4. It is the view of the committee that the peace process will be seriously hampered if dangerous weapons continue to be flaunted in public. Urgent steps must be taken to implement the recommendations of the Commission in this respect. (See paragraph 3.1.1 of its Report). In addition, the dispute resolution committee should, as soon as it is properly constituted, consider ways of allaying the fears of those who fear attack from parties bearing concealed weapons.