

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Natal
Room 66,
20 St. Ann
Tel: (031) 305-7380
Fax: (031) 305-7380

B70

cc
TE
ME

Natal Focus

DEATHS IN NATAL - AUGUST 1993

Greater Durban	85	North Coast	39	Northern Natal	28
Clermont	2	Diangezwa	5	Colenso	1
Inanda		Eshowe	1	Dannhauser	1
Bhambayi	33	Esikhawini	9	Ezakeni	16
Shembe	6	Gezinsila	1	Mahlabathini	8
KwaMashu	7	KwaMbonambi	4	Ndwedwe	1
Ntuzuma	2	Mtunzini	4	Tugela Ferry	1
Phoenix	1	Ntombent	1		
Umbumbulu		Sundumbili	14	South Coast	14
KwaMakhutha	7	Midlands	18	Bhoboyi	2
KwaMahleka	1	Appelsbosch	2	Gamalakhe	3
Malukazi	1	Estcourt	7	Murchison	5
Mkazini	3	Neuze	2	Ntengwane	1
Umbumbulu	2	Taylor's Halt	4	Qinabout	3
Umlazi	18	Wembezi	3		

TOTAL = 184

NOTE: The figures included in this report are the confirmed deaths that have been brought to the attention of the HRC. These figures do not purport to be the exact number of deaths, which in all likelihood is higher. The figures included in this report are 8 higher than those released by the HRC national office as notices of deaths were received too late for inclusion into the National Repression Report.

Comment on Statistics

August's death toll is down from last month's toll of 206. The toll of 184 is still extremely high, being the third highest recorded for Natal for 3 years. The monthly average for 1993 in Natal is 144 deaths compared with the monthly average of 119 in 1992.

There has been a shift in the violence from the Midlands and the South Coast to Greater Durban and the region north of the Tugela. Durban was the worst area with 85 deaths recorded. Almost half of these deaths were in Inanda. During the month, 7 people were killed and 7 injured in security force activity. Four of these were killed by members of the KwaZulu Police force, 2 by the SAP and 1 by the ISU. In attacks against the security forces, 4 KwaZulu policemen and 4 South African

police, including 1 member of the ISU, were killed. Ten people were killed in commuter attacks and two deaths were recorded in hostels - one at the KwaMashu Men's Hostel and one at Glebelands in Umlazi. Nineteen women and 9 children were killed.

Focus on Displacees

During August more than 70 homes were burnt in political violence. In both Ezakheni and Bhambayi over 30 homes were burnt. Homes were also burnt in Appelsbosch, KwaMashu, Sundumbili, Qinabout and Dlangezwa. There are numerous accounts of families living in the veld or in bushes to escape the violence. Most of these people do not know when their lives will return to normal.

Returning displacee youths in KwaNdengezi are a case in study. ANC displacees who fled KwaNdengezi in 1990, returned in January only to face repeated threats on their lives and attacks on their homes. The displacee youths in particular have been victimised by a large group of youths from the community - called the "Varavara" gang - as well as elders from the community. The youths have also alleged that the KwaZulu Police are working together with the gang and elders to get them out of the area. In May one of the youths was killed and homes belonging to the parents of the youths were attacked. This month, 3 youths were seriously injured when they were shot at. According to the Pinetown Child and Family Welfare Society, the attackers were 2 respected elders of KwaNdengezi. They alleged that the attackers were later joined by youths from the area and KwaZulu policemen.

The Pinetown Child and Family Welfare Society has been attempting to assist the youths. A fieldworker had been going into KwaNdengezi, but following accusations that the society was gun-running, he had been advised not to continue visiting the area and the youths now come to the Pinetown offices. Once a week they are given food - for most of them this is their only source of food. The youths are extremely disillusioned. They say that they want to be able to lead normal lives and continue with their education so that they can secure some kind of future for themselves. They say that their lack of allegiance to the KwaZulu government, the local chief and the IFP, means that they will never be integrated into the community. They say that although they are unarmed they are seen as a threat to the KwaZulu government and the IFP in KwaNdengezi as they toyi-toyi in the street and chant ANC slogans.

Focus on Bhambayi

The month of August saw an increase in deaths in Bhambayi from the 10 recorded in July to 33 in August. The 8th August saw the violent and bloody launch of an IFP branch in the Bhambayi squatter settlement. Nine people were killed, 11 others injured and 18 houses burnt in violence surrounding the launch. The branch was launched in Bhambayi following the alignment of the "Green" faction with the IFP. With the launching of an IFP branch the conflict which has claimed over 200 lives in 7 months and which began as an internal ANC conflict over civil issues, has now become a political war.

Focus on Estcourt and Wembezi

The conflict in the Estcourt/Wembezi region has acquired a seemingly recognisable pattern. Whereas it began, ten years ago, as faction fighting within the Estcourt Taxi Association (a member

of the IFP-controlled SABTA), it has recently turned political. However, the matter is complex and causes are overlapping and multidimensional. According to shopowner, Mr Wehhead, it is "difficult to say where the political and commercial-competitive lines can be drawn. Both are running simultaneously and parallel to one another. Each uses the other to bolster support". Thus, where there may be personal rivalry between one taxi owner and another, the guise of political rivalry can be used as an excuse to warrant that person's death. Furthermore, there appears to be an element of criminality or "thuggery", and it is alleged that certain taxi 'warlords' have been implicated in the ongoing violence. A certain 'Macox' is one of those allegedly charging taxi's who enter the rank exorbitant rates, and restricting their access if they could not pay up. A Mr Duke Mbongwa, a senior IFP leader in Wembezi, has also been implicated in "thuggish" attacks on ANC members in broad daylight in the Estcourt town. According to ANC spokesperson, Macduff Mbatha, three such attacks occurred on the 29th of May, the 9th of July and the 16th of July, respectively. It was alleged that in early August Mbongwa personally assaulted 5 ANC members who then had to flee from Loskop to Wembezi. As a result of these attacks the ANC has been refusing to participate in the Local Dispute Resolution Committee, because they feel that the police are not responding adequately to attacks on their members.

According to Lieutenant van der Westhuizen, the 4 factions within the Taxi Association only became politically aligned when both the Estcourt town itself and the adjacent Wembezi township became clearly demarcated into ANC and IFP sections. Although some members of the Taxi association are neutral, the majority is IFP aligned. According to the ANC, the conflict really began last year in December, after ANC commuters were harassed at the Alexander Street taxi rank which is in the "IFP section" of the town. One ANC member was killed in December and 2 in January, in attacks at the taxi rank. As a result the ANC supporters sought alternative transport and arranged alternative pick-up points in the "ANC section" of Estcourt. At the beginning of August 1993, the Black Taxi Association condemned those who were providing this alternative transport and banned them from using the Estcourt/Wembezi roads. This decision fanned the conflict. The majority of the attacks have been on ANC supporters or those claiming political neutrality but there have also been retaliatory attacks by the ANC on the IFP. An example of the latter was the indiscriminate shooting of commuters waiting at the (IFP) Alexander Taxi rank. Attacks ranged from home attacks, such as the killing of Mr Maysile and two others from his family (he had been transporting ANC members), to commuter attacks, such as the shooting of a man by gunmen in a Ford Minibus, and the shooting of nurses (causing only one injury) from a green Cressida, allegedly belonging to an IFP supporter.

The Estcourt situation provides a case study of a situation not unlike that of Bhambayi, where previously civil and socio-economic conflict has acquired a political tenor. Especially in the countdown to elections, it is presumed that this struggle for power between the rival political parties will assume ever more brutal proportions.