

+ BATANDWA NDONDO +

Batandwa Ndondo, a young community worker from a well known Transkeian family, was murdered on Tuesday morning, 24 September, in the little Transkeian village of Cala.

That morning, five people came to Ndondo's house. After they had spoken to him, Ndondo agreed to go with them. Shortly thereafter, he was shot repeatedly in front of several villagers. Ndondo's body was taken directly to the police station, and then to the hospital. Ndondo's brother established at the hospital that the Transkeian police were involved. Later this was confirmed by the head of Transkei CID, General D.K. Nkalitshana.

The people living in Cala know that the van in which Ndondo was taken away belongs to the security police. The drivers of this van are known to people as the 'death squad'.

A murder enquiry was opened. Sworn statements by witnesses were taken by Ndondo's brothers, Dumisa Ntsebeza, a lawyer, and Lungisile Ntsebeza. However, key witnesses have been detained. Ndondo's friends and colleagues have been harassed by the police.

The police stopped Ndondo's colleagues from Cape Town from attending the funeral. All white people who came to attend the funeral were ordered to leave. There were more armed police than mourners at the funeral. Many youths, who were wearing T-shirts commemorating their comrade, were arrested at the funeral.

The post mortem has shown that Ndondo was shot eight times. At least six of the eight shots were fired after he had fallen to the ground.

At the time of his death, Ndondo was employed by the Cape Town-based Health Care Trust to co-ordinate a village health worker project at Cala. He was working with villagers on a community spring protection project to provide clean water for the village.

In 1984, Ndondo was an executive member of the Unitra (University of the Transkei) Students' Representative

Council. Following student action for representation, Ndondo was detained, released, suspended by the university authorities, and then refused re-admission in 1985.

A student boycott at Unitra was held in response to Ndondo's death. A number of students were arrested by police after demonstrating in protest against Ndondo's death.

Ndondo's killing happened against a background of widespread disruption and repression of youth organisations by the police. While people at Cala have lost a son and a community worker, this action implicitly threatens all those trying to work in local communities.

Since the Transkei took 'independence' in 1976, there has been an almost continual state of emergency. Recently, a 10.00pm to 5.00am curfew has been imposed, which has been harshly enforced.

The world focuses its attention on police action in the townships; but we must not forget the suffering of those living elsewhere in South Africa, in the backyard of apartheid.



BATANDWA NDONDU