

DEATH OF A VIGILANTE

IMBALI students were boycotting classes demanding the release of a COSAS member detained for being in possession of a petrol bomb. A committee consisting of representatives from the Imbali Civic Association and COSAS was formed to approach the DET for negotiations on the issue.

Pending the outcome of these meetings we also launched a bus boycott. Then Inkatha came into the scene. Their's was to fight the civic association and the youth organisation under the guise of "stopping violence in the township". They organised meetings in which one notorious killer, Mandla Madlala, featured prominently. Mandla was feared and hated. It was believed he used strong muti. In the meetings he vowed to kill our people, labelling us trouble makers.

News of the threat reached us the very same evening. They began carrying out their threats by attacking the house of Vusi Duma, the president of the I.C.A. and setting alight a visitor's car. The attack was led by Mandla Madlala and councillor Abdul Qwetha, known as Inyanga. The following day some children from Inkatha parents went back to school but the comrades attacked and chased them away. During that clash we suffered no casualties except for one young girl who was watching. She was stabbed by a vigilante.

That afternoon the vigilantes went to the township's entrance where we had established a roadblock to stop the buses from entering the township. They set up their own roadblock to counter ours by preventing taxis from entering the townships. All passengers were to get off at the township's entrance. The taximen held a meeting to discuss and plan counter measures against this harassment.

Because the taximen were co-operative we joined them in fighting the vigilantes who were led by this Mandla. We then attacked them at the roadblock. Realizing that they were no match for us they took to their heels, leaving their cars behind. We stoned the cars, damaging them.

After this confrontation we prepared petrol bombs and went to attack the houses of the vigilante who stabbed the young girl during the battle at the school. We set his house and car alight, after which the vigilantes got together and decided to revenge.

That evening news that Inkatha was preparing to attack the house of our youth organisation's vice-president reached us. We then went to guard his house. The taxi-drivers assisted with transport enabling us to check the house at regular intervals.

I was in the front car, which stopped a short distance away from the vice-president's house. I ran to the house to check the situation. I heard a burst of gunfire, followed by shooting from all directions. The vigilantes were attacking us with guns and there was panic and we ran. In the process some comrades were stabbed and kombis set alight.

After that event many people got scared of vigilantes. Even the taxi drivers became reluctant to assist us. One of the taxi drivers we had been working with crossed the floor and joined the vigilantes. All for the fear of this Mandla. Mandla, Mandla in fact was feared even by his own supporters and Inkatha. When he went to fetch them for operations he would hoot outside their houses and anyone who failed to respond promptly would be accused of supporting the UDF.

Mandla Madlala was posing a

serious problem. He went to schools when there student meetings were held and would introduce himself to the principal and teachers as 'the Mandla that people talk about', and had come to break the meeting. He would be in the company of his vigilantes and they would chase all the students away. If he managed to catch a student he would beat him up thoroughly, bundle him into the boot of his car and drive him to the police. His name sparked fear throughout the township.

It was under these circumstances that we decided to eliminate this criminal. We got together and formed a unit of four. I was part of the four. We managed to organise two pistols from friends. The other two were to be armed with knives. We observed Mandla's house, which is at stage 2 Imbali.

Mandla's car had recently been involved in a car accident and was using public transport to and from work.

After observing him for two days we went to the bus stop at five but did not find him. The following morning we got up very early, reached the bus stop and waited for him. Two comrades deployed at the bus stop advanced and shot him in the shoulder. Mandla turned around and threw a parcel he had at the comrade who shot him. We then all advanced towards him. The other two comrades buried their knives in his back. Realising he was overpowered he tried to run away but was tripped and he fell. As he was trying to get on his feet we pumped four bullets in his chest. He then fell, never to get up again. Once we were sure he is dead we ran away leaving the killer Mandla cold in the street.