



FLINERAL: Triggered violence

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Umtata father grieves

For some people October's SADF raid in Umtata is over and almost forgotten. But for those it struck so viciously, the anger and pain linger on, says ZOLA SONDLLO.

A GROUP of men armed with automatic rifles drive into Umtata under cover of night, their target: a house in Northrest that allegedly harbours Apla "terrorists".

They stop in front of the house, jump out of their vehicle and boot down the door. Guns fitted with silencers, the murderers pump 18 bullets into each of the five figures - not terrorists, but sleeping schoolchildren.

The South African Defence Force has struck again. The spirit of Rambo lives on.

Hours later, a man arrives home from a business trip to find the bodies of his children lying in pools of blood. His 12-year-old son

groups, their angry chants mounting as they move downtown. They stone cars belonging to whites and assault passengers.

Recalling that day, Liezi Baucher, who has lived in Umtata for more than 20 years said: "I was driving along when I saw the mob, I thought I had nothing to fear because I've been living here for years. But then rocks started hitting my car.

"My car stalled and the crowd surrounded me. I was pulled out and beaten. Some people pulled my hair and others stoned me." She was saved by the arrival of police.

"I bear no grudges," said Baucher. "I understand people's anger."

Since the Umtata massacre, white business people are tense. They signed a petition protesting against the raid and said they abhorred the actions of the South African government.

But they also abhorred the destruction of their property by angry youths who smashed windows and looted businesses.

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