



KRISHNA RABILAL FOUNDATION

Generations Inspiring Generations

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MEDIA RELEASE

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40TH ANNIVERSARY OF MATOLA MASSACRE COMMEMORATED

“Krish was sleeping on a mat on the floor and when the first rocket hit, a wall collapsed on him. Oozing blood, he managed to crawl out and go to the bathroom. But he was found and was shot in the face at pointblank range.”

This was part of the chilling testimony of Sunny Singh, an MK Commander stationed in Mozambique during this period. It was in the aftermath of the Matola Massacre, one of the most cowardly and gruesome attacks by the apartheid security forces on freedom fighters in another sovereign territory.

Krishna Rabibal, a.k.a. Goodwin was one of fifteen South Africans killed when the South African security forces, together with foreign mercenaries, attacked and destroyed three houses with rockets and mortars. This cowardly act was carried out in the dead of night on 30 January 1980.

The sixteen victim was a Mozambican national named Jose Ramos, who bore a striking resemblance to **Joe Slovo**. For a brief period the SADF celebrated the death Slovo before news of the true identity of the Portuguese national emerged. During this period Joe Slovo was enemy number one of the apartheid forces and his assassination would have been a major victory to Pretoria.

The President of the ANC, Oliver Tambo, in the company of Mozambican president, Samora Machel, addressed mourners on 14 February 1981, at the funeral of those who were killed. As a result, the day was declared the **Day of Friendship between South African and Mozambique**. A monument was subsequently erected in Matola in honour of those fallen MK soldiers.

Statement by KZN Premier Sihle Zikalala’s on the Matola Massacre-

Forty years ago, the racist apartheid regime launched an attack at Matola in Mozambique killing 15 cadres of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the former military wing of the African National Congress. That attack ranks as one of the most callous acts by the apartheid regime and therefore remains etched in our history and collective memory as a nation.

While it was meant to suppress the fight for liberation, the massacre like many other atrocities carried out by the apartheid state, achieved the opposite. It spurred more people to join in the fight for liberation and also exposed the evil system of apartheid and its forces.

It is for this reason that we owe our liberation to the many fallen heroes, among whom are those who died during the Matola Raid. They died serving a noble and necessary cause for the attainment of freedom. Today we dip our hats in honour of these brave soldiers, some of whom hailed from our beautiful province of KwaZulu-Natal.

The 15 South African killed during the raid are:

- Mduzi Guma
- Lancelot Hadebe
- Mandla Daka
- Daniel Molokisi
- Steven Ngcobo
- Vusumzi Ngwema
- Thabang Bookolane
- Krishna Rabilal
- Themba Dimba
- William Khanyile
- Motso "Obadi" Mokgabudi
- Collin Khumalo
- Levinson Mankankaza
- Albert Mahutso
- Vuyani Mavuso (he was kidnapped during the raid and was later executed).

These men laid their lives for us to enjoy the liberties we enjoy today. Let us honour their memory by continuing to safeguard our democracy and freedoms.

Statement by Raj Rabilal, brother of MK Soldier, Krishna Rabilal, a.k.a. Goodwin. Representing the Rabilal family-

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Matola Massacre, where my brother Krishna was brutally murdered by the sadistic apartheid security forces, my family will again come together to mourn his passing as we have done for the past forty years. The Mozambican High Commission, together with family and members of the Krishna Rabilal Foundation (KRF) visited and paid tribute to the heroes, every anniversary, at the Lhanguene Cemetery, Matola. This year, in all probability, it will be a virtual gathering. His untimely death brought immense grief to my aging parents and hastened our father's passing.

We know that we are not alone in this, and that there are many families scattered throughout the length and breadth of this land who have lost loved ones in similar or more brutal ways in our struggle for freedom and democracy. We offer our condolences and familial greetings to them.

The memory of that painful journey, 40 years ago, with my sick ageing parents, for the heroic burial of the victims of the Matola Raid, will remain with me forever. The dusty streets that lead to the Lhanguene Cemetery were lined by the poor people of the newly gained independent Mozambique. They had plucked flowers from the road and fields and were patiently waiting their turn to pay their last respects. Many of them openly wept and hugged my parents, sharing their pain and loss.

Inside the cemetery, were hundreds of local and foreign dignitaries? My parents were led to Comrade Oliver Tambo, who also hugged my parents and wept, he apologized for the loss and expressed his deep sadness, emphasizing the key role of Krishna and his comrades as part of the elite special operations and planning unit. My brother Krishna believed that freedom, democracy and justice was our natural birthright which should not be denied to the majority of South Africans. It was a cause he believed in, and like his hero, Nelson Mandela, it was a cause he was prepared to die for.

While Krishna's vision of a free and democratic South Africa has been achieved, it is our fervent hope and prayer that his ultimate vision of a just, equitable and fair country whose prosperity is shared by all, come to fruition. The sacrifice of his beautiful life would not have been in vain.

Long Live Krishna Rabilal...Long Live!

Statement by Mavuso Msimang, ANC and MK Veteran, Member of the MK High Command during the Wankie and Sipolilo operations, first Secretary to President Tambo after the establishment of the Revolutionary Council-

On 30 January 1981, the South African Defence Force military of the racist regime, staged a cowardly attack on Mkhonto weSizwe (MK) cadres who were sleeping in their residences in Matola, outside Maputo in Mozambique.

The shocking news reverberated across international news networks, eliciting strong condemnation by progressive humanity throughout the world. During this raid 12 MK cadres were murdered while two were abducted and taken across the border to the Vlakplaas torture centre in South Africa where they were brutalised and killed when they refused to betray the cause. The fifteenth cadre died from his wounds. Sadly, a Mozambican citizen was also killed.

If in mounting this raid the racist regime had hoped to intimidate the Mozambican government into stopping its support for the liberation struggle waged by the African National Congress in South Africa, it grossly misjudged the depth of commitment by the Mozambican people to the total liberation of Africa from colonial and apartheid oppression. This resolute determination by Mozambique to support our struggle cost it the lives of its citizens; destroyed its economic and communication infrastructure, to say nothing about the sheer violation of its sovereignty. These sacrifices should serve as a reminder to those of our citizens who are sometimes disposed to xenophobic sentiments and attacks on Mozambican and other Africans resident in our country. It is but a historical fact that Mozambique, Zambia, Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Zimbabwe and other countries paid dearly in lost lives and ruined economies to help US achieve the freedom we enjoy today.

It is fitting that the democratic governments of Mozambique and South Africa decided to erect a stately monument in honour of those killed during the callous attack on Matola and in other acts of aggression that flagrantly breached Mozambique's territorial integrity. The names of our patriotic cadres are now literally etched in stone for the edification of present and future generations.

Memorably, independent Mozambique's first President Samora Machel and the ANC's highly respected President Oliver Tambo declared 14 February 1981 the Day of Friendship between the peoples of the two countries. It is commemorated annually. This is the day when the patriots who were killed in Matola were buried.

It is particularly pleasing to know that the patriotic community of Merebank in Durban decided to establish the Krishna Rabibal Foundation to honour their heroic son who, together with his comrades, laid down their lives on 30 January 1981.

Statement by Ivan Pillay, former MK Commander, and Coordinator of MK's Operation Vula, former Deputy SARS Commissioner and Acting SARS Commissioner and the main subject of the biography- "The Unlikely Mr. Rogue" authored by Evelyn Groenink

Krishna was a quiet even-tempered person. Unassuming, and friendly, he was always approachable and easy to relate to. He did not speak much; but was always clear about the need to fight the injustice we saw all around us. He preferred to work in the background, rather than be in the limelight.

Krishna rejected the apartheid system, overcame the prevalent fear of detention, torture and death. He chose to join the struggle for freedom and later joined the main liberation movement-the ANC. Krish was born into a family of nine. He was the third oldest of the siblings. He was in the same matric class with Coastal Govender, Spider Juggernath, the late Satish Juggernath and Ivan Pillay. They shared the same political awakening.

He did his high school studies at the Merebank High School. Although an excellent mathematics student, Krish could not receive a matric exemption that would enable him to do further studies at a university as he did not pass Afrikaans, the language of oppression. Resistance to the compulsion to learn Afrikaans would propel the Soweto uprisings a few years later, in 1976. Merebank became a hot bed of civic and political activity in the nineteen seventies even though it was a time when there was widespread fear of the security forces.

Krish's first job was as a clerk for Roberts Construction at its building site at the Shell oil refinery at Prospecton in Durban where he joined Ivan Pillay. Later Krish worked with Sunny Singh, who had been a prisoner on Robben Island, at Day-glo Stationers. His last job was at a second-hand-furniture dealer, managed by Joe Pillay.

Krish together with his friends involved themselves in campaigns, community projects and many civil society organisations, including the Anti-Republican Campaign, the Child Welfare Society, Friends of the Sick Association, the Merewent Ratepayers Association, Merebank Bus Passengers Association, Merebank Community Centre, Black People's Convention, and the Natal Indian Congress. He was a founder member of Sentinel, a community newsletter. Organising and writing for the newsletter placed him and his colleagues at the centre of activities in the neighbourhood and well placed to reach beyond it.

As the apartheid regime intensified its suppression of political activity, Roy Chetty, Ivan Pillay and Krish prepared for a clandestine struggle. They rented a house in Sambalpur road, where they stored banned publications including tracts on guerrilla warfare. This venue provided a safe place for discussions that would shape their future as individuals. Roy was then the national organizer of the Black People's Convention. Roy went into exile in Botswana after a crackdown on black consciousness organizations which organized rallies to celebrate the successful entry of Frelimo into the echelons of power in Mozambique.

Sunny Singh recruited Krish, Joe Pillay, Pat Msomi, Ivan Pillay and Krish Rabilal into the underground ANC. Late in 1977 after the arrest of the late Shadrack Maphumulo (released a few years earlier from Robben Island), Joe Pillay and Pat Msomi anticipating their own arrests, left for Swaziland. A few weeks later, Ivan and Krish left South Africa crossing the border fence into Botswana. Krishna did his basic military training in Angola. Thereafter he went for further training to the then German Democratic Republic. Deployed to the Natal Urban Military Machinery, commanded by Inkuleko Guma, Krish travelled regularly between Swaziland and Maputo, ferrying cadres and weapons destined for South Africa.

Krish and Inkuleko Guma were among twelve MK cadres murdered by apartheid security forces in attacks on ANC homes on 30th January 1981 in Matola, Mozambique.

The Krishna we knew, would undoubtedly stand with the poor, the homeless, the unemployed and the sick. He would have no truck with the corrupt and the abusers of power.

"While Krishna's vision of a free and democratic South Africa has been achieved, it is our fervent hope and prayer that his ultimate vision of a just, equitable and fair country whose prosperity is shared by all, comes to fruition." (Quote from Raj Rabilal)

The Krishna Rabilal Foundation (KRF)

The Krishna Rabilal Foundation, in conjunction with the ANC and other fraternal organisations will be commemorating the 40th Anniversary of the Matola Massacre beginning with a media launch on the weekend of 30th and 31st January 2021 and due to Covid-19 restrictions, the main commemorative event later in the year.
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For further Media Information Contact:

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About the Krishna Rabilal Foundation (KRF):

The Krishna Rabilal foundation has been established to promote the values and principles advocated by Krishna Rabilal and other fallen heroes who were involved in the struggle for freedom, equality, non-racialism and non-sexism.

Armed with our KRF slogan: *"Generations Inspiring Generations"*, the focus of our work is targeted at youth mobilization and empowerment, and community based development projects.

Refer attached **"Matola Raid- 40 Year Commemorative Brochure"** for a detailed version of events and more information on the Krishna Rabilal Foundation.

Release Date Request:

The KRF kindly requests that your newspaper carry this article on the weekend papers 30th and 31st Jan 2021.