

SEBOKENG

4/9/1990

35 dead.

Independent Board of Inquiry Into Informal Repression

Phone (011) 403-3256
Fax (011) 403-1366

MEMORANDUM ON VIOLENCE IN SEBOKENG, TUESDAY 4TH SEPTEMBER 1990.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the early hours of Tuesday 4 September 1990, a group of men with white and red headbands armed with an assortment of weapons launched an attack on the hostels in Sebokeng. In the attack, and in a subsequent incident some hours later when members of the SADF opened fire on residents of Sebokeng, at least 39 people were killed. A total of 137 people were arrested, among whom was Themba Khoza, the Transvaal leader of the Inkatha Youth Brigade who lives in Soweto.

This latest incident should be seen against the background of a number of violent incidents in this Reef township, starting with the July 22 attack on the Sebokeng hostels by Inkatha supporters returning from a rally in Zone 7.

After the July 22 incident, which left at least 24 people dead, Inkatha supporters left the hostel and were not allowed to return by residents - something that was seen as a defeat for Inkatha. (cf. Daily Mail 25/07/90; The Star 26/07/90).

When the violence spread to other townships on the Reef, the sentiment that "Sebokeng won't happen again" was expressed by some assailants clad with the distinctive white or red headbands indicating Inkatha membership. "We won't allow another Sebokeng," an Inkatha spokesman told Business Day reporter Linden Birns in Vosloorus on 16 August, after the Vosloorus hostel was attacked by an impi and Xhosa-speaking hostel residents were forced to flee. (Consultation by IBIIR researcher with Birns).

Renewed fighting broke out in Sebokeng on 24 July when about seven busloads of Inkatha supporters returned to the hostel. (The Citizen 25/07/90; Beeld 25/07/90). Six people died in the fighting.

On 1 August, two Sebokeng residents were killed in an ambush near the Houtkop station. (The Star 06/08/90).

2. ACTIVITIES OF THE IBIIR IN SEBOKENG

Following requests from the local community organisations and from Cosatu, the Independent Board of Inquiry has been monitoring events in Sebokeng and taking statements from residents for for the past two months.

On the morning of 4 September, a researcher and an attorney for the Board was on the scene shortly after the killings by the attackers and the SADF took place. They consulted with local community leaders and with ANC leaders who were visiting the township, as well as with senior officers of the South African Police.

Because of a deep seated mistrust in the South African Police among the residents of Sebokeng, residents have been unwilling to submit statements concerning the events of 4 September to the police. The Independent Board of Inquiry has been active in collecting statements from residents, and after consultation with the witnesses and with local leadership structures, it was decided to submit these statements to the police and to co-operate with the police in order to enable them to press charges against the 137 suspects who were arrested.

The Board has submitted the statements of 43 eye-witnesses to Col van Niekerk and Lt Coetzer of the SAP investigating team in Sebokeng. This has enabled the police to charge the 137 people who were arrested on the 4th September on 35 counts of murder and other offences, including public violence and illegal possession of arms and ammunition, totalling 52 charges.

3. THE EVENTS OF 4 SEPTEMBER

When reading through the statements of eye-witnesses, a fairly clear picture emerges of what happened on the morning of 4 September.

Some time in the early hours of the morning, apparently between 03:00 and 04:00, a group of about 150 armed men, most of them wearing white or red head-bands, attacked the hostel area in Sebokeng. Although most of them were carrying pangas, assegais and other homemade weapons, a number of them were also armed with firearms. (See statements of Thandeka Nxabi, Thezalele Watikeni, Saipeti Radebe, Rufus Jaca).

Witnesses also claimed to have seen about four white men, armed with rifles, who had balaclavas over their heads, in this group. (See statements of Stanford Ngubelanga, Wilson Thafeni, Aaron Ntantiso; Ernest Sotsu and Shele Popane in Beeld 06/09/90).

The attackers moved through the hostels, shooting and hacking residents to death and burning vehicles. Hand grenades were also used during the attack. They were eventually trapped in Block E of Hostel 3 and surrounded by residents. By this time the white men had vanished. The South African Police then moved in and formed a barrier between the residents surrounding the hostel and the attackers trapped inside.

(See statements of Stanford Ngubelanga, Pretty Vanga, Thandeka Nxabi, Thezalele Watikeni, Saipeti Radebe).

A number of the attackers were identified as Inkatha supporters, many of whom had attended the Inkatha rally at the stadium in Zone 7, Sebokeng on 22 July. (See statements of Nelson Tyelinjane, Saipeti Radebe, Aaron Ntantiso, James Mokoena, Rufus Jaca, Joseph Mkhathshwa, Petrus Mahonono, Pona Mokona).

Around 09:00, while the police were still present, a number of about four SADF armoured vehicles arrived. The soldiers, apparently members of the Cape Corps, got out and formed up in single file. The soldiers, who were armed with rifles, started advancing on the large group of residents outside the hostel. The residents sat down. It is not exactly clear whether an order was given, but it is clear that the soldiers opened fire on the crowd with live ammunition. (See statements of Nelson Tyelinjane, Rufus Jaca; Len Kumalo in The Star 05/09/90).

Eleven people were killed and many more injured, according to initial press reports. (The Citizen 06/09/90; The Star 05/09/90). Three people were shot in the back. (Beeld 06/09/90). However, subsequent police investigations suggest that only three people were killed in the SADF incident. The attackers who were trapped inside the hostel were subsequently arrested.

Most of the eye-witnesses whose statements the Board has supplied to the SAP, have attended a photographic identification parade in order to identify specific attackers. In the meantime, the 137 suspects have been refused bail.

4. CONCLUSION

As has been pointed out in previous memoranda, the Board is of the opinion that the present township violence was sparked off by an attack on the Sebokeng hostels on 22nd July 1990. The attack occurred after an Inkatha rally in Sebokeng. Although the Minister of Law and Order and the Commissioner of Police had been forewarned of a possible attack on that day by the Board's attorneys, the attack was not prevented and at least 24 people died in the ensuing violence. Most of the known Inkatha supporters living in the Sebokeng hostels who attended the rally, left the hostel after that incident.

Isolated shooting incidents occurred in the hostels subsequently, most notably in the period from 2 - 7 August and again on 12 August, when 9 people were killed. Representatives from local structures of the Mass Democratic Movement and the South African Police agreed in a meeting that Inkatha supporters should be allowed to return to the hostels but the mechanics and timing of the return were still to be worked out. The attack on the morning of the 4th September should be seen against this background.

The South African Police in Sebokeng have expressed their gratitude to the IBIIR's attorneys for the assistance given to the SAP in investigating the incident on the 4th September. The investigating team of the SAP, most notably Col van Niekerk, Lt Coetzer, Lt Van Niekerk and Warrant Officer van der Gryp have also thus far given their full cooperation to the Board's attorneys.

STATEMENT BY THEZALELE WATIKENI TAKEN THROUGH TRANSLATION

1. I am an adult male residing at Hostel 4, Block E, number 24, Sebokeng.
2. At about 03h45 on the morning of Tuesday the 4th of September 1990, I heard gunshots outside. I peeped through the curtains and saw a number of forty to fifty men coming towards Block F into the hostel area. Three of them were wearing white trousers, long overcoats and balaclavas. The rest of the men behind them were wearing headbands. I could not ascertain the colour of the headbands because of the bad light. The three men in front had rifles in their hands. I could not see if the others were armed.
3. I got dressed and went outside, where I saw the men passing towards Block H.
4. After they had passed, I heard more gunshots from the direction in which they had disappeared and I ran out towards the road in the opposite direction.
5. Outside, I met up with some more people. The gunfire continued inside the hostel area.

6. In the morning, at about 08h00 I went to Block E, Hostel 3, where I saw a group that I could identify as the same men I had seen during the night. They were sitting inside the hostel area, and the hostel was surrounded by policemen. The men inside continued shooting at residents who had gathered outside the hostel. The majority of these men were wearing blue overalls. The policemen prevented the residents gathered outside from going into the hostel.
7. I recognised one of the men as Pele Buthelezi, who works with me at the USCO Vaal factory. I know Buthelezi as a member of Inkatha - he told me so at work. After we were first attacked in the hostels by Inkatha members on the 22nd of July this year, Buthelezi left the hostel where he had been living. Buthelezi attended the Inkatha rally at the Sebokeng stadium on that day, before we were attacked. Buthelezi came back to work after the 22nd of July, but we did not speak to each other after that incident.
8. While the residents were still gathered around Block E, some SADF vehicles arrived. The soldiers fired tear-gas and the residents dispersed. After the teargas had cleared, we came back and I saw the attackers being loaded into SADF trucks. Thereafter I went back to my room.

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: 29 JANUARY 1991
TO: NEIL COLEMAN (COSATU)
FROM: AZHAR CACHALIA
RE: SEBOKENG JUDICIAL INQUEST - AC/C6/90

- 1 On 4 September 1990 in the early hours of the morning and from approximately 3.00 am onwards a group of alleged Inkatha members, possibly assisted by some other people, attacked the Sebokeng Hostels over a period of approximately 4 hours. During this attack between 30 to 39 hostel dwellers were killed. Among the victims were a woman and a baby.

- 2 Between 7.00 and 9.00 am some 137 Inkatha members were trapped within the hostel complex and were separated from a very large incensed crowd by the police. At some stage between 8.30 and 9.00 am the police contacted the South African Defence Force to assist them in arranging a safe passage of exit for the Inkatha members. When the SADF arrived they opened fire on a section of the crowd in the process killing at least 3 persons and injuring many others.

- 3 Following upon this incident the 137 Inkatha members which had gathered inside were then arrested and taken to the Sebokeng police station. Among them was Mr Themba Khoza, the leader of the Transvaal Inkatha Youth Brigade in whose

motor vehicle a large quantity of arms and ammunition were found.

4 The SADF then announced that it would hold a military board of inquiry to investigate the military incident. However, under some pressure from community organisations the Minister of Justice announced the appointment of a judicial inquest to determine causes of the death of 42 persons on the day and whether anybody was criminally responsible for them.

5 Of the 137 Inkatha members initially arrested charges were withdrawn against 100 for lack of sufficient evidence and the remaining 37 were charged with various counts ranging from the unlawful possession of arms and ammunition to theft and public violence. The murder and attempted murder charges were also withdrawn at that stage because of the pending judicial inquest.

6 The inquest is due to recommence on 4 February 1990 and there are various aspects that our organisations need to be aware of. I will discuss these under separate sub headings:

6.1 Assessment of the Evidence Led Thus Far

I do not propose to give a detailed analysis of the evidence. I will however discuss some of the issues

which emerged thus far. The evidence can be broken up into two phases. For our purposes we can refer to them as the "Inkatha attack" and the "military incident".

6.1.1 A large part of the evidence thus far has been to establish whether deceased persons, in fact, died in the "Inkatha attack" or "military incident". The reason for this is that fire arms were used in both incidents and the bodies were subsequently moved about by the community to different points. In several cases therefore there has been some difficulty in establishing where the persons were killed and how. On the basis of the evidence thus far, however, it seems clear that 3 persons were shot dead by the SADF. The evidence, also in my view, tends to show that SADF opened fire without any legal justification and I am therefore fairly confident that the Judge will make a positive finding in this regard.

6.1.2 Very little evidence has been led thus far on the "Inkatha attack". The Inkatha team of lawyers have indicated that their clients will refuse to answer any incriminating

questions in the inquest as they are entitled to do. This places us in a difficult position as we have very little direct evidence at this stage which implicates any of those who were arrested with the actual killings. (The circumstantial evidence that 137 Inkatha members were arrested at the scene of the crime is not sufficient.) In this regard I need to state that it has repeatedly been brought to the attention of all the interested parties, particularly those we represent, that unless we have any reliable information on either the prior planning of the attack or any direct evidence of the participation of particular people in the attack, it is unlikely that the court will be able to make a finding that any of the Inkatha members should be prosecuted for murder or attempted murder. It is therefore crucial that our structures continue to look for people who can give us reliable information on this attack.

6.2 Possible Charges Against Some of the Inkatha Members Who were Arrested Including Themba Khoza

As indicated above the prospects for a charge of murder being pursued against Themba Khoza and the others at this stage, seems remote. However, Themba Khoza and some of his fellow accused will probably be charged with possession of arms and ammunition and explosives as well as a few other charges. If convicted on these counts they could face a prospect of a term of imprisonment.

6.3 The Role of the State

Prior to and during the inquest the police and the Deputy Attorney General, who have been running the inquest, have been co-operative and we have had a fairly good working relationship with them. There are two possible areas where the police may be open to some criticism.

6.3.1 A relatively junior policeman, Warrant Officer Puth, is the person conducting the investigation. There should, perhaps, be a more senior policeman doing this job;

6.3.2 The police do not appear to have conducted any forensic tests on the clothing of the Inkatha people who were arrested. Forensic tests may have produced blood samples which

could have matched the blood types of some of the deceased. This could have provided some evidence that such a person had participated in an attack on the deceased;

6.3.3 I am, however, not able to say that the State has acted male fide or improperly in the conduct of both their investigation and the judicial inquest.

6.4 Action Being Taken

We have launched civil claims in respect of 9 of the people who were injured in the SADF incident and 1 person who died. The Vaal Council of Churches has a list of 29 people who were injured but we have not been able to obtain instructions from them and have thus not been able to pursue any claims on their behalf. The 3rd February is the last day for the submission of the notice to claim damages against the Minister of Defence in terms of s113 of the Defence Act.

7 If there are any matters which I have not raised explicitly in this memorandum, please feel free to contact me or my assistant, Anton Steenkamp, either before or during the duration of the inquest.

Vaal violence: Police were warned

By PHILIPPA GARSON and
MONDLI MAKHANYA

DM
29/7/90

POLICE were warned of plans to attack members of Cosatu and the ANC in Sebokeng at least three days before the outbreak of violence which has claimed 24 lives.

Representatives of the Congress of SA Trade Unions and African National Congress-affiliated organisations say they made numerous approaches to police and Inkatha's legal representatives in the week leading up to the Inkatha rally on Sunday.

In letters to the minister of law and order and leading police officials, Cosatu lawyers told of a meeting on July 10 where it was said that "areas of Sebokeng should be attacked by all 'Zulus'".

They asked the police for assurances that violence would be prevented after the rally. Police told them they would "monitor the proceedings in the normal line of duty" and had agreed to search and disarm hostel dwellers attending the meeting.

Inkatha president Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi responded by dismissing the "impressions regarding alleged future attacks on Vaal residents" as "unsubstantiated gobbledegook".

Two days later violence broke out shortly after an Inkatha rally.

At a press conference last night, Cosatu blamed police and Inkatha and demanded an independent investigation into the clashes.

A police representative yesterday blamed anti-Inkatha elements for the violence, but denied that police had agreed to disarm Inkatha members.

Police liaison officer Lieutenant-Colonel Frans Halgryn told a press conference in Johannesburg yesterday the SAP could not have given such an undertaking because "it is Zulu custom to attend meetings armed with traditional weapons such as assegais, shields and knobkerries".

Inkatha's Witwatersrand organiser Themba Khoza accused ANC supporters of trying to prevent Sunday's rally from going ahead. He said yesterday youths had tried to block people getting into the stadium and had stoned buses going to the rally.

Vaal complex ANC co-ordinator Bavumile Vilikazi said at a press conference yesterday his organisation viewed the situation in a very serious light.

Cosatu legal representative Peter Harris said he had been contacted by the union's Vaal office in connection with an Inkatha meeting on July 10 at the Denver Hostel in Sebokeng, where senior Inkatha officials and hostel dwellers allegedly planned the weekend rally and decided that "comrades" and their property would be attacked.

"According to my instructions and from the information we received we have good grounds to (believe) that the violence which took place was planned in advance" said Harris.

He said numerous steps were taken:

- Letters were sent to the commissioner of police, minister of law and order and the divisional commissioner of police for the West Rand, stating knowledge of the plans and requesting that "necessary and preventive measures be taken".

Police spokesman Halgryn said the fact that Inkatha members were armed was not the cause of the fighting.

According to Halgryn, before the Inkatha rally began people wearing ANC T-shirts had gathered outside the stadium and begun toyi-toying. Police dispersed this crowd with teargas as this was an "illegal gathering".

Thereafter police patrols were attacked all over the township. In one of these incidents a municipal policeman was slightly wounded when his vehicle was fired on.

He said when the rally ended at 3.30pm, police attempted to stop the Inkatha impi from marching to the Denver hostel "because this would aggravate the situation".

However, after police were told that the seven available buses would not accommodate everyone they decided to escort the impi. "On the way to the hostel the Inkatha members were attacked with petrol bombs and stones. Inkatha retaliated by throwing stones back," Halgryn said.

On arrival at the hostel police fired teargas and rubber bullets at a crowd that was threatening Inkatha.

It was during this time that the commanding officer, Warrant Officer Petrus Jooste, was stabbed in the heart with an assegai. He later died in Sebokeng Hospital.

Police withdrew from the hostel at 9pm. "when it seemed as if the situation had quietened". However, 30 minutes later they heard gunshots and the sound of four explosives. When they arrived on the scene they found 15 bodies on the ground. Two more were found in the morning.

Inkatha representative Khoza said his organisation's supporters decided after the rally to catch buses at the hostel, which is on the border of Sebokeng, after fears they might be stoned while proceeding through the township.

"On the way to the hostel (the youths) attacked us and when we arrived at the hostel the attacks continued. That was when people died."

He added that several Inkatha members' homes had been burnt yesterday.

Khoza called on the ANC to "discipline its people so that this sort of thing does not happen again".

Youths force stayaway in Sebokeng

Star
24/7/90

Youths today enforced a worker stayaway by residents of the battle-scarred Sebokeng township amid fears of renewed clashes between Inkatha and African National Congress factions.

Fighting left at least 19 dead on Sunday and bitter disputes over who was to blame. Police are accused of siding with Inkatha against ANC supporters; Inkatha is accused of planning attacks on ANC/Cosatu supporters for days before the violence; and the ANC faction is accused of carrying out planned attack on Inkatha.

All sides have proclaimed their innocence and claim to be victims of premeditated attack.

As yet it is not clear where the truth lies.

At least 19 people, including a policeman, died in running battles from Evaton stadium — which both sides wanted to use for rallies — to Inkatha hostels in Sebokeng.

Today Hlangano Shabalala, treasurer of the Sebokeng Civic Association, said tensions were running high in the township. There were fears of revenge attacks.

Youths were at all major taxi ranks and bus stops to prevent people from going to work, Mr Shabalala said. Although police later intervened, only a few people managed to go to work. A bakery van was stoned.

Youths from the neighbouring Sharpeville township threatened to join forces with Sebokeng youths in the event of an attack by Inkatha members, Mr Shabalala said.

Police confirmed gangs had stopped workers travelling to work.

A spokesman said today the situation was under control and police were patrolling the area intensively to prevent further outbreaks of mass violence.

"There have been sporadic incidents of stone-throwing reported, but the situation is under control.

Patrols stay

"Our patrols will remain in place until we are satisfied the situation has returned to normal," said the spokesman, Captain Eugene Opperman of the Witwatersrand police.

Cosatu general secretary Jay Naidoo said yesterday the weekend violence was "yet another violent attack

by Inkatha with police assistance".

Inkatha leader Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi said that in view of the actions and utterances of certain ANC leaders and supporters to isolate Inkatha and send hit squads to murder its leaders, he could understand Inkatha supporters feeling the need to defend themselves and carry arms.

Police said the anti-Inkatha elements had deliberately provoked a fight with Inkatha.

"We believe that anti-Inkatha elements were the aggressors and deliberately carried out the attacks on Inkatha supporters. If they had not adopted a confrontational stance, the killings would not have taken place. They were there for one reason alone — confrontation," Colonel Frans Malherbe said.

He said a special team of detectives would investigate the killings.

Colonel Malherbe said Inkatha and the ANC-backed Vaal Civic Association had applied to have meetings in the same stadium on the same day.

Inkatha, which also applied to Vanderbijlpark's magistrate, was given permission. The VCA, which did not apply to the magistrate, was turned down.

Police said they had held several meetings before Sunday with Cosatu legal advisers and informed them

gal if it went ahead. These meetings were attended by Witwatersrand police chief Major-General Gert Erasmus

On Friday, Sebokeng police chief Colonel Othniel Mazibuko had held talks with the VCA on the matter.

At a press conference in Johannesburg last night Cosatu said it had informed the Minister of Law and Order last Wednesday of allegations of Inkatha's planned attack on Cosatu and ANC members and supporters. A copy of the fax to the Minister was handed to the press.

Peter Harris, representing Cosatu, said the police said they had investigated the allegation

and found it to have no substance.

He said there was reason enough to believe an Inkatha attack was being planned and Cosatu, the Vaal Civic Association and the local ANC branch was doing everything possible to avoid the situation.

Before Sunday's Inkatha rally, several groups up to 600 strong wearing ANC/UDF T-shirts gathered outside the stadium and hurled stones at policemen and their vehicles, police said.

The police dispersed the mobs with teargas and rubber bullets.

When the meeting ended at 3.30 pm, Inkatha members travelling in seven buses were escorted from the stadium by police through a gauntlet of petrol bombs and stones, said police.

Special police probe of Vaal killings

By Deborah Fine and Sapa

Citizen

20/7/90

A SPECIAL investigation by high-ranking members of the Vaal Triangle Criminal Investigation Department has been set up to examine the circumstances surrounding Sunday's violence in the township of Sebokeng.

The police say 18 people were killed, including a policeman, after an Inkatha rally.

Last night an ANC spokesman alleged that 24 people had died.

Colonel Frans Malherbe, police liaison officer for the Witwatersrand, confirmed at a Press conference yesterday that the bodies of 17 people had been discovered by police on Sunday night after clashes between members of Inkatha and ANC/UDF supporters earlier in the day.

Col Malherbe also confirmed that Warrant Officer Petrus Jooste had died at the Sebokeng Hospital after an assegai pierced his heart during a confrontation between the two groups shortly after the rally.

In a separate incident in the township, a municipal policeman, Sergeant J B. Smith, had been wounded in the wrist when a bullet was fired at his vehicle by an unknown person, he said.

Describing Sunday's events as "tragic", Col Malherbe said the violence began when a group of people wearing ANC/UDF T-shirts gathered outside the Sebokeng Stadium in Zone Seven, where about 2 000 Inkatha members had gathered for a legal "peace rally" at 10 am.

When the police informed the "ANC/UDF group" they constituted an illegal gathering and had to disperse, they began throwing stones, forcing the police to use teargas, he said.

Sporadic attacks on policemen, including a petrol-bomb incident, were also being reported all over the township at this stage, he added.

Col Malherbe said the meeting inside the stadium had been peaceful, and that "the trouble began" when the meeting ended at 3.30 pm, and a large group of Inkatha members decided to walk back to their hostels in Zone 14.

Although the Inkatha members were advised by police not to hold such a procession as "it would aggravate the situation outside", they proceeded with their plan after it was discovered that there were too few buses to provide transport for all the Inkatha supporters.

Police agreed to escort the group, but warned that there should be "no incidents" and that a route which did not go through the township should be chosen.

Col Malherbe said stones and petrol-bombs were thrown at the Inkatha supporters from several houses as they began walking down the street, causing them to retaliate by throwing stones back into the houses.

When the group arrived at the hostel, they were confronted by a large group of "Inkatha opponents".

Although Warrant Officer Jooste warned the "anti-Inkatha" group that he would not tolerate a confrontation, the crowd refused to disperse, causing W/O Jooste to instruct his men to fire teargas and rubber bullets.

During the skirmish, an assegai was thrown at W/O Jooste, which entered his chest and pierced his heart. He died at the Sebokeng Hospital about two hours later.

After the crowd had dispersed, police continued to patrol the area until 9 pm, when it was deemed quiet enough to withdraw.

About half an hour later, automatic gunfire and small explosions were heard in the vicinity of the hostels, and police were again sent into the area.

The bodies of 15 men, all of whom had died as a result of injuries caused by blunt objects, and stab wounds, were then found in the hostel grounds.

The bodies of two men were also discovered yesterday morning.

Col Malherbe did not say whether the victims were Inkatha members or ANC/UDF supporters.

He added that police were expecting "revenge attacks" following these deaths, and warned township residents that police would do "everything possible to stamp out this unnecessary violence".

Col Malherbe said the violence and deaths had been the result of attacks by ANC/UDF supporters who had "clearly aimed to bring out confrontations".

"It was clear that they wanted to cause trouble," he said.

Asked whether the police would negotiate with Inkatha and the ANC/UDF/Cosatu alliance to bring an end to the conflict, Col Malherbe said it "was not the police's duty to act as a mediator".

"This is a political conflict and not a security problem. The two groups must sit down and sort out their differences in a civilised manner," he said.

Asked why the Inkatha supporters had been allowed to take weapons to the rally, Col Malherbe said that it was a Zulu custom to attend meetings with their traditional assegais, shields and knobkerries.

Although earlier eyewitness reports alleged that the Inkatha members were also armed with pangas, pitchforks, steel spikes and golf clubs, Col Malherbe stated that policemen at the stadium had seen "only a small number of impis armed with traditional weapons".

He denied that other weapons had been taken

into the stadium, and said that police would have confiscated such weapons if they had been seen.

He said, however, that if traditional weapons became a problem at political rallies, police would suggest that these weapons no longer be allowed at meetings.

But it had not been the carrying of the traditional weapons that had sparked the violence in Sebokeng, he said.

Reacting to allegations that police had collaborated with and supported Inkatha members as they rampaged through the streets, Col Malherbe said it was "absolute nonsense" that police sided with certain groups.

Cosatu is presently discussing with its lawyers the possibility of suing the SA Police for damages resulting from the pitched battles in Vaal Triangle townships on Sunday.

As a result of the violence, tens of thousands of residents in the Sebokeng, Sharpeville and Evaton townships had embarked on a "spontaneous stay-away" yesterday, Cosatu spokesman, Mr Neil Coleman said.

"What we don't understand is that the police were given ample warning of the planned Inkatha attack, and nothing was done about it," Mr Coleman maintained.

He said Col Paddy Mazibuka, who is responsible for Sebokeng, had given Cosatu an undertaking last week after discussions that police wouldn't allow armed people to attend Sunday's Inkatha rally in Sebokeng.

"Yet, the Inkatha impis who attended the rally were heavily-armed — they had a whole range of weapons, including guns," Mr Coleman alleged.



Warrant-Officer PETRUS JOOSTE, who died after his heart was pierced by an assegai during a clash between Inkatha members and ANC/UDF supporters in Sebokeng on Sunday.

'Spear pierced his heart' — witness

By Craig Kotze



Warrant Officer Petrus "Seppi" Jooste.

A riot policeman, who attempted to keep warring Inkatha and ANC groups apart in Sebokeng township, died after pulling an assegai out of his chest at the weekend.

Warrant Officer Petrus "Seppi" Jooste (32) of the Diepkloof Riot Unit died on Sunday after the spear was hurled at police at the Sebokeng single quarters where up to 21 people died in clashes.

The spear hit his heart but the policeman managed to pluck it from his chest and throw it away

before being taken to hospital. He died an hour later, police said.

Warrant Officer Jooste was with a detachment of police escorting Inkatha members through a gauntlet of petrol bombs and stones hurled by suspected ANC supporters.

He and his men arrived at the hostels, only to be confronted by other ANC/UDF supporters waiting, according to police, to ambush the Inkatha members.

Witwatersrand police spokesman Colonel Frans Malherbe said the mob approached the Inkatha members, but were warned by Warrant Officer Jooste that confrontation would not be tolerated.

They refused to disperse and rubber bullets and

teargas were fired at them. During this incident, a spear was thrown and hit the policeman in the chest.

"He just pulled it out and threw it away," said a policeman who was at the scene.

The assegai has since gone missing and police have been unable to find it.

Colonel Malherbe said it was not known who had thrown it or whether it was a Zulu spear.

"Even if it were a Zulu spear, it could not be ruled out that someone from the other side threw it. They also use spears and these are widely available," said Colonel Malherbe.

Warrant Officer Jooste was married; he and his wife had no children. A shocked Mrs Jooste was yesterday unable to speak to The Star.

24/7/90

DM 24/7/90

Police helped Inkatha in Sebokeng clashes - youth

By NORMAN MAKHUTLE

A 17-YEAR-OLD student yesterday alleged police were assisting Inkatha supporters in a clash with Sebokeng residents on Sunday which left more than 20 dead.

Five people were admitted to the Vereeniging Hospital on Sunday with stab and bullet wounds. Two men were admitted yesterday with bullet wounds.

Speaking from their beds they told how a group of heavily-armed Inkatha supporters went "wild", breaking windows, hitting out at people and firing shots at any person in their path as they marched to the Denver Hostel.

The student, Sandile Mtshali, said he was arrested at about 1.45pm while

walking in the street in Zone 12 and was driven around the township in the back of a police van.

The police then drove up to a group of Inkatha supporters. "A policeman, a Van der Berg, ordered me to get out of the van and go towards the group."

Mtshali refused, saying he feared for his life.

"A gun was pointed in my back and I was pushed towards the group. A man in the group stabbed me in the stomach."

Police representative Major Mike Lombard said he could not comment on Mtshali's allegations. "Anyone with complaints about police misconduct must contact the police, who will investigate them."

Another resident, Nicodemus Moeletsi (26), said that at about 5pm Inkatha members were shooting at random in the township. Moeletsi is in hospital, where he is being treated for a bullet wound in the shoulder.

Solomon Mthembu (17), was shot slightly above his left breast. "I heard a gunshot but it did not sound like the usual gun." He was later taken to the hospital by the police.

The township yesterday was tense, but quiet. Two people were injured in shooting incidents and admitted to Vereeniging Hospital.

Lazarus Mokoena (21) and Simon Zondo (32) are both in a serious but stable condition.

Attack avoidable - Cosatu

Sebokeng's bloody Sunday could have been avoided if the Minister of Law and Order and police had acted correctly when told last week of Inkatha's intention to attack, Cosatu said yesterday.

At a press conference in Johannesburg, the union federation said they had informed the Minister last Wednesday of allegations of Inkatha's planned attack on Cosatu and ANC members and supporters. A copy of the fax to the Minister was handed to the press.

The faxed statement said Cosatu had been informed that an Inkatha meeting on July 10, which was attended by two Inkatha head-office members, de-

Star 24/7/90
cided an attack on Cosatu and ANC members was to be launched in Sebokeng on July 21.

It was also decided at an Inkatha meeting on the July 11 that "all Zulus" should attack ANC and Cosatu members.

The statement asked the Minister to bring the matter to his urgent attention.

Cosatu's lawyers informed the Divisional Commissioner of Police and the Commissioner of Police of the allegations.

Lawyers contacted Inkatha on Wednesday about the attacks.

Peter Harris, for Cosatu, said the police had stated they had investigated the allegation and found it to have no substance.

Vaal death toll 24

From Page 1

mobilise themselves until the violence stops.

The Interdenominational Prayer Women's League, which made the call, yesterday said in a statement: "We have to devise ways to force our husbands to bring these senseless killings to an end."

Mrs Masechaba M... a spokesman of the WL said: "This is not the time to be pointing fingers and scoring points."

"The nation is dying. We need to come together and do something and stop accusing each other."

"We hope the reality of this chaos will reach our husbands if it is raised by mothers in their homes and organisations."

She accused politicians of avoiding

"the obvious solution of talking to one another to seek an end to the violence."

"What they are good at is attributing blame while their followers, our very sons, kill one another."

Mabaso said she had the support of other leaders in the community like Mrs Maggie Nkwe and Mrs Leah Tutu.

The call comes after 24 people died in clashes between police, residents and Inkatha members in Sebokeng yesterday.

The other 26 died in Natal last week when a bus was allegedly ambushed before it and a minibus collided in Phoenix.

Mabaso has also called on residents in Soweto to meet at Uncle Tom's Hall, Orlando West, on Sunday at 1pm.

There will be a march to Little Koppie near Beverly Hills for a prayer meeting.

"We will not only be praying for an end to political killings but also an end to the alarming crime rate in Soweto," she added.

The prayer meeting will start

By KENOSI MODISANE and MATSHUBE MFOLOE

AT least 24 people have died in political fighting between alleged members of Inkatha and the UDF in Sebokeng.

The violence followed an Inkatha meeting attended by heavily armed impis in the Vaal.

The dead have not yet been identified.

Residents on a frantic search for their missing relatives were yesterday told to report to the mortuary.

More than 45 people have been admitted to the Sebokeng Hospital, according to hospital spokesman Dr Daniel C Douglas.

Inquiry

He said it was difficult to work out the number of those admitted as a result of the clash "because they keep streaming in".

He said all those admitted were in a stable condition. A few people were in a serious condition.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions yesterday called for an independent commission of inquiry into the incident.

The Chief Minister of KwaZulu, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi said: "I am very sorry this happened."

He lashed out at the ANCUDF supporters for "taunting and jeering" at Inkatha supporters on Sunday.

The killing of at least 50 people in political clashes in the past five days has led to churchwomen calling on mothers to agitate and

Sowetan

~~24/7/90~~

24/7/90

To Page 2

I saw five people killed – witness

Six By Melody McDougall
Vereeniging Bureau 29/7/90

A photojournalist yesterday described the horror of witnessing the deaths of five people killed during street battles between Inkatha supporters and rival political organisations in trouble-torn Sebokeng township on Sunday.

"It was terrible. I have never seen anything like this before," said the shocked journalist, who wished to remain anonymous out of fear of retaliation.

He said most of the victims, who appeared to be innocent bystanders, were first shot and then hacked and battered to death by large mobs wielding an assortment of weapons, including guns,

pangas, knives, knobkerries and golf clubs.

He also levelled accusations at police, blaming them for being pro-Inkatha and more interested in videotaping the proceedings than intervening and helping people who were being attacked.

The journalist said he was covering the Inkatha peace rally at the Sebokeng stadium. "At one stage while I was outside the stadium taking pictures, two guns were pointed at me by Inkatha supporters. Some of them rushed at me and wanted to chop me with pangas and knives, but I managed to escape through a hole in the fence and fled to safety."

Sfr 24/7/70



War fever . . . a Sebokeng anti-Inkatha hostel resident, armed with an axe and iron pipes, prepares for war after rumours circulated that Inkatha planned to attack ANC sympathisers at the hostel.

● Picture by Alf Kumalo.

BM 24/7/90



Aftermath: The main bus and taxi route through Sebokeng's Zone 7 was impassable yesterday morning, littered with rocks and rubble.

Picture: JABU KUMALO

Anti-Inkatha groups blamed for violence

Spot 24/7/90 By Craig Kotze

Police have blamed anti-Inkatha elements for the weekend bloodbath at Sebokeng township in the Vaal Triangle — where the official death toll is 19 — and said they had deliberately provoked a fight with the Zulu movement.

A team of detectives has now been formed to investigate as top priority the killings, which include that of policeman Warrant Officer Petrus Jooste (32), speared by an unknown person, said Witwatersrand police spokesman Colonel Frans Malherbe.

He said police knew of 19 deaths but it was at first thought, due to separate police statements, that the death toll was as high as 24.

Police have warned that revenge attacks will not be tolerated.

All possible measures would be taken to end the violence but it had to be realised the root of the problem was political and not a security matter. Police would remain neutral and would not take sides.

Colonel Malherbe said Inkatha and the Vaal Civic Association (VCA) had applied to have meetings in the same stadium on the same day. Inkatha, which also applied to Vanderbijlpark's magistrate for permission, was given permission, but the VCA, which did not apply to the magistrate, was turned down.

Before the meeting, several groups between 100 and 600-strong and wearing ANC/UDF T-shirts, gathered outside the stadium and hurled stones at police and their vehicles, igniting violence throughout the township against police.

Police dispersed the stadium mobs with teargas and rubber bullets.

After the meeting ended at 3.30 pm, Inkatha members in seven buses were escorted by police from the stadium through a gauntlet of petrol bombs and stones to the men's hostel in the township.

Buthelezi

supports

Sebokeng

faction ^{Star} 24/7/80

Inkatha leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi yesterday came out in open support of the Inkatha members involved in the weekend clash in Sebokeng.

In a statement, he said he was "very sorry" about the incident but could understand that Inkatha supporters felt the need to defend themselves and carry arms.

Fair game

"In view of what the ANC is saying and doing in calling for the 'isolation' of Inkatha and sending hit squads to murder Inkatha leaders and supporters, it is clear Inkatha is seen as fair game.

"Given these actions and utterances of certain ANC leaders and supporters, and in these circumstances, one can understand Inkatha supporters feeling the need to defend themselves and carry arms," Chief Buthelezi said.

Nuwe onrus eis 6 lewens in Sebokeng

Busse onder klippe gesteeek

Beeld 25/7/90

Van Ons Vaaldriehoekse Kantoor

VEREENIGING. – Minstens ses mense is gisteraand in Sebokeng dood nadat hernieude gevegte tussen ondersteuners van Inkatha en die ANC uitgebreek het.

Dit bring die dodetal in dié gebied sedert Sondag se geweldpleging op dertig te staan.

'n Gespanne toestand het gisteraand in die gebied geheers. Busse is met klippe bestook en verskeie huise is ook aangeval. Ingange na die swart gebiede is afgesper.

In 'n wrede voorval is twee swartmense in geweldpleging by die Sebokeng-hostel doodgekap.

Voorvalle van klipgooiery na polisievoertuie het weer voorgekom en 'n swart polisieman se huis is afgebrand.

Comrades en ander politieke groeperings het intussen 'n wegbly-aksie op swart dorpe in die Vaaldriehoek gereël. Klippe is oor al die vernaamste verkeersroetes in Sebokeng en Evaton gepak.

Woordvoerders van die ANC-alliansie het 'n striemende aanval op die Polisie en Inkatha gedoen tydens 'n nuuskonferensie in Cosatu se kantore op Vereeniging.

Mnr. Peter Skosana van die South African Youth Congress (Sayco) en mnr. Shelley Papane van die UDF het gesê Inkatha het Sondag koelbloedige moord sonder provokasie op ander politieke groeperinge gepleeg.

Dit is onwaar dat Inkatha uitgetart is. Klippe en petrolbomme is nie na Inkatha geslinger en geen ANC-hemde is gedra nie, het hulle gesê.

Die Polisie het Inkatha in 'n baie groot

mate bygestaan.

Die twee organisasies het gevra dat 'n onafhanklike ondersoek na die sewentien moorde Sondag in die gebied en die polisie se betrokkenheid ingestel word.

Die aanvallers het uit sowat 100 Zoeloes uit Sebokeng se hostel bestaan. Vyf busvragte Inkatha-ondersteuners het uit Johannesburg en die Oos-Rand aangekom vir Sondag se Inkatha-vergadering. Inkatha-lede het wit kopbande gedra sodat

hulle hul eie lede in gevegte kon onderskei. Hulle was gewapen met vuurwapens en pangas, het mnr. Skosana en Papane gesê.

Cosatu het in 'n verklaring wat in Johannesburg uitgereik is, gesê hy het reeds op 16 Julie inligting ontvang dat Inkatha 'n aanval in dele van Sebokeng wil begin.

Dit is aan die Polisie en Inkatha oorgepra. Inkatha het 'n onderneming gegee dat geen geweldpleging sou plaasvind by die vergadering wat Sondag gehou is nie.

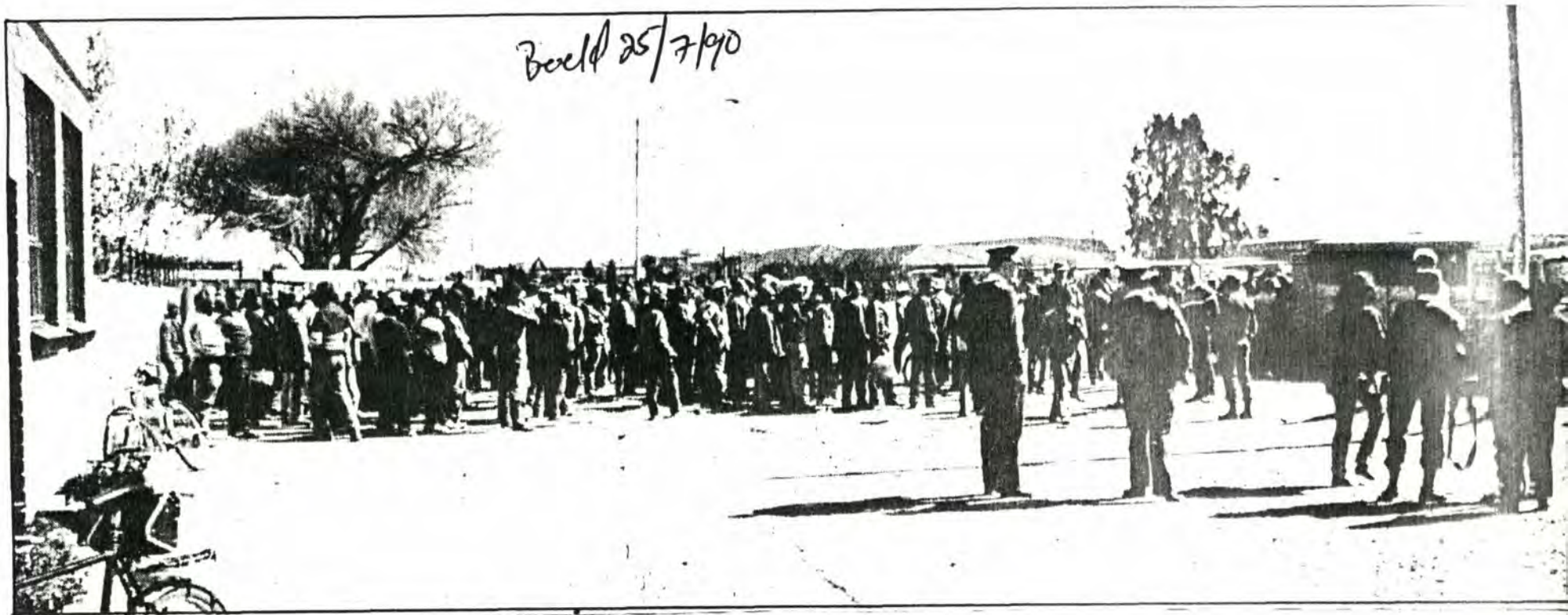
● Die swart-teen-swart geweldpleging het ook na Wesselton, naby Ermelo uitgebrei. Inwoners het uit hul huise gevlug en gaan skuiling soek by die plaaslike polisie-kantoor.

'n Inwoner wat gevra het om nie geïdentifiseer te word nie, het aan Sapa gesê twee huise is aan die brand. Dit is nie bekend of mense dood is in die gevegte nie.

'n Woordvoerder van die Polisie se afdeling openbare betrekkinge het gesê 'n polisievoertuig is met petrolbomme bestook en traanrook moes gebruik word om oproeriges uiteen te jaag.

Stakers aangekla dat hul verkeer ontwrig

POLISIEMANNE laai van die sowat vierhonderd stakers van die munisipaliteit op Vereeniging in yragmotors. Hulle is in hegtenis geneem ná 'n protesoptog in Jan Smutslaan. Die stakers word daarvan aangekla dat hulle die verkeer ontwrig het. Die betoging om hoër lone het van omstreeks nege- tot twaalfuur geduur.



Sebokeng: confusion grows

Star By Helen Grange 25/7/90

Rumoured threats that Inkatha was planning attacks — and counter-threats that there would “never be an Inkatha rally in the Vaal” — were circulating in Sebokeng days before Sunday’s bloodbath, The Star was told yesterday.

Both Cosatu and Inkatha claim they informed the police of the rumours well before the Inkatha rally at Evaton Stadium. However, a bloodbath which claimed many lives was not prevented.

The truth of what happened on Sunday became more clouded yesterday as Inkatha and Cosatu/ANC spokesmen directed further accusations against each other.

Cosatu spokesman Neil Coleman said it was clear that police had collaborated with Inkatha in their plan to attack Cosatu/ANC supporters. Inkatha supporters had been armed in spite of a police undertaking that no arms would be allowed into the stadium. The police had also escorted armed vigilantes through the township to the Sebokeng hostel.

“And when Inkatha did attack, the police made no attempt to stop them,” Mr Coleman said.

Cosatu also claims that, following information that Inkatha was planning attacks, both Inkatha head office and various heads of police, including the Minister of Law and Order, were informed.

In a statement, Cosatu concluded: “The police were warned that there would possibly be violence, were told where and when and by whom it would allegedly be perpetrated — and yet it still took place. The situation demands a full investigation as to why, in spite of repeated warnings, violence occurred, lives were lost and property was damaged.”

Inkatha youth organisers claimed yesterday that information had been given to the Vereeniging Police Station that rumours were spreading in Sebokeng that no Inkatha rally would be allowed in the Vaal Triangle area.

The chairman of the Inkatha Youth Brigade on the West Rand, Themba Khoza, said: “People were trying to prevent the rally from going ahead. The incident was perpetrated by Cosatu/ANC supporters the same way they perpetrated the Natal bus ambush. Inkatha members had every

right to defend themselves.”

Mr Khoza added that an Inkatha member had been killed in Evaton yesterday afternoon.

The Star was informed by the general manager of Putco bus commuter services, Ben Pelsler, that buses were stoned while parked outside the stadium.

“I have gathered from my own staff that when this happened, the drivers ran away. When Inkatha came out of the stadium, they drove the buses to the police station. Our drivers made their way to the station and drove the buses, full of passengers, back to Soweto,” he said.

In an attempt to establish whether an undertaking had been made by police to disarm Inkatha supporters, The Star was told by Colonel Othniel Mazibuko to “speak to public relations”. Colonel Mazibuko, of the Sebokeng Police Station, is alleged by Cosatu Western Transvaal official Zweilinzima Vavi to have given him and others this undertaking.

Police have stated that only traditional arms were allowed into the stadium and that anti-Inkatha elements provoked the attack after the rally.

Sebokeng: Cosatu

By Sapa,
Martin McGhee and
Tony Stirling

Citizen
25/7/90

plea to FW

THE Congress of South African Trade Unions urged State President F W de

Klerk to intervene to halt the fighting in Sebokeng township between supporters of the ANC and Inkatha.

Six people were killed yesterday evening in renewed fighting between the warring factions. The latest deaths raise to more than 20 the number of people killed in the violence since Sunday.

"We feel (Mr) De Klerk must intervene immediately to stop this carnage from continuing," Cosatu spokesman Mr Neil Coleman said yesterday.

"It is clear the police have no intention of doing so," he alleged.

Mr Coleman said fierce fighting had broken out last night at a zone 14 hos-

tel in the township, between Inkatha supporters and hostel dwellers. Inkatha supporters had entered the township in seven buses, he claimed.

"A war is now going on at the hostel."

Mr Coleman said it was criminal of the police to "allow the armed Inkatha members to be bussed into the township and wage war".

When a Citizen team attempted to enter the township yesterday afternoon, they found the main access road barricaded by large stones and a local warned. "Don't go any further, it's too dangerous".

Youths were present at taxi ranks, preventing people from going to work and some taxi driv-

ers were voluntarily refusing to accept passengers who wanted to travel to nearby Vereeniging or Vanderbijlpark — two of the towns hard-hit by the consumer boycott.

Sebokeng exploded in violence on Sunday when about 19 people, including a police warrant officer were killed following clashes after an Inkatha rally at the Sebokeng Zone Seven Stadium.

Inkatha has been accused of planning violence days before the unrest, and a statement released by Cosatu last Friday warned against the possibility.

On the same day Inkatha leader, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, denied

Cosatu allegations that Sebokeng would be used as a spring-board for violence against the people of the Vaal Triangle.

Yesterday, police were still patrolling the area extensively.

Cosatu said the police had been pre-warned of Inkatha's intentions: they had not disarmed people attending Sunday's rally and they made no attempt to prevent the use of weapons which included firearms according to Mr Coleman.

Chief Buthelezi yesterday defended Inkatha's right to protect itself and said that in the light of threats received, his supporters were entitled to defend themselves.

A special police team has been set up to investigate Sunday's killings.

Cosatu said yesterday it found "totally farcical" that police were to investigate Sunday's violence.

Instead, Cosatu called for the immediate suspen-

sion of all police members on duty in Sebokeng on Sunday until an independent judicial inquiry was completed.

According to Mr Coleman, "The police's investigation will just become another attempt by the police to investigate themselves".

Police spokesman, Col Frans Malherbe, blamed the violence on "a group of people dressed in ANC and UDF T-shirts who came to the stadium to provoke Inkatha supporters".

Mr Coleman gave eyewitness accounts alleging police intervened on the side of armed Inkatha members at the height of running battles in Sebokeng.

As far as Cosatu was concerned, Mr Coleman alleged, "it seems clear to us that Inkatha is attempting to raise their political profile through the use of violence because they are unable to win the support of the

people through democratic political means".

The Ministry of Law and Order yesterday

querried why supporters of Cosatu, the ANC and the UDF had appeared at the Inkatha meeting in Sebokeng on Sunday if they knew violence was possible.

A Ministry spokesman was responding to allegations by Cosatu yesterday that despite advance warnings to the police by Cosatu on the possibility of violence taking place after the Inkatha meeting, and that Inkatha supporters might be armed, the violence which resulted in 18 deaths had taken place.

"In the light of their allegations that they knew in advance of the possibility of violence, I wish to ask Cosatu why it is that groups opposed to Inkatha went to the vicinity of the stadium where Inkatha's meeting was taking place, and why, in the circumstances, they did not

simply stay away?" he said.

He said it was preposterous to imply that the police would simply have allowed the violence to proceed had they known of it in advance.

"It should be remembered in the first instance that it is the duty of the SAP to maintain law and order, and that they will not shirk from this task," he said.

"But it should also be remembered that all too often the police have been the targets of violence initiated by one group or another, while they have been engaged in fulfilling this task," he said.

The incidents at Sebokeng on Sunday had been no exception. A policeman had died as the result of a stab wound inflicted by an assegai. This fact alone should show the absurdity of the suggestion by Cosatu that the police had ignored warnings.

Collection Number: AK2672

Goldstone Commission BOIPATONG ENQUIRY Records 1990-1999

PUBLISHER:

Publisher: - Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand

Location: - Johannesburg

©2012

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of the collection records and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document is part of a private collection deposited with Historical Papers at The University of the Witwatersrand.