



**Operation**

# **Duncan Village**

security forces move in

A report by the East London  
Crisis Centre, South Africa

We dedicate this report to all those who died in Duncan Village, known and unknown. The Crisis Centre was able to compile a list of 30 names, but there were other bodies seen at the mortuary which remained unidentified.

## Those who died:

Lotozayo Msutu  
Joseph Menold  
Mthuthuzeli Kama  
Fundisile Alfred Grey  
Oupa Joshua Mapua  
Royal Qwela Nqinele  
Thembile Bemba  
Steven Groep  
Zandisile Thole  
Ndabihle Tsholi  
Tatani Bekenapi  
Patrick Davies  
Nontobeko Ndawo  
Temba Majuba  
Bonakele Bongani Zwelifile  
Malana Kebevana  
Mthuthuzeli Mgoma  
Mkhululi Mahlanza  
Mthuthuzeli Jack  
Norman De Klerk  
Mphongeli Matshekhete  
Toets Jammerson  
Goodboy Willy  
Loyiso Jack  
Michael Mazaka  
Tembekile Dumakude  
Tando Mashalaba  
Reuben Tumaní  
Vuyani Adonis  
Andrew Tsilite

# Introduction

This report is presented by the East London Crisis Centre, which was set up to help victims of the violence in the township who were mostly too afraid to go to hospital for fear of being arrested. It is an attempt to let those speak who suffered most: ordinary residents.

Duncan Village is not unique. It is a township very much like any other: poor, squalid and depressed. And the story of the violence that erupted there in August is not unique either. Over the past two years, township after township has exploded into violent confrontation with the State. Targets have been people and buildings associated with the State.

The national wave of revolt swept into Duncan Village on the weekend of August 11, after the funeral near King William's Town of Mrs Victoria Mxenge, an assassinated Durban civil rights lawyer. Immediately, Operation Duncan Village was launched. Police and army units moved into the township as if they were launching a raid into a neighbouring country. The township was treated as hostile territory, its residents as enemies.

A state of emergency was never formally declared in East London, but the security forces behaved as if it had. They acted as if they had been given complete freedom to do as they pleased, shooting, assaulting and arresting indiscriminately.

The frustrations that led to the eruption of August 11 are the same as those of all blacks in South Africa: poverty and degradation, caused by apartheid and its many facets, including the pass laws, migrancy and the denial of political and other rights. The list is long and well-known.

Of additional importance to Duncan Village, however, was the long-standing threat of removal. Residents had been moved from various locations around East London to what was then known as the East Bank Location, only to be told in the late 1950's that they would have to move again. Mdantsane was established 20kms outside the city to provide accommodation, ultimately, to all Africans in the East London area.

Removals began about 1964. Since then, the authorities have spent as little as possible on Duncan Village in the expectation of its ultimate disappearance. As a result, the roads, schools and other amenities are in a shocking state. The removals have not been able to keep pace with the natural population growth, and as no new houses have been built, overcrowding is extreme.

The community has long resisted the removals. But it was only on August 29 this year that the Government announced that the whole of Duncan Village would be allowed to remain. (Earlier concessions had provided for the retention and upgrading of certain sections.) The announcement brought a measure of relief to residents, but the question remains: why did at least 30 people have to die before the Government was willing to make this small concession?

By now, the township has been bludgeoned into submission and violence

has subsided. But there is no peace. The underlying frustrations remain, and the troops are still there. They must withdraw from Duncan village and all townships if there is any chance of a return to normality in this country. Only then will people be able to speak without fear, and will it be possible to speak of a negotiated solution to South Africa's problems.

## Police and SADF action

From the start, Operation Duncan Village was aimed at regaining control of the community. Its target was not so much the riotous mob as the community itself. From statements gathered at the centre, it is difficult to avoid the conclusions that the tactics used, chiefly shooting and arrests, were in most cases applied indiscriminately.

Patients were not questioned about their involvement in any of the violence because it seemed unlikely that they would admit to it if they had been. However, descriptions of the circumstances surrounding their shooting seemed to indicate that the overwhelming majority cannot have been involved in any violence of their own making. A significant proportion was shot in their homes, in their yards or while walking alone in the street. Among those who were shot in a crowd, most said they were participating in prayer meetings, on their way home from work, the shop or visiting friends.

Almost half of those hurt in a crowd came in to the centre together after a single incident in Gwijana Street. All 17 said they had been participating in a prayer meeting for unrest victims when soldiers arrived in a vehicle and opened fire. They brought with them six people who said they had been uninvolved in the prayers. These included two children, one of them deaf and dumb, who had been playing in the street. A 62-year-old woman said, "I was with my sister sitting in the yard of our house. We saw the crowd running towards us and then I was shot. I am wounded behind the right knee and in the right foot. I saw that it was the SADF who shot me. No warning was given. No teargas was used."

The full statistics of victims' answers appear elsewhere, but the fact that so many obviously innocent people were injured seems to indicate that the shooting must have to a large extent been at random. A 22-year-old worker said: "I was on my way home from work at something past 7 pm. I was walking at the top of Bashe road near the Community Centre. About 8 or 10 small boys (aged about 12 - 13 years) ran past me away from some soldiers who were on foot. There were about three soldiers dressed in brown uniforms. I was walking on my own. The soldiers started shooting and shot me from behind. The soldiers just started firing without saying anything."

The pacification of Duncan Village moved through different phases. When

violence first erupted, its ferocity meant the security forces could only move around in the protection of their armoured vehicles. For the first few days (until about August 15), they drove around firing.

After this, soldiers and police began to move around in small foot patrols as well. This lasted until the weekend of August 31, when 18 victims of the violence were buried in eZiphuzana.

By this time, the violence had subsided to some extent. But after the funeral, there was once again an upsurge in shootings, with at least three deaths. Residents widely saw this as the police and soldiers taking revenge for the deaths of two white people, who were burnt and stabbed after their car crashed into a crowd walking home from the funeral to Mdantsane, seriously injuring 11. Surprisingly, the centre did not see many shooting victims, giving rise to speculation that the police were collecting them and taking them elsewhere.

After this, the pacification programme was carried into people's homes, and arrests and searches took place in large numbers. This led up to September 12, when sections of Duncan Village were sealed off and house-to-house searches conducted in a massive demonstration of power.

## Methods

The Centre received many and varied allegations of illegal actions and excessive force used by the security forces. However, only the confirmed and significant methods will be dealt with here.

It is supposed to be established police practice to act against riots with minimum force, and only after due warning. However, it is clear that the primary method used to deal with Duncan Village was *shooting*. The Centre received no reports at all of baton charges, and teargas was used rarely. In some cases, patients reported that teargas was used only after shots had been fired. Rubber bullets were seldom used, and the vast majority of injuries treated were caused by birdshot and buckshot. There was also a small number of wounds caused by rifle bullets.

Once a measure of control had been re-established, the police and army began to make arrests in large numbers. Again, the reports received at the centre indicate a disturbingly large number of cases where arrests were made apparently at random, anyone in a particular house being taken. At particular risk seem to have been young men in their teens and twenties and people who had been wounded, this fact being taken as evidence of participation in a riot.

In many instances, arrests were described as having been accompanied by threats and assaults. Beatings allegedly took place in people's homes, the vehicles used to transport arrested people and at the police station. Some reports were received of people who were taken to the barracks on the West

Bank where they were assaulted before being handed over to a police station.

A resident described an arrest as follows: "On 2 September, police arrested S.B., V.B. and M.B. at 11.30 pm. The police accused them of causing the unrest in the township. Police kicked the door open and entered the house. When I woke up, they told me to sleep while they looked around in the house. They assaulted and clouted them with the butts of their guns while they were in bed. After they assaulted the three, they were taken away by the police."

A large number of allegations of *torture* have been received. One of the victims, Joe Tetani Jordan, has already obtained a temporary interdict protecting him from the police. His description of what happened to him appears elsewhere. Other victims have described a chair used specifically for electric shock torture, strangulation, beatings on the soles of the feet and other methods.

Arrests have frequently been accompanied by *searches*. Doors were broken down, little regard was paid to property, and some residents reported theft of money and other items during searches. A young woman said: "They looked into a wardrobe and threw all of the clothes that were hanging there onto the floor. They walked on these clothes. They pulled the drawers out of the dressing table and threw the contents and the drawers onto my bed. They broke one drawer because they pulled it out so roughly. They also broke two shelves in the wardrobe in the same way."

Among the more bizarre allegations made were that soldiers and police *stoned* vehicles. The centre obtained a number of affidavits and statements from people who said they witnessed such stonings. In one case, a resident said a cool drink bottle had been hurled at him, hitting him on the leg.

## Witnesses and victims

These accounts were taken down at the Crisis Centre and sworn to as affidavits. In all cases they are corroborated by supporting affidavits. In one instance (Joe Tetani Jordan), the affidavit formed part of a court application for protection from the police. An interim interdict was granted, but the matter was not proceeded with when he was released. The descriptions have been selected to illustrate some of the methods used by security forces. They are by no means unique, and the Centre has similar accounts in large numbers.

### T.B. (19)

At about midday on 2 September I saw a yellow SAP hippo and a brown Casspir coming down road from the rent office. Three men got out of the SAP hippo.

We ignored the three men who got out of the hippo because we had not done anything wrong. We saw them move into the township. Then we heard a shot. We saw the blood on the leg of the man who had been shot. The man had been on the roof of his house, throwing down planks that he was fixing. I do not know this man's name. They shot him before he jumped down off the roof. Although he had been shot he could still walk. They walk in front of them. They made him walk towards the trucks.

Then the police saw a man coming out of a communal toilet. They kicked the man and hit him with the back of a gun. As he was walking in front of them towards the Hippo they kicked him on his buttocks and on his back. They also hit him in the face with the back of a gun.

Then they saw my friend, B.M., aged about 28, his friend M.W., also aged about 28 years, and myself sitting in an old truck in the yard. A policeman asked us in Xhosa why we were sitting in the truck and where we lived. My friends said that they enjoyed sitting in the truck. My boyfriend pointed to the open door of his house and said that he was sitting there at his home. After that the policeman told the men to get out of the truck. The policeman swore at the two men. B. got out of the truck but M. was slow to get down because he was limping. The policeman kicked him and he fell back into the truck and tried to get off the truck on the side furthest from them. As he jumped off one of the policemen grabbed him by the foot and pulled him down.

They took the two men and escorted them to the main road where they were made to lie face down. If they moved they were kicked and jumped on and stamped on, on their backs. They were beaten by the policemen who were keeping guard while the first three were moving from house to house to bring others. They also shot at some people standing at a distance when they objected to the arrests. The people were made to lie in the road for about ten minutes while the policemen were looking for others.

I was not sure what vehicles was used to take the people away because when the police told all the women to get inside, I went into the house. When I went out again they had gone. There were more than ten people who had been made to lie on the ground. They were all men and boys.

## M.J. (17)

At about 12h00 on 2 September myself, the deceased (my brother L.J. aged 19 years), P.T. and a fourth person whose name I do not know were walking to a shop in eZiphuzana.

When we reached the first turn from town into C Section, I saw three policemen on foot approaching. When they were about fifty metres from us they began to shoot at us. They did not say anything to us. They just shot.

We all started running towards nearby houses. I stayed in a house until the policemen had gone.

I went back to where we had run from. I saw my brother lying on the ground.

He had been shot.

Myself and some other people took the deceased to our house. We looked for transport for him. After some time we were able to find someone to take him to the church in Pefferville. A person there said he was dead.

## Joe Tetani Jordan (29)

At about 11.40 am on the 2nd of September 1985 whilst I was on a public road in Duncan Village, I was arrested by members of either the South African Police or the South African Defence Force, whose identities are unknown to me. Thereafter I was taken to the police station in Duncan Village.

Shortly after 8.30 pm on Tuesday evening, the 3rd of September 1985, I was taken from the cells to a room by two police officers.

I was ordered to undress, which I did. When I was naked, I was ordered to lie down on a bench face down, which I did. Whilst lying in this position the police officer who wore nothing above his waist, handcuffed my wrists under the bench in such a way that I was, in effect, locked to it and could not get up. He then handcuffed my feet together at about the position of my ankles. After this, bandages were tightly wrapped around the handcuffs which locked the ankles together. Bandages were also tightly wrapped around my legs in the vicinity of my thighs. It was difficult for me to see exactly where these bandages were placed.

The policeman who was stripped from above his waist then sat on my back. I estimate that he would have weighed about 90 kilograms. (He spoke to me and) lifted his buttocks off my back and then sat down heavily upon my back several times. This caused me considerable pain.

A dark coloured rubber object was then forced over my head. It was very tight. I could not see through it or out of it. It was very difficult for me to breath normally. After this had been done, I felt something touch my back and then felt a sensation similar to the sensation that one feels when one is shocked electrically. I felt the sensation in the vicinity of my spine from below the shoulders to just above the hips. I saw lights in my eyes when I felt the sensation of being shocked electrically. It also made my muscles contract and go into a sort of spasm. (They questioned me about Steve Tshwele and his whereabouts) after being asked further questions and saying that I did not have the information that he was seeking from me, the electric shock treatment which I have described was repeated.

After refusing to make a statement I heard a voice ask: "Where is the stick?" I then felt considerable pain as the soles of my feet were hit very forcefully with a hard object which I believe was a stick. This was done several times. The electrical shock treatment was again inflicted upon me and I then lost consciousness.

I regained consciousness on what I believe was Wednesday morning the 4th of September 1985. I was no longer in the room in which I had been



tortured. I was back in the cell from which I had been taken before going to that room. I saw a white police officer standing above me. I was lying down. He kicked me with his booted foot on the soles of my feet. Although this was not done with a great deal of force, it was very painful. He was saying to me: "Wake-up, wake-up." He ordered me to follow him but because of the pain, particularly in my feet, I had to crawl on my hands and my knees, unassisted, to an office that was about 10 metres from my cell. This was extremely painful. (I was finger printed, and taken to court).

After being placed in a cell below the courtroom, I waited there for several hours before being taken to the dock in what I believe was "C" court shortly after 2 pm. While waiting in the cell below the courtroom, I was assaulted by several black policemen who were in uniform and whose identities I do not know. These policemen kicked me on my feet whilst I was lying on the floor. They did not assault me at the same time, but assaulted me separately. Some policemen threw cold water on me. At one stage a white man in a leather jacket who was carrying a stethoscope was asked by a policeman to take my pulse. He did so. I believe he was a doctor. He said to the police officer: "I can't do anything about this person. He is heavily electrocuted".

My case was called shortly after 2 pm. I was assisted from the cell into the dock by two prisoners. I was in considerable and obvious pain and discomfort. I was formally charged with public violence and my case was remanded until the 18th of September 1985 without bail.

I was visited on 6 September by two attorneys, whom I told about the assaults, torture and ill treatment.

That night at about 7 or 8 pm I was assaulted again by a black policeman who kicked the soles of my feet and also kicked me in the area of my ribcage. Although this was not done with considerable force, it nevertheless caused me a great deal of pain and agony when my feet were kicked.

On Saturday morning the 7th of September 1985 I was taken from the police cells to Frere Hospital where I was examined and treated.

## C.F. (17)

At about 9.30 on 3 September 1985 five friends and I were standing along the Douglas Smith Highway when a hippo arrived. When it was about ten metres away a shot was fired. We immediately ran because we were scared. I ran into a house in Mahlangeni Street to hide. After a while policemen walked into the house and one said: "Hier is nog een van hulle, die p..." (Here is another one of them, the c...).

One policeman grabbed me by my shirt and pulled me out of the house. Two other policemen kicked my buttocks and legs. One of the policemen hit my neck with the back of the gun. It was a very hard knock. He only hit me once in this way.

A policeman told me to climb into the hippo and to lie on my stomach. As I

was lying there they kicked me on the head and tramped on my neck. When the vehicle was moving, shots were fired from it at one point. It stopped and the policemen brought two people into the hippo. As we were driving one white policeman pointed a hand gun at the back of my head and said: "As jy nie die waarheid praat nie gaan dieselfde met jou gebeur." (If you don't tell the truth the same will happen to you). I said that I would talk the truth. The policeman then told the others not to hit me again.

They took us to the Duncan Village police station. As we got off the hippo and were about to go into the police station they hit one of the men. Then I also saw that the other man was shot in the back. He was lying in the back of the hippo. One of the policemen said that he was dead. Another replied that he was not dead. They left him in the hippo.

They took me inside, took my name and my fingerprints. The policeman said that they were holding me for public violence. The policeman then showed me a white man and told me that he was the captain. The captain came to me and asked me whether I belonged to a gangster group and then smacked me.

I was then taken to the cells and locked up with eleven other people. The policemen left us there for the whole day. In the evening they called out our names one by one. We could hear how those who had been called screamed. Those who had been called did not come back to the same cell. They were taken to different cells.

I was called by a policeman who I recognised. He told me: "Vandag skiet ek jou dood." (Today I am going to shoot you dead). He pulled me into an office and slapped my face with an open hand. He then said: "Julle wil die polisie se huise uitbrand." (You want to burn the houses of the police). So he slapped me in the face again. I said "Ons wil nie die polisie se huise uitbrand." (We don't want to burn the houses of the police). He told me to lie on a bench which I did. He then choked me with both his hands. I could not get any air to breathe and I pushed him away. I then sat up. He slapped my face again. He told me to lie down again. I refused. The policeman then pushed me down again. He choked me again and I pushed him away.

Another policeman came in and said: "Los hom vir my." (Leave him to him). He took me to another office where there were two white policemen and a black policeman. As I walked in the black policeman grabbed my shirt front and kneed me in the groin. It was very painful.

The same policeman told me to undress. I took some of my clothing off. He grabbed my neck with both hands and choked me. I could not breathe. My tongue was hanging out and I fell down. He then told me to take off all my clothing, which I did. I was told to lie on the bench again. They handcuffed my hands under the bench. They put a rope around my neck and tied the rope to the bench. They also tied my legs together with my sweater. A green bag was then put over my head. One policeman said: "Was jy al gen...? Vandag gaan ons jou goed n..." (Have you been s... before? Today we are going to s... you thoroughly?).

A policeman sat on my head and hit me with his hands on my body, the white

policeman asked me: "Wie het julle gestuur om petrol te haal?" (Who sent you to fetch petrol?). I felt two objects against my body. I shook and shuddered. It felt as if needles were going through my body. I screamed automatically. The policeman said: "Dit is die Bantoes wat jou gestuur het." (It is the Bantus who sent you). Because of the electric shock I said, "Yes". They then asked me for the names of these people. I said that I did not know. They shocked me again. I just shouted any names. I cannot remember whose names I shouted. They shocked me for about ten minutes off and on.

They then wanted to know where the blacks were meeting and I said that I did not know. They asked again and I repeated that I did not know. They hit me under my feet and shocked me. It was very painful. I was then loosened and taken back to a cell. I was left there until I was taken to court on 4 September 1985.

## The Crisis Centre

On Tuesday, 13 August, the second day after the shootings began, the Crisis Centre was set up at St Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Petterville to offer assistance to those who needed it.

The community immediately responded to the crisis in Duncan Village. Volunteers came forward in large numbers to assist in various ways, while donations of food, money and other things flowed in. The church immediately became a hive of activity, with up to 40 volunteers helping with cooking, transporting the wounded, treating them, taking statements and administering the Centre. Help was offered 24 hours a day at times, and volunteers and patients often slept on mattresses on the floor.

The first and most urgent need was for *first aid*. Medical supplies were obtained and a makeshift sickbay set up in the church's committee room. A great deal of assistance, in the form of supplies and the help of qualified nurses, came from the Mater Dei Catholic Hospital. Doctors and nurses came from there and elsewhere to assist on a roster basis. At times, when the situation in the township was particularly bad, qualified medical help was available throughout the night. At other times, doctors and nurses were on call, ready to come in if the need arose.

Patients were gathered in Duncan Village in the parish combi, which had been marked with taped red crosses on the sides. This was not without its dangers. The combi was singled out for harassment by the security forces, and in one incident, it was stoned. However, when the volunteers in the combi identified themselves as from the Centre, the stoning stopped and they were assisted to repair some damage caused.

Most patients were treated and discharged. The overwhelming majority of patients seen had to be treated for gunshot wounds, which were cleaned and

dressed. Anti-tetanus injections and medication such as painkillers and antibiotics, were administered.

Some patients were kept for observation overnight. If there were any changes, a doctor would be contacted. More severe cases were immediately rushed either to Frere Hospital or the Mater Dei.

Assistance was also given to people searching for missing relatives. All too often, this meant taking people to mortuaries at Frere Hospital or the police mortuary at Cambridge to identify bodies. Sometimes, people would be taken there looking for a relative, but recognise somebody else as well. At the same time, attempts were made to identify bodies in the mortuary. In other cases, missing people were found to have been arrested by the police.

Food was provided on a regular basis to families in need. These include some whose breadwinner was either killed, injured or detained. Patients were also fed at the centre, as with the violence in Duncan Village came real disruptions of food supplies to shops and homes there.

An important part of the Centre's work was providing legal assistance. People were charged with various offences, and in most cases the Centre was able to arrange legal representation for them. Another need was for bail money, and there was fortunately money available for this purpose.

Many victims have a good chance succeeding with civil claims, for the loss of dependants, damage to property or assaults, for instance. None of these claims have yet been filed, but the Centre is working in this direction.

There has also been a need for preventive action. An interdict protecting the Centre itself from interference by the police was sought. An interim order was made by the Grahamstown Supreme Court, but the final hearing has not yet been held. In another case, an interim order protecting Joe Tetani Jordan from torture or assault by the police was sought and granted. The matter was later dropped when he was released. Other, similar court applications are still being prepared.

Legal work also flowed from detentions and arrests, where the reason and place of detention had to be established for relatives. In addition, legal advice was sought by residents on a wide range of issues, and they were assisted in whatever way possible.

**Information** was collected about the events and developments in the township. Statements were taken from all patients, unless they were too seriously ill and had to be rushed to hospital immediately. They were asked to describe the incidents in which they were injured, and statistics were later compiled about the type of injuries, treatment given, missing persons, fatalities etc. In some cases, information was passed on to journalists for publication in the press. This report also forms part of this work.

**Harrassment:** The Centre came in for a great deal of harrassment by the police almost from the start. On Thursday, August 15, police surrounded the church and at one stage threatened to arrest anyone leaving it. Lawyers were called, who spoke to the police and were given an assurance that people were free to enter or leave the Centre. However, there were fears that patients might

be arrested as the police have used injuries as evidence of participation in a riot. Father John Jordaan was arrested as he left the Centre in the afternoon. He was questioned for a few hours about the Centre, and then released.

The Centre was raided twice, and the names of all those present were taken. In the early evening, police returned again and arrested the only two patients there at the time, July Makwenkwe and Lindiswa Vaaltyn, confirming earlier fears. They were charged with public violence, but the charges were later dropped.

In another incident, the combi was stopped in Duncan Village by police who tore the taped crosses off its side. A volunteer was threatened that his mother, who was also helping at the Centre, would lose her job with the municipality.

However, the Centre has been largely left alone since the interim interdict was granted protecting it against police harassment.

**Other areas:** Since the violence in Duncan Village has subsided, the Centre has assisted people injured in police action elsewhere, including small rural villages like Kwelela and Tshabo Village near King William's Town. A disturbing feature has been the increase in patients from the Ciskei, particularly Mdantsane. It seems unfortunately clear that there will continue to be a need for the Centre in the foreseeable future.

## Statistics

The statistics given below were largely compiled from statements given by patients. Often, statements were incomplete because volunteers were too busy treating patients to spend much time on statements, or for other reasons. As a result, the figures do not pretend to be scientific, but can merely act as an indicator.

**Deaths:** At least 30

### Notes

This represents the number of confirmed names the Centre has listed. However, there were other bodies seen in various mortuaries and we believe the figure could be higher.

**Injuries:** 140

This can only be an estimate, based on the number of people treated at the Centre and at Frere. There must have been others who obtained help elsewhere, or not at all.

Patients treated:  
Crisis Centre: 740  
Frere Hospital: 600

The Frere figure is an estimate obtained from a reliable source in the hospital.

#### Treatment of Crisis Centre patients

Treated and discharged	107
Transferred to hospital	29
No details	4

#### Types of wounds treated

Shot gun	107
Rubber bullet	10
Sharp point ammunition	7
Burns	4
Other	14
No details	4

The total will come to more than the total number of patients treated because some suffered more than one type of injury.

#### Was teargas used?

Yes	16
No	107
No details	17

#### Was the victim shot or injured from a moving vehicle?

Yes	86
No	30
Don't know	16
No details	8

#### Injured by whom?

SADF	66
SAP	23
Other	3
Don't know	37
No detail	7
SADF/SAP	4

#### Shootings

In house	6
In yard	14
In street	75
Details unclear/No details	24

If shot in street	
Alone or with one or two others	18
Not part of crowd shot at	12
In a crowd, including 23 at prayer meeting	45

## Chronology

- Sunday 11/8* Mrs Victoria Mxenge, an assassinated Durban civil rights lawyer, is buried in Rayi, outside King William's Town. A Ciskei soldier dies after being stoned and set alight after the funeral.
- 11/8 Evening* Violence erupts in DV. The next three days see the most intense violence in the township. During this period, all community councillors flee DV as their houses are burned down. Other buildings burned include ECDB offices, the Community Centre and beerhalls. Cars are overturned and set alight to form barricades as the police and SADF respond with indiscriminate shootings. Out of concern for their families and property, workers stay away from work in large numbers.
- Tuesday 13/8* A Crisis Centre is set up at St Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Petterville to assist victims of the violence medically and in other ways.
- Wednesday 14/8* Police say that death toll so far is five, but the Crisis Centre at this stage has evidence of far more.
- Thursday 15/8* Police death toll is now 6, but the *Daily Dispatch* reports having received reports of over 10 dead and over 50 wounded. A meeting, called by DV Residents Association for an end to the violence, is attended by about 10 000 people.
- A day of rising police presence at the Crisis Centre. At one stage, police threaten to arrest anyone leaving the Centre. Later, they raid the building and take the names of all those present. In the evening, they return to arrest the only two patients there at the time.
- Friday 16/8* Police admit 19 deaths, not 6 as earlier claimed, and 138 injuries since the beginning of the week. No explanation of the discrepancy is given.

- Sunday 18/8* Police open fire at a group of people attending a prayer vigil at the Gwijana Street home of one of the violence victims, injuring 23. Police claim they dispersed a "mob of black youths on an illegal march". However, statements by victims all speak of prayers being held while at least six said they had nothing to do with the mourning. Among these are a 6-year-old child and a deaf and dumb child of nine, both of whom were playing in the street.
- Wednesday 21/8* Grahamstown Supreme Court grants an interim interdict, restraining the police from harrassing the Centre.  
Factories and shops hit by an almost complete stay-away of its workforce as thousands attend a memorial service for the victims of the violence.
- Friday 23/8* Nation-wide security swoop on UDF leaders, in which a number of people are detained in East London, including members of the Crisis Centre committee.
- Tuesday 27/8* P.W. Botha pays a secret visit to East London to be briefed on the situation in Duncan Village, the consumer and schools boycott and other matters. He pays tribute to the SAP and SADF for their "dedication and commitment".
- Wednesday 27/8* A number of meetings being held for the violence victims are disrupted by security police force shootings.
- Thursday 29/8* The government announces that the whole of Duncan Village is to be retained and the 99-year-leasehold system is to apply in the township.
- Saturday 31/8* An estimated 40 000 people attend the funeral of the 18 victims of the shootings, including one infant. Sneeze powder is found among the graves, but is neutralised by clergymen and marshalls with sand and water. After the burial, a car smashes into a crowd of people walking home towards Mdantsane, seriously injuring 11 people, one of whom later dies. The car is attacked and set alight. Two of the white occupants die, two are seriously injured.
- Sunday 1/9* Arsonists hit the offices of SAAWU in town, but no serious damage is caused. The King William's Town offices of Smith, Van Heerden and Tabata, a legal firm handling some of the work coming out of the Centre, is burgled and some of the files are stolen, others burned.
- Monday 2/9* Many reports of random shootings by the security forces reach the Centre and 2 people shot dead are



brought in. However, there is a marked drop in admissions of injured people amid suspicion that security forces are gathering up the wounded and taking them elsewhere.

*Wednesday 4/9* UDF issues a call for an end to violence, saying that it may harm the consumer boycott as supplies are not getting through to the township traders.

*Friday 6/9* Delegation of clergymen, led by Catholic Bishop John Murphy and Anglican Bishop Kenneth Oram visit Duncan Village despite an attempt to block their party's entry by security forces. They speak to victims and their families and are shown the work of the Centre. Afterwards, they issue a statement saying security force actions are worsening the situation.

*Monday 9/9* Grahamstown Supreme Court grants Joe Tetani Jordan, a worker at the Centre who was detained and then charged with public violence, an interdict restraining the police from torturing him.

*Thursday 12/9* Police and SADF seal off sections of Duncan Village and conduct a house-to-house search. Residents afterwards say they were abused and some report thefts of money during the search.

*Saturday 14/9* A magisterial order placing severe restrictions on funerals comes into effect. The order, valid until October 13 says funerals may not be held over weekends, may not be attended by more than 50 people, may only be held indoors and mourners may not travel to the cemetery on foot.

*Thursday 26/9* East London is once again hit by a worker stay-away that is almost 100 percent effective. The stay-away, which lasts for two days, is called to allow residents to attend funerals of victims of the violence in Mdantsane and Duncan Village. The funerals could not be held over the weekend as originally planned because of the restrictions on burials.

*Friday 27/9* The magisterial order restricting black funerals is revised slightly, and extended to October 25.

*Tuesday Oct 1* The Duncan Village Church of the Assemblies of God is burned by arsonists and the caretaker and lay preacher stabbed to death. His son later blames thugs, saying "organisations involved in the struggle" have nothing to do with the murder.

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