

Freedom plans, but families fear detainees will be banned

By JENNIFER HYMAN

FAMILIES and friends of Internal Security Act detainees believe that many of them will be banned immediately they are released.

Relatives of the detainees were reserved today in their response to the Minister of Justice's promise to release 81 people held under the Act.

One of their main fears is that relatives may not be among those released. There are at least 102 in detention under Section 10 of the Internal Security Act.

Relatives and friends of those in detention were suspicious of the "administrative arrangements" which Mr Jimmy Kruger said would have to be completed before detainees were released.

These arrangements sounded like banning or house arrest orders, they said.

In a statement this weekend, Mr Jimmy Kruger said he had reconsidered the cases of 81 detainees and decided to release them

"taking into account the prevailing circumstances".

These people would be released as soon as "the necessary administrative arrangements" had been completed, he said.

Mr Kruger was not available for comment yesterday.

The Commissioner of Police, General Gert Prinsloo, said he could not release the names of the 81,

nor could he give any further information.

Dr Farouk Meer, brother of Dr Fatima Meer who is detained under the Act, said her family would be overjoyed if she was among the 81 to be released.

"However, the families of detainees are in a state of anxiety and will be until they actually see their loved ones come home," he said.

Dr Meer said he hoped

that during the Christmas period "there will be a further act of mercy on the part of the Minister to release all detainees in South African jails".

Miss Zinzi Mandela, the 16-year-old daughter of Winnie Mandela, who has been in detention since August 13, said:

"Although we will be thrilled to have our mother home for Christmas, we are sceptical about whether she will be given real freedom.

"How do we know that she

won't be banned or house-arrested again?"

Miss Mandela, whose father is Robben Island prisoner Nelson Mandela, said that as long as she could remember her mother had been under some kind of restriction.

"She has been detained many times, she has been banned and house-arrested but she has never been convicted.

"We have no reason to expect things to really change."

Mrs Doreen Sullaphen, the mother of detainee Jeannie Noel, said she would be "on top of the world" if her daughter was, in fact, released.

A friend of Mr Mohammed Timol, chairman of the Human Rights Committee and a detainee since August, said he feared Mr Timol would be banned on his release.

Mr Raymond Louw, Editor of the Rand Daily Mail, who has four of his staff in detention, said he welcomed Mr Kruger's announcement, but with certain reservations.

"If the Minister has considered all the cases and decided to release 81 people, why does he not give their names and avoid the anxiety that their families must feel?"

"Their release in any event does not alter the fact that they should never have been detained in the first place if, as the Prime Minister maintains, there is no crisis in the country."

The members of his staff who were in detention had been held "merely because they were doing their job", he said.

The four Rand Daily Mail journalists in detention are Peter Magubane, Jan Tugwane, Willie Nkosi and Nat Serache.