

School THE STAR, TUE 30 MARCH 1999 renamed after ANC cadre Timol

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President Nelson Mandela yesterday paid a glowing tribute to ANC cadre Ahmed Timol for his contribution to the liberation struggle.

At a function to mark the renaming of Azaadville Secondary School, Krugersdorp, after Timol, Mandela said that few things in life were as painful as losing one's child.

"Timol's mother's testimony at the TRC was a painful reminder of such a grief," Mandela said.

He added that even though he had not met Timol in person, he was a "brave young man who believed in freedom and justice and who fought for non-racialism and democracy".

Police said Timol, who died in 1971, jumped through a window to his death from the 10th floor at John Vorster Square (now renamed Johannesburg Central) police station.

But Timol's family and his comrades in the liberation movement disputed the police version, saying he was tortured to death.

Mandela said Timol would have been a proud citizen of a country where all cultures and religions were guaranteed by the constitution.

"He would have rejoiced in the fact that we are on the eve of our second democratic elections. He would have encouraged the community to be active in the building of the new South Africa, and not to sit back and wait for the Government to do everything," he said.

Mandela said that if Timol's mother had lived to be part of the celebrations at the school yesterday, she would have felt that her son did not die in vain.

"I am sure that all the children at this school will strive to live up to the memory of Ahmed Timol. The best way we can honour his memory is by ensuring that our democracy remains strong and that it does bring a better life for all," he added.

During a TRC hearing, Timol's mother, Hawa, expressed a desire that a fitting tribute in her son's memory was to rename the school, where he had taught before leaving the country to join the ANC in exile, after him.

Timol taught at the school when it was called Roodepoort Indian High School, which was shut down in 1982 and moved to Azaadville.