

# AHMED TIMOL

## ANC Remembers 20th anniversary of Timol's death in detention and other martyrs

Twenty years ago — 27 October 1971 — Ahmed Timol fell to his death from the 10th floor of John Vorster Square. He was being held by the security police for his involvement in the underground of the African National Congress.

Police claimed that he "committed suicide". But it was found that his fingernails had been pulled out, his right eye gouged out and testicles crushed. Timol was probably tortured and then pushed to his death by desperate policemen, trying to hide their brutality.

Ahmed Timol was the 22nd person to lose his life in detention. Those that preceded him include 'Looksmart' Ngudle, Babla Saloojee and Imam Haroon. Thereafter over 50 people died while in custody, including Steve Biko, Hoosen Haffejee and Neil Aggett.

The ANC commemorates the death of Timol and other martyrs to highlight the supreme sacrifice they have made in the struggle for liberation. More importantly, to remember that their deaths have not been in vain. Their efforts have contributed to the unbanning of the ANC and have made a peaceful negotiated settlement in South Africa possible.

We must also remember that the National Party was in power when virtually every single death in detention occurred. Even though De Klerk and his government now claim that they are committed to democracy, they have swept their past under the carpet.

**We call on all to commemorate the deaths of our heroes**

**PLACARD DEMONSTRATION AT JOHN  
VORSTER SQUARE**

**26 OCTOBER 1991 (SATURDAY)**

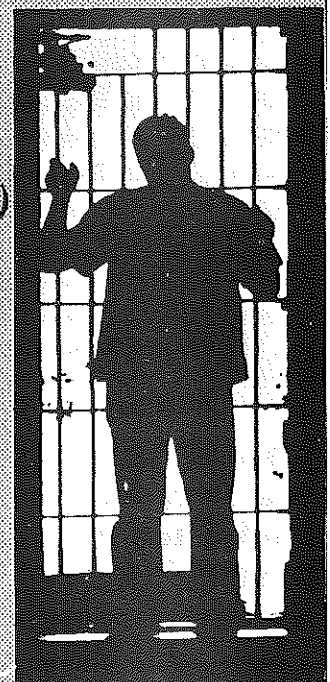
**11 AM (ASSEMBLE : JHB LIBRARY GARDENS)**

**TIMOL COMMEMORATION  
MEETING**

**27 OCTOBER 1991 (SUNDAY)**

**AZAADVILLE CIVIC CENTRE**

**3 PM**



## Profile



Ahmed Timol, born in 1941, had from an early age shown an interest in politics and was inspired by activities of the Congress movement.

He was a keen sportsperson and a popular teacher. While studying abroad in the late sixties he joined the ANC. Upon his return to South Africa, he was involved in building the underground of the ANC. In the course of his duties, he was arrested and shortly thereafter, died at the hands of the police.

## Timol's death shocked the nation

Five days after his arrest on 22 October 1971, Ahmed Timol fell to his death. In addition, the police beat up Timol's comrade, Mohamed Salim Essop, so badly that he had to be hospitalised. They also detained at least 11 people and raided the homes of 100 others. Timol's brother Mohamed, also in detention, was not allowed to attend his funeral.

Even though the early 1970s was a time of severe repression, our community and the country as whole was deeply affected. Thousands showed their anger and their grief.

- In Durban a National Day of Mourning was called for 10 November 1971. Large numbers of shops closed and school children stayed away.
- A prayer meeting held in Johannesburg attracted a crowd of over 1200.
- All businesses closed on the day Timol was buried and several thousand attended his funeral.
- Schools in Lenasia held a one day sit-in.
- Mass protest meetings were held at Johannesburg College of Education and Wits University.
- 500 lecturers and staff at Natal University called for a judicial commission of inquiry.

Between 1963 and 1983, twelve people lost their lives while in detention in Johannesburg police stations.

9 Sept 64	Babla Saloojee (28)	The Greys, "jumped" from 7th floor	65 days
27 Oct 71	Ahmed Timol (30)	JV Square, "jumped" from 10th floor	5 days
28 Sept 76	Ebrahim Mogatusi (22)	JHB Fort, "epileptic fit"	70 days
5 Oct 76	Jacob Mashabane (22)	JHB Fort, "suicide"	4 days
9 Oct 76	Edward Mzolo (40)	JHB Fort, undisclosed	8 days
11 Dec 76	W. Tshazibane (30)	JV Square, "suicide"	2 days
9 Jan 77	Lawrence Ndzanga (52)	JHB Fort, "heart failure"	51 days
20 Jan 77	Elmon Malele (61)	JV Square, "brain haemorrhage"	13 days
15 Feb 77	M. Mabelane (22)	JV Square, "fell" from 10th floor	18 days
5 Feb 82	Dr Neil Aggett (28)	JV Square, "suicide"	70 days
8 Aug 82	Ernest Dipule (21)	JV Square, "suicide"	3 days
5 July 83	Paris Malatji (23)	Protea Police Station, shot in forehead	1 day

**"Ahmed Essop Timol, an Asiatic male, 30 years old, born in South Africa, a teacher, died on October 27 1971, from serious brain injuries and loss of blood when he jumped from a window from the 10th floor of John Vorster Square. The cause of death is suicide and nobody is to blame." — This was the finding of Mr J.J.L. De Villiers at the end of the 8 month long inquest into the death of the 22nd person known to have died while in detention.**