

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF SOUTH AFRICA
GAUTENG DIVISION**

Case number: 101/ 2017

In the matter of:

REOPENED INQUEST: LATE AHMED TIMOL

AFFIDAVIT OF RONALD KASRILS

I, the undersigned

RONALD KASRILS

do hereby make oath and state that:

- 1 I am an adult male born on 15 November 1938 in Yeoville, Johannesburg. I am currently retired and I live in Johannesburg.
- 2 Unless the context indicates otherwise, the facts contained in this affidavit are within my personal knowledge and are, to the best of my belief, both true and correct.

BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL ACTIVITY

- 3 I matriculated at King Edward VII School, Johannesburg in 1957. After school I worked as a script writer for a Johannesburg film studio and then for Lever

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Brothers, as Television and Film Director for their advertising division in Durban, until 1962.

- 4 The Sharpeville massacre in 1960 prompted me to join the ANC-aligned Congress of Democrats ("**CoD**") and I served as the secretary of the Natal branch until it was banned in 1962. In 1961 I was arrested at work for a contravention of the Pondoland Emergency Regulations. In 1961 I joined the South African Communist Party ("**SACP**"). I later became the regional Commander of Umkhonto we Sizwe ("**MK**") in Natal. While in the MK we formed units and we carried out numerous sabotage operations.
- 5 My political activities led to me being banned from gatherings and various forms of employment, and I was restricted to the city boundaries of Durban. In 1963 I registered to study a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Natal but my plans were cut short when the security police sought to arrest me but I evaded arrest and began operating underground.
- 6 My fiancé, Eleanor Logan was detained in Durban. She feigned a nervous breakdown and was transferred to Fort Napier. Eleanor informed me that, while in detention, she saw several comrades who were badly injured from prolonged torture. She later escaped from Fort Napier.
- 7 Eleanor and I were instructed to leave South Africa and I moved to Dar es Salaam in September 1963. Eleanor joined me in October 1963. We both worked at the African National Congress ("**ANC**") offices in Dar es Salaam. I was sent to the Soviet Union for military training and I completed a general

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military course and a military engineering specialist course, graduating from the Odessa Military College at the end of 1964. I later went on to complete a specialist course in intelligence and a general officers course at Brigadier level in 1983.

- 8 In 1965 Eleanor and I reunited in London and we worked for the SACP and ANC in London. While in London, from 1966 I worked with Yusuf Dadoo, Joe Slovo and Jack Hodgson and we established a special committee to develop underground activities in South Africa from the United Kingdom. During this time we trained various people including Ahmed Timol, Raymond Suttner, Jeremy Cronin, Alex Moumbaris, Tim Jenkins and Dave and Sue Rabkin. Our aim was to create underground propaganda units in South Africa. While working for the ANC I was also posted to Luanda, Maputo, Swaziland, Botswana, Lusaka and Harare.
- 9 I became a member of MK's High Command and was appointed as Chief of MK Intelligence in 1983. I also served on the ANC's Politico-Military Council from 1985 to 1989 in Lusaka. I was a member of the ANC's National Executive Committee (NEC) from 1987 and served on the SACP's Central Committee from 1985. I worked underground for the ANC in South Africa during Operation Vula from 1990 to 1991. I went on to head the ANC's Campaign section from 1991 to 1994.
- 10 During South Africa's political transition I was a member of the Transitional Executive Council's (TEC) Sub-Council on Defence. Following the advent of democracy in 1994 I served as Deputy Minister of Defence until 1999 when I

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became the Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry. Between 2004 and 2008 I served as the Minister of Intelligence Services.

TRAINING AND DEPLOYMENT OF RECRUITS

- 11 Our work entailed helping reorganise the SACP and ANC underground in South Africa. The 4 person committee that mobilised this work was comprised of Yusuf Dadoo (Chairperson), Joe Slovo ("**Slovo**"), Jack Hodgson ("**Hodgson**") and myself. Dadoo, Slovo and Hodgson were the same generation as Mandela. Hodgson had served in the army in North Africa during World War II. We would carry out clandestine activities such as recruitment and training. We would send literature to South Africa for distribution by those we trained. We recruited both South Africans and foreigners for this purpose. I sent many young foreigners (known as "**the London Recruits**") on holiday trips to South Africa in order to secretly distribute propaganda for the liberation movements. This proved to be highly successful and tens of thousands of leaflets were distributed by way of bucket bombs and postings.
- 12 One of our South African recruits was Ahmed Timol. I personally never met Timol. Our recruits in South Africa were trained in the setting up of underground cells and networks in South Africa, counter surveillance as well as how to cope with arrest and or interrogation. We trained them to be vigilant, notice whether someone was following them, or whether suspicious people were continuously around them.

- 13 All of the training would essentially be the same, whether a recruit was trained by me, Slovo or Hodgson. Timol was trained by the late Jack Hodgson. Due to the nature of our work, all operations were carried out on a "need to know" basis.
- 14 Timol would have been trained by Hodgson to receive literature on cigarette paper or a photograph negative and he would have been taught to reproduce and distribute it. He would have been trained in leaflet bombing and in communicating via code.

Training on how to deal with interrogation

- 15 We would instruct our recruits that in the event that they were arrested, they should try to hold out for a minimum of 24 (twenty four) to 48 (forty eight) hours, and not give information about their comrades for at least that period. This would allow their comrades time to escape or hide and get the message to headquarters so that we could take whatever action we could.
- 16 Further instructions included denying the claims interrogators put to them; and providing the Security Branch ("the SB") with non-damaging information or information already known to them. We advised them to expect to be assaulted and to try withstand the assaults for as long as they could.
- 17 There was never any instruction to commit suicide. It was never part of our doctrine and philosophy. We never issued any cyanide capsules or the like. We took a humane approach and never expected our recruits to hold out

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indefinitely or never to break under torture. The recruits were advised to accept prison as an option, even if the sentences were long, since they could study. We provided them with inspirational literature such as *Notes from the Gallows* by Julius Fuchik who wrote about his experiences at the hands of the Gestapo.

Interrogation of Timol

- 18 In respect of Timol it seems that the Security Branch suspected him of being behind the multiple leaflet bombing and banner unfurling campaigns in 5 cities throughout South Africa in 1970 and 1971. These campaigns made a big impact and were widely covered in the press. At the time the police did not have a clue who was behind the actions and they were enormously embarrassed. The police were likely instructed by the Nationalist regime to stop the campaigns at all costs and find out who was responsible, no matter what it took.
- 19 In fact the campaigns were carried out by the London Recruits. Timol was not involved. Nonetheless it seems that the police believed he was the mastermind and as a result it appears that they performed the most brutal torture on him, to the point of no return. The SB would have known that they had a window of approximately 24 to 72 hours break to break Timol (and Salim Essop), in order to get the names of others before they could escape or hide. They must have gone all out to break Timol and Essop in this short period.

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AUTHENTICITY OF PUBLICATIONS ATTRIBUTED TO THE SACP

The Frelimo Document

- 20 I have been shown the document titled "*Frelimo Memorandum*". I am advised that it was handed up by the police as an exhibit in the first Timol Inquest. I have never seen this document before. It purports to describe the experiences of Frelimo members with police interrogation in Mozambique.
- 21 It looks like an authentic document and it has the essence of what we would put in literature. However the reference to suicide is at variance with the SACP's policy and philosophy. The statement jars and does not flow with the rest of the document. There is no further elaboration of the statement. Moreover, it was never our practice to sign off a document with a name, as is the case with this document.
- 22 I am of the opinion that the statement regarding suicide was surreptitiously inserted. The SB often seized typewriters used by comrades and could have easily have made insertions to suit their ends.
- 23 Even if the reference to suicide is authentic, which I doubt very much, it represents the opinion of one person, not the organisation.

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Inkululeko Freedom No. 1

24 I have been shown the document titled "*Inkululeko Freedom, no 1, July 1971*". I am advised that it was handed up by the police as an exhibit in the first Timol Inquest. I regard this document as authentic.

Inkululeko Freedom No. 2

25 I have been shown the document titled "*Inkululeko Freedom, no 2, February 1972*". I am advised that it was not introduced as an exhibit in the first Timol Inquest but it was nonetheless supplied to the Inquest Magistrate who relied on it when making his finding that Timol committed suicide.

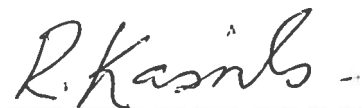
26 Bar the last 5 paragraphs under the heading "Stand Firm" on the last page, this is an authentic document. I know this because I wrote most of it. I can say unequivocally that the last five paragraphs on the last page are a complete fabrication and forgery. I do so for the following reasons:

26.1 We would never have written the words "*act insane*" or publicly instruct our recruits to lodge complaints, whether true or false, knowing that the document would fall into the hands of our enemies, including the SB.

26.2 The use of the English language is poor. We wrote literature and we could write well. The sentence "*rather than to betray*" does not make grammatical sense. Grammatically it should read "*rather than betray*".

26.3 The words "*paid for their lives*" is an 'Afrikanerism'. An English speaker would say "*paid with their lives*".

- 26.4 Rowley Arenstein was expelled from the SACP in 1964 and he certainly would not have been described in those terms in the 1970s.
- 26.5 The last line of the document states that it was "*issued by the Communist Party of South Africa.*" In fact the name of the party was changed in 1953 from the old Communist Party of South Africa to the new South African Communist Party. This is not a mistake we would make some 18 years later.
- 27 It is no coincidence that both references to suicide in the *Frelimo Memorandum* and the *Inkululeko Freedom, no 2* appear at the bottom of the last pages of both documents. This allowed the police to make easy insertions without having to adjust the original layouts of the documents.
- 28 I can say with total confidence that these five paragraphs in *Inkululeko Freedom, no 2* are obvious forgeries manufactured by the SB to promote their agenda against the SACP and ANC. More specifically the SB fabricated these paragraphs in order to cover up the torture and murder of comrades in detention.



RONALD KASRILS



The Deponent has acknowledged that he knows and understands the contents of this affidavit, which was signed and affirmed before me at ^{22 Upper Woburn Place, London WC1H 0HW} _____ on this the 21st day of July 2017, the regulations contained in Government Notice No R1258 of 21 July 1972, as amended, and Government Notice No R1648 of 19 August 1977, as amended, having been complied with.

NB I cannot confirm compliance with the above regulations and notice of contents and effect unknown to me or I am an English Solicitor

**Stephen Sasto
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Solicitor -
COMMISSIONER OF OATHS

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