

Subject: Formal response concerning the purpose of the Eugene de Kock Facebook page and its effect on victims as per the request received from the Mail & Guardian, via Kenneth Moeng Kgwadi.

Dear Mr Kgwadi,

Thank you for your further correspondence and for providing me with an opportunity to respond to the questions you have raised.

I understand that my name, Vlakplaas, the violence of the past, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission process and the continuing search for justice remain deeply painful and controversial subjects.

I therefore do not regard your questions as unreasonable.

They deserve a complete response, rather than a few sentences from which isolated phrases may later be selected without the context necessary to understand my position.

I also wish to make it clear that this response is given for publication and not merely as private background information.

My answers are set out below.

1. What is the primary purpose of the official Facebook page?

The primary purpose of the Eugene Alexander de Kock Facebook page is to serve as a historical archive.

It preserves and presents material concerning my life, my compulsory national service, my police service, my involvement in counter-insurgency work, my transfer to Vlakplaas, the operations in which I became involved, my prosecution, my evidence before the Truth and

Reconciliation Commission, my imprisonment and the broader political, military, intelligence and police structures within which the events of that period occurred.

The page is not a political organisation.

It is not a pressure group, an election platform, a recruitment structure or an attempt to establish any organisation around me.

It has no racial or party-political objective.

It does not exist to organise former policemen, soldiers or veterans into an armed structure. It does not advocate an uprising, resistance campaign, militia, underground organisation or renewed conflict.

It does not seek to divide South Africans according to race, political history, military background or former allegiance.

It does not campaign against the present government, the ANC, SWAPO, PLAN, MK, APLA or any other political or former military formation.

People from different backgrounds and with opposing views are permitted to participate in discussions, provided that they do so respectfully.

Threats, racial abuse, incitement, the celebration of death and the glorification of political violence should have no place on the page.

The page is not intended to glorify me

The page is not intended to idolise me.

It is not a personality cult and it is not an attempt to present me as a hero.

It does not glorify Vlakplaas, apartheid, war, counter-insurgency operations, assassinations or violence committed by any side.

I do not wish for South Africa to experience another period of political conflict.

I am not seeking to mobilise people against anyone.

I remain in my own lane and deal with the history in which I was personally involved.

I do not use the page to pronounce on every political controversy, every historical conflict or every present government decision.

However, refusing to glorify myself does not mean that I must accept every accusation made against me merely because it has been repeated in the press or public discourse for many years.

There is a difference between accepting responsibility and accepting false responsibility.

The historical record surrounding me has been oversimplified

Over time, the words “Vlakplaas” and “Eugene de Kock” became convenient labels beneath which an enormous number of murders, disappearances, abductions and abuses were placed.

Some of those matters directly involved me.

I accepted responsibility for those matters and, where appropriate, applied for amnesty.

Other matters did not involve me at all.

Some originated within regional Security Branch structures, Military Intelligence, Special Forces, covert military directorates, senior police command structures or political decision-making bodies.

In some instances Vlakplaas was approached to provide personnel, logistical assistance, technical assistance or operational support after the target, purpose and broad operation had already been determined elsewhere.

That is materially different from saying that I personally conceived every operation, selected every target and acted according to my own unrestricted authority.

A serious historical record must ask:

Who first identified the person as a target?

Who supplied the intelligence?

Who requested the operation?

Who approved it?

Which department or command structure originated it?

Who supplied the resources?

Who carried it out?

Who concealed it afterwards?

Who destroyed or altered evidence?

Who applied for amnesty?

Who did not apply?

Who was refused amnesty?

Who was prosecuted?

Who was not prosecuted?

Why were some cases pursued while others were allowed to disappear?

Those questions do not remove my responsibility.

They identify responsibility accurately.

Accountability is distorted when one individual is made the container into which the crimes of an entire political and security system are placed.

The page preserves material that was omitted from the dominant narrative

The media understandably focused on the most serious and sensational parts of my history.

Those matters form part of the record and cannot simply be removed.

They are not, however, the entirety of my life or the entirety of my service.

I contributed to different branches and functions of the armed and police services. My history did not begin and end at Vlakplas.

I came from a modest, lower-middle-class family.

I worked during school holidays and on weekends while growing up. I participated in school and sport and approached the responsibilities given to me with the belief that I should do my best.

I completed compulsory national service and basic training at the Gymnasium and later joined the South African Police.

I did not enter adulthood as the architect of a political system.

I was a young policeman who advanced through the system in which I served.

My tendency was to apply myself fully to whatever task I was given. That quality can be constructive when it is directed towards lawful and ethical work. It can become destructive when it is placed in the service of an unlawful or morally compromised system.

I do not offer dedication as an excuse.

I provide it as part of the explanation of how a person from an ordinary background became involved in the structures in which I served.

I did not request Vlakplaas

I did not create Vlakplaas.

I did not establish its methods, its original mandate or its position within the Security Branch.

At a stage when I was tired of war and killing, I asked to return to ordinary uniformed policing in the Western Cape.

I did not ask to be sent to Vlakplaas.

I was nevertheless transferred there, and I did not arrive as its commanding officer.

I later rose to command and I accept that command brought with it serious responsibility.

That is nevertheless very different from the public impression that Vlakplaas was created for me, belonged to me or was handed to me with unrestricted authority to do whatever I pleased.

I did not own the institution.

I did not determine national security policy.

I did not create the State Security Council, the Security Branch, Military Intelligence, Special Forces, the covert military structures or the political policies under which they operated.

I was an operational officer within a much larger hierarchy.

I did not become wealthy through apartheid or Vlakplaas

I also did not become wealthy through my service.

I did not leave Vlakplaas with a commercial empire, substantial property, long-term financial security or the rewards commonly associated with someone described as the principal beneficiary of a system.

Had I been able to use my training, experience and organisational abilities in a legitimate private security, military-support or related business, I might have built a successful career after leaving the police.

Instead, my outcome was prosecution, imprisonment and public infamy.

That fact does not remove responsibility for my conduct.

It does, however, contradict the simplified portrayal of me as the sole architect, controller and principal beneficiary of apartheid's security system.

A person can participate in an unjust system, commit grave acts within it and still be falsely portrayed as having designed and controlled the system itself.

Those propositions are not mutually exclusive.

2. The post concerning the people I refused to kill

I understand that your questions arise particularly from a post concerning a list of people whom I refused to kill.

That post was not published to present me as a hero.

It was not intended to suggest that refusing some instructions cancels the consequences of other instructions that I obeyed.

It was also not intended to claim that those people owed me gratitude.

Its importance is historical.

The prevailing narrative often presents me as a person who personally chose every target and eagerly accepted every request to kill.

That is not correct.

The people referred to in the post cannot simply and accurately be described as “Eugene de Kock’s victims”.

They were people against whom action had been contemplated or proposed through wider security and political structures.

They were not selected by me as personal enemies.

In those particular instances, I refused to take action against them.

That distinction matters.

It demonstrates that targets and proposed operations originated beyond me.

It demonstrates that I was not the sole decision-maker.

It also demonstrates that, although there were instructions I obeyed, there were occasions on which I refused.

I was not always willing to refuse.

I was not always in the mood or position to risk detention, dismissal, prosecution or whatever consequences might have followed disobedience.

There were occasions on which I did what was requested of me despite my own reservations.

There were other occasions on which my response was effectively: no, I will not do this.

A complete account must include both.

That does not absolve me.

It corrects the proposition that every operation associated with me was conceived and pursued by me without external instruction, pressure or command.

3. Does the page further harm victims who believe they have not received justice?

I recognise that material associated with my name may cause pain and distress to victims and their families.

I do not dismiss that concern.

The page should never mock victims, threaten families, expose private information irresponsibly, deny an established death or celebrate the suffering of another human being.

It should not turn murder and political violence into entertainment.

Recognition of victims is also not a competition.

The suffering of people harmed by the apartheid state cannot be answered merely by referring to civilians killed in attacks by liberation movements.

Likewise, the suffering of civilians killed in church attacks, bar and pub attacks, shootings, bombings, landmine incidents and other acts of political violence should not be erased merely because the apartheid state also committed crimes.

A complete historical record should be able to acknowledge all civilian suffering without using one category of victim to silence another.

However, the continuing absence of justice experienced by families was not created by the Facebook page.

The principal institutional responsibility lies with the organs of state that failed for decades to investigate, prosecute and explain cases that were referred for further action.

Families were denied answers long before this page existed

Many families did not receive meaningful responses after the TRC.

They were not told why cases had stalled.

They were not told why suspects who did not apply for amnesty were not prosecuted.

They were not told why people who were refused amnesty remained free.

They were not told who had stopped investigations, who had declined prosecutions or why available witnesses were not used.

In many instances, the delay continued until witnesses, suspects and investigators died.

That is one reason the Khampepe Commission was established.

Its mandate includes determining whether attempts were made to influence the SAPS or NPA not to investigate or prosecute TRC cases, whether officials colluded with such pressure and whether further investigations, prosecutions or other action are warranted. The formal period under investigation is from 2003 onwards. ([The Presidency][2])

It is therefore incomplete to ask only whether a Facebook archive causes further harm.

The more fundamental questions are:

Why were families left without answers?

Why did state institutions fail to act?

Why were people who did not apply for amnesty never charged?

Why were people who were denied amnesty not prosecuted?

Why were investigations delayed until relevant persons died?

Why did the chain of accountability so often stop with operational personnel?

Why was I prosecuted, convicted and imprisoned while many people above me, beside me and in parallel structures were not?

Correcting a false attribution is not an attack upon a victim

Where a family has been told that I was responsible for a particular murder, but the evidence shows that I was not involved, correcting that record does not insult the family.

It assists the family in identifying the actual perpetrators.

A false answer is not justice merely because it has been repeated for many years.

The page seeks to distinguish between:

- * conduct I admitted;
- * conduct established against me;
- * conduct for which I received amnesty;
- * allegations that I dispute;
- * operations conducted by other structures;
- * and crimes subsequently swept beneath the general labels of “Vlakplaas” and “Eugene de Kock”.

That is not denialism.

It is historical precision.

4. My amnesty applications and the question of unequal accountability

I understand that merely applying for amnesty did not automatically cancel a criminal conviction.

Amnesty was considered act by act.

An applicant was required to identify particular conduct, establish a political objective and make full disclosure. Amnesty granted for one act did not amount to general immunity from every charge or conviction.

My question is therefore not based upon the simplistic proposition that I applied for amnesty and should automatically have walked free.

My question concerns unequal accountability.

I disclosed extensively.

I identified operations, participants, commanders and structures.

I testified before the TRC.

I was prosecuted, convicted and imprisoned.

By contrast, many people who did not apply for amnesty, were refused amnesty or were implicated by evidence were never prosecuted.

Why?

Why was disclosure followed by severe consequences in my case, while silence and denial appear to have protected others?

Why did the state pursue the person who could explain the chain but fail to complete the prosecution of the chain itself?

Why did so many families receive promises of future investigation, followed by decades of silence?

These are not efforts to erase my own responsibility.

They are questions about whether accountability was applied consistently.

5. Why was I charged instead of being secured as the principal cooperating witness?

This is one of the central questions that I direct to Advocate Anton Ackermann SC, Dr Torie Pretorius, Dr Jan D'Oliveira and the authorities that controlled the prosecution process.

I had information that could potentially have been used against persons far above my rank.

That information concerned command structures, authorisations, instructions, operational relationships and the knowledge of senior officers and political figures.

It potentially extended to two former presidents, ministers responsible for policing and justice, senior police officials and several generals.

I do not suggest that the word of one witness automatically sends another person to prison.

Prosecutors decide whether to institute charges, and courts determine guilt after hearing all admissible evidence.

My point is that I was the indispensable evidentiary link through whom much of that chain could have been explained and tested.

There was no officer beneath me who possessed the same overall knowledge of the instructions I received, the people from whom they originated, the structures with which Vlakplaas cooperated and the manner in which decisions moved downwards.

Instead of constructing a formal cooperation arrangement under which I could give evidence against the senior chain, I became the central accused.

The practical result was that the person with the most extensive operational knowledge was imprisoned, while many of the people against whom he could have testified were never brought before a criminal court.

Advocate Ackermann's evidence confirms that I was intended to be the link upwards

This is not speculation invented decades later.

Advocate Ackermann has now testified before the Khampepe Commission that his prosecution strategy was based on a chain-conspiracy approach.

He said he expected that, after my conviction, I would implicate those who had given me instructions.

He identified General "Krappies" Engelbrecht as the next link, followed by General Basie Smit and General Johan van der Merwe.

He further testified that he had already drafted an indictment against Engelbrecht. ([TRC Inquiry][3])

That evidence is extremely important.

It confirms that the prosecutor did not regard me as the final point of responsibility.

I was intended to be the evidentiary link to people above me.

Yet the chain stopped.

The public and the affected families are entitled to know why.

I was reportedly regarded as “out of reach” because I was cooperating with the TRC

Advocate Ackermann further testified that I was willing to implicate Engelbrecht and Basie Smit.

He said he expected to obtain an affidavit from me, but was then informed that I was effectively “off limits” because I was working with the TRC rather than the prosecution team. ([TRC Inquiry][3])

That explanation raises further questions.

Who told the prosecution that I was off limits?

On whose authority was that decision made?

Was there a written legal direction?

Was there any actual law that prevented the NPA from consulting me because I was cooperating with the TRC?

Why could cooperation with the TRC and cooperation with prosecutors not occur in a coordinated manner?

Why was no arrangement made to preserve my evidence for later prosecutions?

Why did the prosecutor not subpoena me or obtain a statement through the appropriate legal process?

Why was the drafted indictment against Engelbrecht not pursued?

What happened to the other dockets and indictments?

Advocate Ackermann also testified that indictments had been prepared against Engelbrecht and Wouter Mentz and that the matters were later declined by the NPA after being handed over. ([TRC Inquiry][4])

That history requires a full explanation.

Direct questions to the prosecutors and investigators

I therefore ask Advocate Ackermann, Dr Pretorius and Dr D'Oliveira:

Why was I not approached before or during my prosecution with a structured proposal to become the principal cooperating witness against the command structure?

Why was I prosecuted as the central figure if the prosecution already intended to use me to reach those above me?

Why was I not offered an appropriate cooperation arrangement, subject to full disclosure and the testing of my evidence?

Why, after my conviction, was my cooperation with the TRC treated as though it made me legally unavailable?

Who decided that the NPA could no longer consult or use me?

What became of the draft indictment against General Engelbrecht?

What became of the evidence against General Basie Smit and General Johan van der Merwe?

What became of other matters in which senior officers, ministers or political office-holders were potentially implicated?

Why did the state charge the person who could explain the entire operational chain, but then fail to use him fully against the people above him?

From my perspective, the practical effect of the decision was obvious.

Once I was imprisoned and reduced in the public mind to the sole face of Vlakplaas, the senior political, intelligence and police structures were far safer.

I cannot state as an established fact what every official privately intended.

I can, however, ask whether some people understood that, if I remained available as a fully cooperating witness, they themselves faced a serious possibility of prosecution.

That question must be investigated rather than dismissed.

6. The Motherwell bombing demonstrates that I could be used effectively as a state witness

The Motherwell bombing is important because it demonstrates that I was capable of giving evidence against fellow officers and senior structures when I decided that the truth had to be placed before a court.

In the Motherwell matter, I acted as a state witness and received indemnity against prosecution for the evidence I provided in the criminal trial. The public TRC record expressly refers to my role as a state witness, while the amnesty record identifies the chain through which the operation moved from the Eastern Cape Security Branch, through General Nic van Rensburg, to me and the Vlakplaas personnel who assisted. ([Justice][5])

My recollection of the circumstances is important.

I was ill.

The High Court proceedings had gone into recess.

During that period, General Nic van Rensburg brought what I remember as an urgent application in the Cape in an effort to prevent his name from being mentioned or publicly associated with the matter.

I understood that attempts were being made to place the responsibility for the Motherwell bombing principally upon me.

Despite my condition, I was transported to court and gave evidence.

My evidence exposed the wider chain and materially contributed to the convictions obtained against the accused before the court.

The exact procedural history, including the urgent application and the timing of my testimony, can and should be checked against the original court files.

I am not asking a journalist merely to accept my recollection.

I am asking that the record be obtained and examined.

The essential point is that, when I testified, the state was able to move beyond a simplified accusation against me and establish the involvement of others.

That experience showed precisely why my evidence could have been used in other prosecutions.

I was willing to accept responsibility when others were not

To my knowledge, I was the only officer at my level who was prepared to accept broad responsibility for the operations in which I participated and to explain the structures above me.

Others denied, minimised, claimed memory loss, blamed subordinates or remained silent.

I do not claim that every statement I made was perfect or that my recollection could never be challenged.

I do say that I was willing to enter the witness box, make admissions against my own interest and identify others.

In the Motherwell matter, my evidence helped secure accountability.

Why was that model not followed in relation to the wider command structure?

Why was I useful as a state witness when my evidence was required to prosecute certain officers, but not secured as the central witness when the evidence could have reached generals, ministers and political decision-makers?

7. Why have I not been called by the Khampepe Commission?

The Khampepe Commission is investigating whether, from 2003 onwards, attempts were made to prevent, delay or suppress the investigation and prosecution of TRC cases. ([The Presidency][2])

I appreciate that its formal period begins in 2003.

However, the evidence available before 2003, the people who possessed that evidence and the prosecutorial strategies already developed form essential background to understanding what was subsequently stopped.

One cannot determine why prosecutions were suppressed after 2003 without identifying:

- * which cases were ready;
- * which indictments had been drafted;
- * which witnesses were available;
- * what those witnesses could prove;
- * who was implicated;
- * and what happened to the dockets after they moved between investigative and prosecutorial structures.

I can assist with those questions.

I can explain command structures, operational relationships, requests for assistance, the movement of instructions, covert liaison arrangements and matters wrongly attributed to me or Vlakplaas.

I can identify where the intelligence or target selection originated outside Vlakplaas.

I can explain which senior people approached me and which structures possessed direct knowledge.

I can explain where I refused requests and where I complied.

I can assist in distinguishing between events I personally witnessed, information reported to me and conclusions I drew from operational circumstances.

I am prepared to do so under oath.

I am prepared to be questioned and cross-examined.

I am not asking that my account be accepted without scrutiny.

I am asking that it be heard.

Why have other relevant officials been heard while I remain outside the process?

The Commission has heard, or received statements from, former prosecutors, NPA officials, investigators, TRC representatives, political office-holders and family representatives.

Why has the central operational witness not been subpoenaed?

Why are the authorities discussing what happened to the cases in which I could have been the principal witness without asking me what evidence I possessed, what arrangements were proposed to me and why those arrangements failed?

Why has Advocate Ackermann been able to explain that he intended to use me to move upward through the chain, while I have not been given an opportunity to explain my side of that process?

Why has no one formally asked me who made me unavailable to the prosecution?

Why has no one asked whether I was willing to assist?

The Commission's own public submission platform calls upon people with first-hand and reliable information concerning stopped TRC cases to provide it. ([TRC Inquiry][6])

I possess such information.

I therefore ask openly: why have I not been subpoenaed?

It is I who continues to assist families where I can

I have not merely remained silent since leaving prison.

I have assisted with efforts to locate the remains of missing persons and to provide information where I can.

Former Justice Minister Michael Masutha testified before the Commission that assisting the NPA's Missing Persons Task Team in locating remains was made one of my parole conditions. ([TRC Inquiry][7])

I do not claim that this repairs the harm caused.

I do not expect families to thank me or forgive me.

I do say that, where I possess information that can assist a family, I have attempted to provide it.

It is therefore incorrect to portray the Facebook page as an initiative that exists to injure families while ignoring my continued willingness to assist in uncovering information.

8. The journalist should speak to Lukhanyo Calata and examine the available material concerning the structures

I invite you to contact Lukhanyo Calata, the son of Fort Calata and eNCA's News Director.

Mr Calata has been centrally involved in the families' efforts to establish why TRC prosecutions were delayed or prevented and has testified before the Commission.
([eNCA][1])

You should ask him for access to any available video or recorded material in which I have explained how the political, police, security and intelligence structures operated.

The purpose of referring you to that material is not to claim that Mr Calata endorses my version.

He is entitled to disagree with me and to pursue the interests of his family.

The purpose is to allow you to examine the structural explanation itself.

The central question is whether the historical record supports the idea that I operated as an independent individual who personally originated everything associated with Vlakplaas, or whether decisions and instructions moved through broader chains of command and liaison.

A journalist investigating this matter should examine that evidence before reducing the history to a familiar description of one man.

9. DCI, DCC and the formal cooperation arrangement with Vlakplaas

Another area requiring investigation concerns the relationship between Vlakplaas and the covert military-intelligence structures known as the Directorate of Covert Information and the Directorate of Covert Collection.

This was not merely an informal friendship between individual operatives.

The surviving TRC record contains my evidence concerning a written cooperation document signed by Brigadier Willem Schoon and the relevant covert directorate.

The document authorised cooperation and liaison between C1/Vlakplaas and Military Intelligence personnel.

The record identifies Colonel At Nel as the DCC's second-in-command and refers to the authority given to relevant commanders to cooperate. ([Justice][8])

In separate evidence concerning the Botswana infiltration route, I testified that Tony Oosthuizen headed the PAC desk at DCC and that there was a written cooperation agreement between C1 and DCC. ([Justice][9])

This matters because it demonstrates that Vlakplaas did not operate in isolation.

There were formal relationships through which intelligence, requests, targets and operational assistance moved between police and military structures.

Why have I not been called to explain that relationship fully?

Why have I not been asked to testify comprehensively about the DCI and DCC relationship with Vlakplaas?

Why have I not been asked to explain the written agreement?

Why have I not been asked how it operated in practice?

Why have I not been asked which people were authorised to request assistance and which senior officers had knowledge of the cooperation?

Why have the roles of Henri van der Westhuizen, Tony Oosthuizen, Colonel At Nel and other covert officials not been examined together with the evidence concerning Vlakplaas?

Public TRC proceedings already contain material relating to Henri van der Westhuizen's amnesty application and covert military operations. ([Justice][10])

I possess further contextual information concerning the manner in which military-intelligence personnel, police units, sources and covert structures interacted.

That evidence should not be adjudicated through a newspaper article or Facebook argument.

It should be placed before a competent judicial structure, under oath, with all affected persons given an opportunity to answer.

Tony Oosthuizen and the infiltration route

The public TRC evidence also records Tony Oosthuizen's role in establishing or controlling a PAC infiltration route through Botswana and his requests for Vlakplaas assistance.

In my evidence, I described how Oosthuizen initially requested that infiltrators be killed, while Brigadier Schoon and I decided that they should instead be arrested.

I further testified about the written cooperation arrangement and the resulting operational relationship. ([Justice][11])

That evidence demonstrates that proposed killings and operations did not all originate with me.

It also provides a documented example of a request to kill people being altered by me into an arrest operation.

That is precisely the type of historical distinction the Facebook page seeks to preserve.

10. Willem “Timol” Coetzee and the Nokuthula Simelane-related matters

Willem “Timol” Coetzee is another person whose evidence and role require proper examination.

The public record identifies Coetzee as a senior Security Branch figure involved in the abduction and interrogation of Nokuthula Simelane.

He and others testified in the TRC amnesty process concerning the abduction, although no applicant obtained amnesty for her murder because no one admitted the murder or disclosed her ultimate fate. ([unfinishedtrc.co.za][12])

The question should therefore not be framed as though Coetzee has never testified anywhere.

The proper question is:

Why has he not been compelled to account fully in every later proceeding in which his direct knowledge is relevant?

Why has the disappearance and suspected murder of Nokuthula Simelane remained unresolved for so long?

Why have all the people with direct operational knowledge not been placed before a court together?

Why were the necessary prosecutions not pursued while witnesses and accused persons were younger and the evidence was fresher?

Why has the family still not received the complete truth about what happened to her remains?

The Bambo matter and the connection to the Simelane case

Another matter requiring examination concerns the killing of Adriano “Strongman” Bambo.

According to my recollection and information, Colonel Ivor Human travelled to Pretoria and met senior police figures, including General “Krappies” Engelbrecht, in relation to Bambo.

I did not personally witness every conversation or meeting and do not present every detail as something I saw with my own eyes.

My evidence concerns how the request came to Vlakplaas, what was communicated to me and the context in which action against Bambo was sought.

Bambo was associated as a source with Willem “Timol” Coetzee and possessed information that could potentially have exposed matters connected to the disappearance of Nokuthula Simelane.

The public TRC record separately records an allegation that Engelbrecht requested that a former informer of Coetzee be killed because it was feared that the person would disclose sensitive information. ([Justice][13])

The precise identity, sequence and connection should be established through admissible evidence rather than assumption.

I am prepared to give my evidence under oath.

The necessary questions include:

Who first identified Bambo as a threat?

What information was he believed to possess?

Who approached Colonel Human?

Why did Human travel to Pretoria?

Whom did he meet?

What was requested from Engelbrecht or other senior officers?

Who asked Vlakplaas to become involved?

What relationship did the matter bear to the disappearance of Nokuthula Simelane?

Why were all relevant persons not charged?

Why was the evidence not pursued fully?

These questions may assist the Simelane family rather than harm it.

11. The prosecution stopped with me instead of proceeding upwards

The prosecution's own strategy contemplated using me to move upward through the chain.

That did not occur.

Instead, I became the headline villain and the visible endpoint of the process.

The result was that the public came to understand apartheid-era covert violence principally through one face and one name.

This allowed the people who originated policy, approved structures, controlled budgets, supplied intelligence and gave instructions to fade from public attention.

Once every unresolved event could be described as "Vlakplaas" or attributed to me, there was less pressure to identify:

- * the originating command;
- * the responsible minister;
- * the relevant general;
- * the intelligence structure;
- * the authorising body;
- * or the official who later prevented prosecution.

This simplification may have been politically and institutionally convenient.

It was not complete justice.

Responsibility under instruction

I accept that an instruction does not automatically remove personal responsibility.

I obeyed instructions that I should not have obeyed.

I participated in acts that caused death and suffering.

However, if the person who carried out an instruction is criminally responsible, then the person who conceived, authorised or concealed the instruction cannot be treated as irrelevant.

Individual responsibility and command responsibility must be investigated together.

The fact that I was lower in the chain does not make me innocent.

It also does not make those above me innocent.

12. The approaches made to me before my arrest

Before my arrest, I was approached on three occasions and encouraged to change sides or cooperate in a manner that I regarded at the time as a betrayal of the organisation and colleagues to whom I remained loyal.

I refused all three approaches.

My response was that, from my perspective then, crossing over would amount to treason.

Shortly after the third refusal, I was arrested and rapidly became the principal public symbol of apartheid-era covert crime.

I do not present that chronology as conclusive proof of a conspiracy.

I present it as a fact from my own history that deserves examination.

Who approached me?

What was expected from me?

What would have happened had I agreed?

Why did the prosecution strategy change after I refused?

Were any records made of those approaches?

Did anyone later decide that it was safer to prosecute me than to use me against senior political and security figures?

Those questions should be investigated.

13. My treatment during imprisonment and in the media

Once I was imprisoned, I had very limited ability to answer the allegations made about me.

I was brought out of prison and displayed before the media while others controlled the framing of my history.

Complex evidence was reduced to short headlines.

Qualifications and distinctions disappeared.

What I said under oath was selectively reported.

Over time, repetition became a substitute for proof.

A claim could be attributed to me or Vlakplaas, repeated in several articles and eventually treated as an accepted fact despite the absence of evidence connecting me to it.

The Facebook page provides one of the few places where I can place my own account on record.

My account should be questioned and compared with documents and other testimony.

I do not demand unquestioning acceptance.

I ask for the opportunity to state my version.

14. The page is not intended to litigate pending matters through the media

Some information in my possession may be relevant to pending or anticipated judicial proceedings, including matters connected to the Cradock Four and other unresolved cases.

The Facebook page is not intended to disclose legal strategy, confidential information or evidence that should first be placed before a court or commission.

It would be irresponsible to make every allegation publicly before affected persons have an opportunity to answer under proper procedures.

However, the existence of pending proceedings cannot be used as a reason to prevent me from saying that I possess relevant information and am willing to provide it under oath.

I will distinguish between:

- * information already in the public record;
- * my personal recollection;
- * information reported to me by others;
- * and evidence that must be reserved for formal proceedings.

15. Previous dismissive media coverage

Journalists are entitled to investigate me critically.

I do not expect favourable coverage.

I do not ask for my history to be sanitised.

There is, however, a difference between scrutiny and ridicule.

A previous dismissive and mocking article concerning my sale of military memorabilia was perceived by many readers as an attempt to kick a man who was already living in reduced circumstances.

The article produced largely the opposite reaction from what may have been intended.

People began asking why a person portrayed as the all-powerful beneficiary and controller of apartheid had ended up in those circumstances.

Some readers began examining the discrepancies between the public image created around me and the more complicated historical record.

That reaction contributed to greater interest in the page.

I do not mention this as a threat.

I mention it because ridicule does not answer substantive historical questions.

A negative or predetermined approach may attract attention to the very inconsistencies that the article intended to dismiss.

16. My role in exposing apartheid-era crimes

I provided extensive evidence concerning crimes committed by the system in which I had served.

I did so because there were aspects of apartheid and the security structure that I did not approve of and because I believed that the truth had to be exposed.

I was also aware of violence and terrorism taking place outside the state structures—violence against civilians that was often not treated with equal prominence.

My disclosure of state crimes did not require me to pretend that no other political violence occurred.

Likewise, recognising attacks by liberation formations does not excuse crimes committed by the state.

I exposed conduct involving people who were still alive and structures that possessed far more authority than I did.

Without my disclosures, substantial parts of that record might never have emerged.

I do not say this to demand praise.

I do say that the country should recognise the practical value of the evidence I gave before the TRC and the assistance I have continued to provide.

It is unreasonable to rely upon my disclosures when they incriminate me but disregard the same disclosures when they implicate others.

A truth process cannot function properly when the person who speaks is punished as the representative of everyone who remained silent.

17. Request for full and impartial publication

Given the seriousness of the questions put to me, I request that this response be published in full.

I understand that newspapers ordinarily retain editorial discretion and that no respondent can automatically compel a publication to reproduce every word submitted.

However, these questions concern murder, unresolved injustice, the continuing suffering of families, the conduct of the NPA and SAPS, the failure of the post-TRC process and my own criminal responsibility.

A response of this nature should not be reduced to a few selected sentences that remove the explanation and reinforce a predetermined portrayal.

At an absolute minimum, any article must accurately and impartially represent:

1. the archival purpose of the page;
2. its rejection of racial mobilisation, political organisation and the glorification of violence;
3. the distinction between my admitted conduct and crimes falsely attributed to me;
4. the fact that the post concerned people I refused to kill, rather than a celebration of people I harmed;
5. the wider command, intelligence and political structures involved;
6. the written cooperation arrangements between Vlakplaas and covert military-intelligence structures;
7. the failure to prosecute many people who did not obtain amnesty;
8. Advocate Ackermann's evidence that he intended to use me to move upward through the chain of command;
9. the unexplained failure to pursue the draft indictment and evidence against people above me;

10. my previous effectiveness as a state witness in the Motherwell case;

11. my willingness to testify before the Khampepe Commission;

12. my continued assistance in efforts to locate victims' remains;

13. and my position that accurate attribution assists, rather than harms, families seeking justice.

Should the response not be published in full, or should it be selectively represented in a way that materially distorts my answers, I reserve the right to publish the complete questions and my complete response on the Facebook page.

That would not be done to attack the journalist personally.

It would be done so that the public may read the correspondence for itself and form its own view.

I expect the Mail & Guardian to uphold its journalistic obligations of accuracy, fairness, context and impartiality.

Conclusion

In direct response to your first question:

What is the primary purpose of the page?

The page is a historical archive and discussion platform.

It has no political, racial, organisational or military objective.

It does not exist to glorify me, Vlakplaas, apartheid, war or political violence.

It exists to preserve historical material, correct false attributions, explain the structures within which events occurred and allow neglected or oversimplified parts of the record to be examined.

In direct response to your second question:

Does the page further harm victims who have not received justice?

I acknowledge that the material may be painful.

The page's purpose is not to harm victims or to diminish their suffering.

The greater continuing harm lies in the original killings and disappearances, the concealment of the truth and the subsequent failure of state institutions to investigate and prosecute numerous cases properly.

Correcting a false attribution does not deny a victim justice.

Accurately identifying who selected, authorised, carried out and concealed an operation is an essential component of justice.

I am willing to assist the Khampepe Commission, prosecutors, investigators and affected families by providing evidence under oath.

I therefore ask again:

Why have I not been subpoenaed?

Why was I prosecuted as the central accused rather than secured as the principal cooperating witness against the senior command structure?

Why was I described as unavailable once I began cooperating with the TRC?

Who made that decision?

Why did the prosecution stop with me when its own strategy was to move upwards?

Why were draft indictments and available evidence against those above me not pursued?

Why were so many people who did not apply for amnesty, or who were refused amnesty, never charged?

I will continue to accept responsibility for conduct that was mine.

I will also continue to dispute crimes that were falsely attributed to me, identify the larger structures involved and place relevant historical information on record.

Truth cannot be achieved by preserving a simplified narrative at the expense of evidence.

Yours sincerely,

Eugene Alexander de Kock

- [1]: <https://www.enca.com/top-stories/enca-wins-big-national-press-club-awards> "eNCA wins big at National Press Club Awards"
- [2]: <https://www.thepresidency.gov.za/president-cyril-ramaphosa-establishes-commission-inquiry-delay-investigation-and-prosecution-trc> "President Cyril Ramaphosa establishes a Commission of ..."
- [3]: <https://www.trc-inquiry.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Day-18-Adv.-Ackermann2-05-03-26.pdf> "MEETING"
- [4]: <https://www.trc-inquiry.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Day-17-Adv.-Ackermann-04-03-26.pdf> "MEETING"
- [5]: <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/pe/mother3.htm> "TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION"
- [6]: <https://www.trc-inquiry.org.za/submission.php> "Make a Submission"
- [7]: <https://www.trc-inquiry.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/DAY-51-Adv.-M.-Masutha-26-05-26.pdf> "the judicial commission of inquiry into allegations"
- [8]: <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/decisions/2001/ac21049.htm> "AC/2001/049"
- [9]: https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/1999/9905240623_pre_990531pt.htm "NAME: EUGENE DE KOCK"
- [10]: <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/2000/201009jb.htm> "TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION"
- [11]: https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/1999/9905240623_pre_990603pt.htm "DATE: 3RD JUNE 1999"
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- [13]: <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/media/pr/2000/pr000221.htm> "February 21, 2000"