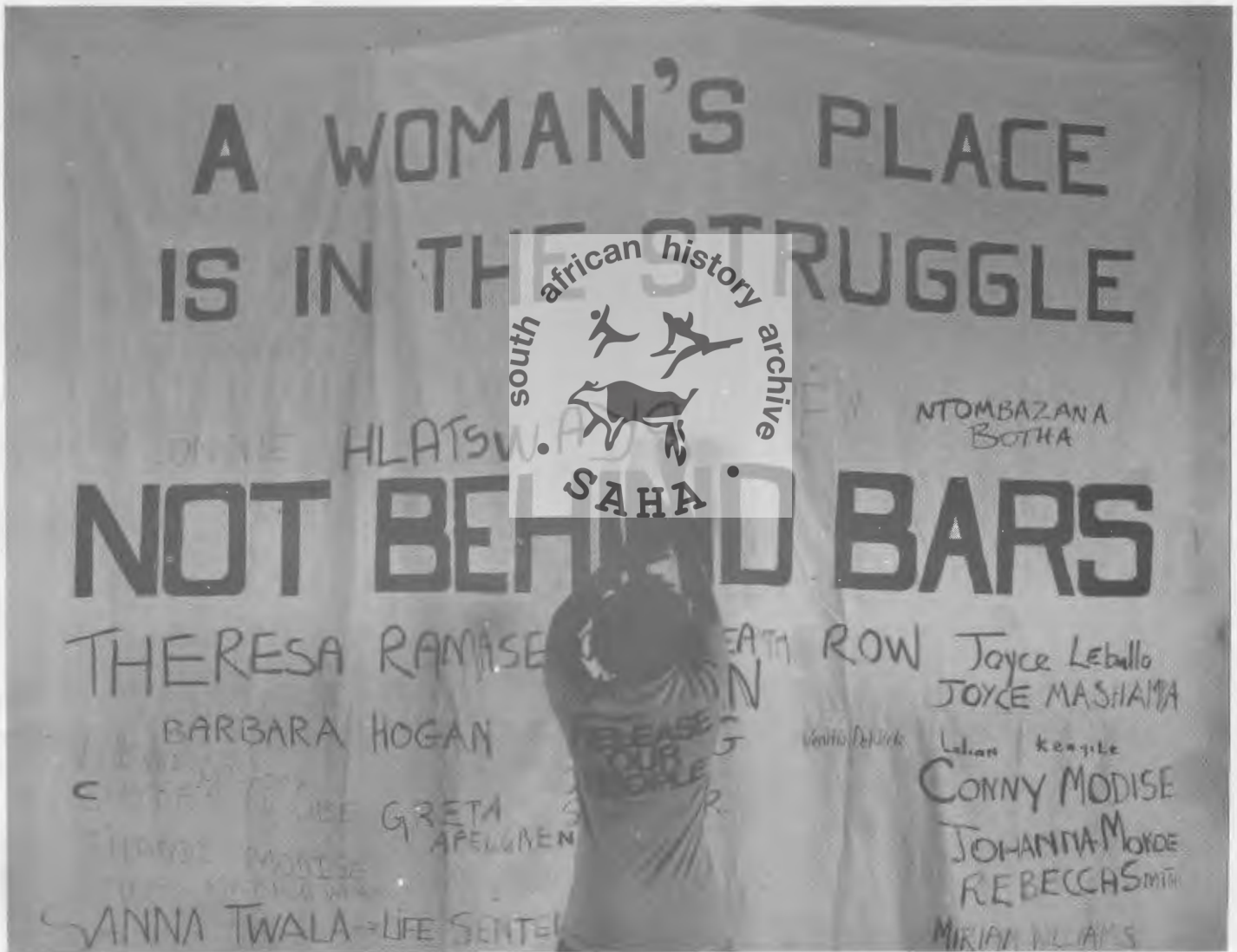


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# WOMEN IN PRISON



FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN  
WESTERN CAPE REGION

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# SPOTLIGHT ON WOMEN PRISONERS



Albertina Sisulu is a leader in FEDTRAW and the UDF. She has been involved in FEDSAW since the fifties and suffered detention and restriction.

Women have long been in the forefront of opposition to apartheid. Some names which spring to mind include Lillian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Albertina Sisulu and Ruth First.

Women political activists, like their male counterparts, often pay a heavy price for their involvement.

Women are harassed, detained, jailed and restricted. Some live in exile; others like Dulcie September, Victoria Mxenge and Jenny Schoon, have been assassinated.

The Western Cape region of the Federation of South African Women (Fedsaw) launched a campaign in mid 1988 to focus attention on the plight of women political prisoners.

Women have consistently comprised only 12% of the total number of detainees. This is partly due to the fact that most leadership positions in progressive organisations are held by men. To understand the motivation for a campaign concentrating on women prisoners, we need to look beyond the statistics and focus on the conditions under which women are kept. Conditions relating to men and women political prisoners are very different despite the fact that they have the same "rights" in prison.

At a service on August 9 1988, National Women's day, an UWCO speaker said: "Women are not just the wives, mothers and sweethearts of activists. Sometimes they are the one behind bars. How often do you hear of a man who has waited 15 years for his woman to come out of jail?"

In the decade of the Rivonia trial, Dorothy Nyembe was sentenced to serve 10 years in Kroonstad prison. While conditions on Robben Island improved because of the international attention focussed on the Rivonia trialists, Dorothy's imprisonment received scant attention. Even her family did not give support since it was regarded as unacceptable for a woman to go to prison. She served her sentence in virtual isolation.

The later trial of Dr. Neville Alexander received world attention, but Betty van der Heyden, who was sentenced in the same trial, served her sentence with no political recognition and very little support. The only visits she received were from her mother. When her mother was no longer able to visit, she received no visits or support from the outside world.

Even today, details about many of the women serving sentences or detained, are hard to come by.

Generally male prisoners are held together while women are often kept apart. Trialist Jenny Schreiner went on a hunger strike before she was allowed to spend one hour a day with other women prisoners.

Men have been given study rights almost automatically, while no such rights have been given to women. Very basic needs and requests are often denied to women. For example, during Ramadan (a holy period for Muslims) the men were allowed to cook special food, while Yasmina Pandey, who is also Muslim, was denied this privilege.

One of the reasons behind the different conditions is the amount of campaigning and world attention being focussed on particular prisoners and prisons, eg Robben Island and its inmates. Another reason is that women's position in society makes them more invisible than men.

Fedsaw is committed to fight for the release of all political prisoners and detainees. In the short term we hope that this campaign will help to improve conditions under which women are held in prison.

We also hope to focus the attention of the world on the new form of imprisonment - restrictions.



Helen Joseph was a leader of FEDSAW in the fifties and is still active in the women's struggle. She has suffered bannings, house-arrest and imprisonment.



# DETENTION UNDER SECTION 29.

This section of the Internal Security Act is used to detain people the police want to interrogate. Detainees are kept on their own, usually in police cells. They are not allowed to see their lawyers or their families and are not allowed any reading or study materials.

Some of the worst abuses take place during this form of detention. The detainees are cut off from the outside world and the police have total power over them.

Many people have spent more than a year in solitary confinement under Section 29.

Every year hundreds of people are detained under Section 29. They are usually kept for about six months and then charged or released.

Many women activists have been detained under this section. In 1989 in the Western Cape Noma-India Mfeketo was released after spending five months inside with her small baby. Buyiswa Jack was pregnant when she was detained and was charged and released just before giving birth.

The security police use Section 29 to break the spirit of activists. More than 80% of these detainees report that they were physically tortured. One of the most common forms of torture reported by detainees is that police put wet canvas bags over their heads to suffocate them. This method leaves no visible scars, but makes the victims lose consciousness.

There are also many reports of security police beating people, giving them electric shocks, pulling out their hair or stopping them from sleeping or even sitting down. Some detainees are kept in chains all the time, others are forced to eat terrible things. A few people have told how the police blindfolded them and then pretended to execute them.

More than 60 people have died in detention. Most of them were held under laws like Section 29. All detainees say that they were psychologically tortured.

"Section 29 is there to make you lose your mind. They can torture you and beat you. They lie to you and play games with you. They don't let you have anything that will keep you busy or that you can get pleasure from. They say they will keep you forever or even kill you."

Sister Bernard Ncube from Fedtraw spent more than a year in solitary confinement in 1986/87. Afterwards she said: "You are like an animal in a cage - everything that was meant to help me be a human was taken away. Gradually I came to understand that it was a period in which I would have nothing to do with the world and my friends. You need a strong spirit to build you up in these periods because you have nothing else."

Section 29 has also been used to detain children. In 1985 14 year old Joan Nontanda Gqueba was held for 77 days.

Two of the biggest worries for women under section 29 are the welfare of their children outside and the fear of rape inside prison.

The women are not allowed to see or communicate with their families and their children can suffer terribly from this forced separation. The children often get nervous and scared and stop trusting people. It is a great strain for a detainee to worry about this and to cope with the child's problems when she is released.

Almost all the women who have been detained under section 29 say that they were very scared of being raped by the police. The police often threatened women and sometimes sexually harassed them. The women say that police make dirty comments about their bodies or their sex lives. Sometimes they torture women on their private parts.

If a woman is raped in detention there is little she can do about it because it is so difficult to prove. It is also a very difficult thing to talk about afterwards.

Rape and sexual harassment make women feel powerless and degraded. In detention sexual abuse is a powerful weapon that the police can use against women.

Section 29 give the police the power to do what they like with detainees. The detainees have no way to get outside help.

Even when detainees get ill they are dependent on the security police to get a doctor or be taken to the hospital. The police can come to interrogate them any time they like; they can leave them alone for weeks. They can play with the life and the mind of a detainee.

Section 29 is the most unjust and cruel form of detention. No one can come out of it unscathed.

**WE SALUTE THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE SURVIVED SECTION 29!**

**WE REMEMBER THOSE STILL IN DETENTION!**

**WE DEMAND AN END TO ALL FORMS OF DETENTION!**



Veliswa Mhlaui recently released from Section 29, was detained two weeks after she lost an eye when a sniper shot her near her home.



# INTERVIEW: SECTION 29 DETAINEE

Nomaindia Mfeketo has been detained three times since the declaration of the first State of Emergency in 1985: the first time (1985) for 14 days; the second time for eight months (1987), when her eldest son Kenneth died in a car accident; and the third time for six months (1988-89). On the last occasion (21 September 1988) Nomaindia was detained together with her 2 1/2 month old son Bonele, leaving her eight-year-old son Onele behind. For two weeks she was held at Pollsmoor with others arrested at the same time. Then she was designated a Section 29 detainee and transferred to the Sea Point Police Station where she spent six weeks before being returned to Pollsmoor. She was released on 23 March 1989.



Noma-India Mfeketo released after spending five months in Section 29 detention with her small baby.

*Q. How did you manage in the Sea Point Police Station?*

A. I was getting more depressed. Most of the time I was confined to bed because it was so cold, a cement floor, and the baby was very small, to put on the floor. When I was detained I just gave birth by Caesarian and the operation was still sore so I was very sensitive to the cold.

*Q. Were the warders women? Did they take any interest in your baby?*

A. Yes, the cell guards were women. They send warders to guard you for 24 hours. You need somebody to speak or pass a comment but it is as if they were zombies, sitting there and watching what you do, and if there is the slightest noise they would pop into the door to see what you are doing. So it affects you. I wasn't sleeping properly because I always had in my mind, there is somebody watching me.

*Q. So you really had no company at all except the baby?*

A. No. After three weeks the Security Police began to question me. That was only for a week. That fourth week they came every day, and that was all. That was the only time I was questioned, till I was moved to Pollsmoor on 23rd November. Since then I was never ever questioned again till my release on 23rd March this year.

The police station was much worse than the prison. It was SO untidy. When it was windy you'd be choked by the dust which was sitting on the windows, and dirt under the beds, and all that. So it is not a healthy place to be with a baby.

*Q. So on 23 November they returned you to Pollsmoor. And how did you manage there?*

A. There I had a cot for the baby, and a highchair, and a walking ring. They more or less gave me kids' facilities, with the exception of toys. But it was so quiet in the cell, so plain

*Q. I thought they broadcast right through the prison?*

A. They cut off the wires in the Section 29 cells - so it is silent, unless you are fortunate enough to be in one of the other cells, but the section I was in was the section that they normally use for Section 29. So the wires were cut already.

*Q. How was it different from the police cell?*

A. At about 5 a.m. they switch on the lights and you are supposed to wake up. Breakfast, 7 o'clock; lunch 11 o'clock; supper at half past two. So - that's the end of your meals. But inbetween, there is 30 minutes exercise in the morning and 30 minutes in the afternoon. They lock up about half past three. Since the baby was much older when I was

there, after supper I used to put a blanket on the floor and just play with him right until about six o'clock. Then I gave him a bath - had a sink with hot and cold water.

*Q. Did you get any news at all of Onele? He was only eight, and he was without you.*

A. That was my most concern. I didn't get any news, in fact, I didn't know anything that was happening at home for the whole six months, and that was quite hurting, because of my experience, last time I was detained and my son died. I was always frustrated and thinking about what might be happening while I am away. Would they have a way of telling me if anything happened? When I was released, I didn't know my mother had moved. The house was empty. Fortunately my aunt was around, just by chance, so that is how the house was open - otherwise I would have come to a locked house.

*Q. And how did Onele take your absence?*

A. When I came out he didn't recognise me at all. When I asked him later, he said, "No, I saw this person in the car and I didn't even think of you, and I didn't associate this person with you, because you were so thin, and short hair and everything."

*Q. Do you feel that with detention there is anything special from a woman's point of view? You've have the experience with a baby, which is certainly a woman's experience.*

A. Yes. I think that if we can be asked to make the laws, one strong point would be that women with babies - nursing women and pregnant women - should not be detained. Or even arrested for that matter. Having a baby alone is very depressing, I mean, you get those post-natal blues. Coupled with detention and staying confined in a small place is even worse. You are fighting with two things at the same time. But I have been meeting quite a lot of men who have been in detention and I think they are experiencing problems - for example, of mixing with people, after a long time inside.



# EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN IN EMERGENCY DETENTION

The government declared a state of emergency on 12 June 1986. Since then about 40 000 activists have been detained under emergency regulations.

Any policeman can detain a person and people can be kept for an unlimited length of time. Emergency detainees are kept in prison or police cells. They are imprisoned to keep them out of the way and to stop their political activities. They are seldom charged and not always interrogated.

Many detainees were severely tortured in emergency detention. The article after this one is a gruesome example of the way women detainees are treated. Detainees can also be kept in solitary confinement for long periods.

But for many detainees the main problem is the uncertainty - they feel that they may sit in prison forever without ever getting charged or released. Hundreds of people spent almost three years in detention before their own resistance led to their release.

In early 1989 emergency detainees launched a national hunger strike. More than 600 detainees took part and forced the government to release about 95% of the long term detainees.

## CONDITIONS WOMEN FACE IN DETENTION

All women detainees are not held under the same conditions. Some are held in modern prisons, others in primitive police cells. Different prisons also have different conditions.

## INTERROGATION

Many women are interrogated in detention - some women have been brutally tortured. Most women complain that the police use insulting and threatening language.

The police often exploit the fear women detainees have of being raped or sexually abused. This makes the woman detainee feel even more powerless.

## DIET

All detainees complained about getting bad food as well as not getting enough to eat.

For breakfast women get porridge or one slice of bread, for lunch they get four slices of bread. Supper is usually a cooked meal, but many people complain about the fact that nothing is fresh. One detainee described the suppers as "doç food".

When detainees try to make demands they are sometimes put on "spare diet". This means that they get even less food. In some prisons detainees went on hunger-strike before their food was improved.

The women cannot get food parcels from outside and can only buy things from the prison shop if they have money.

## HEALTH

There are no doctors in prisons. Detainees are seen by a district surgeon who visits the prison. If they need specialist treatment they are taken to hospital by the security police.

Many women complained that the police make them wait for days before fetching them for hospital visits. The district surgeons work for the state and women detainees say they find them unsympathetic and untrustworthy.

The bad food and unhealthy conditions cause health problems for most detainees. Women who are breastfeeding or pregnant suffer badly.

Most detainees also suffer from stress. Dizziness, headaches, nightmares and sleeplessness are common. Many women also have menstrual problems and some stop menstruating completely while in detention.

## PRIVILEGES

Detainees are allowed visits from one family member every week, but many people complain that it takes a long time before visitors get permission. Detainees are sometimes kept in prisons far from their homes and their families cannot afford to visit them.

In some prisons detainees are allowed to get letters and cards, but in others they are refused contact with the outside world.

In most prisons detainees can get a small amount of pocket money from their families to buy toiletries and extra food from the prison shop. They are not allowed to get any things in from outside and complain that the shops are too expensive.

In Pollsmoor women went on hunger-strike in 1988 and demanded better food, adequate toiletries and the right to knit! Some of their demands were met.



Gloria Shuenyane, Sylvia Mabangu and Angel Phira, all sixteen years old, after their release from detention at Diepkloof Prison.



# TORTURE - ONE WOMAN'S STORY OF DETENTION

Many women have spoken of torture while in detention. This is the story of an 18 year old girl who spent a year in detention under the State of Emergency in the South Cape.

The information comes from an affidavit she made to her lawyers on her release.

She was arrested in June, 1986, in Knysna and taken to the local police station. Three policemen interrogated her about a necklacing that had taken place in George 4 months before. They hit her repeatedly with a truncheon and when she could not answer their questions put her back in a police cell. She was kept from the Wednesday of her arrest to the next Saturday without food or water.

On the Saturday she was taken to the George police station where a policeman called Pieterse interrogated her with three other policemen. Pieterse handcuffed her to a chair.

She describes what happened: "...my wrists were handcuffed to the back of the chair - each arm was handcuffed to a side of the backrest. My leg was cuffed to the front leg of the chair. Pieterse then stuffed paper in my mouth and tied a bloodied T-shirt over my face. One policeman covered my mouth with his hand and another one, I think it was Pieterse, attached something to my ears which gave me a shock when they switched it on. I later saw that it was a small electric machine with wires attached. The shocks were terribly painful - it felt as if my whole body was beating and bursting. For about one hour the switch was turned on and off. When it was turned on, the shocking would go on for a few minutes before the policemen turned it off. They also pulled out my hair. Eventually my bladder could not take it anymore. I was then taken to my cell."

Again she was given no food but she had water. She was unable to speak to people in the neighbouring cells because her mouth was too sore. She was also afraid that the police would hear her if she shouted. The next morning, Sunday, she was given bread but her mouth was too sore to eat. Later that morning she was taken for further interrogation by a number of white men in plainclothes. She recognized three of them: Pieterse, Coetzee and Kruger. This time she was pushed from side to side, and smacked, "like a soccer ball", while being questioned about the necklacing and the George Youth Congress.

The next day she was taken to Mossel Bay and left in a police cell for a few days. Then she was interrogated again by a Captain Van der Merwe and by Kruger. She describes her interrogation:

"...they interrogated me again about the necklacing. I said, "Even a dog can see that you are stupid - surely you know I wasn't there." They got angry ...and closed the doors, the windows and the blinds.. Kruger put paper and a piece of cloth in my mouth. Van der Merwe bound my hands and eyes. Kruger took off my jersey and my shirt and pulled me up to the desk. One of them took off my bra. They forced me to bend over the open drawer so that one of my breasts would hang in the drawer. They then slammed it shut so that my breast was squashed. They did this three times to each breast...they also pulled out handfuls of my hair."

After this they untied her hands and left her in the office. One of her nipples was cut and oozing a "watery, sticky substance." She cleaned it with the cloth from her mouth and saved the cloth and the hair and kept them. Later Van der Merwe returned and asked if she wanted to see a doctor. She said yes but the police took her back to the police station in Mossel Bay.

About a week later, on a Sunday she was lying sleeping alone in her cell. A black, uniformed policeman entered the cell. He woke her up and said he wanted to have sex with her.

"I screamed and he tried to pull off my pants and lift my shirt. I pulled the buttons off his uniform jacket and screamed. He put his hand over my mouth but people in the cell next door had heard me and they started shouting at him. He then left me."

She reported the incident to the captain the next morning and showed him the buttons but he refused to believe her.

A few more days passed and she was then taken for further questioning by Van der Merwe and a policeman called Snoek. Again her hair was pulled out. They pushed her, spat at her and threatened to take her far away and kill her.

Later that day she was taken to a male doctor and left alone with him. She was too afraid to undress as there was no woman present and so she was returned to the Mossel Bay police station without treatment.

By this time she was terrified of further torture. She felt too weak to take it and so she agreed to be a state witness. She told the police they would have to "train" her in the evidence she would give. She learned their story off by heart. She was then taken to a magistrate to make her statement. Van der Merwe read her statement and told her she would have to add her own name to the names in the statement or that she would be tortured again. So she added her name.

She was transferred to George prison and told that someone from the Attorney-General's office would visit her to decide whether she would be used as a state witness.

When this official visited her in January 1987 she told him that she had been tortured and forced to make a statement. She said that if she appeared in court she would tell the whole story of her torture and refuse to give evidence.

She was never charged and was released in June 1987. Since then she has suffered from nightmares and fear. She describes some of this in her affidavit:

"I feel that I am not myself.... I used to be a talkative and sociable person who enjoyed being with lots of people. Now I'm afraid of being with people. It's very difficult to trust any people now. Other people feel that I have changed. They look at me with sad eyes and no longer find it easy to approach me. It has affected my relationship with my family, boyfriend and friends."

"I find it difficult to concentrate on anything for a long time. I am afraid to return to my studies because I cannot concentrate"

"I suffered much pain and discomfort during detention, especially after they hurt me like they did. I felt like I was a useless person...I felt ashamed that my body had been exposed...I had never stood naked like that before white men. I also felt helpless as there was nothing I could do to defend myself."

This is only one story. Many other women detainees who heard it said that they had experienced similar feelings.

# Women serving sentences

## Kroonstad Prison

Regina Madumise (40) from Kroonstad received a five-year sentence and will be released in 1993. She has a 22-year-old son who is staying in Qwa Qwa with his grandmother.

Nontembiso Ndabeni (31) from Port Elizabeth was sentenced for six years with Gertrude Sofute and is due to be released in 1993. She has three young children (2 daughters aged 15 and 10, and a son aged 14) who stay with her sister in KwaZekhele.

Gertrude Sofute (35) from Port Elizabeth was sentenced for six years with Nontembiso Ndabeni. Her 16-year-old son is staying with her family in KwaZekhele. Her sister is able to visit her twice a year.

## Diepkloof Prison

Shelle Masondo received an eight-year sentence on 6 March 1989. It is expected that she will be transferred from Diepkloof to Kroonstad Prison.

## 'Sun City' (a Johannesburg prison)

Audrey Skosana was convicted of the necklace murder of an Alexandra Township policeman and received a five-year sentence in June 1988. In September she gave birth to a son who is with her in prison.

## Pretoria Central Women's Prison

Ruth Gerhardt was sentenced on 31 December 1983 to ten years imprisonment, on a conviction of treason for assisting her husband, Commodore Dieter Gerhardt (South African Navy, Simonstown) in espionage for the Soviet Union. Her husband was sentenced to life imprisonment. They are both being held in Pretoria Central. They have a son who was about 10 years old when they were arrested, who now lives with friends in Switzerland. Ruth was kept in isolation for many months.

Barbara Hogan was sentenced on 20 October 1982 to ten years imprisonment on a conviction of treason. Before being sentenced she spent about a year in detention and awaiting trial. While she was being held at John Vorster Square her friend Neil Aggett, who was also in detention there, died. Barbara first experienced detention while she was a student at Witwatersrand University and worked with trade unions and in rural development projects after getting her degree.

Marion Sparg was sentenced on 6 November 1986 to 25 years imprisonment on a conviction of terrorism and/or treason. She was kept in isolation for some months after her arrest. Marion had worked as a journalist on the Rand Daily Mail. She left South Africa for military training in Angola, after which she joined the editorial staff of "Voice of Women", the official journal of the ANC women's section. After an SADF raid in Lesotho in which 30 South Africans and 19 Lesotho citizens were killed, she joined the operative ranks of Umkhonto we Sizwe.



THANDI MODISE: Released in December 1988 after serving 8 years on charges of terrorism.



# POLITICAL PRISONERS

This is not a complete list of women political prisoners. It is very difficult to get details of these women since they are not all kept together and their trials often receive little or no publicity.

NAME	SENTENCE
Theresa Ramashamola	Death (Commuted)
Lorraine Sobuzi	10 years
Mawethu Mabona	12 years
Famana Twala	Life
Barbara Hogan	10 years
Nontemiso Ndabeni	6 years
Zondile Mkhize	3 years
Ruth Gerhardt	10 years
Gertrude Magoqoza	8 years
Regina Matroos	8 years
Rita Motasi	8 years
Jacqueline Manxenyane	8 years
Helen Rashubula	5 years
Mathlakala Mothung	10 years
Regina Madumise	5 years
Lilian Keagile	6 years
Pumla Fante	15 years
Mary Mgemtu	18 months
Bukiwe Sofute	6 years
Marion Sparg	25 years
Gloria Twala	4 years
Nontobeko Madolo	18 years
Thalitha Matsitse	15 years
Silvia Mbovane	8 years
Amelia Memani	8 years
Sindiswa A Plaatjie	7 years
Audrey Skosana	5 years

# WOMEN STILL ON TRIAL

## 1. TERRORISM

Lumka Nyamza, Jenny Schreiner, Gertrude Fester, Colleen Lombard and Soraya Abass are on trial for terrorism in the Cape Town Supreme court.

## 2. HARBOURING

Ethel Loza, Maureen Loza, Sindiswa Dlavu, Xolile Mini and Khungeka Mali are on trial in Cape Town for harbouring suspected ANC guerrillas.

## 3. INTIMIDATION

Beauty Popi and Elizabeth Popi are on trial in Springbok for "intimidation."

## 4. CHARGES NOT FORMULATED YET

Veliswa Mhlauli, Linda Tsotsi, Buyiswa Jack and Miranda Sineli are all on trial in Cape Town after spending months in detention under Section 29.

## 5. MURDER

Xoliswa Duba, Elizabeth Bostaander and Evalina De Bruin have all been found guilty of murder in Upington. They are part of the "Upington 26" and will be sentenced soon.

## 6. MILITARY ACTIVITIES

Pumla Williams is on trial in Witbank and is charged with being a member of the ANC's Regional Political Military Command in the Transvaal.

There are many other women who may be on trial in other parts of South Africa of whom we have no record.

south african history

SAHA



National Women's Day rally, August 9th, 1988, marking the launch of FEDSAW's Women Political Prisoners Campaign..



# RESTRICTIONS : DETENTION IN DISGUISE

The state is finding new ways of restricting the political freedom of its opponents. The hunger strike is a victory for detainees but, according to the Human Rights Commission, about 700 detainees are now believed to be subject to restrictions in South Africa. Most have to report to a police station daily and have to remain indoors for at least 12 hours a day.

(Weekly Mail April 21st 1989)

Restrictions are a means of imprisoning people, who become their own wardresses in their own prisons. The restricted person, their families, friends and communities all suffer from these restrictions. The restricted person must be at home at certain times. This means her family and friends must also change their way of living and share in the worries of the restricted person in case she "breaks" her restrictions. This puts a lot of strain on people and stops them living normal lives. Children especially find this difficult to understand and to cope with. The restricted person herself feels bad that those close to her must suffer as well. With this is always the fear and uncertainty of being re-detained.

Most restricted people are also restricted from taking part in community organisations. These restrictions stop people from meeting with others, from talking to others, and from taking part in community affairs.

Many restricted people cannot earn a living due to the nature of their restrictions. This causes much hardship and suffering. It also removes dedicated people from the community where they are much needed. We think of those women restricted from their work in all fields of community service and from organisations that take forward the people's struggle.

Banishments, bannings and restrictions are not new to us. We salute those women who have overcome their restrictions. We think of Winnie Mandela, restricted to Brandfort, and her efforts to develop and unite this community. We think of Mamphela Ramphele and her work in the rural areas related to health. We think also of Francis Baard who was banished to the Northern Transvaal when her home was more than a thousand kilometers away in Port Elizabeth. Today Ma Baard is still an inspiration to our women and an active leader.

Restrictions not only silence people and isolate them from community life. This is part of the strategy to break up our struggle. Restricted people are also increasingly exposed to attacks due to their enforced confinement and routine.

Detentions under the state of emergency as a means of dealing with opponents of the South African government, has become acceptable to the rest of the world. We salute our comrades who went on hunger strikes and through their tremendous sacrifices made it very difficult for the South African security police to justify this method of dealing with its political opponents.

We are deeply concerned that there does not seem to be a proper understanding or concern for the effects of these restrictions on our people and our organisations. We were horrified by the callous manner in which the British government refused to show any sympathy for the plight of the restrictees who sought refuge in the British Embassy as means to highlight their plight. The rest of the world need to understand that we could well be entering a new era; an era where our homes will become our prisons.

We need to unite against these restrictions and find ways of dealing with them. We know that restricted people will not change their commitment to freedom and we must stand firm with them in their struggle.



Dorothy Zihlangu is the president of the Western Cape region of FEDSAW. She was released from detention and restricted from participating in FEDSAW and UWCO. She has been involved in the women's struggle for more than 30 years.

## WOMEN RESTRICTED

Many women are restricted. At the time of this publication going into print, there was, for example, 39 women who were restricted in Transvaal alone. We include some of their stories.

### AMY THORNTON

Amy Thornton was served with a banning order in 1959 under the Suppression of Communism Act. In 1961 a second, more severe order was issued which restricted her from entering any institution linked to education, labour, publication and law. Amy was also unable to continue her work as a nursery school teacher. She had to report daily to a police station and, having missed one day within a five year period, was subsequently imprisoned for a week and received a prison record. These banning orders were in effect for a period of fourteen years.

Amy was detained in 1988 and released under restriction orders. These restrict her to the Cape Town and Wynberg Magisterial districts. She is not allowed to participate in any activities of the Cape Democrats, of which she is chairperson, UWCO and UDF.

### JOYCE MABUDAFHASI

National Education Crisis Committee Executive member Joyce Mabudafhasi was released in February after two years in detention, and served with severe restriction orders. In terms of her banning order she may not:

- Enter any education institution
- Be in the company of more than 10 people at a time
- Compile anything for publication
- Give any interviews to journalists

Joyce is restricted to the Mankweng Township in the Northern Transvaal. This is about 300 kilometers from Johannesburg where her husband George is employed. Her restrictions, therefore, keep them apart. She was recently granted permission to stay with her husband for six days. Staying any longer would have broken her restriction order.



# THE LIFE OF A RESTRICTED PERSON

This article was written by a family member of a restricted person. Restricted people are not allowed to be quoted.)

To be restricted is sometimes more difficult than to be in jail. There are no bars and no guards, but you become your own jailer.

You always have to look at the time and rush home to lock yourself up. The borders of your magisterial district are there like high walls that you may not cross. When you are with people you must count them and watch what you say. Every day you must rush to report to the police - simple things like a late bus makes you panic that you may be late and be detained again. And in all this you are not even sure that they are watching you. You must always decide for yourself whether you will live by these restrictions or risk being re-detained.

The worst of all is that you have to give up the organisations you have helped to build and have gone to prison to defend.

Your family also suffers as you cannot go anywhere with them and they have to stay in this homemade jail with you. You also sometimes sometimes feel that people have forgotten you, because the struggle must go on and you feel left behind.

In spite of all the suffering, restricted people will not change their commitment to freedom. The state is making a big mistake by trying to beat us into submission.

## TWO WOMEN DETAINEES

Two Port Elizabeth women were detained for a long time in Grahamstown. Ivy Gcina was inside for 34 months and Buyiswa Fazzie for 28 months.

Ivy Gcina was first detained for four months under the 1985 emergency. She was severely tortured. After a few months of freedom she was re-detained for 34 months.

Ivy has been involved in the women's struggle for a long time and is a leader in PEWO. Before her detention she worked as a cleaner at a white school.

Two of her sons died as M.K. soldiers while she was in detention and she was unable to go to their funerals.

Buyiswa Fazzie is a hospital clerk who played an active role in women's and civic structures in Port Elizabeth. She is married to Eastern Cape leader, Henry Fazzie who spent almost three years in detention.

Buyiswa's health is weak and during her detention she suffered from digestive and back problems.

Ivy and Buyiswa suffered the anguish of seeing their friend, Elda Bani, die while in detention with them.

They were released in May 1989 under severe restriction orders.

## PUMLA WILLIAMS:

### ON TRIAL FOR MILITARY ACTIVITIES

Pumla Williams is Currently on trial in the Witbank Regional Court for allegedly being a member of the ANC's Regional Political Military Command (RPMC) and of the Transvaal Implementation Machinery (also known as the Elias Motsoaledi Command). She was arrested on the 29th June 1987 outside a shopping complex in Soweto, where she was spotted by a policeman, handcuffed and taken to Protea Police Station. She was held in solitary confinement for the whole of her detention (June 1987 to September 1988) in Piet Retief, where her mother managed to visit her only 3 times after endless persevering and refusing to take no for an answer.

She was charged on 1 September 1988 in Bethal, and from then on was held in Bethal prison, where there are no other women political prisoners. After pressure was applied by lawyers and a psychiatrist she was finally allowed to have contact with 2 other women prisoners (common law prisoners).

During her trial the court rejected Williams' claim that she was forced to make a statement after being subjected to intensive interrogation for long periods. A member of the Protea security branch said in evidence that the use of pressure during interrogation is justified in the interest of "state security", and that police had a right to question for long periods - even weeks - and to apply force to extract information.

Pumla claimed that:

At the time of her arrest she was suffering from diarrhoea but was not allowed to go to the toilet,

After showering she was forced to wear wet clothes,

Her interrogators then switched on a fan which caused extreme discomfort because of the cold, wintry weather.

During Pumla's trial another terror trial ended when two other members of the RPMC (based in Swaziland), Ebrahim Ismael Ebrahim and Mandla Maseko, were sentenced to a total of 53 years imprisonment. Pumla was a member of the same command and may face an equally severe sentence.

Pumla also faces charges under the old Terrorism act which include membership of, and advocating and encouraging the objects of, a banned organisation.

Sheila Nyanda, another alleged member of the RPMC, was kidnapped from Swaziland and has been subpoenaed to give evidence against Williams. Sheila was detained under Section 29 and 31 of the Internal Security act.

Five members of Pumla's family have also been subpoenaed as state witnesses.

Pumla has one child named Thandeka, who was born in Swaziland in December 1985.



THIS IS THE REALITY

I've been forcibly removed from my  
cosy and cushioned cocoon  
To a group area reserved for terrorists:  
Solitary Confinement  
I've been endorsed out of my community  
Into the homeland of my cell -  
Dark, dull, grey, dreary - where even a  
Smile is scarce!  
For 24-hours a day I am watched,  
scrutinised,  
perused - in case of some wrong move  
And I immediately think of when so-called  
Africans enter a supermarket or a shop.  
The floorwalkers are on guard!  
These are the people who steal!  
Their every twist, turn is carefully perused  
And here - my every move too is controlled  
A recording is made of what I eat/ how much  
This is telephoned to who knows whom!  
Where and when I sit, stand, shit or sleep!