

MS TERREBLANCHE: Mr Chairperson, I wish to call Frans Mandlazi. He will be the last witness of our investigation.

CHAIRPERSON: If you will Ms Terreblanche.

MS TERREBLANCHE: Mr Chair, this is our last witness, Frans Mandlazi. I think you are familiar with him.

CHAIRPERSON: Yes, I am.

MS TERREBLANCHE: He has given us a statement, I think you've seen it.

CHAIRPERSON: I don't have it now.

~~MS TERREBLANCHE: Okay, I'll try and give you a copy while you swear in the witness.~~

CHAIRPERSON: Is it in the bundle?

MS TERREBLANCHE: Yes, but I'll get you another copy while - Mr Mandlazi contacted us because he said he's got information about the night that the Mozambican president died in an air crash in 1986.

DISCUSSION FOLLOWS ON LANGUAGE AND TRANSLATION DEVICE

FRANS MANDLAZI: (duly sworn, states)

CHAIRPERSON: Mr Mandlazi, you can sit down. I believe that ~~you are happier to speak Afrikaans than English. If that is so,~~ that is quite acceptable. We don't have Zulu translators or Sotho or Sndebele or - so what language are you going to use? Or are you just going to read your statement? But there will be

questions of clarification that will be put to you. All I'm saying is if you would rather reply to them in Afrikaans, you know then please do so. That's the way in which Fanie and I speak, Fanie Molapo. Because he's more happier in Afrikaans than in English. And we understand. Okay? Thank you Ms Terreblanche.

MS TERREBLANCHE: Thank you Mr Chair. I think that I will ask Frans the questions in Afrikaans and we'll see how it goes. Frans, in 1986 you were in the South African Defence Force.

MR MANDLAZI: Yes.

MS TERREBLANCHE: ~~What was your role there? What unit were you and what did you do?~~

MR MANDLAZI: In '94 (sic) I did my training in Amsterdam and then I went to the Kimberley Intelligence School or in '95 - or '85 actually I went to a different battalion and they sent me to Nelspruit, Mpumalanga at the Eastern Province Command. From

~~there I worked at Intelligence, with the people of the intelligence~~
team. And I also worked underground and I worked underground for military intelligence. And then I was sent to Makadama and Squamans in Komatipoort. Those were the places where we worked underground and we lived there, and those are the places where we went to to torture people and perhaps to kill people, and the Crocodile River was quite close so it was convenient for us to throw them in the river after we'd shot them and the crocodiles would eat them.

CHAIRPERSON: And the crocodile farm that is in Nelspruit?

MR MANDLAZI: That's the dam.

CHAIRPERSON: At Laughing Waters?

MR MANDLAZI: Yes.

MS TERREBLANCHE: In October '86 you were at Squamans.

MR MANDLAZI: Yes.

MS TERREBLANCHE: Can you recall the Sunday night of the 20th of October of '86? What do you remember?

MR MANDLAZI: I remember that we were at the base with the

~~other intelligence people. There were also other adults there,~~

people from Nelspruit and some people came from Pretoria. And

there were top brass from the defence force and people from

Mozambique were there. They were all at the base. And I

remember that we stayed at the base that day and we had a braai

at the base. And we started the braai at about five o'clock,

~~between five and six in the evening, until late. Round about~~

~~eleven. And we had this braai with the people from Mozambique.~~

I can't remember exactly the names and the surnames of the people present, but I will be able to identify the people if I was to see them.

MS TERREBLANCHE: May I interrupt you? Did people from

Mozambique often come to this camp or base? How often did it

happen that people from Mozambique came to you at the base

there?

MR MANDLAZI: They came with General Otto from the Eastern Province Command. And Col Taljaard from military intelligence was also there, and Comdt Ramsley; he was from military intelligence. Maybe I can start with this, with my list.

Capt Van Jaarsveld - he's now superintendent from the Komatipoort, the SAP security forces. A/O Da Costa, South African Police, CIS security, Nelspruit. Sgt Shongwe - I don't have his initials, but I could identify him, I know him very well.

He's also with the security forces in Komatipoort. Happy Schlope, ~~he's no longer in the South African Police but he was~~ SAP Komatipoort. And then Rifleman Maki, he was in Askari attached to military intelligence, the Eastern Transvaal Command.

And then there was a Col Van Zyl, also in the police at Nelspruit. And then there was a Rifleman Africa, he was an

~~Askari and he was also at the base. Cpl Steyn, military intelligence, group 3 33 Nelspruit, military intelligence.~~ And there were a couple of officers from the military in Maputo. I don't have their names.

MS TERREBLANCHE: All right. Let us just stop there for a moment Frans. So you can remember quite clearly, there were quite a few people. Did they all arrive there at the same time?

MR MANDLAZI: Yes.

MS TERREBLANCHE: Eleven o'clock in the morning you said?

MR MANDLAZI: Of the next day?

MS TERREBLANCHE: No, when did they arrive at Squamans?

MR MANDLAZI: If I remember correctly it was about between ten and eleven because on that same day, that evening we had the braai at the base; it was a big braai that we had. And they shoot certain things of different colours.

MS TERREBLANCHE: You also said that Pik Botha was there.

MR MANDLAZI: Yes, I didn't put him in the list but yes, he was also there.

MS TERREBLANCHE: Did he arrive there with the other people?

MR MANDLAZI: Yes.

MS TERREBLANCHE: Did you ask anybody what are all these people doing here?

MR MANDLAZI: No. Capt Leli who was our commanding officer, he said that these important people would come, so we would have to clean up the base nicely and then we would have a nice braai. They didn't tell us what was going to happen or what was afoot. But after the braai some people left, and some people also left early the next day. And then Leli said that we had to go and do a road block.

MS TERREBLANCHE: What time was that?

MR MANDLAZI: It was between seven and eight o'clock. We went to do the road block. We asked him what the purpose of the road block was and he said it was to search the people from

Mozambique for fire-arms and that kind of stuff. Then we got to the base. Before we left the base there was a Cpl Steyn and he said that bastard has fallen, or has crashed. I remember that he answered the radio.

MS TERREBLANCHE: So you were on your way to the road block.

MR MANDLAZI: No, this was before, before we left for the road block. So we didn't know what was going on. We just heard that something had fallen.

MS TERREBLANCHE: Just tell us again?

MR MANDLAZI: He said that dog has fallen, or has crashed. And then he almost applauded and we didn't know what was going on.

MS TERREBLANCHE: So you then left for the road block and you didn't know what was going on.

MR MANDLAZI: Before we left for the road block, all the important people had already left.

MS TERREBLANCHE: What did they leave with?

MR MANDLAZI: They left for Mbuzini.

MS TERREBLANCHE: But how did they leave? By road, by helicopter?

MR MANDLAZI: It was a plane. There were two planes from Nelspruit which we had at the base. So they left in the plane. Just before Mozambique there's another defence force station, a

military station. And there were only a few people present at a time. Five people one day and five different people the next day, et cetera. To stand guard, and so on.

MS TERREBLANCHE: Was it a camp?

MR MANDLAZI: Yes, it was a small camp. It's a four barrack base. It's an extension 4 base. It's near Mbuzini. I think the distance is just by 1 km.

MS TERREBLANCHE: And the road block, where was that?

MR MANDLAZI: It was in Komatipoort. It's close there. The Capt Schlapp knows that place. We went there. And I pointed out all those places to him, and he saw that it wasn't that far. It's still in the same place of Komatipoort. So from our camp to there was about 2 km.

MS TERREBLANCHE: And the road block?

MR MANDLAZI: Well, that was also another 2 km.

MS TERREBLANCHE: What were you told? That people who came from Mozambique that you had to search them?

MR MANDLAZI: They said that people who came from Mozambique, we had to search those people.

MS TERREBLANCHE: Did any people go through to the side of Mozambique?

MR MANDLAZI: The few people after the aeroplane fell who were at the road block, they drove to Maputo. We did not detain the people.

MS TERREBLANCHE: Let me just go back. When at eight o'clock that evening you heard that an aeroplane crash had taken place, after you went to the road block were the other people, the important people, had they already left?

MR MANDLAZI: Yes. That is so. I remember President Botha and General Otto were the important people who left to Mozambique before we were sent to the road block. They flew to Mozambique. I cannot lie; I did not know whether they were going to the borderpost or where. I got this information later that these people went to the Mozambique border post.

MS TERREBLANCHE: Did you go to the borderpost?

MR MANDLAZI: Yes, at Mozambique.

MS TERREBLANCHE: Who told you that? Who told you that they went to the borderpost?

MR MANDLAZI: They said - it was the people in the camp, Cpl Steyn who said that there were a few people, the Maputo people who had shocked him, given him electric shocks. And he just went to check on them.

MS TERREBLANCHE: All the people who had left, had they gone to the borderpost? Did they stay over? Did they go back to Pretoria? What did they come and do there?

MR MANDLAZI: The important people or the top brass.

MS TERREBLANCHE: Why? What do you think did they come and do there? Did you think that they went back to Pretoria from Squamans?

MR MANDLAZI: I did not hear very well.

MS TERREBLANCHE: When they left there, did they all go to the borderpost?

MR MANDLAZI: Yes.

MS TERREBLANCHE: And from there? Did they go back to Pretoria, Mozambique, or where did they go?

MR MANDLAZI: That same day - I'm going to speak the truth - we just got information that they did not leave that day because the next day before one leaves the Mozambique borderpost there's a hotel. And the father of Capt Leli, it's his hotel. That's about 3 km on the Mozambique side. Because the other cars from Mozambique and SAP people were also there.

MS TERREBLANCHE: So they all spent the evening at that hotel?

MR MANDLAZI: I think so yes. I don't think they left for Pretoria that same day.

MS TERREBLANCHE: And tell me, when you held the road block, did you return or did you go straight to Mbuzini?

MR MANDLAZI: No, we went back to the base. Then we heard that President Samora Machel had crashed. There were a whole

lot of us there. SAP people, uniform people, defence force people, they were all there.

MS TERREBLANCHE: Tell us once again about Squamans, what kind of base was it?

MR MANDLAZI: It is the military base of military intelligence and the SAP security forces.

MS TERREBLANCHE: So you say that those people were there before the aeroplane with the president crashed, and then they were at Squamans again?

MR MANDLAZI: That's correct yes.

MS TERREBLANCHE: And for how long, and from when were they there the next day? Did they fly in again? Or did they travel by road?

MR MANDLAZI: They travelled by road. If I remember correctly they came to Squamans with the aeroplane. So they went back to the aeroplane. I do not know where they went to from there. I thought it was Nelspruit. General Otto, when the aeroplane fell or crashed I forgot to put it in my statement that he was also present at the base, General Otto.

MS TERREBLANCHE: And General Rogers, or Maj Rogers?

MR MANDLAZI: He was also there at the base. There were people from Mozambique who always came, so I said that I remember one lieutenant who also came with those people and

who was also sent to us in military intelligence. I can also identify him. I think it's Macadami, Macadamia Base.

MS TERREBLANCHE: When were you told to go where the crash had taken place? When did you see the wreckage of the aeroplane for the first time?

MR MANDLAZI: I remember that it fell and we loaded things onto trucks, things from the police station at Ntonga. I remember Capt Leli and Van Staden stole other things, because I remember that we came to his father's hotel in Komatipoort and we saw the same kind of plane.

MS TERREBLANCHE: You came back the same evening, so all the people were at Squamans again?

MR MANDLAZI: Yes, that's correct.

MS TERREBLANCHE: Did you go with them to the wreckage of the plane that had crashed or were you never at Mbuzini?

MR MANDLAZI: I was at that place, but I thought that they'd asked me to go and fetch the things there. Yes, I did go to fetch things there at Mbuzini. At Ntonga police station. Mbuza can also testify here. He now works at the Department of Safety and Security at Nelspruit. He was the station commander at Ntonga police station.

MS TERREBLANCHE: And when did you go there?

MR MANDLAZI: The same day.

MS TERREBLANCHE: The Monday or the Sunday?

MR MANDLAZI: Early the Monday I went to Ntonga police station.

MS TERREBLANCHE: Where were the things loaded?

MR MANDLAZI: In our places where the aeroplane crashed, at the base near where the aeroplane crashed. That was our base there. I think it's about 400 metres from there.

MS TERREBLANCHE: So did you have to go and load up things there?

MR MANDLAZI: Yes.

MS TERREBLANCHE: What kind of things?

MR MANDLAZI: The engines or the engine of the aeroplane and all kinds of other parts.

MS TERREBLANCHE: So it was pieces of wreckage?

MR MANDLAZI: Yes. That is why there were many of us from the police station to load all the pieces of wreckage. I just wondered whether Lt Leli and Van Staden got that stuff. Because everything was taken to Ntonga police station to the station commander. We saw them afterwards in Komatipoort.

MS TERREBLANCHE: Is he still at the hotel?

MR MANDLAZI: I don't know. It's a long time since I left the defence force in '94.

MS TERREBLANCHE: I think maybe somebody else wants to ask you a question.

MS PATTA: Mr Mandlazi, Capt Leli, he stole things?

MR MANDLAZI: Yes. He took things from the plane, like the cover of the aeroplane if I remember correctly. He was at the hotel for a long time and many people at the hotel also identified these pieces as being part of the wreckage of President Samora Machel's aeroplane that crashed.

MS PATTA: (Indistinct) these pieces?

MR MANDLAZI: Yes. It was kept at his father's hotel. And the people of the hotel can also testify that we saw the things for a few days.

MS PATTA: And Capt Leli's father owned this hotel did you say?

MR MANDLAZI: Yes, it was. I cannot remember the name of the hotel.

MS PATTA: Is it in Komatipoort?

MR MANDLAZI: Yes. On the right-hand side after the border you get that hotel.

MS PATTA: And on the actual night of the crash, the big people who were there, like senior members of the military, was General Kat Liebenberg was there?

MR MANDLAZI: Yes. I also mentioned his name. In my statement his name was also mentioned.

MS PATTA: And any other senior members of the defence force?

MR MANDLAZI: General Van der Westhuizen if I remember correctly. I mentioned him in my file, because he was also there.

He came to our base often, General Van der Westhuizen. Col Van der Westhuizen.

MS PATTA: And was Magnus Malan there?

MR MANDLAZI: Yes.

MS PATTA: You did see Magnus Malan?

MR MANDLAZI: Yes. I know him very well. Because there was another woman also, she's a journalist, who was also there.

A Mrs Matibula. She's an informer. She said that the important people in South Africa bought her the kombi. Because we saw the woman at the base and then we saw these important people.

MS PATTA: And how long did they stay for at the base, the important people? Liebenberg, Malan? Approximately, more or less.

MR MANDLAZI: You mean now from the time they came and the time they left? Approximately 9, 10 hours. Maybe 15 hours.

MS PATTA: And what time did they arrive?

MR MANDLAZI: They arrived early, they left. Later they returned that same day; we had a braai. Then the next day when the aeroplane crashed they were still in the vicinity.

MS PATTA: After the crash?

MR MANDLAZI: Yes.

MS PATTA: And you don't remember any names of the Mozambicans who were there?

MR MANDLAZI: That's why I say that maybe I could identify them if I see the photos, but the other men who were also there with Da Costa, the other man he was fat. I cannot remember his name. Jackalas or something.

MS PATTA: He was a Mozambican?

MR MANDLAZI: Yes. He's also got a beard. He came to our base often. But we knew that he came from Mozambique.

MS PATTA: Did he speak Portuguese or English?

MR MANDLAZI: Portuguese together with Capt Leli. They spoke Portuguese or English.

MS PATTA: Was he Black or white?

MR MANDLAZI: White.

MS PATTA: White man.

MR MANDLAZI: If I could say or can remember, he looks like Mr Bizos.

MS PATTA: (Indistinct) George Bizos. Okay.

MR MANDLAZI: No.

MS PATTA: And what was the discussion there, the discussion, I mean did the generals talk about anything, was anything mentioned about Samora Machel?

MR MANDLAZI: I can say that as it states in my file, he was our leader in the office. If I remember well it was Capt Lapo,

and I saw his name in the file. In the papers I also remember that I wrote in red. There was a board of the people that we had to eliminate. So at the beginning of the point that we made, the pins that we stuck into the paper was white and red. If it's white next to your name, then we just torture you and we're just looking for information. If it's a blue pin, then we can possibly kill you, but if there is red next to your name then we have to kill you.

MS PATTA: And whose names were in red on this board?

MR MANDLAZI: The name of that president as well, is also written in red. At our headquarters in Transvaal as well, his name was also in red. Such as the other comrades as well.

MS PATTA: Who else was in red? What other names were in red?

MR MANDLAZI: You can speak to the people of Mpumalanga, and they also wrote the name of that leader there.

MS PATTA: And that board, where was this board, I'm sorry? It was in the base did you say?

MR MANDLAZI: Yes, it was in the base. At the base.

MS TERREBLANCHE: You say that you had a small camp or base near Mbuzini. It was Squamans Camp.

MR MANDLAZI: Yes, it was.

MS TERREBLANCHE: Now that evening, do you know how many people there were, the Sunday evening?

MR MANDLAZI: I cannot remember so well, but I remember that I was also there. I remembered and I wrote it down but some things I forgot; but I was at that place.

MS TERREBLANCHE: But not that evening?

MR MANDLAZI: No, not that evening.

MS TERREBLANCHE: But do you know whether any of the people from Squamans were there at that camp? Or was everybody at Squamans that evening?

MR MANDLAZI: No, there were other people as well because I remember that Cpl Steyn went to Malelane to fetch meat and when he came back we heard that the people of substation 4 were also going to braai there. They took the landrover to the other place.

MS TERREBLANCHE: So first you went to fetch meat and then you still took it to another place?

MR MANDLAZI: Yes, to substation 4.

MS TERREBLANCHE: Was it substation 4 that was at Mbuzini?

MR MANDLAZI: Yes.

MS TERREBLANCHE: And what did you usually do there? How did you have such a substation?

MR MANDLAZI: There are people always bringing information, and these people go into Mozambique, they come back and they report nearby at substation 4.

MS TERREBLANCHE: Did some people stay overnight? Were there tents in which people slept?

MR MANDLAZI: Yes, there were beds and everything. There were small rondavels, but one wouldn't be able to see the base easily because it was covered with shade cloth. And there were big rocks. It wasn't easy to see the base. The base at Squamans was the same. A few people did not know of the existence of that base. The people who we tortured, we took them away. And they would say that the people who tortured me, took me there. So the substations were meant to torture the people. We used to torture people.

MS TERREBLANCHE: To get information?

MR MANDLAZI: That's correct yes. And these places...

MS TERREBLANCHE: Let's look at the aeroplane crash again. You were nearby for weeks while people came and looked at the aeroplane, et cetera. Or were you taken away from Squamans? Were you ever at the aeroplane? Did you ever see how the people went about their work there or what they did at the aeroplane? People who came to clear up the wreckage?

MR MANDLAZI: (Inaudible)

MS TERREBLANCHE: What happened during the next week or two after the aeroplane crashed?

MR MANDLAZI: If I remember correctly there was another man from Mozambique, a Dr So-and-So. Because I know that man

very well; he came to our base often, the old man. The defence force gave him a bakkie, a Nissan bakkie. I can also remember the registration number. It was a defence force bakkie but it was changed on the computer. He was from Nas Trust. I then heard that at that stage that that man had often gone to these places. At that stage I remembered that that man was the informer of the South African Police and military intelligence.

CHAIRPERSON: Are you through with your questions?

MS PATTA: Just one last thing on this man; this Dr So-and-So. He was Mozambican?

MR MANDLAZI: No, he was not from Mozambique. He was from our people. And he sometimes came to speak to General Otto and then he would go back and so on. But he was not a Mozambican if I remember correctly.

MS PATTA: He was from military intelligence?

MR MANDLAZI: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON: Are we through?

MS TERREBLANCHE: I believe so Mr Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON: Mr Mandlazi, I have to thank you for having come and I am sure that your evidence in its entirety will be taken into account alongside with any other evidence that we have taken from other witnesses in this inquiry.

We are sorry that we have kept you until this hour, but it was due to circumstances totally beyond our control. We are

however very happy that you were able to be patient and to remain until we have taken your evidence in its entirety.

For the moment however, you are excused.

WITNESS IS EXCUSED

CHAIRPERSON: Is there any other evidence Ms Terreblanche?

MS TERREBLANCHE: This concludes our evidence in both the Machel and the Helderberg investigations.

CHAIRPERSON: I understood that there is a possibility that we would take evidence from other witnesses.

MS TERREBLANCHE: The witness in question has said she can only make herself available on the 23rd of this month. If that is all right with you, I can confirm that with her.

CHAIRPERSON: The matter then is adjourned for hearing of evidence, particularly in the Samora Machel to the 23rd of this month, or some such other date as may be arranged should that date not be convenient. But I am sure that it is convenient for you, but I do not know about the witness.

The matter is adjourned. These proceedings are also adjourned.

MS TERREBLANCHE: Mr Chair, Mr Mandlazi wants to just conclude with something.

MR MANDLAZI: Ms Terreblanche, I'm not afraid to say all these things in a court because if I remember correctly there was

a Capt Kambule of Nelspruit police station. I told him what had happened there.

CHAIRPERSON: (Indistinct) if there are any other issues that you want to converse with the witness, the Commission has not come to an end. You can take statements from him under oath and if there is a need for him to come and depose in an inquiry of this nature on record, that can be arranged.

The matter now is firmly adjourned.

MS TERREBLANCHE: Thank you Mr Chair.

COMMISSION ADJOURNS

