

- b Brigadier Joffel van der Westhuizen (now retired as a lieutenant general) who was the head of EP Command from January 1983 until January 1987. He left and subsequently took over as officer commanding of Witwatersrand Command, another of the three key problem areas identified in terms of the military's plan;
- c Brigadier Wessel Kritzinger, who took over from Van der Westhuizen as officer commanding of EP Command until March 1990;
- d Colonel Reg Deyzel, the officer commanding of the military's Group 8 base in East London between 1984 and January 1988. This base was nearer both Ciskei and Transkei than the EP Command and would have had to deal with the homelands. In October 1985 Deyzel set up the East London Joint Management Committee (JMC);
- e Colonel Phillip Hammond, who took over from Deyzel as officer commanding of Group 8;
- f The Border region's then head of security police, Brigadier Griebenaauw.

162 It is also likely that General Johan Coetzee, the recently retired commissioner of police, was involved. Coetzee was brought into the region and based in East London from about March 1987 until April 1989; his official brief was to run a tri-partite commission aimed at keeping the peace between Ciskei and Transkei, but this commission never operated and it seems his real reason for being there was to help run the clandestine security operations.

163 It is during this period that the security police set up an additional base in the Eastern Cape in support of Vlakplaas – based on a farm outside East London and apparently set up sometime during 1987. It is highly likely that one of Coetzee's key tasks was to oversee the setting up of this base.

164 During the mid-1980s in Transkei, there was a marked increase in the number of incidents involving both sabotage by guerrillas and armed clashes between guerrillas and police. By 1988, a spate of security trials was underway or had recently been concluded. Most of these related to ANC activity and many were linked to each other, indicating the operation of a widespread guerrilla network across Transkei. The security force actions against this network indicate that Joubert's plan was indeed implemented in this region.

165 1987 and 1988 were particularly bad years for guerrillas operating in Transkei, featuring several hit squad killings.

### **The fuel depot bombing suspects**

*On 25 June 1985, the Umtata fuel depot was blown up together with the city's water pipelines and electricity sub-station. In what must surely have been one of the most spectacularly successful MK operations, the fuel depot burned all day, leaving panicked Umtata residents queuing for petrol, the city without electricity for several days, and the possibility of running out of water before the pipelines and electrical pumps could be restored.*

*On 24 September, student activist Bathandwa Ndondo [EC0237/96WTK], a University of Transkei student representative council member who had been expelled the year before, was picked up at his home in Cala near the South African border by a unit involving SAP member Mbuso Enoch Shabalala, Transkei policeman Sergeant Gciniso Lamont Dandala and askaris Silulami Gladstone Mose and Xolelwa Virginia Shosha. He was shot dead. Within weeks, the then Transkei president Chief Kaiser Matanzima had announced publicly that Ndondo had been killed because he had been involved in the fuel depot bombings.*

*Guerrillas Masizizi Attwell "Pieces" Maqeqeza [EC0224/96UTA], Zola Dubeni [EC2653/97UTA], Welile Salman, Sisa Ngombeni and Mzwandile Vena were sought by police in connection with the fuel depot bombing<sup>23</sup>.*

*On 21-2 January 1987, Maqeqeza was one of two guerrillas who assisted guerrilla Mbulelo Ngono, aka "Khaya Kasibe" or "KK" [EC0330/96PLZ], to escape after a thirty-six-hour shoot-out between Ngono and the combined forces of the TPF, TDF and SAP. Maqeqeza and Ngono, together with Mr Thandwefika Radebe, were attacked by unknown gunmen in Lesotho weeks later. Radebe was killed, Ngono fled and subsequently disappeared, while Maqeqeza was killed by unknown gunmen on 15 March 1987 while recovering under police guard in the Maseru hospital from the first attack.*

*During 1988, Maqeqeza was mentioned in at least five security trials in Transkei in cases in which others were charged with assisting him. Also in March 1987, Dubeni was shot dead by police in Cape Town,*

---

<sup>23</sup> They were all named as involved in this incident in the statement that Mzwandile Vena allegedly made to a Wynberg magistrate after his arrest in Cape Town in 1988.