

■ THE PAN AFRICANIST CONGRESS

181 Evidence before the Commission indicates that gross violations of human rights were committed by the PAC in the course of its armed struggle. Formed in 1959 as an Africanist breakaway from the ANC, the involvement of the PAC in the anti-pass law campaign of 1960 led to its banning, together with the ANC, in 1960. Like the ANC, it established an organisational structure in exile and established camps for the military training of members of its armed wing APLA. It engaged in a limited armed struggle which resulted in few human rights violations inside South Africa. It was plagued with internal divisions and leadership conflicts which rendered it ineffective and led to the commission of gross human rights violations against its own members in exile.

Poqo

182 The establishment of a military wing known as Poqo in September 1961 followed the decision of the PAC to form underground cells and embark on an armed struggle. *Poqo* was established some three months before the formation of MK and was later transformed into APLA in exile.

183 Poqo⁶ has been interpreted as having been, at least initially, a spontaneous militant 'movement' without clear strategic direction or lines of command.

184 The commission of human rights violations by PAC members began with the activities of Poqo in the early 1960s, whose campaign was to liberate the country with 'traditional weapons'. In the Western Cape townships, in particular in Langa, Poqo militants conducted a house-to-house membership drive. In what became a reign of terror, residents were coerced into 'enlisting' and paying a two shillings and sixpence joining fee. In September 1962, policemen investigating the conscription campaign were attacked by Poqo members. They fired into a crowd, killing one and wounding two others; 133 people were arrested.

185 In the early 1960s, a group of disaffected PAC supporters, the 'Katangese', began operating independently of the PAC constitution and political culture of the PAC, raising concern in the Western Cape regional executive of the organisation. The Katangese soon became the targets of physical attacks, attempted assassinations and group attacks by Poqo gangs armed with pangas and pistols. Poqo gangs

⁶ *Poqo* means 'pure' or 'alone' in Xhosa. The name had been used before in the organisation in the translation of Pan Africanist Congress as '*Umbutho wama Afrika Poqo*' (the organisation of Africanists or 'undiluted' or 'pure' Africans), those Africans who wanted to be on their own.