



F(b)(1)  
F(b)(3)  
(S)

~~Secret~~

NOFORN NOCONTRACT ORCON

SA (S) (S)

*Directorate  
of Intelligence*

**Intelligence Memorandum**

Office of African and Latin American Analysis  
28 August 1992

# South Africa: The Boipatong Massacre and Reining in the Security Forces

## Summary

We have no reporting that indicates President de Klerk or senior security officials ordered the 17 June attack at Boipatong, nor do we believe they issued such orders. Some 200 local Zulu supporters of Inkatha apparently conducted the raid, which stemmed mainly from Inkatha-ANC enmity. We doubt--but cannot rule out--the direct participation of rogue police or soldiers.

[REDACTED], we believe isolated security mavericks are exacerbating black feuding in some areas in an effort to weaken the ANC and undermine negotiations.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] A massive purge is unlikely, but de Klerk can take steps--such as facilitating independent probes into political violence and allowing international monitors--that would improve his credibility among both blacks and whites on the issue of government complicity.

[REDACTED]

~~Secret~~

[REDACTED]

Q4D255,4

### Assessing the Boipatong Massacre

The 17 June massacre of more than 40 blacks in Boipatong, a township south of Johannesburg, has amplified allegations that the South African Government is aiding Chief Buthezezi's Zulu-based Inkatha movement in bloody fighting with African National Congress (ANC) supporters. The ANC withdrew from multiparty constitutional negotiations one week after the massacre, accusing Pretoria of engineering the incident and of assisting Zulus implicated in it. [REDACTED]

Although the massacre is still under investigation, at this point we can say with confidence that most of the attackers in the incident were Zulus--most of whom are Inkatha members or supporters--from the KwaMadala hostel near Boipatong and that the incident centered on organizational enmity with the ANC.<sup>1</sup> Eyewitnesses and security personnel on the scene after the massacre blamed some 200 of the hostel residents for the raids on Boipatong and the adjoining squatter camp. In testimony before the Goldstone Commission, a respected South African statutory body investigating political violence, the commander of one of two small Army patrols in the area when the attack occurred admitted that his men stopped traffic on a highway separating Boipatong and the KwaMadala hostel to allow some 80 to 200 Zulu warriors--carrying various weapons and headed toward the hostel--to cross the road. [REDACTED]

Several credible motives for the attack have surfaced.

- KwaMadala hostel residents had battled residents in nearby ANC-controlled areas on several prior occasions, according to press reports. Tensions were especially high on 17 June, the day after the ANC and its allies staged a nationwide general strike which was aimed at the government but had strong anti-Inkatha undertones.
- According to a press statement by one hostel resident, the Boipatong attack was in retaliation for the murder the week before of the girlfriend of one hostel member.
- Some hostel dwellers have admitted going to Boipatong on the night in question to attack an ANC "self defense" unit there, but then attacked residents indiscriminately after they could not locate the unit. Police have since arrested 78 hostel dwellers for involvement in the raid, making it perhaps the largest such case in the country's history. [REDACTED]

We have no evidence that contradicts the Goldstone Commission's contention on 6 July that it had found nothing so far implicating President de Klerk, his Cabinet, or senior security officials in ordering the attack. Although eyewitnesses say police vehicles ferried Zulu attackers and smashed down flimsy dwellings, we doubt police would use such high-visibility tactics during an authorized covert mission. Moreover, following the Goldstone Commission's statements, the ANC shifted from accusing de Klerk of direct

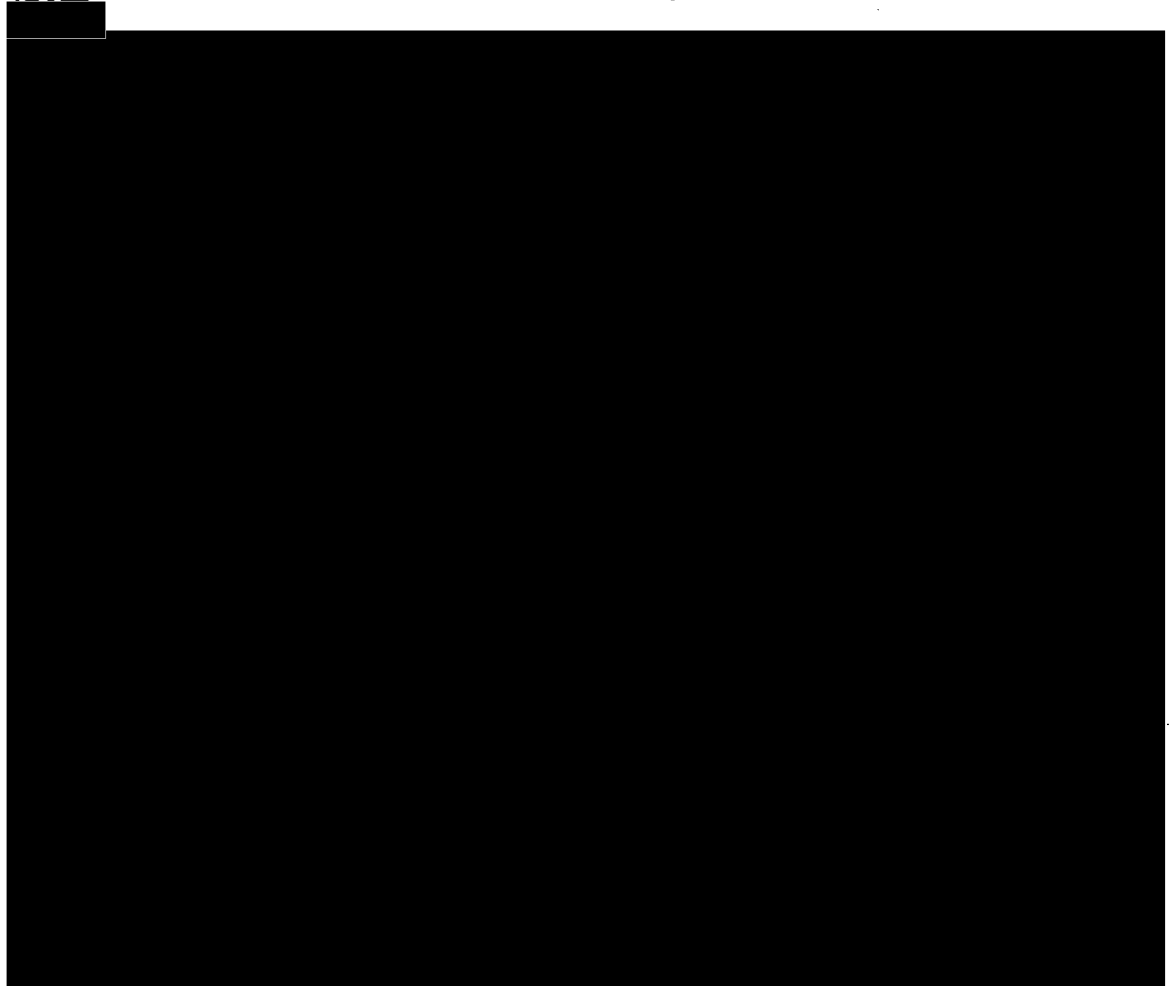
---

<sup>1</sup> In determining responsibility for the massacre in Boipatong, we have relied in part for objective information on a preliminary statement by the Goldstone Commission. Journalists have uncovered some useful data, but we believe the media has given too much credence to claims of government involvement by the ANC and angry blacks in Boipatong [REDACTED]

~~Secret~~

~~NOFORN NOCONTRACTORCON~~

complicity in the massacre to accusing him of not doing enough to prevent it, suggesting that it, too, doubts that there is any evidence of a direct government role.<sup>2</sup> We believe de Klerk's actions since becoming President make it highly unlikely that he orchestrated the massacre.



Based on available information, including the Goldstone Commission's preliminary findings, we cannot rule out involvement of rogue police or military personnel in the attack although, on balance, we doubt that such involvement occurred. Some black survivors of the raid claim to have seen or heard whites participating in the attack, echoing unproven charges in many earlier incidents of political violence. However, an independent inquiry by a British

<sup>2</sup> The ANC and the local media have also criticized de Klerk for going to KwaZulu on 16 June--the anniversary of the 1976 Soweto uprising, the day of the general strike and the day before the massacre--to meet with Buthelezi. The ANC said it does not believe the two met to plan the attack, but has argued--in our view, convincingly--that Inkatha warlords could have viewed the meeting and accompanying harsh criticism of the ANC's mass protest campaign as a green light to initiate violence

~~Secret~~

legal expert found no evidence of complicity by the South African Police (SAP).<sup>3</sup> Moreover, based on maps showing the relatively close proximity of the KwaMadala hostel to the areas where the attacks occurred, we do not believe that a force of several hundred highly motivated Zulus would have needed outside logistics help. If whites participated, they may have belonged to any one of an estimated 40 extremist groups that have proliferated since de Klerk began his reforms. [REDACTED]

We also doubt initial allegations that a unit of ex-Namibian soldiers, employed by the SAP and stationed inside South Africa, were among the attackers. One important factor that undercuts such charges is that members of the unit, initially accused of participation during preliminary hearings before the Goldstone Commission, do not speak any South African dialects.<sup>4</sup> Witnesses in Boipatong have not made any claims of hearing languages other than Zulu, English, or Afrikaans during the massacre. [REDACTED]

We have no information that Buthelezi engineered the massacre. The KwaMadala hostel was a well-known Inkatha stronghold, and Buthelezi surely knew about tensions in the area. He almost certainly would have anticipated the severe damage that the massacre of mostly women and children in fact has done to Inkatha's already poor international image. He also must have calculated that evidence that hostel dwellers were acting on his direct orders might well emerge during any trials of Zulus charged in the raid. [REDACTED]

Although no definitive picture has emerged yet on the actions and motives of security personnel around the time of the Boipatong attack, we believe that the combination of police incompetence, unwillingness to take personal risks, and pro-Inkatha bias gave the attackers a relatively free hand in the raid, and has left the SAP open to charges of complicity despite the absence of hard evidence.

- The British legal expert tasked by the Goldstone Commission to assess the police investigation of the massacre found great shortcomings and failures in police planning and command systems.
- ANC warlord Ernest Sotsu told the press that on the day before the massacre a police captain ignored ANC warnings of an imminent attack in the Boipatong area, saying that he already had such information and had deployed his men accordingly. When the ANC contacted the captain the next evening with fresh information on the impending attack, police allegedly came to the township and teargassed youths manning roadblocks to force them off the streets.
- Police spokesmen claim that on the night of the massacre their attention and manpower were diverted to another local township they had been warned would be attacked. This has also been their explanation for why the police only arrived in Boipatong about half an hour after they first received reports of the raid and long after the attackers had vanished.

<sup>3</sup> De Klerk--at the suggestion of the SAP--requested Judge Goldstone to employ foreign experts to evaluate the SAP investigation of the massacre. Goldstone appointed Dr. Peter Waddington, an expert British criminologist, and two London police officers to do the evaluation. "The Waddington report" was completed in mid-July, and was non-binding on the Goldstone Commission and the SAP. [REDACTED]

<sup>4</sup> Even ANC President Nelson Mandela acknowledged this to [REDACTED] on 25 June. [REDACTED]

- The commander of an Army patrol--the second in the area--said he heard shots and screams and thus knew a large-scale attack was underway, but added that his small, 9-man unit was vastly outnumbered and could only take cover. Reports that the attack unfolded sporadically for over an hour make his unit's alleged paralysis--and failure to summon help--more questionable.
- Police spokesmen recently testified that the regional SAP riot control headquarters had accidentally erased tapes of police radio conversations before, during, and after the massacre. Widespread skepticism about the testimony prompted embarrassed police to explain later that all tapes used since the recording system was installed last March are blank because officers were unaware that they could only be used on one side, and that use of the second side resulted in the erasure of the first. [REDACTED]

### Reining in Security Personnel

The Goldstone Commission's final report on the Boipatong incident may--to the ANC's chagrin--only highlight the incompetence and problematic attitudes of SAP and SADF personnel without concluding that rightwing security mavericks participated in that particular attack. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

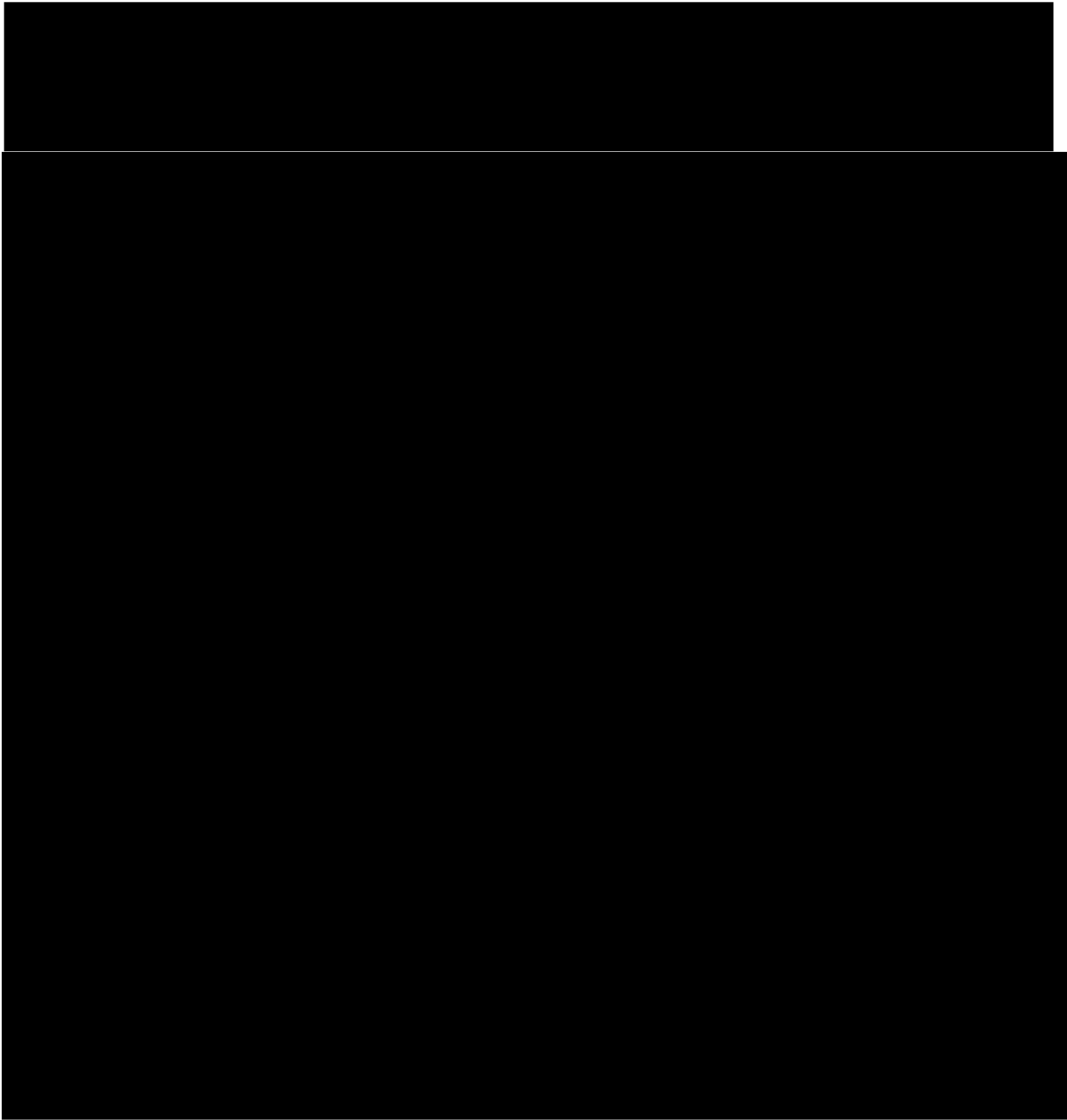
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

In 1991, blacks comprised 55 percent of the overall force, although only 5 percent of the officer corps. So far only one black has reached the rank of brigadier, immediately below that of general. [REDACTED]

~~Secret~~

~~NOFORN NOCONTRACT ORCON~~

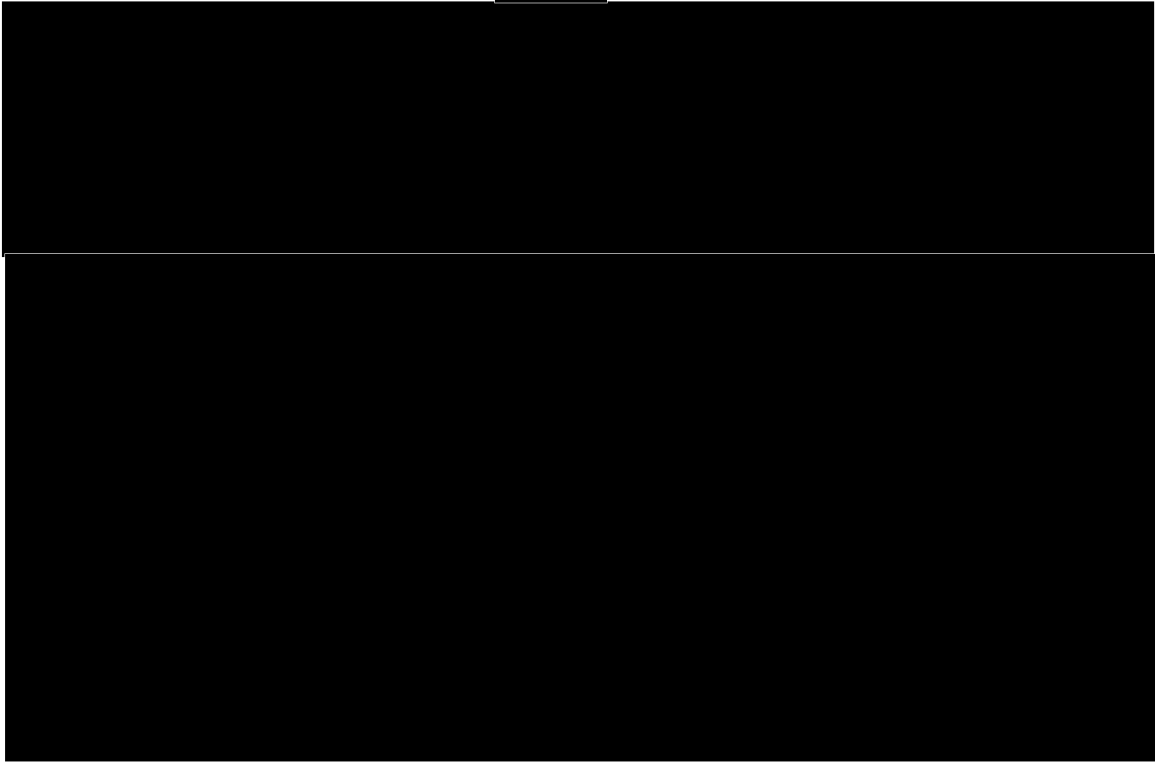


De Klerk has tried to offset resentment toward some of his moves, such as banning security force personnel from belonging to any political party, with actions aimed in part at minimizing the ranks of disgruntled police. Since 1989, SAP manpower has increased by 25 percent, which has helped ease grueling work schedules. The SAP budget has nearly tripled during the same period to include funds for significant salary hikes and a greatly enhanced benefits package. [REDACTED]

**Cleaning Up the Military.** De Klerk has employed similar means to try to make the South African Defense Force (SADF) conform to his new standards for dealing with the black opposition, even though the military differs from the police in some key respects. Although

~~Secret~~

about 90 percent of all military personnel are white, the SADF is widely considered more proreform than the SAP. Nonetheless, SADF units have come under more public fire--including from former officers--for alleged hit squad activities than has the SAP. A judicial commission investigating such charges in 1990 implicated the SADF's "Civil Cooperation Bureau" (CCB) but exonerated the SAP. [REDACTED]



**Outlook**

The task of re-orienting South Africa's security forces will remain formidable. Growing hit-and-run attacks by armed black factions and individuals are demoralizing and angering the SAP; as of late July, 112 police have been killed this year, nearly equalling last year's total of 137. If this trend is not reversed, even more police are likely to seize opportunities to help Inkatha, especially by turning a blind eye. [REDACTED]

Despite the SAP's more conservative makeup, the SADF may continue to be the greater thorn in de Klerk's side in coming years. His drastic cuts in the military's budget, his favoritism for the NIS, and pervasive fears among white Army careerists about their future under a black-led regime have made some SADF components fertile ground for rightwing dissension. In addition, although the SAP has a fiercer reputation and uglier image than the

SADF, the military--thanks to units such as the CCB--may have more skeletons in its closet.<sup>6</sup>

Purging the police and military of all personnel who are potential threats to de Klerk's reform program is not a viable option for him at this point.

- Although the opposition of many senior security personnel to the reforms is well known within government circles, forcing them to resign solely because of their political views would probably meet with substantial resistance from even proreformists in the security forces, as well as most whites.
- Moreover, despite the recent forced retirement of SAP generals, the high proportion of lower-ranking white security personnel who are skeptical about de Klerk's sweeping changes virtually precludes a comprehensive purge.
- While the odds of a military or police coup attempt are currently remote, prospects would increase dramatically if de Klerk began conducting a mass purge of conservative security personnel.

Nonetheless, we believe de Klerk--aided by independent investigators such as the Goldstone Commission--can weed out rogue security personnel over time and improve his credibility among blacks and whites on the issue of government complicity in violence. Some positive steps we believe he undoubtedly is considering include:

- Increasingly making an example of security personnel implicated in incidents such as the Boipatong massacre by publicly supporting the maximum punishments allowed under South African law.
- Publicizing the findings of internal SAP and SADF inquiries into individual cases of misconduct.
- Allowing the Goldstone Commission free rein to explore all aspects of abuses and unauthorized actions by security personnel, and making good-faith efforts to follow up on their proposals.
- Continuing to cooperate with the UN Secretary General's recommendations--accepted in principle by Pretoria--for a permanent presence and role for respected foreign monitors of violence.
- Permanently attaching government civilians--perhaps from the judicial branch--to key security components, such as the SAP's Internal Stability Division and the SADF's Special Forces, to serve as de Klerk's eyes and ears.

<sup>6</sup> The recent scandal involving an apparent unauthorized plot by Army intelligence officers to murder a former police official living in London--who has confessed to heading a hit squad in the 1980s and has joined the ANC--underscores the work de Klerk has yet to do:



## APPENDIX

### Backdrop to Boipatong

The Boipatong massacre occurred against the backdrop of five years of black factional fighting that has become an obstacle to political talks and risks escalating into ethnic civil war. The unprecedented antigovernment violence from 1984 to 1986 has been followed by even more deadly black factional fighting among mostly Zulus in Natal Province, where gangs of ANC "comrades" have battled Inkatha-aligned *impis*, or regiments, for supremacy in black townships and villages. ■ ANC-Inkatha fighting worsened significantly--and broadened into ethnic clashes pitting Zulus against non-Zulus--when it spread to Transvaal Province in July 1990. Although most observers believe Chief Buthelezi ordered his Inkatha followers to initiate clashes in Transvaal in an attempt to demonstrate that his support was not confined to Natal, this interpretation ignores prior tensions in the area. As early as April 1990, Buthelezi was distraught over information that ANC supporters--of whom Xhosas form the backbone--in Transvaal had begun to harass and attack Zulus, according to US Embassy reporting. In early July 1990--two weeks before serious fighting in Transvaal townships erupted--the ANC conducted a nationwide general strike accompanied by considerable anti-Inkatha rhetoric. Buthelezi's forces in the Transvaal, mostly migrant Zulu laborers living in all-male hostels, then launched an offensive against non-Zulus, according to most reports. During one four-week period in July and August, over 800 blacks died, and the killing has continued at a high rate; overall, some 6,000 have died in the 30 months since Mandela was freed. ■

In addition to the ANC-Inkatha rivalry, Boipatong and other townships south of Johannesburg were the scene of increasing turmoil within the ANC alliance in the weeks prior to the massacre. According to press reports, tensions were growing between leaders of ANC-aligned civic associations and former ANC military wing members returning from exile, who have joined many ANC "self-defense units" (SDUs) charged with protecting township supporters from Inkatha and government security forces. The core of one such unit controlled by ANC warlord Ernest Sotsu in Sebokeng, located near Boipatong, is some 200 ex-guerrillas who reportedly defended ANC supporters from attacks launched by residents of the KwaMadala hostel early this year. (Before the massacre, the hostel reportedly had also served as a local refuge for Zulus fleeing ANC persecution.) Some former ANC guerrillas, however, have gone beyond setting up and commanding SDUs to usurping power from local civic leaders, causing concern among senior ANC leaders. Only days before the massacre, one ANC supporter in Sebokeng told a journalist that it had been clear who the enemy was before the internal ANC rivalries had grown to the point where he was much more fearful of being killed by "an insider." ■ six weeks after the Boipatong massacre that the ANC had uncovered evidence that Sotsu and his gunmen had killed a number of union leaders aligned with the ANC. Early this month, Mandela and ANC firebrand Chris Hani, head of the South African Communist Party and former second-in-command of the ANC's military wing, admitted publicly that the ANC was investigating and attempting to correct problems caused by some SDUs. ■