

Office of the National Director of Public Prosecutions



The National Prosecuting Authority of South Africa
Igunya Jikelele Labeshutshisi boMzantsi Afrika
Die Nationale Vervolgingsgesag van Suid-Afrika

TO: MEDIA

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EXCAVATIONS BY THE NATIONAL PROSECUTING AUTHORITY AT POST CHALMERS, EASTERN CAPE

Tel: +27 12 845 6000

Fax: +27 12 845 7291

Victoria & Griffiths
Mxenge Building
123 Westlake
Avenue
Weavind Park
Silverton
Pretoria

P/Bag X752
Pretoria
0001
South Africa

www.npa.gov.za

The NPA's Missing Persons Task Team is conducting investigations to trace the whereabouts of persons who disappeared in political circumstances under apartheid and, where possible, to recover remains for the affected families. This was one of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

These cases include several Eastern Cape activists who were abducted and killed by the Eastern Cape security police, including the following:

- Siphiwo Mthimkulu and Topsy Madaka, who were abducted and killed by the Eastern Cape security police in April 1982.
- The Pebco 3, namely Sipho Hashe, Champion Galela and Qaqawuli Godolozzi, who were abducted and killed in May 1985.

In both of the above instances, the perpetrators told the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)'s amnesty committee that the individuals had been abducted, interrogated, shot and killed and their remains burnt on wood fires fuelled by diesel at Post Chalmers, an abandoned police station near Cradock in the Eastern Cape. The perpetrators also asserted that the ashes of these burnt remains had been scraped into black plastic bags and thrown into the Fish River.

The Missing Persons Task Team, accompanied by archaeology and anthropology forensic specialists, has conducted investigations and excavations at the Post Chalmers site.

Significant quantities of burnt human bone material and other artifacts were uncovered at the site.

A septic tank (sewage drain) was also drained and large quantity of burnt human bone fragments were recovered from its contents.



Given the quantity of burnt remains recovered thus far, indications are that the burnt remains were thrown into the septic tank and not the Fish River as claimed by the perpetrators. There are other items of evidence which differ from the account presented by the perpetrators.

All human remains and items gathered will be subjected to further forensic examination.

The NPA will be conducting ongoing investigations and further excavations at the site.

Tlali Tlali (NPA Deputy Spokesperson) 082 3333 880