

Reginald Bhekumuzi Hadebe (1957–1992)

(Editorial reprinted from the *Natal Witness*, 28 October 1992.)

Another prominent political figure has been assassinated in the mindless war in the Natal midlands. The brutal murder of ANC leader Reggie Hadebe cannot be justified. It is part of the madness with which we have lived now for far too long.

Ultimately, political affiliation is unimportant; another life has been lost. A young man has died in the long litany of violence which threatens to dehumanise all of us. The savage irony is that Hadebe was returning from a peace meeting in the Ixopo district when the fatal attack took place. He was on his way to a meeting which was to consider ANC participation in the Pietermaritzburg forum, launched to design a city for the new South Africa. His death will undoubtedly bedevil this process to the detriment of all in this city.

It will remain forever as a tragedy of the old South Africa. Violence in Natal is again threatening to boil out of control. Scores of people are being slaughtered on the South Coast. The death of Hadebe can only raise tensions in the midlands. Many of the youthful supporters of the ANC will undoubtedly want revenge. They will develop their own perceptions of who their targets should be. The danger of the spiral into open warfare cannot be overestimated.

Those guilty of this assassination must be apprehended and punished to the full letter of the law. More and more the seed is taking root that political crimes can be committed with impunity. This has to be stopped. The forces of law and order must, at all costs, stop the senseless murder of Hadebe deteriorating into the wild orgies of killing to which we have become so accustomed.