

Winnie Mandela makes another comeback

By Gumisai Mutume
INTERNATIONAL PRESS SERVICE

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — Outspoken politician Winnie Madikizela-Mandela has often had her back to the wall, but whenever analysts have predicted her political demise, she has been able to bounce back.

She faces another battle and the outcome need not be different from previous occasions.

Madikizela-Mandela is scheduled to appear before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission — a body set up to investigate apartheid-era human rights violations — to answer allegations over her role in 18 human rights abuses, including eight murders.

At the same time, she has been nominated by the African National Congress Women's League of which she is president, as its candidate for the ruling party's deputy presidency, to be contested at its December conference.

Madikizela-Mandela's latest battle involves an allegation that she killed 14 year-old activist

Seipei Stompie. The claim was made by Katiza Cebekhulu in the book "Katiza's Journey" by journalist Fred Bridgland.

Cebekhulu is a former member of the Mandela United Football Club, a group of Soweto youths who served as Winnie Mandela's bodyguards at the height of her anti-apartheid activities.

The man jailed for Seipei's murder, Jerry Richardson, alleged recently in a South African Broadcasting Corporation interview that he killed another activist, Kuki Zwane, on the orders of Madikizela-Mandela. And another former member of Winnie Mandela's entourage, Nicholas Dlamini, claimed that he murdered Dr. Abu Baker Asvat — who examined Seipei before his death — on her instructions.

The TRC will also examine whether Madikizela-Mandela had a hand in the murder of MUFC members who had fallen out with her.

TRC investigative head Dumisa Ntsebeza has said that

the hearing will only try to establish whether there were any human rights violations and if there were, the commission would then proceed with investigations. However the hearing will not be conducted on camera and evidence will not be made public despite calls by Madikizela-Mandela for a public hearing so that she can absolve herself.

She alleges it is all a ploy by people within the African National Congress to scuttle her bid for the vice-presidency.

It would not be the first time Mandela has been the target of alleged dirty tricks.

In a post-1990 operation, police agents set out on an anti-Winnie campaign in which they planted both fact and fiction in the local and foreign media about criminal activities of the MUFC.

Former policeman Paul Erasmus went public in June last year and claimed that he co-ordinated the campaign, which may have contributed to her divorce in

early 1996 from President Nelson Mandela, to whom she had been married for 38 years.

On the political front she managed to sail past opponents and be re-elected president of the ANCWL in July this year despite a crisis that came to a head in 1995, when 11 members of the league's national executive, led by ANC veteran Adelaide Tambo, walked out in protest at her leadership.

Issues that emerged during that time were the question marks hanging over a check for 350,000 rand that she received from Pakistan as head of the women's league and allegations that she was involved in dubious diamond-dealing in Angola.

Mandela had made a dramatic comeback in the ANCWL before. In 1992, she had been forced to withdraw from her position in the women's league provincial office, and all other posts she held in the ANC following allegations that she had abused party funds.

By December 1993, she was back as ANCWL president.

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A Poem

Does it hurt us to be kind
Or is there more satisfaction in doing crime
That only leads to the brothers making time
Pathways to find, like working a job from 9 to 5
Will help our brother stay alive and out of trouble
Because only the strong can survive
Too many of our love ones have died
Too many in the grave
Many, many more to save
No more mistakes to be made
Got to learn how to behave and
Stop going around making waves
We've become no better than our relatives who were enslaved
Don't you listen to those fools out there
Become dead, broke with a sad prayer
and never never have bus fare
Stay in school or learn a trade
You don't always have
to go to college to get that knowledge
Do it right see the light
Go to bed and have a good night
Kill the hate before it's too late
We need an international day of prayer
To let others know we care
It is not all about us
Then perhaps that will quiet some of the fuss
Let's kill the hate before its too late

by
Carolyn Blakeney-Saunders
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Ghana leader opposes USA's embargo against Cuba

PAN-AFRICAN NEWS AGENCY

CAPE COAST, Ghana — Ghanaian President Jerry Rawlings has lashed out at the United States' embargo against Cuba, saying it is "morally wrong." He said to deny a sovereign state the benefits derived from external trade is indefensible.

Rawlings' remarks came during the second Africa-Cuba solidarity conference at the University of Cape Coast. The four-day conference, under the theme "Free Trade and National Sovereignty," was attended by delegates from several countries, including Angola, Cuba, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa and U.S.

Rawlings said attempts by the U.S. to broaden the embargo to cover trade between Cuba and other countries has generated legitimate international concern.

Ghana is against the Helms-Burton embargo, which forbids U.S. overseas subsidiaries to trade with Cuba and threatens to punish any country that trades with the island nation. Ghana is against any law that violates two important principles of international law — non-interference in the internal affairs of another and the right of all nations to determine their own paths of social development.

Increasing opposition to the tightening of the embargo against Cuba, he said, has weakened the U.S. position because its own allies — the European Union, Canada, Japan and several Latin American states — consider it without any basis in international law.

AIDS screening called unfair

LUSAKA, Zambia — Human rights activists in Zambia are angry over requirements by many countries that immigrants and visitors undergo mandatory HIV testing, calling the practice "inhuman" and discriminatory.

The situation was highlighted in a recent case involving three Zambian journalists who were refused entry into Canada after testing positive for HIV. Human rights activists have called on world bodies to take up the situation as a human rights issue and are demanding redress.

Countries feel that by not admitting people who are HIV positive they will be able to reduce the rate of infection. However, the World Health Organization has denounced this practice, saying that it is not the way to reduce HIV transmission.

The mandatory testing have made some Zambians more cautious when choosing countries for advanced studies.

"We now take into consideration the country's policy regarding HIV/AIDS testing. For example, I have accepted that I will not even apply to the United States or Canada for training — not because I am HIV positive, but because I refuse to be forced to undergo a test," said Martin Mwamba, a physiotherapist.

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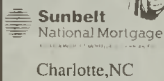
Some Zambians see the practice as having racial overtones. Winston Zulu, an AIDS activist, says it is strange that it is mostly the developed countries where a majority of the population is white that are insisting on this compulsory testing, while developing countries "meekly allow their people to be led like rabbits" to the laboratories for testing.

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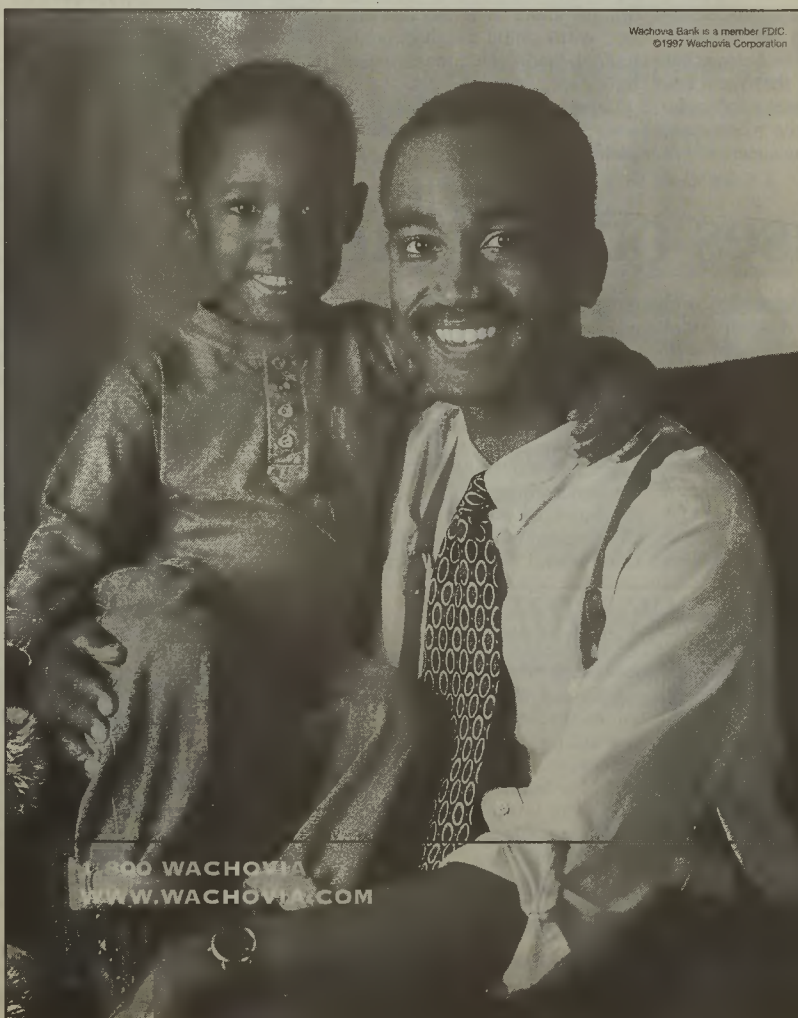
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