

SUBMISSION TO TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION  
BY  
URCSA MESSINA CONGREGATION

We, the congregation of the Uniting Reformed church in Southern Africa (former NGKA in Messina) hereby represented by the church council, wish to submit to the Truth and Reconciliation commission as follows:

1. In 1977 the congregation lost a house in Messina Town. Rev L. E. Matsaung, our first black minister, could not stay in our mission house, (parsonage) in town (white area) because as the white NG Kerk put it: "The Group Areas Act did not allow it." They even rented the house to someone else. This Act no longer exists, but we do not succeed in re-owning our house. The situation continues to torment the congregation. Several times we approached the white N.G. Kerk, but no response comes through.
2. During the period 1977 to 1991 our parsonage at Messina-Nancefield was frequently raided by police and the army. At one stage it was attacked and window panes broken. Up to date nobody has been arrested.
3. Our church building at Nancefield where also the para-legal office is housed, was also attacked and window panes broken.
4. We lost also a plot at Harper of about 6 hectares (6ha) which was granted to the congregation by Messina Investments Limited. We had already made three boreholes and plans for conference centre and irrigation schemes where 50 people were on standby about to start to work.
5. Another parsonage we lost with the same reasons is at Tshipise 35kms from Messina Town.
6. Our congregation was horribly persecuted by both the police, the army and the white congregation of the N. G. Kerk in Messina.
  - 6.1 In 1982 the congregation lost the subsidy which was withdrawn because our minister was labelled a "terrorist".
  - 6.2 In 1985 the N. G. Kerk in Messina blocked the subsidy from Pretoria which was coming to our congregation through them.
7. During this Period the church council members were now and then taken to Belbridge police headquarters and terribly interrogated.
8. During the Messina Terror Trial where Mthetheledi Ncube and Nondula (MK cadres) were tried by the Supreme Court their parents stayed at our parsonage at Nancefield Township with the family of Rev. L. E. Matsaung.

This resulted in the persecution of our pastor's family by the police, army and the N. G. Kerk congregation of Messina. The pastor's sermons were now and then confiscated by the army.

9. At one stage a planned bombing of our church building was aborted as congregation members pounced upon one government agent who was found taking fotos of our church building while the congregation was busy worshipping.

10. In 1991 our pastor and other church leaders were detained under section 50 of the Security Act and put in different police station cells. Rev L. E. Matsaung was put at Duiwelkloof police station cell. "On my arrival I was pushed into a big ice cold room. From 18h00 to 4h00 my bowels were cold frozen. After I was taken out for 2 days I could not eat nor drink. I nearly died. This was a horrible torture I will never forget in my life."

11. The congregation suffered for many years because of our involvement in the struggle against the oppression of the Black community in Messina. The white government saw us as the enemy that was misleading the people, while the people saw us as carrying a light of hope in their lives.

## **REQUESTS:**

We hereby humbly request the commission to help us in the following:

1. To repossess our congregation parsonage, the mission house from the N. G. Kerk congregation which they registered in their name for the reasons that the Group Areas Act did not allow us to register it in our name.

1.1 We claim also the monies they got from its rentals. Also the parsonage at Tshipise and the plot at Harper.

2. To bring back the subsidies which were cut and the interest that accrued from it. In this case we claim about R250 000-00 that will help us in healing our wounds.

## **Conclusion**

The above is our humble submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The church council - URCSA