

You've failed the people of this country, Mr President

**HARD
TRUTH**

**LUMKA
OLIPHANT**



By the time you read this article I will be in Cape Town burying my cousin Nonceba Mzondo, who was brutally murdered in Gugulethu last weekend.

Nono, as we fondly called her, was raped. Her eyes were gouged out and she was left for dead. On Sunday morning, when I received an SMS that Nonceba was no more and how brutally she was murdered, I wondered how our president and his government feel when such horrific crimes are reported in the media. I wondered if they ever consider changing the law and bringing the death penalty back.

Then again, wherever the president and his family go, they have bodyguards protecting them.

The heartless thugs even killed the family dog, which was found lying beside Nono – just a nuisance to them as it fought to save her.

Barely two weeks ago we lost our uncle after he was stabbed to death in the same area of Gugulethu.

Last week in this newspaper, a colleague, Zingisa Mkhuma, wanted to

know what on earth was going on with our black brothers. I am about to join her in the chorus of concern about our black men, for it is a black male who has been arrested for Nono's murder.

Why this deep-seated hatred of women among our black brothers? How could anyone kill somebody in such a cruel manner? We surely can't blame it on poverty or apartheid. ✓

I have always been very optimistic about the future of South Africa and never quite understood the impact of crime in this country. To be honest, it has been the least of my problems and, above all, I trusted our black leaders to get things under control. Even after I myself was shot last year, I was optimistic – but now I have had enough.

I was lucky that I lived to tell the tale. But I don't have much hope that the court system will put the man accused of shooting me behind bars.

Nono was one of the unlucky ones who will never be able to tell her story before a court. Instead, if her killer is found guilty, all of us who pay taxes will be footing the bill for his food, accommodation and wellbeing while he is incarcerated.

I was one of the people who, no matter what, defended the ANC government for abolishing the death penalty. Now I understand why most whites in this country are making so much noise about crime and

emigrating in droves. I understand why somebody would set up a website to make sure that nobody comes to this country for the World Cup in 2010, as day in and day out we hear stories of this nature.

This week we have had many politicians visiting my granny's house to convey their condolences. But it's too late, because Nono is a statistic, and once she has been laid to rest, it will be business as usual and nothing will be done to make sure the citizens of this country are safe.

We will still be living in fear and wondering who we're going to bury next.

Call me whatever you want to call me, but never again will I set foot in a voting station unless there is a party that will promise to bring back the death penalty.

We need it in this country and we need it urgently. I have lost all hope in this government to bring the crime levels under control, and I am sorry, Mr President, you and your government have failed me and my family.

You have also failed the Mbhele family, because, after a year, the killers of Nelisiwe and Lindiwe are still roaming the streets. And you've failed thousands of others.

I hope that as your day comes to an end today, you realise that, no matter how hard members of the police service have worked on this case, we will never get Nono back.