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EMPSA Daily Reports of the Town Howick in the Natal Region

Howick team, Ecumenical Monitoring Programme in South Africa

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EMPSA-report Howick team

Draft

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Maina Murage 13-04-1994 Deployment

14-04-1994

Morning: team meeting

Afternoon: Howick police station to meet station commander Danielz and to introduce ourselves. He told us that he had been there for 3 years, and at this moment it is very quiet. In April 1993 there was a clash in Mpophomeni with 11 deaths. He wonders if there will be a clash this year April. Next week there will be three rallies of the ANC, DP and NP. Tomorrow a rally by the NP at 7.30 am. He gave us the name of the 4 voting stations: Sawers Hall, Howick West Community Hall, Mpophomeni Community Hall and the Lion's River Polo Club. He said that he didn't have an idea about how the people will vote.

Afterwards we stopped to see the Howick West Community Hall voting station.

Evening: meeting with the brothers of Marianhill. We saw the debate between Mandela and de Klerk with them.

15-04-1994

Morning: 7.30 am there was supposed to be a meeting in the busterminal of Howick of NP Natal governer Danie Schutte. We waited until 8.15. Then we heard from the traffic police that the meeting was cancelled. We did see a lot of police.

Maina Murage joined us at lunchtime to strengthen our team.

After lunch: To the police station in Mpophomeni. App. 3000-5000 inhabitants. It is neighbouring KwaZulu. The officer in charge of the ISU didn't know where the voting station was going to be. It is now very quiet. It is mostly ANC and no Inkatha, but he wasn't sure. He didn't know about ID's and voter education. He sent us to the Catholic church.

Afterwards we went to see Sister Annet. She also confirmed that it was quiet. She indicated that there was a rumour that Ntombella, an Induna and KZ parliament member, was collecting ID's in KwaZulu territory neighbouring Mpophomeni and that the magistrate ordered him to return the ID's. She wasn't sure if that had happened. She said that ID's and voter education has been done. In the rural areas there is intimidation from the Boers. She thinks that the voting station will be in the Community Hall, but this isn't yet confirmed to the people. She gave us a briefing on the history of violence in Mpophomeni.

In the township we only saw posters from the ANC. We saw a voter education poster in the church.

18-4-94 (Monday)

Drove to Mooi River and called on the magistrate's office. Informed us that he was in charge of only one voting station in town. Directed us to the IEC office, to a Mr. Chotu.

Proceeded to the IEC office, in a Caltex petrol station. Met Mr Chotu and three other men. IEC office had no sign to designate it as IEC. Reception by Mr Chotu was less than welcome. Mr Chotu said he could not speak to us because we had no official accreditation. Said any discussion with us would have to be off the record. Told us there were nine voting stations - five fixed stations, and four mobile stations. His assessment of the situation was that the area was quiet, with the exception of the rural northern area of his voting district. Mr Chotu indicated that there were two voting stations in Mooi River and one in Bruntville. The second station in Mooi River was for those who might feel intimidated in Bruntville; those could come to town to vote there. He thought voter education in the area was adequate. (In Bruntville we discovered that the assessment of voter education was slightly different.)

Then we stopped to meet Father Thembi of the Catholic Church in Mooi River. Father Thembi gave us a good summary of the conflict, the three main groups in the area: the township residents, the freest to vote; the farmworkers, who were dependent on their farmers for permission to vote; and the rural/hostel dwellers, who had to account to both IFP and the local indunas.

Then Father Thembi took us to Bruntville, first for a tour of the township, and then for some meetings. Our first meeting was with Derrick Nondaba, the ANC representative in Bruntville. Derrick gave us an overview of the security situation; he explained that there was an uneasy quiet in the area, since there were some "bad elements" in the hostels. Most of the hostel dwellers (80%), according to Derrick, would vote for the ANC. He also felt that any person in the Bruntville township would be free to vote.

Derrick said that voter education had been done in the township on the one ballot system, but indicated a need for more education on the two ballot system.

Derrick was not aware of the existence or location of the IEC office in Mooi River. (IEC's anonymity was confirmed by Father Thembi, who also did not know of the IEC office; neither did a Caltex station attendant who worked just outside the office.)

Derrick agreed that it would be helpful to have the IEC come to Bruntville and provide further voter education on the two ballot system.

Then we proceeded to the hostel and met Alex Sokhela and another person. Alex is the IFP hostel leader. Neither of the two men welcomed us - there was clear hostility toward us. The second man only responded in Zulu to our questions although it was evident that he could easily understand and communicate in English. Alex was quiet for the first half of the meeting, until a white NPA hostel official arrived. The NPA man said the IEC had been there and had contacted them about the voting station. At this point Alex interjected that the IEC had come to the administrator but not to the political party. This he said in English. The IFP position was that those who wanted to vote could do so, and those who did not want to vote would leave and go home. He said that they would deal with their own affairs and those who wanted to vote would bother about their own affairs.

Alex asked what would be our response if there was intimidation. We answered that we would report any intimidation, by whoever, to the IEC for appropriate action.

SUMMARY and CONCLUSION

1. Bruntville residents feel free to vote..
2. ANC requested additional IEC resources for the two ballot system.
3. According to the ANC, the majority of the people in Bruntville will vote ANC, including 80% of the hostel dwellers.
4. ANC is unaware of the existence and location of the IEC office.
5. IEC in Mooi River has no identification to notify residents.
6. IEC in Mooi River was inaccessible to us. First words to us were that we were not properly accredited. This does not bode well for the average person seeking voter assistance.

19-04-94

ANC meeting with Yunus Carrim in the Howick West Community Hall, about 300 people.

Before the meeting there were ballot papers, instructions on the two ballot paper system and ANC programs distributed.

There were also 9 IEC-monitors present.

The audience was mostly men and Indians and coloured.

There were no police in the building but they were around. We estimated that there were about 300 people who attended the meeting, but after the speech a lot of people left early.

The meeting started with some vivas and a prayer.

The speech given by Yunus Carrim was mostly directed to the Indians and the coloured, to address their concerns when the ANC will become the government of SA.

The speech was translated into Zulu. Yunus Carrim also gave some attention to the need of education on the two ballot paper system.

Someone of the Mpophomeni ANCYL gave also a speech.

Afterwards people got the opportunity to ask some questions. There was one question on the voting of the blind and the illiterate and on the voting education.

The meeting was orderly, disciplined and quiet.

Howick team report

20-04-1994

Meeting with Peter Kerchoff at the IEC office
Pietermaritzburg.

1. Need to print 80 million stickers to attach to ballot. There is a danger that they may not be applied straight, and then it is a spoilt ballot.
2. Much of the material for the election is kept in Pmb.
3. There are not enough UV-lamps, and so they are flying new ones in from America.
4. Right now there is a meeting between Buthelezi and IEC in Ulundi.
5. With IFP in, voting stations needed to be expanded, but some of the already appointed earlier. There will now be between 1500-1600 voting stations.
6. Tomorrow there will be a dry run for the elections to check the stations for water, toilets, telephone etc and also how long it takes to get to a voting station from various points.
7. It was planned to have more voting stations in one building, but now there will be one per building, because they need to release staff to work in the new voting stations.
8. The principals will be available to work at the station.
9. There is a problem with transport from the staff to the voting stations. There will be an appeal on the churches to offer cars.
- 10 Temporary Voting Cards will be taken in after receiving the ballot paper. Then the TVC's will be destroyed, otherwise some could be used again by another person. They cannot be marked with ink because they are plastic.
- 11 People still need TVC's. They may even be available at the voting station themselves.
12. There are security and under age problems. A number of underaged have got a TVC.
- 13 There will be an checking process at the station. Questionable people may be asked to come back in several hours. A doctor may be present to check age.
- 14 In the new stations Telkom will install telephone and faxes.
- 15 Ballot boxes will be constantly watched, even slept with, by IEC monitors.
- 16 Weapons need to be left outside the 1100 meter perimeter. The police will not arrest anyone for unlawful possession of weapons within the 1100 meter perimeter. They will request them to leave.
- 17 Outside the 1100 meter SAP will be armed. They are asked to act sensitively. But the third force?
- 18 Perimeters are not fenced, so dividing this may not always be so clear.

19 Peter took our report on the IEC office in Mooi River. He will pass it on.

20 There are risks distributing material. We should take resources to the IEC office and tell both IFP and ANC that resources are here. Jabulani saw this as a problem if we distributed the material. Leaving it in the IEC office is the best policy.

21 PACSA has done a lot of voter education among the farmers and the farmworkers. If we have questions we should check PACSA.

22 Ntombelo will have problems since he has collected ID's. It is his, IFP, problem.

23 Same goes for Bulwer area.

21-04-94

Meeting with commander Peters in Hilton. There is one voting station, Hilton Town Board, for 15000 voters. Sweetwaters is close, so he expects also some voters in Hilton, because they may feel safer and they go to Hilton for shoppings and for work.

Hilton has a peaceful history without political violence and intimidation. Yesterday there has been voter education also for the farm workers.

The police will be armed within the 100 meter, but no heavy arms. There will be no SADF or NPKF. The presiding officer is in charge, and the police will be sensitive. The task of the SAP will be fair and free of violence elections.

He has noticed no change after the IFP decided to participate. He thinks that in Hilton there is no support for the Volksfront, more for the DP.

There were people who had seen trucks of the KZP in the night. The police did try to get this confirmed but they failed. It is handed over to the intelligence department. The perception of the SAP in the community has changed. They have moved into community policing. They had meetings with the people, and these were well attended. The police also talked with the taxi companies from Sweetwaters.

Afterwards we went to the Cedara farm college. There we spoke with the man in charge, elected by the people and the boss. He says that the people are now freer to vote than before the IFP participated. He is saying that we are going to vote. He thought that the voting station would be at St. Joseph. If it isn't there he foresees problems with transport and with violence. There has been voter education done. The people in general know about the ID's. As a leader he is non-partisan, but he told us freely that he is affiliated to the IFP. He just wants more freedom and peace.

We went to check out if there is a voting station at St Joseph Scholasticate or the high school. But they didn't know that.

Then we went to Lion's River. We found the polo club, that will function as a voting station. The man in charge, J.R. MacKenzie was not home. The man in the voting station told us that there had been voter education of the farmworkers by the boss.

Afterwards we went to Nottingham Road. The voting station will be in the building of the Farmers Association. Tuesday there will be only in Howick for the special votes.

The people go one way in and one way out. He expects 20000 voters. Also a lot of Impendle and Bruntville. If IFP would have not taken part there would be a lot of violence and less voting. The 1100 meter perimeter was not clearly identified. The 100 meter perimeter is the building. There are no cars allowed in front of the building.

A team of the college has done voter education. There has been intimidation from all parties.

In the evening three of us attended the PACSA agape meal in Merrivale.