

PRESS RELEASE

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STARTS

December 05, 2014

## Update: The Steve Biko & Ahmed Timol Autopsy Reports

*"One thing you must realize is that the concept [of] struggle which is [a] struggle [for] liberation of yourself, from anything threatening you is continuous through history."*

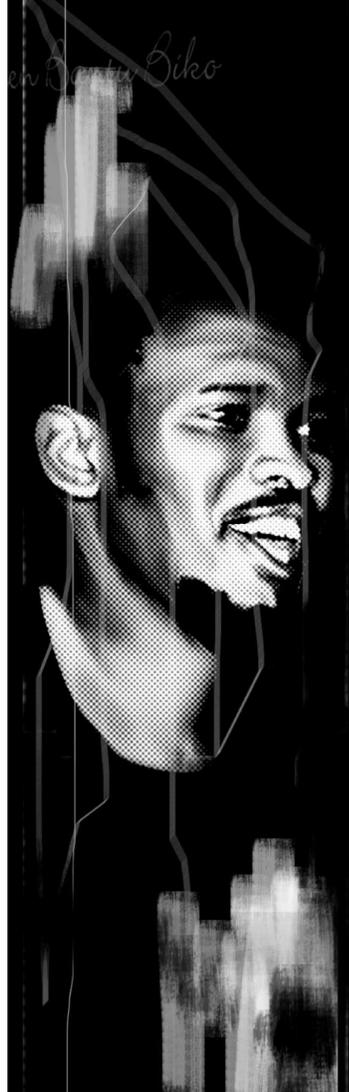
-Steve Biko

The Steve Biko Foundation, the Biko Family and the Timol Family are deeply disappointed that in their statement of December 4, 2014, Mr. Clive Steele and Ms. Susan Steele have not addressed the matter of returning the autopsies of Mr. Ahmed Timol and Mr. Steve Biko to their respective families.

The facts are that the Biko Family together with the Steve Biko Foundation and the Timol Family acted to protect the sale of documents that are not only of familial value, but are also of national significance. The Steeles were given ample time to explain themselves; yet they did not. The lawyers subsequently went to court on December 3rd at 08h30 because the auction was imminent--scheduled to take place on December 3rd at 10h00. Despite being served papers to appear, the Steeles were conspicuously absent and did not send representation.

In regard to the statement issued by the Steeles, the Biko Family, Steve Biko Foundation and Timol Family note numerous inconsistencies between the auction catalogue through which the Steeles promoted the autopsy reports, and their pronouncements yesterday. The description of the goods in the auction catalogue reads as follows:

*"101. GLUCKMAN, DR. JONATHAN – THE STEVE BIKO AUTOPSY REPORT, Pretoria 1977, in original ruled paper covers, pale green pages, containing certificate from the relevant pathologists, Certificate in Terms of the Criminal Procedure Act of 1977 and the Report of the Medico-Legal Post Mortem, this copy is not signed and the photographs referred to in the text are not*



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present, however the autopsy of Biko's brain has the cyclostyled signature of Dr. N.S. Proctor on each page, the autopsy consists of 43 pages, **a unique document of the struggle era of great historical importance** that gives the full details of the autopsy/post mortem. **It is unknown if another copy of this document exists.** The history of the document is of interest – it was given to the vendor's mother, Mrs. Maureen Steele, who was employed by Dr. Jonathan Gluckman as his personal private secretary from June 1969 to February 1978. Dr. Gluckman was very concerned about the safety of such documents as his offices had been bugged and he had received numerous death threats. He therefore asked Mrs. Steele to keep the copies of such documents. The Biko autopsy was attended by Professor Johan Loubser, Chief State Pathologist; Professor I.W. Simpson – Department of Anatomical Pathology at the University of Pretoria; **Dr. Jonathan Gluckman – pathologist appointed by the Biko family;** Professor Neville Sydney Proctor – Anatomical Pathologist of the University of the Witwatersrand, at the request of Dr. Gluckman and Professor L.S. de Villiers. R70000/100000

102. GLUCKMAN, DR. JONATHAN – THE AHMED TIMOL AUTOPSY AFFIDAVIT, Johannesburg 1977, **original age-browned foolscap, unsigned cast of carbon copy.** Mrs. Maureen Steele was employed as personal private secretary to Dr. Jonathan Gluckman from June 1969 to February 1978, Gluckman asked Steele to keep copies of such documents as he felt that his rooms in Lister Building, Jeppe Street, Johannesburg could be raided or burgled at any time. His suspicions were confirmed many years later in December 1992 when his rooms were found to have been bugged with sophisticated equipment. The then Minister of Law and Order, Hennis Kriel, was extremely critical of Dr. Gluckman, stating that of the 118 cases obtained from files in Dr. Gluckman's office, only 34 of these people had died in police custody. During this period Dr. Gluckman was asked, by many families of people who died in detention, to be their pathologist. In 1972 Ahmed Timol was one of the first deaths in custody to cause a public outcry, he was said to have jumped from the eighth floor of John Vorster Square in Commissioner Street, Johannesburg. The post mortem was conducted by Dr. N.J. Scheepers, head of Department of Forensic Medicine at the University of the Witwatersrand and the officer in charge of the Government Mortuary in Johannesburg. He was assisted by **Dr. Jonathan Gluckman who represented the Timol family,** he was allowed to attend with the consent of the District Surgeon of Johannesburg and the Divisional C.I.D. Officer of the Witwatersrand, Brigadier Alwyn Burger. R20000/25000."

**[Emphasis Steve Biko Foundation]**

Ms. Obenewa Amponsah, SBF Director noted that "It is unfortunate that the Steeles have opted to make statements of this nature instead of doing the right thing and simply returning the documents to the Biko and Timol Families. Our lawyers have given the Steeles until Monday to agree to immediately handover the

*documents or we will proceed with court papers and, this time, we will seek costs."*

The Timol Family, the Biko Family and the Steve Biko Foundation are of the view that the reaction of the Steeles' is defensive, incorrect in law and inconsistent with their prior statements. According to Mr. Nkosinathi Biko, Trustee of the Steve Biko Foundation and Biko Family representative, Ms. Susan Steele's assertion that she is owed an apology, "*is an indication that she and her brother are yet to understand the gravity of the situation in which they find themselves.*"

**ENDS**

*For further information or interview requests please contact Mr. Thando Sipuye at the Steve Biko Foundation on 011 403 0310 or via email: [tsipuye@sbf.org.za](mailto:tsipuye@sbf.org.za)*

*For more information on the Steve Biko Foundation, please visit [www.sbf.org.za](http://www.sbf.org.za)*

*For more information on Ahmed Timol, please visit [www.ahmedtimol.co.za](http://www.ahmedtimol.co.za)*

**ENDS**