



AZAPO

AZANIAN PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION

TO : MEDIA HOUSES FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FROM : AZAPO PRESIDENT

DATE : OCTOBER 24, 2022

SUBJECT : AZAPO PRESS STATEMENT ON THE FALLING OF CDE HLAKU KENNETH RACHIDI

AZAPO is shocked and shattered by the sad news of the passing on of one of the founders of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), Cde Hlaku Kenneth Rachidi (78). Cde Rachidi was not well for a while after he suffered a major stroke. He took his final rest last night at his home in Johannesburg.

Cde Rachidi is one of those credited by history for reorganising the masses and reigniting the revolutionary fires after the political lull that followed the 1960 banning of the ANC and PAC by the settler-colonial regime. As a BCom student at the University of Fort Hare in 1966, Cde Rachidi joined the University Christian Movement and NUSAS. The experience of the neglect of black students' interests in NUSAS prompted them to form the South African Students Organisation (SASO), of which Steve Biko was the inaugural President in 1969.

Cde Rachidi was instrumental in the formation of the Black People's Convention (BPC) in 1972. During the 1973 sweeping banning of the BCM leaders, Cde Rachidi assumed the position of the BPC's National Vice Chairperson. He also held the Position of the organisation's Secretary General during the 1974 *Viva Frelimo Rallies*. His fearlessness and leadership prowess saw him elected the BPC President in 1975. He held that position until the banning of the BCM organisations on 19 October 1977.

That bestows upon Cde Rachidi the honour of having been the last President of the BPC. In his capacity as the BPC President, he led the funeral of Steve Biko barely a month before the banning of BCM organisations.

The banning never deterred the spirit of these fearless leaders. In 1978 they founded AZAPO to continue raising the flag of the BCM and advancing the legacy of Steve Biko. In 1984, he was elected the Transvaal National Vice President of AZAPO. In the advanced stages of his life, he returned to the community development projects under Isbaya together with his Comrades Pandelani Nefolovhodwe and Peter Jones.

Our democracy owes a lot to the contributions and sacrifices of the political activists like Cde Rachidi. The history books of democracy cannot be complete without his name. AZAPO takes note of the coincidence of the passing of Cde Rachidi in the month of October, and during the 45th anniversary of the banning of BCM organisations.

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