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William Ndangana

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William Ndangana was one of the commanders of the [Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army](#) (ZANLA) during the [Second Chimurenga](#). He was a senior member of the [Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front](#) (ZANU PF), the leader of the [Crocodile Gang](#) which staged sabotage activities in 1964. During the post independence era, he was appointed as the Deputy Minister of Defence and the leader of the Zimbabwe People's Militia, which was a para-military sect which was a security mechanism meant to gather information as well as quelling the perceived threat exposed by the so called dissidents.

Political career

Ndangana joined ZANU PF whilst he was in Zambia. He was the Deputy Secretary of the ZANU PF's Youth League in Zambia.^[1] He is credited for assembling the Crocodile Gang whilst in Zambia.^[2] He received 'basic' military training in Tanzania for six months to undertake acts of sabotage under the banner of the Crocodile Gang.^[2]

When the gang was disbanded in 1964, he escaped to Zambia after being aided financially by [Ndabaningi Sithole](#)'s wife.^[1] He went for further military training in China. After successfully completing his training, he became a military instructor. He was deployed at Intumbi Reefs Camp in Tanzania.^[1]

Other than being a mere instructor, he was appointed to be a commander of the ZANLA forces under the leadership of [Josiah Tongogara](#) who was the Commander in Chief of the ZANU PF's military wing. He rose through the ranks and at one point he was appointed to be the ZANLA's Chief of Operations.^[3]

His Career after 1980

During the post-independence era, Ndangana became the Deputy Minister of Defence, a position he held until the time of his death. In 1982, there was the establishment of a para-military sect, the Zimbabwe People's Militia which was an additional and or supplementary part of the [Zimbabwe National Army](#) (ZNA).^[4] The para-military sect was treated as a separate entity from the ZNA and its creation was prompted by the perceived threat of the so called 'dissidents' who were allegedly accused of plotting a coup de tat.^[4] The militia was thus supposed to be the ears and eyes of the government and it was supposed to act first before the army was called in.^[4] Ndangana was appointed to led this people's militia whose mandate was to secure that all dissidents were rotted out.

Members of the people's militia were trained by the North Koreans and their main training camp was the

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[Battalion Battle School](#) located in [Nyanga](#).^[4] As time went on, they were began to be trained at other camps such as Paradise in Bindura and Gabriel Central Training which was in Marondera.^[4]

Though the people's militia was supposed to be a non-partisan entity, it was reported that it later became an arm of ZANU PF. In the 1985 elections, the people's militia was heavily implicated for gross human rights abuse.^[4] It was however disbanded and its members were incorporated into the [Fifth Brigade](#) which orchestrated the massacres of *dissidents* during the [Gukurahundi](#) era.^[4]

His Death

Ndangana died in a horrendous car accident on 27 June 1989 near Nyazura and he was buried at the [National Heroes Acre](#). This was despite that he constantly criticised [Robert Mugabe](#)'s criteria of selecting cabinet members which was mainly based on tribal lines.^[5]

Conflicting accounts emerged which tried to account for the death of Ndangana. On the one hand, it was reported that he was mistakenly killed as the targeted person was [Edgar Tekere](#) who was now referred to as a dissident after he had defected from ZANU PF to form his political party, the [Zimbabwe Unit Movement](#) (ZUM).^[5] It was stated that Tekere was supposed to travel from [Harare](#) to [Nyazura] at noon but he however decided to travel during the night.^[5] Coincidentally, Ndangana travelled from Harare to Nyazura at noon. Upon seeing an oncoming vehicle which resembled Tekere's, an army truck came from nowhere and collided head on with Ndangana's vehicle.^[5]

On the other hand, it was reported that Ndangana offered Tekere a lift from Harare to Nyazura unbeknown to him that something was prepared for them on their way.^[3] However on the scene of the accident, Tekere was not there and no tracks ever showed that Tekere was with Ndangana on that fateful day.

About Pindula

Pindula is a place to find information about local things on the internet. We do it a lot like Wikipedia, except everything is hyper-local. We started work on Pindula because we needed something like it. There's so little useful information about local things online and we're working to change that

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