

18 June 2015

Dhlomo family mourns and celebrates the life of exiled Apartheid Struggle hero, footballer and boxer, Baba Darius Mfana Temba Dhlomo.

The Dhlomo family is mourning and celebrating the heroic life of exiled ANC stalwart, erstwhile footballer, boxer and jazz singer Darius Mfana Temba Dhlomo who passed on 13 June 2015 in Netherlands.

The funeral service is currently underway in the Netherlands today and is being beamed live via satellite to members of the Dhlomo family, who are gathered at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre (ICC).

This gallant hero and selfless leader was born on 9 August 1931 in Kranskop, eMakhabeleni, to Mr Elias and Pauline (MaSithole) Dhlomo.

He began to compete in black boxing contests in apartheid South Africa and became the black South African cruise weight champion in 1956.

Alongside his boxing career, he was the captain of both Baumannville City Black football team and Natal National football team. He also sang in a jazz quintet and Drum magazine published a feature article entitled, "Darius Dhlomo, Man of many talents."

He moved to Netherlands having signed a professional football contract with Heracles Almelo in 1958, joining Steve "Kalamazoo" Mokone, the first black South African to play in European leagues.

Despite success abroad, his position as an activist for the African National Congress meant that he was not allowed to return home. The Nationalist Party did not want him.

The funerals of his parents, two brothers and two sisters were all held in his absence while he was in exile.

Exiled from South Africa, he settled in Enschede and later worked as a teacher, social worker and politician - contributing significantly to the anti-apartheid movement.

He received permission to return to South Africa in 1992 and met former president Nelson Mandela.

The entire Dhlomo family is humbled to have had one of its own who has lived such a heroic life. The funeral takes place in Netherlands on Thursday, 18 June 2015. Mr Dhlomo will be cremated and his remains will be sent to South Africa for late burial. The family is planning to have a satellite connection in Durban during the proceedings of the funeral.