

# Freedom fighter's daughter tells of her grief and fury

By Luvuyo Mjekula

Lindiwe Khayingo is still harbouring pain and anger 47 years after the death of her father at the hands of the apartheid government.

She was six years old when her father, Diliza Wilson Khayingo, was hanged at the gallows in Pretoria's Maximum Security Prison (C-Max) in 1964. She was the last of four children.

In a workshop organised by the Department of Correctional Services on 21 November 2011 for families of executed freedom fighters, Lindiwe, now 53, narrated her painful story of her life without a father and a mother and how she once tried to kill herself.



**GRIEF STRICKEN:** Lindiwe Khayingo battled to control her tears as she spoke about her father Diliza Wilson Khayingo, a political prisoner hanged at the gallows in Pretoria during the apartheid era.

The purpose of the workshop was to prepare family members of liberation struggle heroes who were hanged at the gallows in Pretoria for the unveiling of the restored gallows as a museum in December 2011.

Lindiwe also vented her fury.

"I hate the boers. I will remain with that hatred in my life. I still live with it," she said, with tears running down her face.

This was because they denied her the opportunity to have a father. "I never got to see my father in flesh. I only see my father in photos," she said.

But Lindiwe's anger is not directed at just the apartheid regime.

She is angry at her own relatives whom she said abused her and deliberately kept her away from her mother, actions that drove her towards suicidal thoughts and saw her diagnosed with a heart disease for which she receives treatment.

After her father was executed, her uncle took her into his home in Queenstown because the apartheid government had taken away her father's home.

However, she was to suffer abuse and more pain from her own uncle and his wife, she said. Battling to hold back tears, Lindiwe said her uncle told her she did not have a mother despite the fact that her mother was alive.

"I grew up not knowing my mother, but she was alive. She was hidden from me," said Lindiwe. Her mother was of coloured origin and Lindiwe said black people hated coloureds at the time. "Coloured people were hated at the time because they were viewed to be close to Indians," said Lindiwe.

Her ordeal made it hard for her to concentrate on her schoolwork because she often fell ill and her uncle kicked her out of his home. "I was not happy living with my uncle."

The situation was so traumatic that Lindiwe tried to commit suicide. She was stopped by her uncle when she tried to swallow a stack of tablets.

It was only in 1985 that Lindiwe found out about the true whereabouts of her mother.

She was in hospital, diagnosed with cancer and later died. Lindiwe's elder brother also died in the late 80s – he was shot dead during a riot in Port Elizabeth.

Lindiwe went on to live with her sister in Maclear in 1986.

She is now a Grade-R teacher in the area but said life was tough. She has been taking care of her sister's mentally ill child after the boy's mother died a few years ago.

Lindiwe is trying hard to let go of the anger and put the past behind her. "If one boer could have come here (to the workshop) and say, 'I am sorry', I would find forgiveness in me," she said.

Lindiwe wants the government to honour her father the same way it honoured other freedom fighters. She said years ago she was on a school tour with her schoolmates when she saw the names of executed struggle heroes neatly posted on the wall of the Red Cross Museum in Port Elizabeth.

She was shocked not to see her father's name on the list.

"My father's name was missing from those on the wall. But he also struggled for this country," said Lindiwe. She said it is surprising that her father's name is not mentioned among the struggle heroes who died for the country.

Her father and five other MK soldiers had been found guilty of eliminating one of their own cadre who had turned traitor and then worked for the apartheid regime. They were executed on 6 November 1964 despite international pressure.

"I'm asking. There's got to be a way for us (Khayingo family) to get help. I wish my father's name could be in the history books."

The Department of Correctional Services will officially reopen the restored gallows on 14 and 15 December following an initiative from Minister Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula to facilitate healing and remembrance around that part of the country's history.