

Winnie Mandela Losing Allies In Soweto

By **JOHN D. BATTERSBY**, Special to **The New York Times**

February 14, 1989

CAPE TOWN, Feb. 13 — Winnie Mandela appears to be increasingly isolated among blacks after weekend reports in the South African press that she took part in the beating of four black youths, one of whom is presumed dead, at her home in Soweto on Dec. 29.

Mrs. Mandela, wife of the imprisoned African National Congress leader, Nelson R. Mandela, who is regarded by some as an anti-apartheid leader in her own right, has denied the allegations. And she has threatened to sue the South African newspapers that reported these charges.

In an unexpected development today, Krish Naidoo, a civil rights lawyer who has acted on Mrs. Mandela's behalf in recent months, resigned.

Mr. Naidoo said in an interview that he had a long discussion with her on Friday and decided not to continue representing her. He would not give the reasons for his decision.

Mr. Naidoo has represented Mrs. Mandela since she refused to deal with Ismail Ayob, who had been the Mandela family lawyer for the last 17 years. Mr. Ayob continues to represent Nelson Mandela.

Mr. Naidoo's resignation followed a six-week controversy surrounding Mrs. Mandela and a score of black youths, known as the Mandela United Football Club, who act as her bodyguards.

Besides representing Mrs. Mandela, Mr. Naidoo has also served as an adviser to the Mandela Crisis Committee, a group of anti-apartheid leaders formed at Nelson Mandela's request last August.

The committee, which includes the most respected church and trade union leaders, was ordered to insure that the football club was disbanded after Mrs. Mandela's Soweto house was burned down, reportedly by black youths who had been provoked by club members.

However, in a statement issued last Friday, the Mandela Crisis Committee admitted that it had failed to disband the club and indicated it was abandoning attempts to defuse the situation, ostensibly because a police investigation had been launched the day before

into the charges surrounding Mrs. Mandela. She avoided meetings with the committee and refused to speak to its members.

Soweto residents who were previously admirers of Mrs. Mandela say she has become a law unto herself and is not accountable to other anti-apartheid leaders, either inside the country or in exile.

Geoff Budlender, a lawyer who has represented political prisoners in cases where they testified they were victims of torture, serves as lawyer for three black youths who said they were abducted by the Mandela United Football Club on Dec. 29. He said today that he had sworn affidavits from them.

The youths said they had been abducted and assaulted and that Mrs. Mandela had been involved in those events that night.

South African police today called on young black radicals, known as comrades, who claim to have discovered the body of the missing youth, to hand it over to the police to assist in their investigation.

The Sunday Star, an English-language newspaper, reported that Mrs. Mandela had personally taken part in the beating of the four youths by football club members.

Mrs. Mandela stopped consulting Mr. Ayob after a controversy last summer, when she entered into an agreement with Robert Brown, a black American lawyer and businessman from North Carolina, concerning the rights to use of the Mandela name on books and other products and in publicity campaigns. She took that action without consulting her husband.

Nelson Mandela subsequently summoned Mr. Ayob to Pollsmoor Prison, where he was then incarcerated, and dictated a statement in which he repudiated the agreement and, by implication, the actions of his wife.