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Women in solitary :stories of the Female detainees in the SA Terrorism, December 1969

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Abstract

In May 1969, 22 political activists, including Nomzamo Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and six other women, were detained at Pretoria Central Prison under the Suppression of Communism Act. Madikizela-Mandela, Venus Thokozile Mngoma, Martha Dhlamini, Joyce Sikhakhane-Rankin, Shanthie Naidoo, Nondwe Mankahla and Rita Ndzanga were held in solitary confinement and kept from their families for various lengths of time, although they were never charged. As 2019 marks the 50th anniversary of their detention, the stories of the remaining women have not been told collectively or in the context of their emotional experience, which varied greatly from that of the men. This project consists of two parts: a theoretical introduction and a long-form journalism narrative. The narrative highlights the stories of the women who fought in the struggle against the apartheid regime in South Africa, particularly those who were detained and tortured, in the context of the trial of May 1969, *The State versus Ndou and 21 others*. Using in-depth interviews with the four women who have survived, Joyce Sikhakhane-Rankin, Shanthie Naidoo, Nondwe Mankahla and Rita Ndzanga, the long-form tells their stories, delves into the emotional impact of their activism and their lives to date. The theoretical research aims to highlight the need for the female narrative and the lack of information about the women involved in the struggle against apartheid. The research shows how telling this story will contribute to the history of untold and intertwined female experience.