

Petros Linda Jabane (1958 – 1980)

MENDI DECORATION FOR BRAVERY IN GOLD (POSTHUMOUS)

AWARDED TO
PETROS LINDA JABANE
FOR BRAVERY AND
VALOUR IN THE FACE OF
OVERWHELMING ODDS AND
FOR SACRIFICING HIS
LIFE IN THE CAUSE FOR A
NON-RACIAL, NON-SEXIST,
JUST AND DEMOCRATIC
SOUTH AFRICA



Petros Linda Jabane was born in Soweto in 1958 and grew up in a single parent family. Unable to keep him at school after Standard Five, his working mother sent him to work to help support the family.

Jabane's experience of injustice and oppression as a worker and the 1976 Soweto uprising inspired him to join the ANC's Umkonto we Siswe.

Jabane received military training in Angola, where his combat unit gave him the nickname of *Ikommanisi* because of his dedication to the workers' cause.

After his whereabouts were detected by the security police from information extracted from brutally tortured comrades, a massive unit of the South African security force, descended on his secret refuge in Chiawelo in Soweto.

Surrounded on all sides and knowing that he would be killed in any event, he was determined to resist being taken alive. When he refused to surrender, the security forces opened fire on the hapless freedom fighter. Jabane defiantly fired back, forcing his enemies to retreat. Jabane's efforts to avoid capitulation have become legendary and witnesses still talk of how he "fought like a lion" to keep at bay the huge forces arraigned against him.

Fighting to his last bullet and injuring many security force members, Jabane was eventually overcome by the sheer might of the assault against him and finally succumbed when a grenade was launched into the building.

Petros Linda Jabane, the *Lion of Chiawelo*, as he has become popularly known, laid down his own young life to secure a South Africa free from oppression, exploitation and racism. His heroic stand until the very end remains an inspiring symbol of fortitude in the face of overwhelming odds.