

Jafta Kgalabi Masemola (1928 – 1990)

ORDER OF LUTHULI IN SILVER (POSTHUMOUS)

AWARDED TO
JAFTA MASEMOLA
FOR DEDICATING HIS
ENTIRE ADULT LIFE TO
THE STRUGGLE AGAINST
APARTHEID AND STANDING
FOR THE IDEALS OF A
FREE, JUST AND
DEMOCRATIC
SOUTH AFRICA



Jafta 'Jeff' Kgalabi Masemola joined the ANCYLin 1958 and was amongst the group of break-away members who founded the Pan African Congress of Azania (PAC) in 1959.

When the PAC was banned in 1961, Masemola and others were sent out of the country to set up the PAC's underground guerrilla structure, POQO, the forerunner of the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA).

Masemola was abducted in Lesotho by apartheid forces and was, with most members of his unit, later sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island. Prison authorities regarded him as an instigator among the prisoners and the 'Tiger of Azania', as Masemola was popularly known, was subjected to solitary confinement for much of his time on Robben Island.

Jafta Masemola rejected President PW Botha's offer to release him on condition that he denounced the armed struggle. He steadfastly refused to engage in any negotiations, except if it was to result in the return of land to the dispossessed African majority and the establishment of a free and just society.