

Finding the last missing piece of a life story of a disappeared person: Dumisani Khumalo & Pamela Whitman



Tracing history through investigations- Stories of the disappeared



A Disappearance Investigator

Dumisani Khumalo



My Background

- Hello my name is Dumisane Khumalo. I am a Disappearance Investigator who has been working for Khulumani Support Group for over ten years. Khulumani was founded during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to help victims through the process of telling their stories. And 16 years later Khulumani is still helping people to discover the truth about people's experiences during the Apartheid period. I help families find out what has happened to their loved ones. And I support people through this painful process.
- My passion for this type of work came about through a very personal story. On the 29th July 1989, my brother Casswell Castro Khumalo was killed in an assassination plot carried out when the security branch of the Apartheid Government managed to infiltrate the MK unit that my brother and two other young men were working with.
- Eight perpetrators were granted **amnesty** for their deaths, despite the fact that they did not reveal the whereabouts of the bodies. The three men killed, including my brother, were came to be known as the Mofolo Three.

One Man's Journey as a Disappearance Investigator



Site of my brother, Caswell's death

Some common threads in these stories

- Often forced disappearance implies murder. The victim in such a case is first abducted, then illegally detained, and often tortured; the victim is then killed and the body hidden. Typically, a murder will be surreptitious, with the corpse disposed of in such a way as to prevent it ever being found, so that the person apparently vanishes. The party committing the murder has deniability, as there is no body to prove that the victim has actually died.

Our presentation on Oral History of the struggle are...

- Histories that are painstakingly reconstructed.
- Histories that are pieced together.
- Histories that some people want to hide or forget while others **need** to know.
- Stories about which some tellers may want to remain silent.

Our presentation on Oral History of the struggle are...

- Histories about people that can no longer talk for themselves.
- Painful stories.
- Histories that don't have a neat conclusion when most of us seek endings for our stories.

‘Enforced or Involuntary Disappeared Person’: A Definition

- those who have been taken into custody by agents of the State
- whereabouts and fate are concealed
- custody is denied
- officials refuse to acknowledge they are involved
- officials refuse to disclose information
- victims outside the protection of the law
- enforced and involuntary
- Governments are involved – indirectly / directly

Source: UN Working Group on Enforced Involuntary Disappearances & Amnesty International

South African Context

- Targeted abduction operations of people formally arrested and detained at police stations.
- Unrest in townships
- Use of vigilante groups
- Laws to root out “terrorism” facilitated the state in carrying out enforced disappearances
- Missing in exile- who fled?,
- Change of role identity
- ANC / PAC

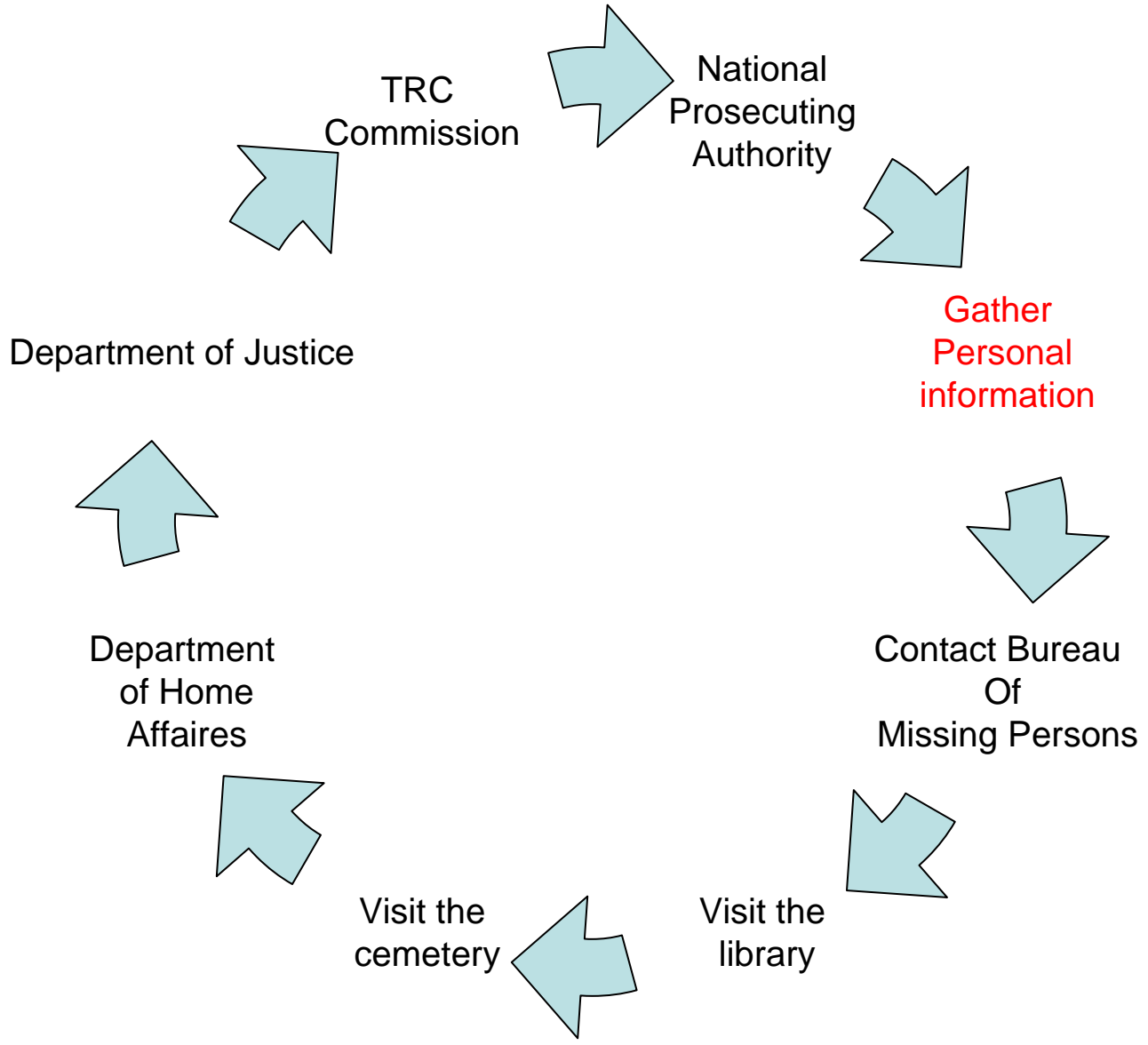


Some methods that were used

- Where security branch did not want to release people who they did not have sufficient evidence. These people would be killed, a release papers would be drawn up, and then people disappeared without a trace.
- Unanswered Questions:
- Who disappeared? How did they die?

Investigating the story of the Disappeared: Steps in Reconstructing the Stories





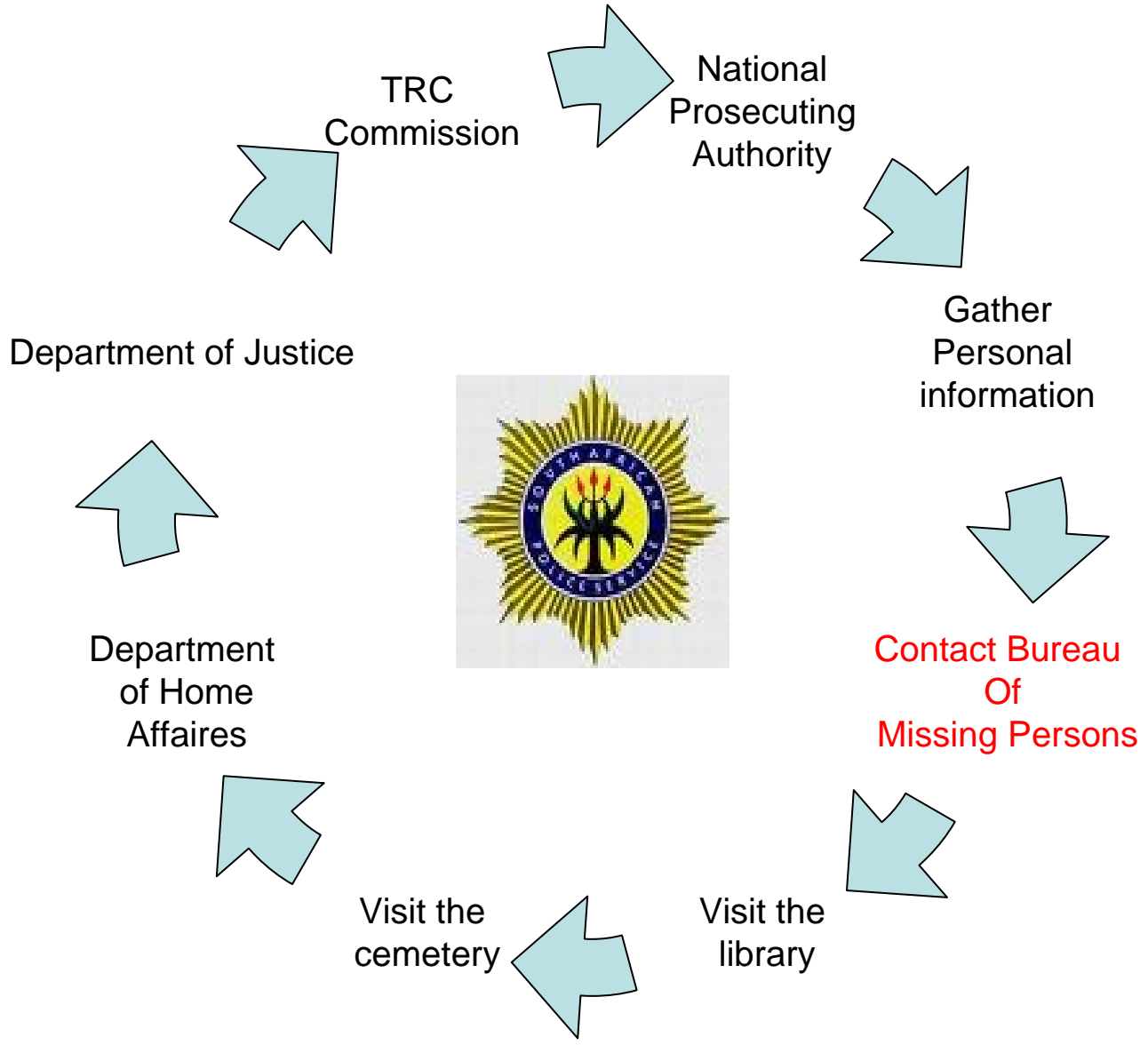
Gathering personal information

- A photo of the disappeared person
- The date of birth & birth certificate
- Age at the time of the disappearance
- Address
- Details of the deponent
- Brief description about the circumstances of the disappearance.

Dealing with trauma

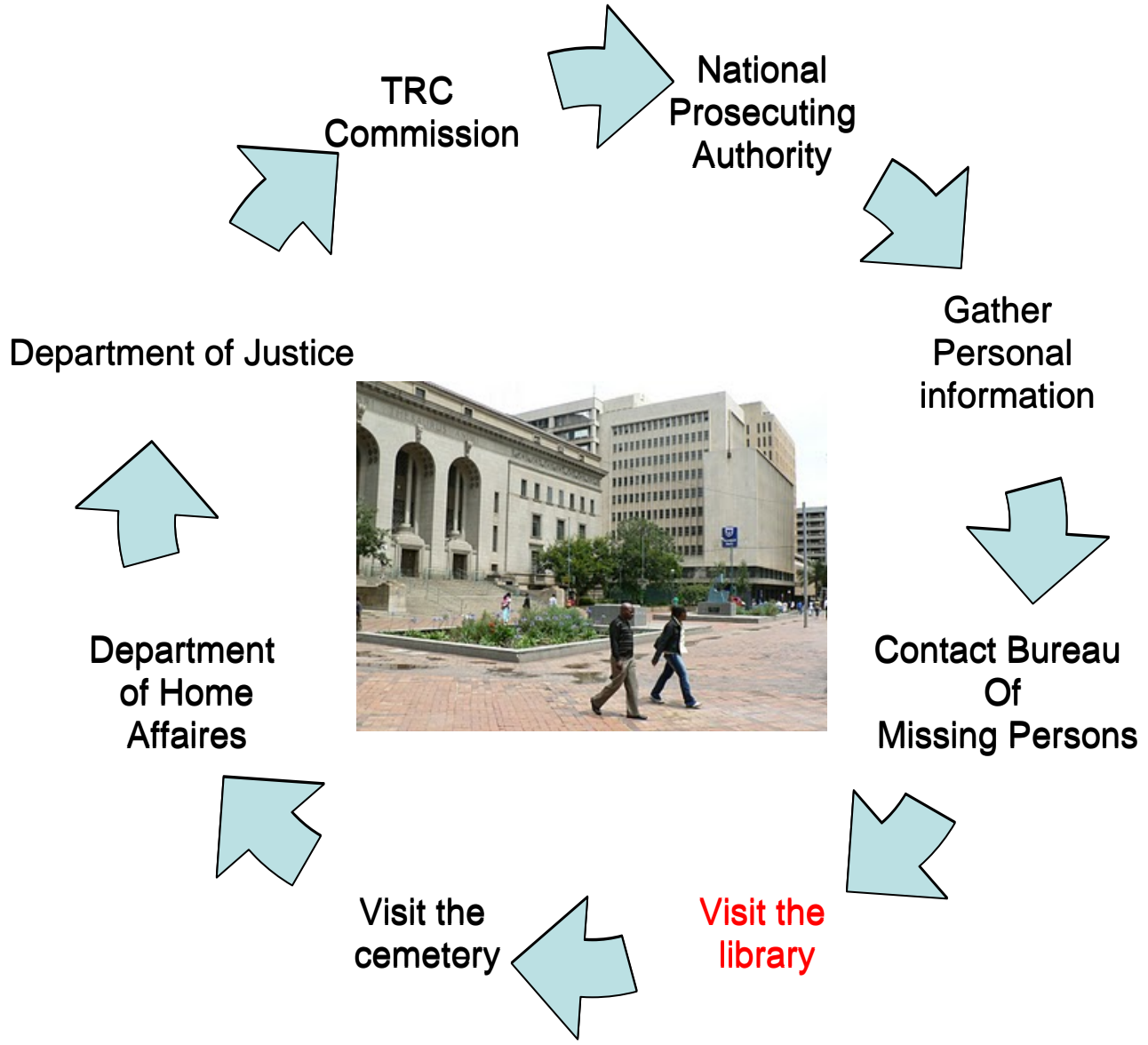
- *“I have to be very supportive of the families’ needs. I have to counsel them, and help them through this process”*

Dumisani Khumalo



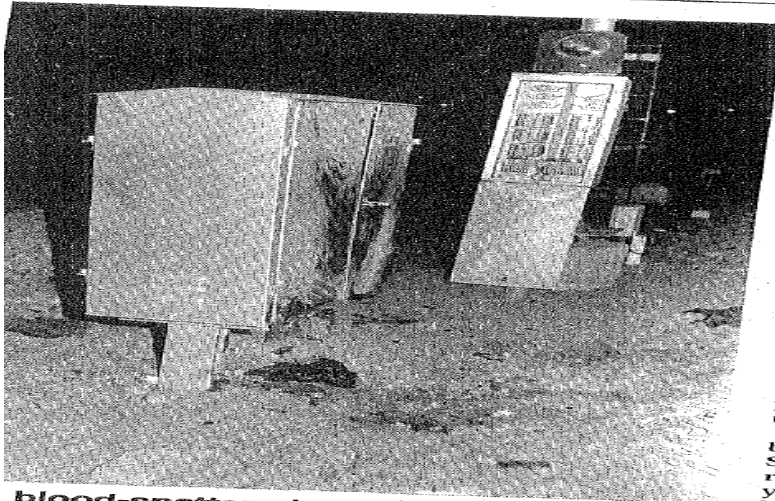
Registering a case

- Once I have opened or re-opened a case at the Bureau and got a case number, I go to the public library in Sauer Street. I search the newspaper archives for old newspapers for articles on the disappearance up to three months after to see if I can find any information.



Finding newspaper articles

- The following picture shows a copy of a newspaper article I found during my investigations at the library. The article is about the incident which led to the death of the Mofolo Three. Information about the death of my brother.



blood-spattered electricity box and raps of clothing mark the spot where a suspected bomber was blown up near Soweto's Midway Railway Station on Thursday night.

Police detonate mines on Soweto rail link

Citizen Reporter

POLICE detonated two Soviet SPM limpit mines at different sites on the Soweto railway line early yesterday, several hours after two blasts in Johannesburg and a third in Soweto, in which the suspected bomber was blown up.

Captain Ruben Bloomberg, spokesman for the SAP's public relations directorate in Pretoria, said yesterday Soweto police had received simultaneous information at 4.15 am about bombs on the Soweto line.

The first tip-off related to a bomb near Nancefield station and the second one near New Canada Station.

An SPM limpit mine was found at an electricity box near Nancefield and was detonated in a controlled explosion.

Services near New Canada were "temporarily delayed" after the second mine was detonated, also in a controlled explosion, and while police searched the line for further bombs.

The second mine had been planted at a signal pole.

At 9 pm on Thursday, a man was killed near Midway station in Soweto when a bomb exploded.

"It appears as if he was planting the bomb when it went off and we are investigating that possibility," Capt. Bloomberg said.

About 45 minutes earlier, Johannesburg's J G Strijdom Hospital was rocked by a blast, caused by a mini-limpit mine placed in a parking lot. No-one was hurt and damage was slight.

No injuries were reported in the blast which followed at 11.30 pm, behind the municipal toilets in Joubert Park, Johannesburg.

Lieutenant Eugene Opperman, liaison officer for the Witwatersrand police, said no organisation had yet claimed responsibility for the blasts yesterday.

"These are deplorable acts of violence against obvious civilian targets," he said.

It was possible that the attacks were part of a campaign.

stroom ANC holidaying' in London

father, Joe, is a prominent East Rand man. He is past president of the Transvaal Federation of Industries and he is a member of the Federated Industries of Industries. He was reported as a fifth member of the cell arrested in year at a farm-broederstroom. He apparently disappeared in September 1987, and gone to explain his de-

allegedly interned in the uaturo punish-

ment camp in Angola.

A report in Beeld this week quoted a friend of Annegarn as saying he had gone from Quatro to Cuba to Russia before joining his mother in London.

He and his mother are now active members of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in London, an organisation to which Annegarn has belonged since he was 19, the report said.

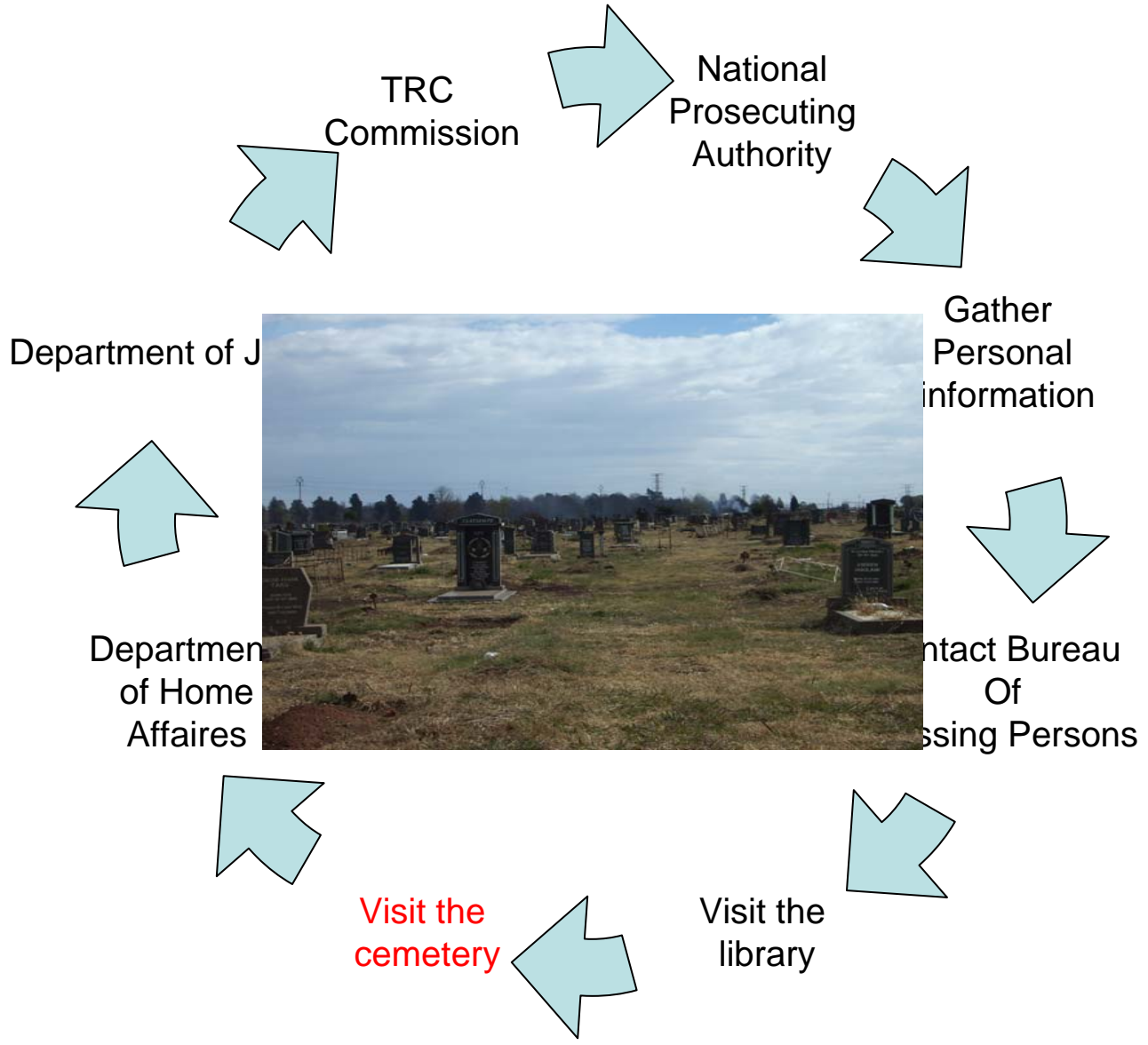
Mr Joe Annegarn could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Petrol bomb linked to her blasts

people who set off the fire at Alexan- Congress president, Mr M. M. and general Mr Jacob

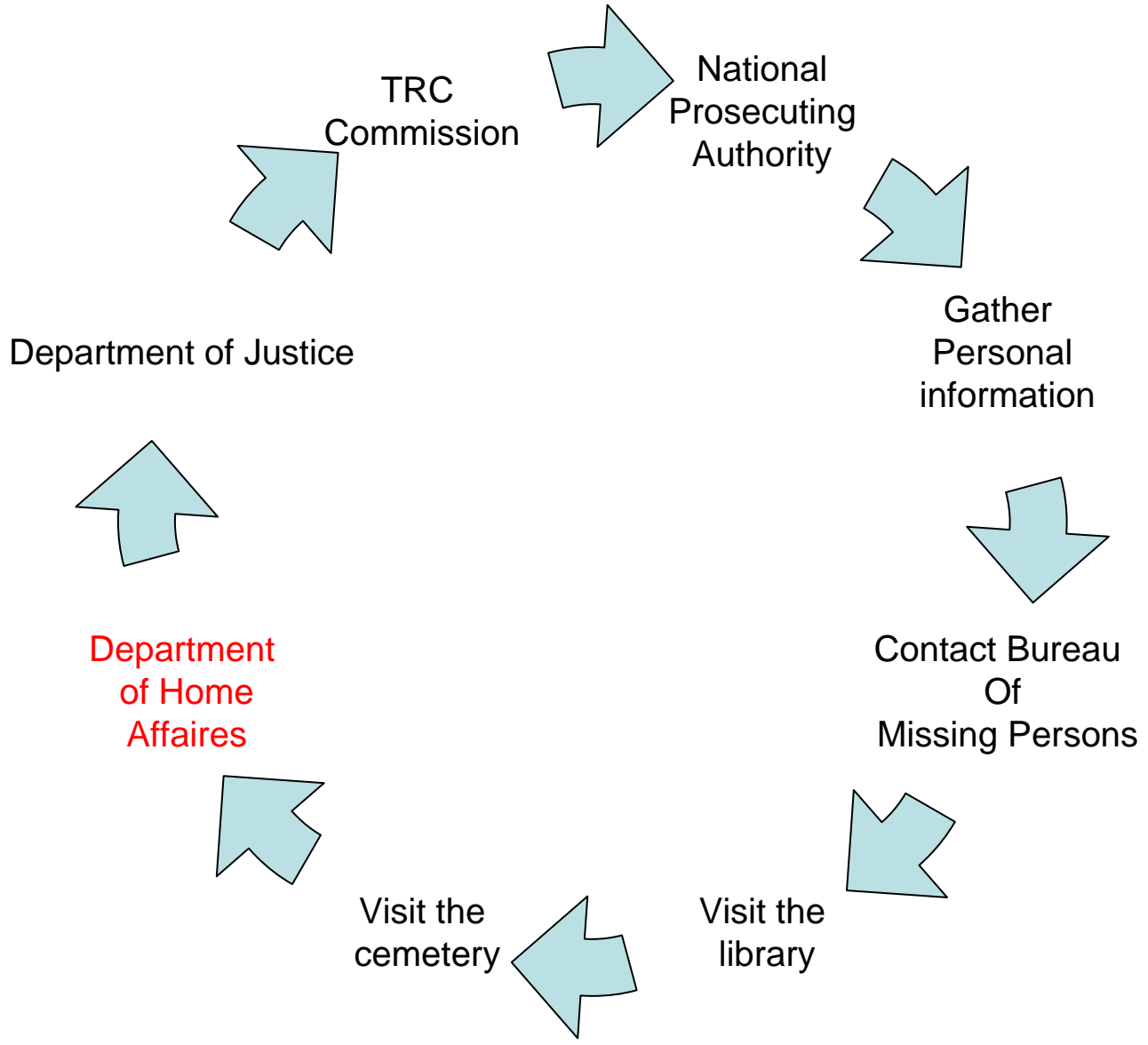
Miss Satchwell's BMW 325i were burnt, but the fire went out by itself and the petrol tank did not explode.

A bottle with a small



Visits to cemeteries

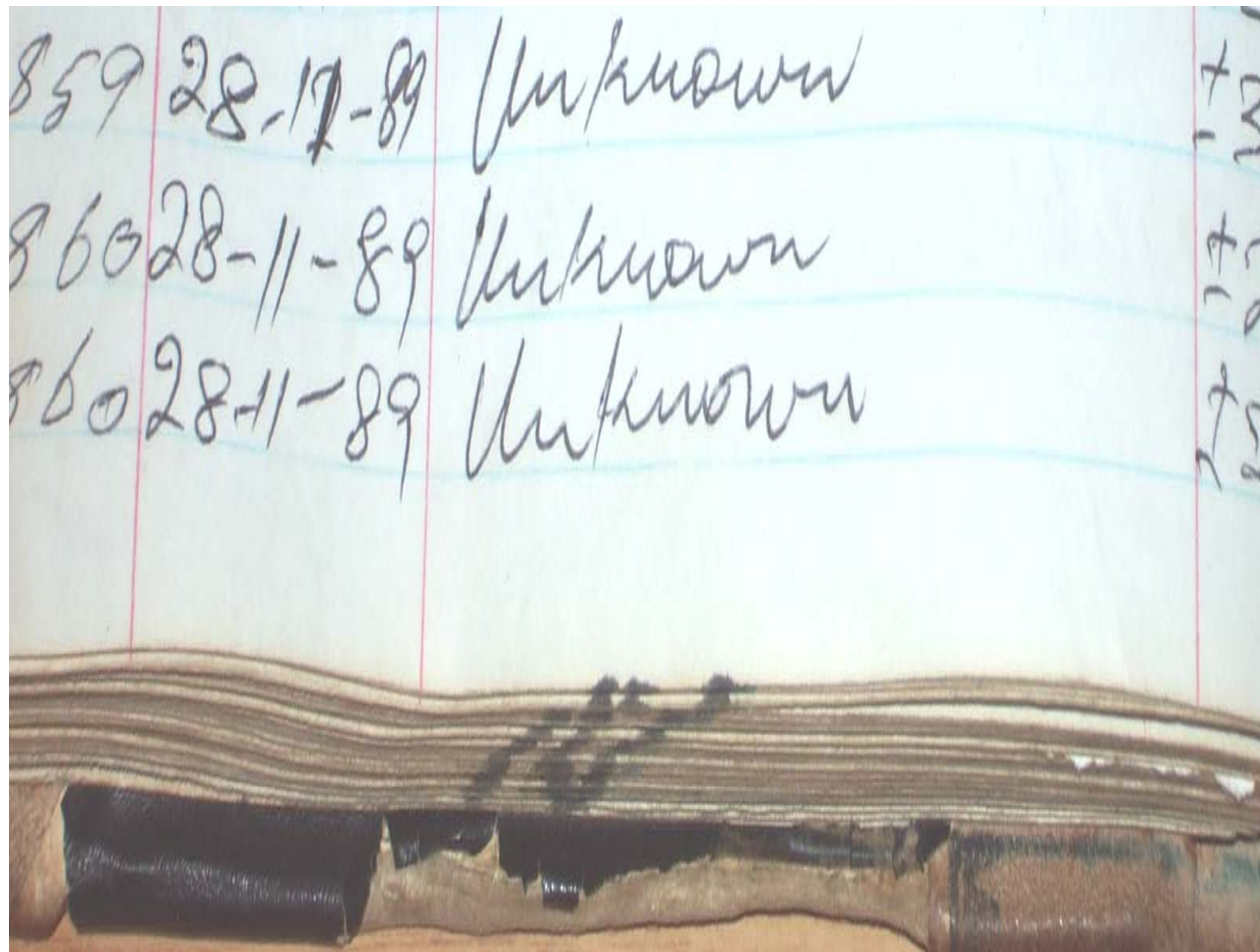
- I visit Avalon or East Rand cemetery. I can access information where there is a list of every person that has been buried. I look through the records up to three months after the date of disappearance, and check to see if there may be a match to the criteria of the person I am looking for.



Role of Home Affairs

- Then I go to the Department of Home Affairs. They have photos of everyone who has been buried as a pauper and their burial number.
- I compare the photos in the file at the Home Office with a photo that the family has given me. If I find a matching photograph, I compare the burial number with the burial number I have found at the cemetery. In this way I am often able to discover the location of the body of the disappeared person. I discovered the burial location of Nceba Cassius Snumo this way.

Burial records of unknown people at Home Affairs

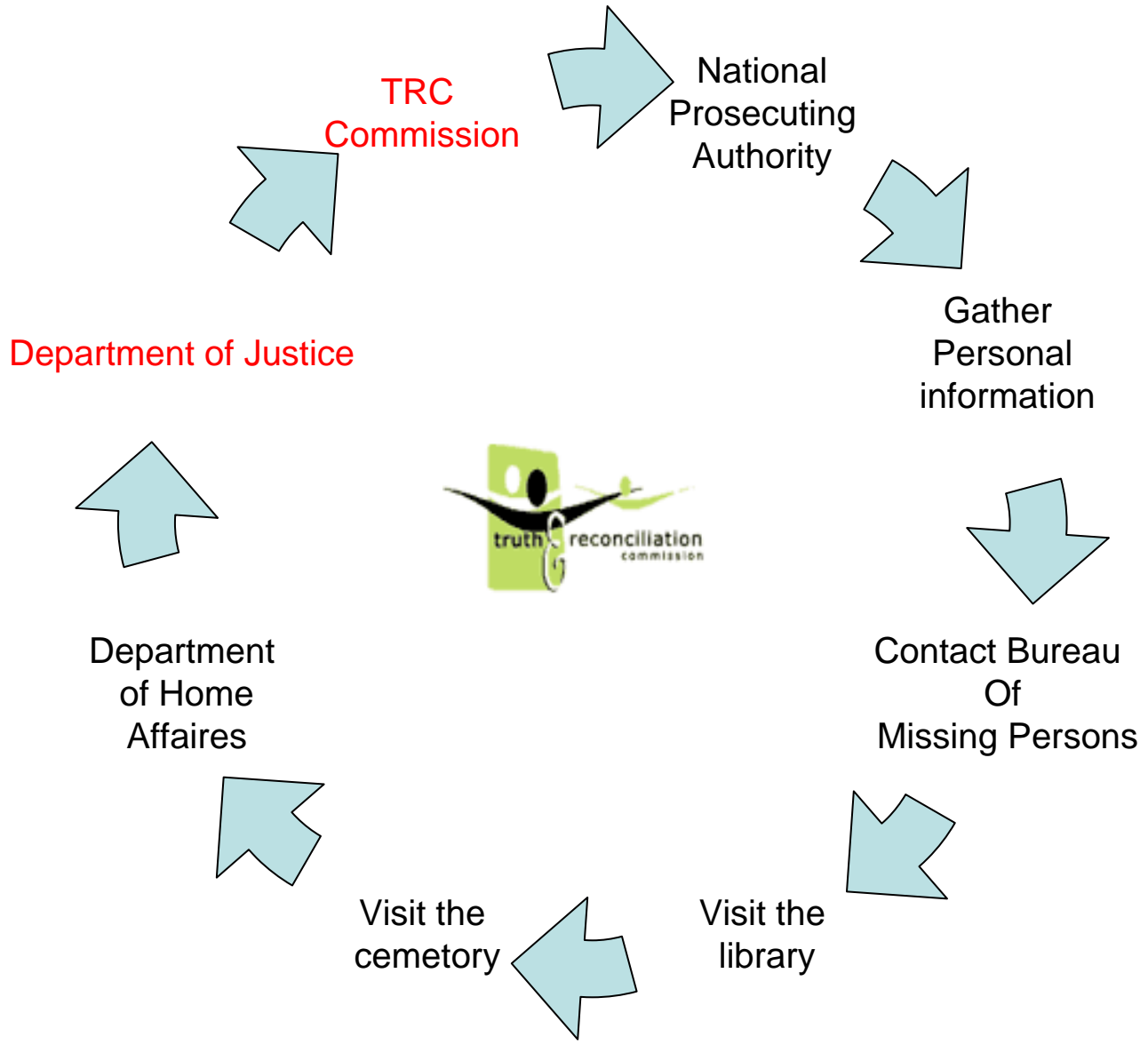


A photograph of a handwritten record book. The page is lined and has three entries. The entries are written in cursive and include a number, a date, and the word 'Unknown'. To the right of each entry, there are some numbers, possibly page numbers or counts. The bottom of the page shows the dark, textured binding of the book.

859	28-17-89	Unknown	+3
860	28-11-89	Unknown	+2
860	28-11-89	Unknown	+2

Burial site: A grave site of an unknown person I identified





Role of Department of Justice



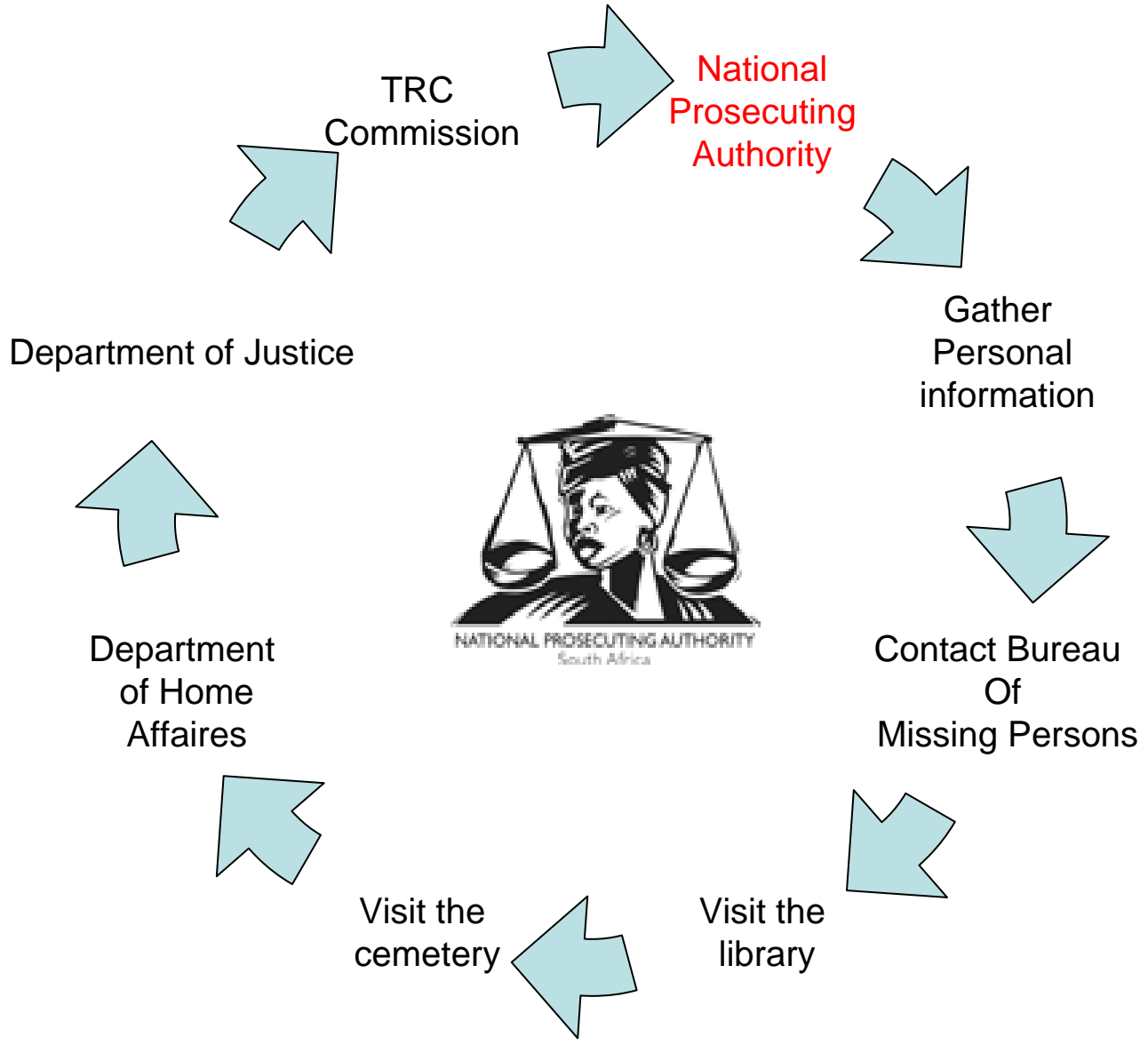
the doj&cd

Department:
Justice and Constitutional Development
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Role of the DOJ & the TRC Unit

- I now compile my findings and send the information to the Department of Justice, requesting further information. Once they receive my letter, they refer it to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Unit that reviews the case & gives it a case number.

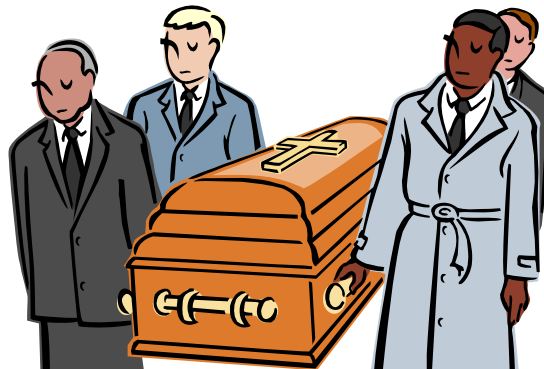


National Prosecuting Authority

- Case further investigated by the NPA
- My work can help them come up with answers more rapidly
- I accompany NPA Investigators to the family for an interview
- The NPA gather biological information (DNA Samples) and take official statements, and check for police dockets
- I accompany the NPA on their second visit, where the results of the investigation are given to the family.

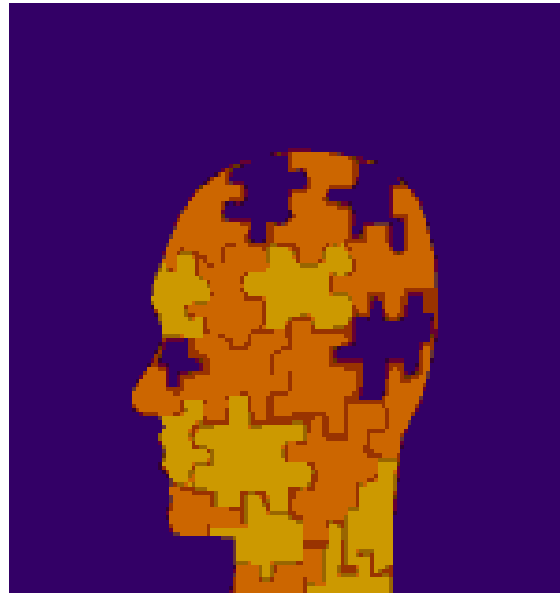
If remains are identified...

- **Financial assistance** - If remains are identified, the family can apply to the Dept of Justice for financial assistance in the burial and funeral arrangements of the disappeared person. Khulumani Support Group assists these families with this process



Presumption of Death

- Families are provided with presumption of death certificates – another piece in the puzzle



Processes for accessing death certificates

- If a person has been missing for a long time (but not longer than 23 years), the family can apply to the High Court for a Presumption of Death Certificate. This can allow a family to receive a Special Pension
I refer people to the Legal Resource Centre for help to get the presumption of death certificate.

- If you would like to know more, Dumisani & Pamela are available to talk further about this topic
- Thanks for listening.

